

How are the world's children?

All countries that have ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child have promised to respect the rights of the child. Yet still, violations of these rights are common in all countries.

RIGHT TO LIFE AND TO DEVELOP

You have the right to life and the right to develop. You also have the right to good health, and to help if you are sick. Lack of food, clean water and good hygiene affects many children's health. A million children die during the first 24 hours of life due to poor conditions when the mother is giving birth.

1 in 7 of the world's children aged under five are undernourished. This affects their development for the rest of their lives. Many children, 15,000 a day, die before they reach the age of five. In poor countries, more than half of the very youngest children die of preventable

illnesses such as pneumonia, diarrhoea, tetanus and AIDS. Only 5 in 10 children with malaria receive treatment, and only 5 in 10 children in the poorest malarial countries sleep under a mosquito net. But a lot has improved: since 1990, global infant mortality has more than halved!

NAME AND NATIONALITY

When you are born, you have the right to a name and to be registered as a citizen of your home country.

Around 140 million children are born in the world every year. 1 in 3 of these children will never be registered. There is no written evidence that they exist. This can make it difficult to do things like go to school or to the doctor's!

DISABILITIES

If you have a disability, you have the same rights as everyone else. If you have a hearing impairment, are deaf or have any other kind of disability, you have the right to receive support so that you can play an active role in society. Children with disabilities are among the most vulnerable in society. In many countries they are not allowed to go to school. Many are treated as inferior and are kept hidden away.

There are approximately 200 million children with disabilities in the world.

CHILD LABOUR

You have the right to be protected from economic exploitation and work that is hazardous to your health or that prevents you from going to school. All work is prohibited for children under twelve.

In some of the poorest countries in the world, around 1 in 4 children are forced to work. For most of them, the work they do is harmful to their safety, health, development and education. Some 5.5 million children are forced into the worst forms of child labour, as debt slaves, soldiers or victims of the child sex trade. Every year, at least 1.2 million children are the victims of trafficking: some within their own country, while others are sent abroad.

EDUCATION

You have the right to go to school. Primary and secondary schooling should be free for everyone.

Around 9 in 10 children in the world go to school, but there are still 263 million children who do not get the education they have a right to. 63 million of them are aged 6–11 years. More children than ever before are now starting school, but many are forced to quit before they've completed their education. More than half of the children who don't go to school are girls.



DIGITALISATION

Access to technology and the internet is increasing, and it's an important factor in empowering and informing children and young people. But access to the internet and mobile phones is not equal.

3 in 10 children have no internet access. The situation is worst for children in Africa, where 6 in 10 lack internet access.

PUNISHMENT

Children may only be imprisoned as a last resort and for the shortest possible time. No child may be subjected to torture or other cruel treatment. Children who have committed crimes should be given care and help. Children may not be sentenced to life imprisonment or receive the death penalty.

At least 1 million children in the world are being held prisoner. Imprisoned children are often treated badly.

WAR AND REFUGEES

You have the right to protection and care in times of war or if you are a refugee. Children affected by conflict and refugee children have the same rights as other children.

Roughly 28 million children in the world are currently refugees, many more than there were just a few years ago. The vast majority who are forced to leave their homeland live in a neighbouring country. At least 2 million children have been killed in war in the past 10 years. 6 million have suffered serious physical injuries, while 10 million children have suffered psychological harm. 1 million

have lost or become separated from their parents. Around 300,000 children are being used in wars as soldiers, carriers or mine clearers. More than 1,500 children are killed or injured by mines every year.

In 2018 more than 17 million people were forced to flee because of climate- and weather related natural disasters.

MINORITIES AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Children who belong to minority groups or indigenous peoples in their country have the right to their language, culture and beliefs. Examples of indigenous peoples – the very first people to live in a country – include Aboriginal Australians and the Inuit people of Greenland.

Indigenous and minority children often suffer injustices. Some are not allowed to speak their own language. Others are not allowed to practice their faith, or to love whoever they want to. Many of them are discriminated against, which means that they do not have the same opportunities as other children, for example, when it comes to education and medical care.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Climate change is causing more droughts, more floods, heatwaves and other problematic weather conditions. Children are killed and injured, but natural disasters can also make food and clean water even more scarce and can increase the spread of diarrhoea and malaria, which affect children particularly badly.

More than half a billion children live in areas that are often affected by floods, and 160 million live in areas where there is a risk of severe drought. UNHCR predict that 250 million people, many of them children, will be forced to leave their homes in 2050 due to climate change.

VIOLENCE

You have the right to protection from all forms of violence, neglect, abuse and mistreatment.

1 in 3 children say they have been subjected to bullying and/or discriminatory treatment. 3 in 4 children aged 2–14 in the world have been subjected to some form of violence in the home. Many countries allow corporal punishment in schools. Just 56 countries in the world have banned all forms of physical punishment for children.

A GOOD LIFE

You have the right to a home, food, clothing, education, health care and security.

Over 1.3 billion people, or 1 in 7, live in extreme poverty. Almost half of these people are children. Around 100 million children live on the streets. For many, the streets are their only home. Others work and spend their days on the streets, but have families to return to at night.

YOUR VOICE MUST BE HEARD!

You have the right to say what you think about any issue that affects you. Adults should listen to the child's opinion before they make decisions, which must always be in the child's best interests. Is this how things are in your country and in the world today? You and the rest of the world's children know best!

