



Statement of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on grave violations of children's rights in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory

13 October 2023

The Committee on the Rights of the Child is profoundly shocked by the grave violations of children's rights in the context of armed conflict in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory. We are deeply concerned about the mass killings of dozens of children in the Kibbutz Kfar Aza, and about the deaths of so many children in Gaza as of 12 October. Killings, maimings, abductions, and the denial of humanitarian access are grave violations of international law protections for children and must cease immediately. Children must not be used as pawns in war, and those being held hostage in Gaza must be immediately released and safely returned to their families or communities.

Children in Gaza are facing further threats due to restrictions on humanitarian assistance being able to reach them and their families, and apparent attacks on civilian infrastructure, as well as blocking of the supply of electricity, fuel, food and water. These attacks seriously affect the functioning of basic services, such as hospitals, schools and other places that meet the basic needs of children. This exacerbates an already terrifying and life-threatening situation, that has been previously underlined by the Committee in its recommendations to both the State of Palestine and Israel, and we call for the immediate lifting of any impediments to the provision of humanitarian assistance. We further call on all actors to safeguard civilians, schools and hospitals in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory.

We reiterate that the Convention on the Rights of the Child requires States parties and all actors to respect and to ensure respect for the rules of international humanitarian law applicable in armed conflict with regard to children. The Convention also aims to ensure the highest level of protection for children. We call on all actors, including the international community, to act to restore peace and preserve the safety and recovery of children as their immediate priority.