

JOINT DECLARATION – APPEAL (ROUGH TRANSLATION)

Even war has rules - Over 2,000 children have been killed and thousands more will live with disabilities and mental health issues due to war-inflicted trauma. The blatant disregard for civilians' right to life and protection cannot be accepted.

The Children's Rights Advocacy Network and the co-signatory Civil Society Organisations express their dismay at the killing, maiming and abduction of children, their recruitment or forced participation in armed groups, as well as attacks on schools and on strategic infrastructure such as hospitals, water and electricity infrastructure and the denial - until recently - of humanitarian support to children and civilians in the war that is still raging in Gaza and Israel today.

Thirty-four years since the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and seventy-four years since the Fourth Geneva Convention for the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, recent images from Israel and Gaza demonstrate in the most brutal way that children remain the truly innocent victims on every side and in every situation.

The bombing of the Al-Ahli hospital in Gaza on 17/10/2023, where hundreds of people, mainly children, were being treated or had taken refuge, the military-armed attacks on schools, the capturing of children, their forced displacement and other illegal practices of regular and irregular military groups are undoubtedly violations of children's rights and the international law of war. Such a flagrant violation of the established rights of children stands against everything that the international community and the representatives of states have agreed in international treaties, depriving children of their future, whether they lose their lives or survive in terror for it.

We hereby appeal to the international community for immediate intervention to bring about an immediate ceasefire and to ensure peace in the region.

We also call on all parties involved in the conflict to act to fulfill their obligations to protect children and other civilians, regardless of their race, gender, nationality, religion, or political opinion (Article 3 of the 4th Geneva Convention), and in particular to ensure that:

- The wounded and sick are treated**

- The civilian population, in particular children and pregnant and nursing women, are protected, provided with medical care, adequate food, water and shelter**

In addition, it is noted that:

- Attacking strategic infrastructure for civilians depriving them of access to clean water, electricity, etc. constitutes a war crime

- The immediate dispatch of humanitarian aid based on the recommendations and needs identified by the UN bodies is urgent

- The maintenance and expansion of humanitarian channels for the protection of children and civilians in general, with the active involvement and assistance of the EU, is imperative.