



**WORLD DAY AGAINST
CHILD LABOUR**

12 JUNE 2017



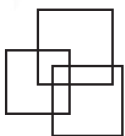
International
Labour
Organization



IN
CONFLICTS
AND **DISASTERS**



**PROTECT CHILDREN
FROM CHILD LABOUR**



World Day Against Child Labour 2017 focuses on the impact of conflicts and disasters on child labour.

Conflicts and disasters have a devastating impact on people's lives. They kill, maim and injure, force people to flee their homes, destroy livelihoods, push people into extreme poverty and starvation, and trap them in situations in which their human rights are violated. Conflicts and disasters push millions of children into child labour or into the hands of traffickers.

Internally displaced children and those who become refugees in other countries are particularly vulnerable.

An estimated 250 million children live in areas affected by armed conflict. Each year, almost 70 million children are affected by natural disasters. Many of the 168 million children engaged in child labour live in conflict- and disaster-affected areas. Children also make up more than half of the 65 million people presently displaced by war.

HOW DO CONFLICTS AND DISASTERS CONTRIBUTE TO CHILD LABOUR?

Conflicts and disasters destroy livelihoods. As economic conditions worsen, the income that parents and adult siblings bring in may no longer be sufficient to sustain their families. Children often find themselves with no choice but to give up school and to work for their and their families' survival.

In conflicts and disasters, many children are particularly vulnerable because they are separated from their families. With little awareness and lacking the guidance of their caregivers, they easily fall prey to trafficking and child labour, during transit and after arriving at their destination.

During conflicts, children may be recruited, particularly by armed groups, to be used not only as combatants, but also as spies, helpers and porters – or become victims of sexual exploitation and abuse. Besides the dangers of combat, they often suffer physical and psychological abuse, harsh duties and punishments, and are frequently exposed to alcohol and drug consumption. This creates deep scars in children's minds and reintegrating them once the conflict is over is often complicated. ILO Convention No. 182 considers the recruitment and use of children for armed conflict as one of the worst forms of child labour.

Conflicts and disasters lead to the destruction of schools. The lack of educational infrastructure is a major factor contributing to child labour. Attacks on schools are prohibited under international law and Security Council Resolution (SCR) 1612 identifies such attacks as grave violations of children's rights.

When schools are attacked, damaged or destroyed by war or used for military purposes, irreparable damage is done both to education infrastructure and to the sanctity of the school, permanently harming children's perception of school as a safe place for education.

Conflicts and disasters cause mass displacement. Children on the move are particularly vulnerable to child labour, as displacement might separate them from the protection of their parents and disrupt their education. They face challenges in accessing schools in their new locations. Even when they manage to enrol, children face immense difficulties in adjusting to the curriculum and language of the host country.

Refugee children face particular challenges that drive them into the labour market. Restrictions imposed by host governments prevent or hinder adult refugees from accessing the labour market. In most countries, they do not have access to full social protection. In such difficult circumstances, parents might rely on their children to fill the gaps in family income. Unaccompanied children are particularly vulnerable as they often resort to child labour in order to survive.

Integrated and effective child protection systems prevent children from being trapped in child labour. Unfortunately, conflicts or disasters tend to weaken or collapse law enforcement. Labour inspectors, other law enforcement authorities and social welfare officers are overburdened and do not have the necessary resources to monitor and combat child labour effectively.

WHY SHOULD WE ACT?

Child labour in conflicts and disasters violates international law, Security Council resolutions (SCR) and UN Conventions, including ILO Convention No. 138 on Minimum Age for Admission to Employment; ILO Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour; ILO Recommendation No. 71 on Employment Organisation in the transition from war to peace (under revision); as well as the Convention on the Rights of the Child and SCR 1612 on children and armed conflict.

Children must be protected from harm. Child labour inflicts serious harm on the physical and psychological wellbeing of the child. Particularly during conflict and disaster situations, children engage in hazardous forms of child labour that pose serious risks to their health, safety and wellbeing. Children mining or scavenging for metal and minerals in war torn areas, children clearing rubble, as well as refugee children working in the streets or in agriculture all face high levels of hazards.

WHAT HAVE WE DONE?

The attention paid to child labour in situations of conflict and disaster has increased in recent years. In 2010, the ILO developed the *“How-to” guide on economic reintegration for children formerly associated with armed forces and groups* and in 2011, released the *SCREAM special module on child labour and armed conflict*. In 2012, the *Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action* were adopted, including a specific standard on child labour.

The Child Labour Task Force of the inter-agency Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, co-chaired by the ILO and Plan International, launched the toolkit *Inter-agency Guidance: Supporting the Protection Needs of Child Labourers in Emergencies* in 2016. It provides guidance to humanitarian workers on protecting children from child labour. The *Guiding principles on the access of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons to the labour market*, adopted by ILO’s Governing Body in 2016, calls on all ILO Members and constituents to take measures to combat and prevent child labour.

Children have the right to be protected during conflicts and disasters and the best interests of the child have to be upheld. They have the right to regain their normal life and to return to learning as quickly as possible – education is key in combating child labour and for the development of prosperous societies. It is – simply – wrong for children to have to work to ensure their own survival and that of their families. All children must be protected at all times.

Child labour is a violation of children’s human rights, a major brake on sustainable decent work for development and a stain on humanity. Eradicating it is a global and globally-agreed priority. Through Target 8.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the world community has committed to eliminating all forms of child labour by 2025. This target can only be achieved if no child is left behind in the fight against child labour – no matter how difficult and challenging the circumstances.

In 2016, Alliance 8.7 was formed to accelerate and intensify action to tackle child labour, forced labour, modern slavery and human trafficking. Under the framework of Alliance 8.7, the ILO is working with multiple partners including, amongst others, UNICEF, OHCHR, IOM, OSCE and ICMPD. One of its six Action Groups is dedicated to addressing child labour and forced labour in situations of crisis.

The ILO has helped its constituents in supporting thousands of children affected by child labour in conflicts and disasters. Children from Haiti to Myanmar and from Nepal to the Democratic Republic of Congo have been withdrawn from child labour and enrolled in education. In an integrated approach to addressing fundamental principles and rights at work, the ILO has developed specific tools to prevent child labour and provide economic reintegration in post-conflict situations, with a particular focus on children formerly associated with armed forces and groups. The ILO has also trained and mobilised government officials, employers, workers’ representatives and NGO staff on addressing child labour in situations of crisis and fragility.

WHAT MORE NEEDS TO BE DONE?

Urgent action is needed to tackle child labour in areas affected by conflict and disaster. Child labour should be treated as a priority within humanitarian responses, and during reconstruction and recovery. Governments, workers' and employers' organizations and humanitarian actors have, and should play, a critical role in tackling child labour during conflicts and disasters. If the world is to achieve SDG Target 8.7, we need to intensify and accelerate action to end child labour, including in areas affected by conflict and disasters. And we need to do it together.

ON THIS WORLD DAY, WE CALL FOR COORDINATED ACTION AIMED AT:

- Stronger integration and early addressing of child labour in humanitarian responses.
- Targeting root causes of child labour through education, social protection, livelihood interventions and access to decent work for adults.
- Upholding the human rights of refugee and displaced children to be protected from child labour and trafficking.
- Strengthening collaborative efforts and advocacy through social dialogue to end the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict and in other worst forms of child labour.
- Ensuring a continued focus on promoting a decent work agenda for preventing child labour during reconstruction and recovery processes, including by promoting skills training, social protection and decent work for adults and youth of working age.

THROUGH:

- Fostering coordination and collaboration between national, development and humanitarian actors and programmes.
- Strengthening the role of governments, workers' and employers' organisations, and private and public enterprises in tackling child labour in situations of conflict and disaster.
- Enhancing employment, livelihoods and social protection of households to prevent child labour.
- Reinforcing wider partnerships and alliances for decent work.
- Increasing further our knowledge of the drivers of child labour and building the capacity of actors in situations of conflict and disaster.

JOIN US ON THE WORLD DAY AGAINST CHILD LABOUR 2017!

World Day is an opportunity to raise your voice against child labour. We invite you and your organization to be part of this year's World Day.

Join us and add your voice to the worldwide movement against child labour.

For more information, visit www.ilo.org/ChildLabourWorldDay
or contact fundamentals@ilo.org



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 **#NOchildlabour**