



SIDE EVENT & REPORT LAUNCH

“Children are children first and foremost: protecting child rights in migration contexts”

Tuesday, 22 October 2024

10:00-11:30am

Conference Room 8

United Nations Headquarters

760 United Nations Plaza, New York City, New York

Concept Note

In 2020, there were an estimated 35.5 million international migrant and displaced children globally, the largest number ever recorded.¹ This corresponds to around 1 in 66 children worldwide living outside their country of birth, whatever their reasons for having crossed borders. Between 2010 and 2022, the global number of forcibly displaced children—including both internal displacement and cross-border displacement—more than doubled, with children now constituting over 40 per cent of all forcibly displaced and stateless persons.²

Children move for a number of complex and often interconnected reasons, including a lack of sustainable livelihoods; poverty and economic hardship; limited access to basic services; educational and employment aspirations and opportunities; family reunification; domestic violence and abuse; denial of human rights; harmful cultural practices; and displacement due to armed conflicts, persecution, violence, disasters and the adverse impacts of climate change and environmental degradation.

When children move they can face a wide range of protection risks such as diverse forms of violence, including gender-based violence (GBV), trafficking, abuse, exploitation and neglect. Unaccompanied and separated children face even greater risks of abuse and exploitation due to their lack of parental care. In this context, there is a greater need than ever for strengthened child protection systems, including cross-border cooperation to uphold the protection and best interests of children.

There is also a need for better disaggregated data and statistics to support evidence-based policymaking for migrant and forcibly displaced children. Currently there is insufficient data about children on the move regarding their age, sex; about where they come from, where they are going, what were the reasons for leaving, whether they move with their families or alone, and how they fare along the way, including their unique vulnerabilities and protection needs. In many cases data are not regularly collected, shared or analysed, and data quality is often poor.

Unfortunately, too often States respond to complex migratory movements in a way that fails to give precedence to children’s protection and best interests over their migration management objectives.

¹ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, [International Migrant Stock 2020](#).

² [The International Data Alliance for Children on the Move](#) (IDAC).

To help address these gaps and protection challenges for children on the move, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants, Mr. Gehad Madi, has dedicated his most recent report to the UN General Assembly to the issue of children on the move. This is a landmark report, marking the first time that the Special Rapporteur's mandate has specifically looked at the protection of children on the move in more than a decade.

Objectives

This Side Event is taking place on the margins of the UN General Assembly's 79th Regular Session and will provide an opportunity for States, UN agencies and civil society organizations to engage in an interactive discussion with the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants, Mr. Gehad Madi, regarding his forthcoming report to the General Assembly, "**Children are children first: Protecting child rights in migration contexts**" ([A/79/213](#)).

The side event will provide an opportunity to highlight key recommendations and promising practices to protect the rights of children in migration contexts, including a focus on two **priority actions identified by the Special Rapporteur**:

- **Facilitating and expanding access to family reunification; and**
- **Preventing and responding to statelessness.**

Format

The 90-minute side event will feature a keynote address by the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants followed by targeted interventions from Member States, UN agencies, civil society, and youth representatives. The floor will then open to all participants for an interactive roundtable discussion in which participants will be invited to share positive practices for strengthening the protection of children on the move, including through the development of child-centered, trauma informed, and multi-disciplinary approaches.

Participation

The event will be held **in-person** in Conference Room 8 of the United Nations Headquarters (760 United Nations Plaza, New York City, New York) with **remote participation** available to registered participants.

To register for this event, visit: supportkind.org/UNGA79