

ILSAMUN 2024

UNICEF

UNITED NATIONS  
CHILDREN'S EMERGENCY FOND

DISCUSSING THE CHALLENGES  
FACED BY WOMEN IN THE  
WORKPLACE



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## **LETTER FROM SECRETARY-GENERAL**

Esteemed Participants,

I salute you on behalf of the ILSA Model United Nations Team of 2024 which shall be the fourth annual edition of ILSAMUN as its Secretary-General. It's utmost pleasure to lead a team which struggle to gather up a Model United Nations Conference that we all hope and with great determination schedule to be an intellectual gathering of minds that wish nothing but to become more sharpened rather than just a usual Model United Nations Conference.

Through relentless efforts, our aim has been to craft an enriching experience marked by intellectual exchange, robust debates, and indelible memories. It is a privilege to see this vision come to fruition with a team of dedicated individuals eagerly awaiting your arrival.

I truly believe that the Model United Nations Conferences shall be nothing but serve you to demonstrate the dynamics of the world with a different perspective, provide a chance to expand your knowledge and awareness on the matters. Without you, our efforts would be meaningless. Therefore I invite you to find the common ground and generate the sustainable solutions with your enthusiastic and active participation.

Finally, I as the Secretary-General of ILSAMUN, hereby welcome you all to this beginning of an unforgettable experience. I'm no one but the person who is looking forward to meet you for your valuable contributions.

Sincerely,  
**Ömer Faruk Can**  
**Secretary-General**

## **LETTER FROM UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL**

Dear Esteemed Delegates,

I extend a most cordial welcome as we embark on a mission of paramount importance at ILSAMUN'24: safeguarding the well-being of children embroiled within the ongoing conflict in Palestine.

The study guide provided serves as a foundational resource for your endeavours. While it furnishes an outline of the conflict's historical context, the specific challenges faced by Palestinian children in securing basic necessities, and current efforts undertaken to alleviate their plight, it is intended as a point of departure for your exploration.

Consider this guide akin to a cartographic representation – it lays the groundwork, yet to become a true champion for Palestinian children, a more profound understanding is necessary. I, therefore, encourage you to engage in rigorous independent research. Utilize a diverse array of scholarly resources, including pertinent news reports and potentially even documentary films, to cultivate a nuanced comprehension of the conflict's intricacies.

As delegates representing your respective nations, you assume a position of significant influence. I urge you to become a veritable authority on your country's stance regarding child protection within war zones, specifically the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Armed with this knowledge, craft a comprehensive position paper that outlines potential solutions prioritizing the welfare of Palestinian children.

Feel free to reach out with any inquiries that may arise throughout the conference. I am dedicated to facilitating a productive and intellectually stimulating experience for all delegates.

With Highest Regards,

Ayşe Nur Çatal

Under Secretary General

## INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMITTEE

### A. UNICEF

#### 1. What is UNICEF



The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), originally known by the name United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, was created by the United Nations General Assembly (UN-GA) on 11th December 1946 to provide emergency food and healthcare to children and mothers in the countries that had been devastated by World War II. UNICEF works in 191 countries and territories to save children's lives, to defend their rights, and to help them fulfill their potential, from early childhood through adolescence. In 1950, UNICEF's mandate was extended to address the longterm needs of children and women in developing countries throughout the world. In 1953 it became a permanent part of the United Nations System, and the words "international" and "emergency" were dropped from the organization's name, though it retained the original acronym, "UNICEF".

UNICEF's Executive Board doesn't have permanent member countries. Instead, it consists of **36 member states** elected for **three-year terms** by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations.

- **Africa:** 8 seats
- **Asia:** 7 seats
- **Eastern Europe:** 4 seats
- **Latin America and the Caribbean:** 5 seats

- **Western Europe and Others:** 12 seats

*UNICEF's mission is twofold:*

1. **Advocate for the protection of children's rights, everywhere.** This means ensuring every child has access to the essentials they need to survive and develop, like healthcare, education, and sanitation. It also involves safeguarding them from violence, exploitation, and abuse.
2. **Help meet their basic needs and expand their opportunities to reach their full potential.** UNICEF goes beyond just providing basic necessities. They work to create an environment where children can thrive and reach their full potential, regardless of their background. This includes promoting quality education and advocating for policies that support children's well-being.

## **2. UNICEF's Global Achievements**

It is a broad question that encompasses UNICEF's work throughout its history. Here's a summary of their achievements:

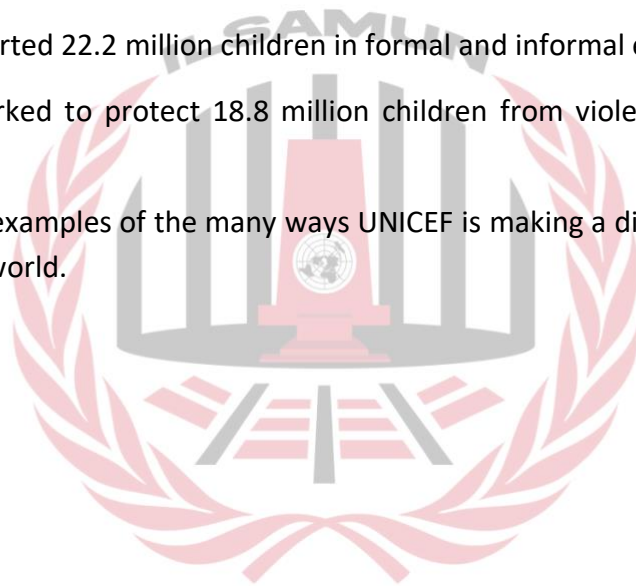
- **Reduced Child Mortality Rates:** UNICEF has played a major role in significantly reducing child mortality rates worldwide. This is due to their work on immunization programs, providing access to clean water and sanitation, and promoting proper nutrition.
- **Improved Healthcare:** UNICEF has been instrumental in providing essential healthcare services to millions of children, including vaccinations, treatment for diseases like malaria, and access to basic medical care.
- **Increased School Enrollment:** UNICEF has helped to increase the number of children enrolled in school globally, particularly girls. They champion girls' education and promote early childhood development programs.
- **Fighting Violence and Abuse:** UNICEF works tirelessly to protect children from violence, exploitation, and abuse. They advocate for child protection laws and support programs that help vulnerable children.
- **Supporting Children in Conflict Zones:** During conflicts and emergencies, UNICEF provides vital humanitarian aid to children, ensuring access to basic necessities and protecting them from harm.
- **Empowering Children:** UNICEF's work empowers children and equips them with the tools they need to reach their full potential. This includes promoting education, advocating for their rights, and fostering a healthy environment for them to grow.

UNICEF's impact extends beyond immediate aid. They work on long-term development projects to build sustainable solutions for children. They collaborate with governments, communities, and other organizations to create a global network for child well-being. While challenges remain, UNICEF's work has significantly improved the lives of countless children around the world.

### ***3. Specific Examples of UNICEF's Work:***

- In 2021, UNICEF provided vaccines to 116 million children against measles, polio, and other diseases.
- They also provided access to clean water and sanitation to 48 million people.
- UNICEF supported 22.2 million children in formal and informal education programs.
- They also worked to protect 18.8 million children from violence, exploitation, and abuse.

These are just a few examples of the many ways UNICEF is making a difference in the lives of children around the world.



## **INTRODUCTION TO THE AGENDA**

### **A. Understanding the Convention on the Rights of the Child**

Rights of the child, are a specific subset of human rights that recognize the special needs and legal protections children require. These rights are outlined in the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)**, an international treaty adopted in 1989.

#### ***1. A Long Journey for the World's Children: The History of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child***

The concept of children's rights, once a distant dream, has evolved into a cornerstone of international law. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), adopted in 1989, stands as a landmark achievement in this evolution. However, the road to this document was paved with decades of changing social attitudes, international cooperation, and persistent advocacy.

The seeds of change were sown in the 19th century. As Western societies began to view childhood as a distinct and valuable stage of life, concerns about child welfare grew. This shift laid the groundwork for early efforts to protect children. In 1919, the International Labor Organization took a crucial step by adopting the first conventions prohibiting child labor in hazardous conditions.

The League of Nations, the forerunner to the UN, further solidified these ideas in 1924 with the Declaration of Geneva. While non-binding, this document outlined the fundamental rights of children, marking a significant step towards formal recognition.

The horrors of World War II underscored the need for a comprehensive framework for human rights, including those of children. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted in 1948, provided a foundation for this framework. Following this, the UN itself adopted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child in 1959, further emphasizing the specific needs of children.



A turning point arrived in 1979, declared as the International Year of the Child. This global focus on children's issues generated momentum for a more robust legal framework. For the next ten years, intensive discussions and negotiations took place. Governments, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) with expertise in child welfare, and child advocates all contributed to the drafting process.

This collaborative effort culminated in a historic moment – the adoption of the UNCRC by the UN General Assembly in 1989. This comprehensive document outlines the civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights of every child, regardless of their race, religion, abilities, or any other factor.

Several key players contributed to this achievement. The increasing role of women in international diplomacy played a vital part in advocating for children's rights. Moreover, NGOs provided valuable expertise and advocacy throughout the process. Additionally, Sweden, a leader in child welfare issues, played a significant role in the negotiations.

The UNCRC's impact has been undeniable. It has become the most widely ratified human rights treaty in history, with nearly every country in the world adopting it. The UNCRC established a global standard for how children should be treated and their rights protected. This has led to significant progress, as evidenced by declining child mortality rates and increased access to education, particularly for girls.

However, the fight for children's rights continues. Violations of these rights remain a persistent challenge across the globe. Poverty, conflict, and discrimination continue to threaten children's well-being. Enforcing the UNCRC and addressing ongoing challenges must remain a top priority.

Looking back, the history of the UNCRC reveals a long and determined journey. From the initial recognition of child welfare in the 19th century to the formalization of children's rights in 1989, this journey represents the power of international cooperation and unwavering advocacy. As the world strives to create a better future for all children, the UNCRC serves as a vital roadmap, a reminder of the progress made and the ongoing struggle for a world where every child can thrive.

## ***2. Key Components of Children's Rights***

### **Article 6**

1. States Parties recognize that every child has the inherent right to life.
2. States Parties shall ensure to the maximum extent possible the survival and development of the child.

### **Article 7**

1. The child shall be registered immediately after birth and shall have the right from birth to a name, the right to acquire a nationality and, as far as possible, the right to know and be cared for by his or her parents.

2. States Parties shall ensure the implementation of these rights in accordance with their national law and their obligations under the relevant international instruments in this field, in particular where the child would otherwise be stateless.

#### **Article 8**

1. States Parties undertake to respect the right of the child to preserve his or her identity, including nationality, name and family relations as recognized by law without unlawful interference.

2. Where a child is illegally deprived of some or all of the elements of his or her identity, States Parties shall provide appropriate assistance and protection, with a view to re-establishing speedily his or her identity.

#### **Article 14**

1. States Parties shall respect the right of the child to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

2. States Parties shall respect the rights and duties of the parents and, when applicable, legal guardians, to provide direction to the child in the exercise of his or her right in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child.

3. Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs may be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary to protect public safety, order, health or morals, or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others.

#### **Article 22**

1. States Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure that a child who is seeking refugee status or who is considered a refugee in accordance with applicable international or domestic law and procedures shall, whether unaccompanied or accompanied by his or her parents or by any other person, receive appropriate protection and humanitarian assistance in the enjoyment of applicable rights set forth in the present Convention and in other international human rights or humanitarian instruments to which the said States are Parties.

2. For this purpose, States Parties shall provide, as they consider appropriate, co-operation in any efforts by the United Nations and other competent intergovernmental organizations or non-governmental organizations co-operating with the United Nations to protect and assist such a child and to trace the parents or other members of the family of any refugee child in order to obtain information necessary for reunification with his or her family. In cases where no parents or other members of the family can be found, the child shall be accorded the same protection as any other child permanently or temporarily deprived of his or her family environment for any reason, as set forth in the present Convention.

#### **Article 28**

1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to education, and with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity, they shall, in particular:

- (a) Make primary education compulsory and available free to all;
- (b) Encourage the development of different forms of secondary education, including general and vocational education, make them available and accessible to every child, and take appropriate measures such as the introduction of free education and offering financial assistance in case of need;
- (c) Make higher education accessible to all on the basis of capacity by every appropriate means;
- (d) Make educational and vocational information and guidance available and accessible to all children;
- (e) Take measures to encourage regular attendance at schools and the reduction of drop-out rates.

2. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that school discipline is administered in a manner consistent with the child's human dignity and in conformity with the present Convention.

3. States Parties shall promote and encourage international cooperation in matters relating to education, in particular with a view to contributing to the elimination of ignorance and illiteracy throughout the world and facilitating access to scientific and technical knowledge and modern teaching methods. In this regard, particular account shall be taken of the needs of developing countries.

#### **Article 30**

In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities or persons of indigenous origin exist, a child belonging to such a minority or who is indigenous shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture, to profess and practise his or her own religion, or to use his or her own language.

#### **Article 31**

1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.

2. States Parties shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity.

#### **Article 34**

States Parties undertake to protect the child from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. For these purposes, States Parties shall in particular take all appropriate national, bilateral and multilateral measures to prevent:

- (a) The inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity;

- (b) The exploitative use of children in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices;
- (c) The exploitative use of children in pornographic performances and materials.

### **Article 37**

States Parties shall ensure that:

- (a) No child shall be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Neither capital punishment nor life imprisonment without possibility of release shall be imposed for offences committed by persons below eighteen years of age;
- (b) No child shall be deprived of his or her liberty unlawfully or arbitrarily. The arrest, detention or imprisonment of a child shall be in conformity with the law and shall be used only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time;
- (c) Every child deprived of liberty shall be treated with humanity and respect for the inherent dignity of the human person, and in a manner which takes into account the needs of persons of his or her age. In particular, every child deprived of liberty shall be separated from adults unless it is considered in the child's best interest not to do so and shall have the right to maintain contact with his or her family through correspondence and visits, save in exceptional circumstances;
- (d) Every child deprived of his or her liberty shall have the right to prompt access to legal and other appropriate assistance, as well as the right to challenge the legality of the deprivation of his or her liberty before a court or other competent, independent and impartial authority, and to a prompt decision on any such action.

### **Article 39**

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to promote physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of a child victim of: any form of neglect, exploitation, or abuse; torture or any other form of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; or armed conflicts. Such recovery and reintegration shall take place in an environment which fosters the health, self-respect and dignity of the child.

## **B. Beyond the Map: Understanding the Complexities of Conflict Zones**

Conflict zones are more than just red markings on a map; they are intricate tapestries woven from violence, instability, and human suffering. While the immediate visuals of war may capture our attention, a deeper understanding necessitates delving into the underlying factors that fuel these crises and the devastating impact they have on human lives.

The most evident element of a conflict zone is **violence**. This can range from sporadic clashes to full-blown war, perpetrated by state actors like governments and militaries, or non-state actors like rebel groups and terrorists. This constant threat creates an atmosphere of fear and disrupts the social fabric of communities. People are displaced from their homes, families are torn apart, and essential services like healthcare and education crumble.

This breakdown of order often stems from **political instability**. A functioning government is frequently absent or weak in conflict zones, creating a power vacuum that breeds competition for control. This can lead to human rights abuses, a disregard for the rule of law, and further violence.

**Underlying causes** often simmer beneath the surface, fueling the flames of conflict. Economic inequality, where resources are distributed unevenly, can create tensions and competition for basic necessities. Ethnic or religious divisions, fueled by historical grievances and cultural clashes, can erupt into violence as groups vie for power or dominance. Additionally, competition for scarce resources like water, land, or minerals can be a significant driver of conflict, especially as climate change puts additional strain on these vital elements.

The consequences of conflict zones are far-reaching and deeply disturbing. **Loss of life** is inevitable, with casualties mounting among both civilians and combatants. **Displacement** becomes a defining feature, as people flee their homes to escape the violence, creating massive refugee populations that strain resources in neighboring regions. Basic necessities like food, water, and shelter become scarce, leading to a full-blown **humanitarian crisis**.

The **international community** plays a crucial role in mitigating the suffering caused by conflict zones. Organizations like the United Nations work tirelessly on peacekeeping missions, delivering humanitarian aid, and facilitating conflict resolution efforts.

In conclusion, conflict zones are complex entities that extend far beyond the geographical boundaries depicted on a map. Recognizing the interplay of violence, political instability, social upheaval, and underlying causes is essential for comprehending the true nature of these crises. By acknowledging the devastating impact they have on human lives, we can work towards fostering peace, promoting stability, and rebuilding shattered communities.

## **1. Israel-Palestine Conflict: A Brief History**

The Israeli–Palestinian conflict began in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, with the development of political Zionism and the arrival of Zionist settlers to Palestine. The modern political Zionist movement, with the goal of establishing a Jewish state in Palestine, grew out of the last two decades of the 19th century, largely in response to antisemitism in Europe. While Jewish colonization began during this period, it was not until the arrival of more ideologically Zionist immigrants in the decade preceding the First World War that the landscape of Ottoman Palestine would start to significantly change.

### *What was Israel Before 1948?*

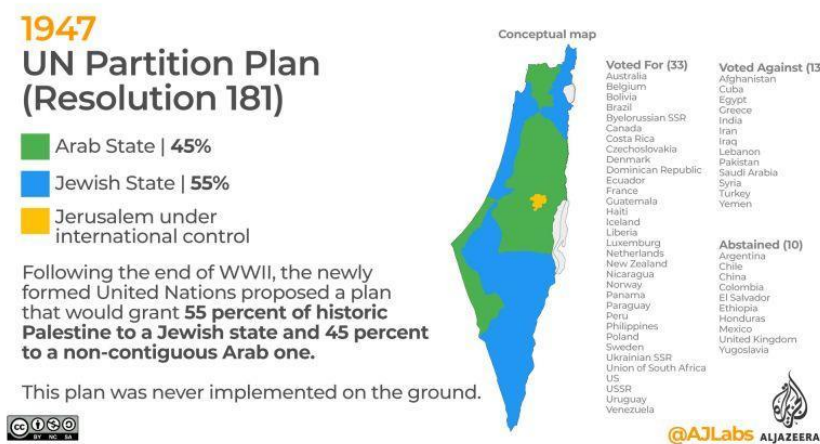
Britain took control of the area known as Palestine following the defeat of the Ottoman Empire, which ruled that part of the Middle East, in World War One. The land was inhabited by a Jewish minority and Arab majority, as well as other, smaller ethnic groups. Tensions between the two peoples grew when the international community gave the UK the task of establishing a "national home" in Palestine for Jewish people. This stemmed from the Balfour

Declaration of 1917, a pledge made by then Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour to Britain's Jewish community.

### *Jewish Immigration to Palestine*

A large-scale Jewish migration to Palestine began, accelerated by Jewish people fleeing Nazism in Europe. Between 1918 and 1947, the Jewish population in Palestine increased from 6 percent to 33 percent. To Jews Palestine was their ancestral home, but Palestinian Arabs also claimed the land and opposed the move. As a consequence violence between Jews and Arabs, and against British rule, also increased.

### *United Nations Partition Plan*



On 29 November 1947, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted Resolution 181(II) recommending the adoption and implementation of a plan to partition Palestine into an Arab state, a Jewish state and the City of Jerusalem. Palestinian Arabs were opposed to the partition. Zionists accepted the partition but planned to expand Israel's borders beyond what was allocated to it by the UN. On the next day, Palestine was swept by violence. By spring 1948, it was already clear that the Arab forces were nearing a total collapse, while Yishuv forces gained more and more territory, creating a large scale refugee problem of Palestinian Arabs.

### *1948 Arab–Israeli War*

In 1948, unable to solve the problem, Britain withdrew and Jewish leaders declared the creation of the State of Israel. On May 14, 1948, the State of Israel was created, sparking the first Arab-Israeli War. The war ended in 1949 with Israel's victory, but 750,000 Palestinians were displaced, and the territory was divided into 3 parts: the State of Israel, the West Bank (of the Jordan River), and the Gaza Strip. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians fled or were forced out of their homes in what they call Al Nakba, or the "Catastrophe". By the time the fighting ended in a ceasefire the following year, Israel controlled most of the territory.

### *Six-Day War*

Six-Day War, or Arab-Israeli War of 1967, War between Israel and the Arab countries of Egypt, Syria, and Jordan. Palestinian guerrilla attacks on Israel from bases in Syria led to increased hostility between the two countries. A series of miscalculations by both sides followed. Syria feared that an invasion by Israel was forthcoming and appealed to Egypt for support. Egypt answered by ordering the withdrawal of UN peacekeeping forces from the Sinai Peninsula and by moving troops into the area. Amid increasingly belligerent language from both sides, Egypt signed a mutual defense treaty with Jordan. Israel, surrounded and fearing an Arab attack was imminent, launched what it felt was a preemptive strike against the three Arab states on June 5, 1967. Israeli forces captured the Sinai Peninsula, Gaza Strip, West Bank of the Jordan River, Old City of Jerusalem, and the Golan Heights. The status of these occupied territories subsequently became a major point of contention between the two sides.

### *1973 Yom Kippur War*

On October 6, 1973, a coalition of Arab forces consisting of mainly Egypt and Syria launched a surprise attack against Israel on the Jewish holy day of Yom Kippur. Egyptian and Syria had crossed over the ceasefire lines that were agreed upon prior to 1973. Egypt had in particular tried to reoccupy much of the area surrounding the Suez Canal, whilst the frontline with Syria was mainly situated around the north in the Golan Heights. Israel signed a formal cease-fire agreement with Egypt on November 11 and with Syria on May 31, 1974. A disengagement agreement between Israel and Egypt, signed on January 18, 1974, provided for Israeli withdrawal into the Sinai west of the Mitla and Gidi passes, while Egypt was to reduce the size of its forces on the east bank of the canal.

On March 26, 1979, Israel and Egypt signed a peace treaty formally ending the state of war that had existed between the two countries for 30 years. Under the terms of the treaty, which had resulted from the Camp David Accords signed in 1978, Israel returned the entire Sinai Peninsula to Egypt, and, in return, Egypt recognized Israel's right to exist. The two countries subsequently established normal diplomatic relations.

### *1982 Lebanon War*

On June 5, 1982, less than six weeks after Israel's complete withdrawal from the Sinai, increased tensions between Israelis and Palestinians resulted in the Israeli bombing of Beirut and southern Lebanon, where the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) had a number of strongholds. The following day Israel invaded Lebanon, and by June 14 its land forces reached as far as the outskirts of Beirut, which was encircled, but the Israeli government agreed to halt its advance and begin negotiations with the PLO. After much delay and massive Israeli shelling of west Beirut, the PLO evacuated the city under the supervision of a multinational force. Eventually, Israeli troops withdrew from west Beirut, and the Israeli army had withdrawn entirely from Lebanon by June 1985.

### *First Intifada*

Even though the relations between Israel and its neighbors improved, the question of Palestinian self-determination and self-governance remained unresolved. In 1987, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip rose up against the Israeli

government in what is known as the first intifada. The 1993 Oslo I Accords mediated the conflict, setting up a framework for the Palestinians to govern themselves in the West Bank and Gaza, and enabled mutual recognition between the newly established Palestinian Authority and Israel's government. In 1995, the Oslo II Accords expanded on the first agreement, adding provisions that mandated the complete withdrawal of Israel from 6 cities and 450 towns in the West Bank.

### *Second Intifada*

In 2000, sparked in part by Palestinian grievances over Israel's control over the West Bank, a stagnating peace process, and former Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's visit to the al-Aqsa mosque—the third holiest site in Islam—in September 2000, Palestinians launched the second intifada, which would last until 2005. In response, the Israeli government approved the construction of a barrier wall around the West Bank in 2002, despite opposition from the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court.

### *Fatah-Hamas Split*

In 2006, Hamas won a plurality of 44% in the Palestinian parliamentary election. Israel responded it would begin economic sanctions unless Hamas agreed to accept prior Israeli–Palestinian agreements, forswear violence, and recognize Israel's right to exist, all of which Hamas rejected. After internal Palestinian political struggle between Fatah and Hamas erupted into the Battle of Gaza (2007), Hamas took full control of the area. In 2007, Israel imposed a naval blockade on the Gaza Strip, and cooperation with Egypt allowed a ground blockade of the Egyptian border.

The tensions between Israel and Hamas escalated until late 2008, when Israel launched operation Cast Lead upon Gaza, resulting in thousands of civilian casualties and billions of dollars in damage. By February 2009, a ceasefire was signed with international mediation between the parties, though the occupation and small and sporadic eruptions of violence continued.

### *Current Stuation*

In early October 2023, war broke out between Israel and Hamas, the militant Islamist group that has controlled Gaza since 2006, in the most significant escalation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in several decades. Hamas fighters fired rockets into Israel and stormed southern Israeli cities and towns across the border of the Gaza Strip, killing more than 1,300 Israelis, injuring 3,300, and taking hundreds of hostages. The attack took Israel by surprise, though the state quickly mounted a deadly retaliatory operation. One day after the October 7 attack, the Israeli cabinet formally declared war against Hamas, followed by a directive from the defense minister to the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) to carry out a “complete siege” of Gaza. Since then, the two sides have traded daily rocket fire, and Israel ordered more than one million Palestinian civilians in northern Gaza to evacuate ahead of a ground invasion that began on October 28. Israeli forces have encircled Gaza City, cutting it off from southern Gaza and squeezing Hamas. Hundreds of thousands of civilians remain in the city. The territory is also



desperately low on water, fuel, and supplies as Israel has rejected humanitarian pauses and limited the amount of aid that can enter.

The displacement of millions more Palestinians presents a dilemma for Egypt and Jordan, which have absorbed hundreds of thousands of Palestinians in the past but have resisted accepting anyone during the current war. They fear that Gazans, many of whom were already displaced from elsewhere in Israel, will not be allowed to return once they leave. Egypt also fears that Hamas fighters could enter Egypt and trigger a new war in the Sinai by launching attacks on Israel or destabilizing the authoritarian regime of Abdel Fattah el-Sisi by supporting the Muslim Brotherhood. So far, negotiations have resulted in only 1,100 people exiting Gaza through the Rafah border crossing to Egypt. The other 1.5 million displaced Gazans—70 percent of the territory’s population—have nowhere to go and face increasingly dire living conditions and security risks.



### C. Defining Living Standards: Challenges to Children’s Well-Being in Conflict Zones

The concept of "living standards" takes on a harrowing complexity within the brutal reality of conflict zones. While globally, it refers to access to necessities like food, shelter, and healthcare, in areas ravaged by war, the very definition transforms into a desperate fight for survival.

#### 1. A Precarious Existence: Under Siege of Basic Needs

The foundation of living standards crumbles under the relentless weight of conflict. Access to clean water, a fundamental human right enshrined in Article 6 of the CRC, becomes a perilous undertaking. Damaged infrastructure due to bombings or neglect leaves communities vulnerable to contamination from sewage, industrial waste, or naturally occurring pollutants. War further disrupts vital water treatment and distribution systems, forcing children on long and risky journeys to collect water, often contaminated, exposing them to waterborne diseases.

Food security suffers a crippling blow as conflict disrupts agricultural production cycles. Farmers may be forced to flee their land, abandon crops, or be targeted for violence. Markets in war zones are often destroyed or severely limited, leading to price hikes and food shortages. Distribution channels are severed, hindering the flow of essential supplies to vulnerable

populations. Children, with their developing bodies and higher nutritional needs, are particularly susceptible to malnutrition and disease under such conditions.

This jeopardizes not only their physical well-being but also their cognitive development and future earning potential (violating Article 6 of the CRC).

Shelter, another fundamental need (Article 6), becomes a luxury in conflict zones. Families are forced to flee their homes due to the threat of violence or bombardment. Many find themselves living in overcrowded displacement camps, often lacking basic sanitation facilities and proper protection from the elements. Others resort to makeshift shelters cobbled together from salvaged materials, offering inadequate protection from harsh weather conditions and potential security threats.

### ***2. A Stolen Future: Education Under Attack***

Education, a crucial pillar of well-being and future opportunity, becomes a casualty of war. Schools are often deliberately targeted in conflicts, seen as symbols of progress or potential recruitment grounds for opposing forces. This blatant violation of Article 28 of the CRC not only disrupts children's education but also destroys vital community infrastructure. Children are forced out of classrooms, their intellectual and social development stunted. This perpetuates the cycle of poverty and vulnerability, as education is a key pathway to improved livelihoods and breaking free from the shackles of conflict.

Furthermore, desperate economic situations driven by war can lead to the exploitation of children for child labor (Article 31). Children may be forced to work in dangerous and exploitative conditions, jeopardizing their physical and psychological well-being. This not only deprives them of education but also steals their childhood and exposes them to long-term health risks.

### ***3. Beyond the Physical: Scars on the Soul***

The impact of conflict extends far beyond the realm of physical needs. Children become unwilling witnesses to violence, displacement, and the loss of loved ones. These experiences lead to lasting psychological trauma, a violation of Article 37 of the CRC which prohibits cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. Fear, anxiety, and depression become constant companions, hindering their emotional development and ability to learn. Nightmares and flashbacks can disrupt sleep patterns, further impacting their overall well-being.

One of the most crippling consequences is the constant shadow of fear and anxiety. The boom of explosions becomes a lullaby, sirens a constant reminder of vulnerability. This hypervigilance takes a toll on a child's sense of security. Nightmares become a gateway to reliving the horrors of war, and even the most mundane activities can trigger flashbacks. Schoolwork becomes a distant thought, replaced by the primal need to survive. This persistent state of unease can lead to developmental delays and hinder their ability to learn and cope with everyday life.

Beyond fear lies the crushing weight of loss. Children in conflict zones witness violence firsthand, forced to bear the emotional burden of seeing loved ones injured or killed. The

sudden absence of parents or siblings creates a void that can be overwhelming. Displacement from familiar surroundings and communities further intensifies the sense of isolation and grief. This loss of normalcy can lead to depression, feelings of hopelessness, and a struggle to find meaning in a world seemingly defined by chaos.

Mental health services, already limited in many regions, become even scarcer amidst a conflict's chaos. This leaves children with little to no support to navigate the emotional turmoil they experience. Untreated trauma can manifest in behavioral problems, difficulty concentrating in school (if education is still available), and increased vulnerability to substance abuse as they grow older.

The emotional toll often manifests in a spectrum of reactions. Some children become withdrawn, retreating into a world of silence in an attempt to cope with the trauma. Others may lash out, expressing their pain through aggression and disruptive behavior. These coping mechanisms, while understandable, can hinder their ability to form healthy relationships and navigate social situations.

The psychological effects don't just affect individuals; they have a ripple effect on society. Exposure to violence can normalize aggression, creating a generation that sees violence as a means of conflict resolution. This perpetuates the cycle of violence, making children susceptible to recruitment by armed groups, further entrenching them in the conflict.

The international community holds a critical responsibility to uphold child protection principles enshrined in UN conventions, particularly the CRC. Preventing conflict remains paramount, but when war breaks out, ensuring safe access for humanitarian aid is essential. This may involve advocating for ceasefires, establishing safe corridors, and deploying peacekeepers to facilitate the delivery of life-saving resources and protect vulnerable populations. Additionally, holding parties to conflicts accountable for violations against children, as outlined in Article 38 of the CRC, sends a vital message of deterrence.



#### **D. The Complex Challenges Faced by Children in Gaza**

Children in Gaza bear the brunt of violence, often facing direct physical harm during periods of conflict. Bombings, shelling, and stray gunfire can inflict devastating injuries with long-term consequences for mobility, growth, and overall health. Witnessing violence and experiencing displacement or loss

of loved ones leaves deep psychological scars. Anxiety, depression, nightmares, and difficulty concentrating in school become common occurrences. These traumas can manifest as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), hindering their ability to cope with everyday life. Disrupted education further exacerbates these difficulties as school closures due to conflict or damage to infrastructure become a constant threat. With routines and safe spaces disrupted, children

lose a sense of normalcy and security, jeopardizing their academic development and well-being.

Poverty casts a long shadow on children's lives in Gaza. Many families struggle to meet basic needs for food, clean water, and sanitation. This creates a dangerous cycle of malnutrition, weakened immune systems, and increased vulnerability to disease. Stunted growth and developmental delays can become long-term consequences, impacting their future health and potential. Limited employment opportunities create a vicious cycle, with parents unable to provide for their children. This desperation can push families towards child labor, robbing them of their childhood and exposing them to exploitation and hazardous working conditions.

The healthcare system in Gaza is under immense strain due to chronic shortages of resources. Limited medical supplies, equipment, and qualified personnel create a situation where children have limited access to essential services. Vaccinations, treatment for injuries and illnesses, and specialized care for chronic conditions become out of reach for many. This lack of access, coupled with inadequate nutrition, significantly contributes to the spread of infectious diseases and the prevalence of malnutrition. Children struggling with trauma and psychological distress often lack proper mental health support due to inadequate services. This lack of support further compounds their challenges and hinders their emotional well-being.

Frequent conflict has severely damaged Gaza's infrastructure. Schools and hospitals, crucial for children's education and health, are often destroyed or significantly damaged. This hinders access to essential services, impacting their learning and healthcare, and creating a sense of insecurity. The water supply in Gaza is another source of concern. Contaminated with sewage and saltwater, it becomes unsafe for drinking and household use, leading to a high risk of waterborne illnesses among children. Poor sanitation facilities further exacerbate health risks and create unsanitary living conditions. Regular power outages due to damaged infrastructure and fuel shortages disrupt essential services in hospitals, schools, and homes. This hinders not only education and healthcare delivery but also essential daily activities, adding another layer of hardship to children's lives.

The constant cycle of violence and hardship takes a heavy toll on children's social and psychological well-being. Feelings of hopelessness, a lack of faith in a brighter future, and isolation become pervasive. Opportunities for play and recreation, crucial for emotional development and social interaction, are limited. This lack of safe spaces restricts their ability to develop social skills and can lead to feelings of loneliness and depression.

The situation for children in Gaza is dire. Addressing these intertwined challenges requires a comprehensive and multi-faceted approach. By working together to provide for immediate needs and implement long-term solutions, the international community can help create a safer and more hopeful environment for children in Gaza. Only through a united and sustained effort can the web of problems be untangled and a brighter future woven for these children.

*Voices of Gaza Strip's Children - UNICEF*

The continuous escalation of hostilities in the Gaza Strip presents a lethal triple threat to children's lives. Thousands have tragically lost their lives to the violence, countless others are now living with disabilities, and the overall living conditions for children are swiftly deteriorating.

At the age of 11, the life of Razan was irrevocably altered. She tragically lost her parents and three brothers in the ongoing war and an explosion led to her left leg being amputated. Amidst the ruins of her former life, Razan reflects: "Becoming an orphan has turned my life upside down."

Fares is a 6-year-old boy who used to live in Khan Younis, but is now displaced to Rafah with his family and two colorful birds. Fares shares, "I love my two birds, they are my best friends now and I take good care of them." His longing for home is palpable as he adds, "I wish the war would end soon, so I could go back to my room, my neighborhood and my friends."

Taline is 11-year-old. She was forced to move from her home in Khan Younis to Rafah. She faces a daily struggle to gather just basic necessities. "Every day and for at least three hours, I stand in line to collect some water for my family," she explains. Her story is one of survival, depicting a childhood overshadowed by conflict.

These stories, interwoven with hope and despair, underscore the urgent need for action.



## **UNICEF'S ROLE**

### ***A. What is UNICEF's humanitarian role during armed conflict?***

UNICEF plays a critical role in protecting children during armed conflict. Their humanitarian efforts focus on several key areas:

**Protection:** UNICEF advocates for the safety and well-being of children caught in conflict. This includes calling on all parties involved in the fighting to uphold international law and to stop violations against children, such as recruitment into armed forces and attacks on schools and hospitals.

**Emergency Response:** When conflict erupts, UNICEF mobilizes resources to provide essential supplies like clean water, food, sanitation facilities, and medical care to children and families in need.

**Education:** Even in conflict zones, UNICEF works to ensure children have access to education. This may involve setting up temporary learning spaces or providing educational materials.

**Child Reintegration:** In some cases, children become involved in armed groups during conflict. UNICEF works with governments and other partners to support the release and reintegration of these children back into their communities.

**Psychosocial Support:** The psychological impact of conflict on children can be severe. UNICEF provides trauma-informed counseling and other forms of psychosocial support to help children cope with their experiences.

### ***B. How does UNICEF operate in the State of Palestine?***

In the complex and often volatile landscape of the State of Palestine, UNICEF acts as a vital lifeline for children caught in the midst of conflict and hardship. Unlike its limited role in Israel, UNICEF has a dedicated presence and robust programs specifically designed to address the

needs of Palestinian children across the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and the Gaza Strip.

#### Championing Child Rights:

- **Education:** One of the most critical areas of focus is ensuring access to education. In areas where schools have been damaged or destroyed by conflict, UNICEF steps in. For instance, following the recent escalation in October 2023, UNICEF rapidly deployed temporary learning tents to ensure displaced children didn't experience a break in their education. Additionally, they work with local partners to distribute school supplies and create safe learning environments.
- **Health and Wellbeing:** UNICEF prioritizes children's health through various initiatives. They partner with local health institutions to provide essential healthcare services, including vaccinations and treatment for common childhood illnesses. In Gaza, where malnutrition is a concern, UNICEF supports programs that distribute micronutrient supplements and promote healthy breastfeeding practices.
- **Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH):** Access to clean water and sanitation is fundamental for children's health and development. UNICEF works with local authorities to ensure water infrastructure repairs and upgrades water treatment plants. They also distribute hygiene kits and conduct hygiene education campaigns to promote healthy habits.
- **Child Protection:** Protecting children from violence and exploitation is paramount. UNICEF advocates for the rights of all children, regardless of background. They work with the Palestinian Authority to strengthen child protection systems and raise awareness about issues like child labor and recruitment into armed groups.
- **Psychosocial Support:** The psychological scars of conflict can be deep-seated in children. UNICEF provides trauma-informed counseling services and creates safe spaces for children to play, express themselves, and begin to heal. These spaces often incorporate art therapy or group activities that foster a sense of normalcy and community.

#### Funding and Collaboration:

UNICEF relies on donations from governments, individuals, and the private sector to sustain its operations in Palestine. They also collaborate extensively with local and international NGOs, leveraging their expertise and resources to maximize their impact.

#### ***C. How does UNICEF operate in Israel?***

UNICEF's role in Israel is distinct from its work in the State of Palestine. Due to the complexities of the ongoing conflict, UNICEF's presence in Israel is more focused on fundraising and advocacy, rather than direct intervention programs. Here's a breakdown of how UNICEF operates in Israel:

#### Fundraising for Global Impact:

- **The Israeli Fund for UNICEF:** Established in 2009, this branch acts as a fundraising arm for UNICEF's global work. Israeli citizens can donate to the fund, with contributions directed towards UNICEF's life-saving programs for children around the world, rather than specifically for children within Israel.

#### Advocacy for Children's Rights:

- **A Voice for All Children:** While there isn't a dedicated program for Israeli children, UNICEF does speak out regarding the protection of children's rights across the entire region. They've issued statements condemning violence against children in both Israel and Palestine, urging all parties involved in the conflict to uphold international law and prioritize the safety and well-being of children.

#### Limited Direct Intervention:

- **Navigating a Political Landscape:** The sensitive political situation in the region limits UNICEF's ability to have a large-scale presence for direct intervention within Israel. Unlike the State of Palestine, there's no dedicated UNICEF Country Office in Israel.
- **Collaboration with Regional Offices:** However, UNICEF doesn't entirely turn a blind eye to the situation within Israel. They collaborate with regional offices, like the UNICEF Middle East and North Africa office, to address the needs of children affected by the conflict. For example, during the recent escalation in Gaza, UNICEF, through its regional office, raised awareness about the devastating impact on children, such as the rise of malnutrition rates.

#### Challenges and Considerations:

- **Maintaining Neutrality:** UNICEF adheres to the principle of neutrality in conflict zones. Having a large-scale presence within Israel could be perceived as taking sides, which could hinder their ability to advocate for children's rights across the entire region effectively.
- **Focus on Global Impact:** UNICEF's resources are limited, and they strategically prioritize areas with the greatest need. Since Israel has a relatively developed infrastructure compared to some other regions, UNICEF might allocate resources to areas with more pressing humanitarian crises.

Overall, UNICEF's role in Israel is focused on raising awareness and advocating for the well-being of all children in the region, while leveraging donations from Israel to support their global lifesaving work for children around the world.

## STAKEHOLDERS' ROLE

The besieged territory of Gaza presents a stark reality for its most vulnerable population – children. Caught amidst ongoing conflict and a deteriorating humanitarian situation, their



basic needs and development are under constant threat. To address this complex crisis, a network of key stakeholders plays a vital role in weaving a safety net that supports their well-being.

Local authorities in Gaza hold the primary responsibility for ensuring the essential services that underpin childhood – education, healthcare, water, sanitation, and social protection. The Gaza Municipality, Ministry of Health, and Ministry of Education work tirelessly to provide these services within the limitations imposed by the conflict. However, their efforts require collaboration with other stakeholders to bridge resource gaps and ensure efficient interventions.

UN agencies like UNICEF, UNRWA, and WHO act as crucial partners. UNICEF champions the rights of children in Gaza, focusing on education, health, nutrition, water and sanitation, and child protection. Working with local partners, they may provide learning materials, train teachers, support mental health programs, and advocate for safe access to education. UNRWA, particularly important for its support of Palestinian refugees, delivers a similar range of services through schools, healthcare facilities, food assistance programs, and psycho-social support initiatives. The World Health Organization (WHO) focuses on ensuring access to essential healthcare services, including vaccinations and treatment for communicable diseases, bolstering the health infrastructure for a healthier future for Gaza's children.

International NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations) inject specialized expertise and resources into the support network. Save the Children, the International Rescue Committee (IRC), and Mercy Corps are just a few examples. They collaborate with local partners to deliver specific programs, often focusing on child protection, psychosocial support, or livelihood development. These targeted interventions address the immediate and long-term consequences of conflict on children's lives.

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) play a critical role in raising awareness about child protection issues, advocating for the rights of children, and mobilizing communities. Organizations like the Gaza Community Mental Health Programme and the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights, within their broader mandates, champion the specific needs of children in Gaza. Their work ensures that the voices of children are heard and that their rights are protected.

While not always directly involved, the private sector can also contribute through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives. Partnerships with NGOs for specific programs, funding educational materials, or vocational training initiatives that empower youth and provide them with future prospects are a few ways private entities can contribute to the overall well-being of children in Gaza.

The complex situation in Gaza demands a collaborative effort. By effectively coordinating their roles and responsibilities, these stakeholders can provide a more comprehensive safety net for children. Local authorities, UN agencies, International NGOs, Civil Society Organizations, and potentially the private sector, must work together to ensure that the fragile fabric of childhood in Gaza is not further frayed. Only through a unified approach can these children have a chance at a brighter future.

## **MEMBER STATES' ROLE**

The plight of children in Gaza, caught in the crossfire of conflict and a deteriorating humanitarian situation, demands a global response. UNICEF, the champion of children's rights, works tirelessly with its member states to address this complex crisis. This essay explores the multifaceted efforts undertaken by member states to preserve the living standards of children in Gaza.

### **Financial Lifeline:**

High-income countries like Canada, Sweden, Norway, the United Kingdom, the United States, Germany, France, and Japan have consistently provided substantial financial contributions. These funds form the backbone of UNICEF's interventions, ensuring the delivery of essential supplies like learning materials, vaccines, and hygiene kits. Furthermore, establishing temporary learning spaces, mobile healthcare clinics, and psycho-social support programs becomes possible with these resources. Middle-income countries like Brazil and India, demonstrating global solidarity, have also contributed financially. Even Least Developed Countries (LDCs) such as Rwanda, and Bangladesh, facing their own development challenges, have made symbolic contributions. These gestures, though smaller, hold significant meaning in terms of global unity. Türkiye, a close neighbour to Gaza, has also provided financial assistance through its humanitarian aid agency.

### **The Power of Advocacy:**

Beyond financial support, member states have leveraged their positions on international platforms to advocate for the protection of children in Gaza. Western Bloc countries like Canada, New Zealand, Australia, and European Union member states have consistently called for an immediate ceasefire and a durable political solution. They emphasize unimpeded humanitarian access to ensure aid reaches children in need and urge all parties to uphold international law and protect children from violence and exploitation. Members of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), such as South Africa, Indonesia, and Malaysia, add a crucial dimension by advocating for a peaceful resolution from a non-aligned perspective. Arab League member states, including Jordan, Egypt, Qatar, and Türkiye, have played a vital role in regional diplomacy, urging all parties to prioritize the well-being of children.

### **Sharing Expertise for a Brighter Future:**

Developed countries with expertise in specific areas, like France with child protection specialists, Germany with best practices in psychosocial support, and Japan with water and sanitation technology, have provided invaluable technical expertise and resources. Furthermore, member states with experience in conflict zones, such as Colombia and Rwanda, can share valuable best practices in areas like mine clearance, education in emergencies, and community-based rehabilitation programs. This cross-pollination of knowledge and experience strengthens interventions on the ground. Türkiye, with its experience in managing refugee populations, can also offer expertise in areas like education and healthcare service delivery for displaced children.

### **Bilateral Partnerships for Long-Term Impact:**

The European Union, along with some of its member states like Spain, Italy, and Ireland, have established long-term partnerships with the Palestinian Authority through bilateral cooperation agreements. These agreements focus on improving the living standards of children in Gaza through investments in early childhood development programs, rehabilitation of damaged schools and healthcare facilities, and vocational training opportunities for youth. Nordic countries like Sweden, Norway, and Denmark, known for their strong social welfare systems, can offer bilateral support focused on strengthening child protection systems, promoting mental healthcare access for children, and supporting social safety nets for vulnerable families. Islamic Development Bank member countries like Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates can contribute through bilateral agreements focused on areas like food security, infrastructure development in schools and healthcare facilities, and scholarships for higher education.



### **POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS**

The situation in the Gaza Strip presents unique challenges due to the ongoing blockade and political complexities. However, several solutions can still be implemented to improve the living standards of children there:

#### **Focus on Basic Needs:**

**Water Security:** Partner with international NGOs and water treatment specialists to:

- **Refurbish existing water treatment plants:** Upgrade infrastructure to improve efficiency and capacity.
- **Develop desalination plants:** Utilize seawater desalination as a sustainable source of clean water, requiring investment in renewable energy sources to power the plants.
- **Promote rainwater harvesting:** Encourage household and community rainwater harvesting systems to supplement water supplies.

#### **Child Protection:**

- **Strengthening Child Protection Systems:** Work with the Palestinian Authority to establish a robust child protection system that includes:
- **Reporting Mechanisms:** Develop accessible and confidential hotlines or reporting systems for children to report abuse, exploitation, or violence.
- **Case Management:** Train social workers and child protection specialists to effectively handle reported cases and provide support to victims.
- **Awareness Campaigns:** Implement public awareness campaigns on child rights and available support systems within communities.
- **Preventing Child Labor:** Advocate for stricter regulations and enforcement mechanisms to eliminate child labor in Gaza. This includes raising awareness among families and providing alternative income sources for families who rely on child labor.

#### Health:

- **Rehabilitation and Expansion:** Focus on repairing and upgrading existing healthcare facilities in Gaza. This includes investing in new equipment, technology, and infrastructure improvements.
- **Specialized Care Units:** Advocate for the establishment of specialized care units for critical areas like oncology, cardiology, and neonatal care. Currently, many patients require travel outside Gaza for such treatment, which can be difficult and risky.
- **Mobile Clinics:** Utilize mobile clinics to deliver basic healthcare services to remote areas or communities displaced due to conflict.
- **Training and Capacity Building:** Offer online training modules and resources for healthcare professionals in Gaza to upgrade their skills and knowledge in various medical fields.

**Sanitation and Waste Management:** Collaborate with local authorities and sanitation experts to:

- **Develop waste management programs:** Implement effective waste collection, sorting, and recycling systems to minimize health risks and environmental damage.
- **Food Security:** Support local agriculture and promote urban farming initiatives by:
- **Providing training and resources to farmers:** Improve agricultural techniques, water efficiency practices, and crop diversification to increase food production.
- **Investing in greenhouses and vertical farming:** Utilize innovative methods to grow food in controlled environments with less land and water.
- **Encouraging urban farming:** Promote rooftop gardens and community gardens in urban areas to supplement food sources.

#### Education and Upliftment:

**Early Childhood Development:** Partner with UNICEF and education NGOs to:

- **Establish and expand high-quality early childhood education centers:** Provide a nurturing environment for young children, promoting cognitive development, social skills, and school readiness.
- **Train childcare professionals:** Equip caregivers with the knowledge and skills to support early learning and development.

#### **Technology-Based Education:**

- Explore innovative solutions like e-learning platforms and digital educational resources to enhance learning opportunities for children in Gaza, especially in times of conflict or school closures.
- Partner with educational technology companies and invest in training teachers in online learning methods.
- **Mobile Learning Units:** Mobile vehicles can be used to provide learning materials and teacher support to reach children in remote areas.

**Community Learning Centers:** Existing structures such as libraries, community centers, or religious institutions can be converted into temporary learning spaces.

**Mental Health Support:** Advocate for increased resources and invest in programs to:

- **Train more child psychologists and counselors:** Equip mental health professionals to address the specific needs of children experiencing trauma due to conflict.
- **Integrate mental health support into school curriculums:** Introduce programs that teach children coping mechanisms, emotional regulation, and resilience skills.
- **Psychosocial Support for Children Affected by Violence:** Integrate programs addressing trauma and violence into schools and community centers. This could include individual and group therapy sessions, art therapy, and mindfulness techniques to help children cope with the psychological impact of conflict.
- **Develop community-based mental health services:** Provide accessible and culturally sensitive support for children and families in their communities.

#### **Long-Term Solutions:**

**Peacebuilding Initiatives:** Advocate for and support initiatives that:

- **Promote dialogue and understanding** between Israelis and Palestinians at all levels of society.
- **Support joint projects** on issues of mutual concern like water management and environmental protection, fostering cooperation.
- **Engage youth** in peacebuilding activities to invest in future generations who can lead towards a more peaceful resolution.

**Sustainable Development Programs:** Collaborate with the Palestinian Authority and international agencies to:

- **Develop a comprehensive plan** that addresses issues like poverty, unemployment, housing, and environmental degradation.
- **Invest in renewable energy sources** like solar and wind power to create a more sustainable energy infrastructure.
- **Improve public transportation systems** to increase access to education, healthcare, and employment opportunities.

#### **Additional Considerations:**

- **Data Collection and Monitoring:** Partnering with UNICEF and other child rights organizations to collect data on the specific needs of children in Gaza is crucial for tailoring solutions effectively. Regularly monitoring child health indicators, education enrolment rates, and access to basic necessities helps track progress and identify areas that need further attention.
- **Advocacy and Pressure:** International organizations, NGOs, and civil society groups can advocate for increased international aid for Gaza and pressure all parties involved in the conflict to prioritize the well-being of children. This could involve raising awareness through campaigns and lobbying governments to take action.



#### **QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED**

1. How can your member state further contribute financially to support UNICEF's programs in Gaza?
2. Are there innovative partnerships or technical expertise your member state can offer to address specific challenges faced by children in Gaza?

3. How can sustainable agricultural practices and urban farming initiatives be promoted to improve food security in the long term?
4. What strategies can be implemented to ensure safe access to clean water, sanitation facilities, and hygiene education for children in conflict zones, particularly in densely populated areas?
5. How can the capacity of healthcare facilities be strengthened, and how can mobile clinics and telehealth services be utilized to reach underserved areas?
6. How can international legal frameworks, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Optional Protocol on Children in Armed Conflict, be effectively implemented to protect children during conflict?
7. How can considerations be made for vulnerable groups like infants, children with disabilities, and unaccompanied minors in terms of shelter design and provision of basic necessities (blankets, hygiene kits, etc.)?
8. How can the specific needs of children in terms of safe spaces for play, learning, and psychosocial support be integrated into shelter provision strategies?
9. What alternative learning programs can be implemented to ensure children continue their education, even amidst conflict situations (e.g., accelerated learning programs, radio/TV-based learning)?
10. What are the psychological effects of chronic stress, violence, and displacement on children in Gaza?
11. How can child-friendly mental health services be made more accessible and culturally appropriate for children in need?
12. What strategies can be developed to support children who have been injured by landmines or ERW, including physical rehabilitation and psychosocial support?
13. What role can UNICEF and other stakeholders play in advocating for the release and reintegration of children associated with armed forces?
14. How can data collection methods, especially in conflict zones, be improved to ensure the safety of researchers and the reliability of information?
15. How can collaboration with local NGOs and community leaders be strengthened to facilitate data collection and ensure the participation of children's voices?
16. What are the key messages that need to be communicated to raise awareness about the situation of children in Gaza?
17. How can social media, public awareness campaigns, and lobbying efforts be utilized to pressure all parties involved in the conflict to prioritize the well-being of children?
18. How can the international community be encouraged to increase humanitarian aid and support long-term development initiatives in Gaza?
19. How can information sharing and coordination be improved among these stakeholders to streamline interventions and avoid duplication of efforts?
20. How can collaboration and partnerships between these stakeholders be strengthened to achieve more effective solutions?

## RESOURCES

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