

**CHILDREN IN DANGER:**

**ACT TO END VIOLENCE  
AGAINST CHILDREN**

**FOR  
EVERY  
CHILD IN  
DANGER**

**unicef**   
UNITED KINGDOM

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# FOREWORD: CHILDREN IN DANGER

**When a child is violently killed, a world somewhere ends. A young life is lost, changing everything and everyone around them. When that child was born, a future of possibilities was born too. Violence wipes out that potential in an instant.**

**Every five minutes, somewhere across the globe, a family loses a son or daughter to violence. Every five minutes, a family and a community are altered forever.**

These findings from Unicef UK's report underline that violence is not a rarity – an occasional explosion of the worst parts of human nature that blights the lives of an unfortunate few. Nor is it confined to remote, conflict-hit corners of the world. We are dealing with a global problem of epidemic proportions that can reach into the homes, schools and streets of every child everywhere, and this violence can be passed down through generations.



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**DOREEN LAWRENCE, BARONESS LAWRENCE OF CLARENDON OBE**

And the deaths of children are not the only outcome of this crisis. Millions of children experience physical, sexual and emotional abuse on a daily basis and the results can be devastating. In fact, Unicef UK's report reveals that the brain development of children who are victims of violence can be affected – with some showing similar brain activity to soldiers exposed to combat. Furthermore, a third of children who are victims of violence are likely to develop long-lasting symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder.

Violence also feeds off social inequality. No matter where a child is from in the world, if their family happens to be living in poverty, or if the child has a disability, or is from an ethnic minority, their chances of being exposed to violence are much greater. Moreover, the likelihood that they will get justice for the violence committed against them is far lower. Shockingly, only 41 countries have implemented a comprehensive and explicit legal ban on violence against children, while only 2 per cent of countries report a comprehensive legal framework to prevent violence.

However, we know change is possible and this is why Unicef UK has launched its *Children in Danger* campaign. Effective strategies already exist that are proven to help end violence – such as supporting parents and families, promoting and providing services for affected children, and implementing laws that protect children against specific violent acts. There have been steep declines in violent crime in most western countries over the past 10 years – a trend that has been replicated in many Asian countries and by some in Latin America and Africa.

This year's Nobel Peace Prize winners, Malala Yousafzai and Kailash Satyarthi, have shown us what is possible when people stand up for children's right to be free from violence, exploitation and abuse. Now the world has an unprecedented opportunity to place a marker in the sand to end violence against children for good.

The international community is setting a new global framework that will replace the Millennium Development Goals that expire in 2015. As part of this process, the UK can show global leadership by ensuring the new framework includes an unequivocal commitment to ending violence against children. A robust target in the new agenda will signal that ending violence is an international priority. The UK must also lead the drive to turn these global commitments into action. We must start planning now for a world without violence. That means collecting data and evidence so that we know where it is happening and we can track progress and ensure accountability for promises made.

Violence can touch every child's life – whether directly or indirectly – in every part of the world. The scale of the problem, and the extent of its reach, must not lead to inaction. Without ending the epidemic of violence, vital progress in areas like health and education – all over the world – will be undermined and millions more children will be placed at risk.

**No child should live in danger. We must do everything possible until every child is safe. Now is the time to act.**

*Doreen Lawrence, Baroness Lawrence of Clarendon OBE*

# INTRODUCTION

## IN TODAY'S WORLD, CHILDREN FACE MANY DANGERS.

Disease and malnutrition continue to kill millions, despite the fact that we have the ability to ensure all children are healthy and well fed. And when disaster strikes, children are hardest hit, facing risks that will continue to grow as the world's climate becomes more volatile.

Moreover for many children, the threat of violence, abuse, and exploitation overshadows their lives, preventing them from growing up in an atmosphere of happiness, love, and understanding that is essential to their full development.

**Every five minutes, a child is killed by violence.\*** For too long, the world has tolerated this epidemic of violence that disfigures societies and leaves millions of children unsafe in their homes, schools and communities.

This epidemic has had a **catastrophic impact** on child survival and wellbeing, and has left millions of children living in fear every day.

Children in **every country** are threatened by violence, yet the poorest and most marginalised children face the greatest risks and are least likely to be protected by their societies.

The danger is greatest for children who live in **fragile and conflict-affected states**. They face greater risks to their lives, families and homes, and are also more vulnerable to all forms of abuse, exploitation, and deprivation.

It is time for all of us to **confront the epidemic of violence** directly, and to build a safer world for all children whomever they are and wherever they live.

**Violence can be prevented**, but only if all countries come together to make the protection of children a priority.

The world's governments are in the midst of debating a **new global development agenda** to replace the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) after they expire in 2015.

A failure to tackle the abuse of children has made it impossible to deliver the Millennium Development Goals in full, despite **unprecedented improvements in child wellbeing** since the Goals were agreed.

Child victims and survivors of violence have been most likely to be left behind by global social and economic progress, and their needs must be at the heart of the new development agenda.

The world's governments should therefore agree a target to **end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence and torture against children**.

This commitment will make a major contribution to building **peaceful and inclusive societies**, and ensuring that the rights of all children are realised.

Yet children need more than aspirational goals and targets. Seizing the opportunity to end violence requires all societies to take **decisive and immediate action**.

Governments should develop credible plans to **implement the new agenda**, forming partnerships with all those committed to ensuring every child can grow up in a world without fear.

This will give **new hope** to children affected by violence and ensure future generations of children no longer have to live in fear.

The UK government has the opportunity to be at the forefront of a **global campaign** to protect children from violence.

It has already **demonstrated leadership** in tackling the violence that children face around the world, working to end female genital mutilation (FGM), child marriage, and sexual violence in conflict.

At home, the UK government has issued a call to end violence against **women and girls**, and is implementing an action plan that also aims to help victims rebuild their lives and bring perpetrators to justice. It has demonstrated that it is possible to reduce levels of violence with strong leadership and the right policies and programmes.

By working with UNICEF and other international partners, and with governments around the world, the UK government can now play a vital role in ensuring that **every child is safe**.

\* Global Health Estimates (GHE) Summary Tables: Deaths by cause, age, sex and region, 2012 (WHO, Geneva, 2014), recalculated by UNICEF. Age 0–19.

## THE UK HAS THE OPPORTUNITY TO:

- lead the push to secure a global commitment to *end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence and torture against children* by 2030
- take immediate steps to build momentum by forming a global coalition to end violence
- work at home and internationally to turn global commitments into action that make children safe
- ensure the epidemic of violence against children is no longer ignored, by collecting the data and evidence needed to track progress and ensure accountability

## FOR EVERY CHILD IN DANGER

WE LIVE IN A **DANGEROUS** WORLD WHERE MILLIONS OF CHILDREN ARE SUFFERING AND **DYING UNNECESSARILY**.

THIS IS WRONG AND IT IS **TIME TO CHANGE**.

UNICEF UK'S CAMPAIGN FOCUSES ON THE FIVE MAIN DANGERS THAT CHILDREN FACE: **VIOLENCE, DISEASE, HUNGER, WAR, AND DISASTERS**.

WE WILL DO WHATEVER IT TAKES, UNTIL EVERY CHILD IS SAFE.

PLEASE HELP US.

**UNICEF.ORG.UK**

**EVERY 5 MINUTES, A CHILD IS KILLED BY VIOLENCE.**

## CHAPTER ONE

# MAKING THE INVISIBLE, VISIBLE

# MAKING THE INVISIBLE, VISIBLE

**Across the world, children bear the brunt of an epidemic of violence that is often hidden or ignored and that threatens their rights to a healthy and fulfilling life.**

Despite the right of children to protection from all forms of violence, abuse and neglect, the international community has failed to ensure the safety of children.

Too many children face repeated cycles of violence that lead to serious injury or

death, have long-lasting psychological impacts, and stop them from reaching their full potential.

Children in every country are at risk, but the most vulnerable live in the most disadvantaged communities and countries, especially those affected by conflict. Violence results from, but also deepens, inequality.

It is time to confront the widespread denial of these facts that prevents concerted action to end violence against children and to seize the opportunity to build a safer world for us to live in.

# CHILDREN HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE FREE FROM ALL FORMS OF VIOLENCE

According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, “everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person”.<sup>1</sup>

Freedom from violence is especially important for children. Their age and need for special care and assistance makes them vulnerable to abuse and exploitation, often by the very adults who are directly responsible for their survival and development.<sup>2</sup>

When subjected to violence, or the threat or fear of violence, children often suffer serious and long-term consequences, as their development is threatened or permanently harmed. Violence damages children’s health, prevents them from growing up safely, or from receiving the education that will equip them for the future.<sup>3</sup>

Under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the world’s governments have committed themselves to ending “all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse” against children as well as neglect, maltreatment and other forms of exploitation.<sup>4</sup>

Governments are obliged to “take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures” to guarantee the rights of all children to a life free from violence.

Yet we all have a responsibility to play our part in protecting children from danger.

For too long, the world has ignored the extremely high levels of violence that children face. We now have an opportunity to make a renewed commitment to ending all forms of violence against children, and to providing them with the opportunity to grow up healthy, happy, and safe.

Figure 1

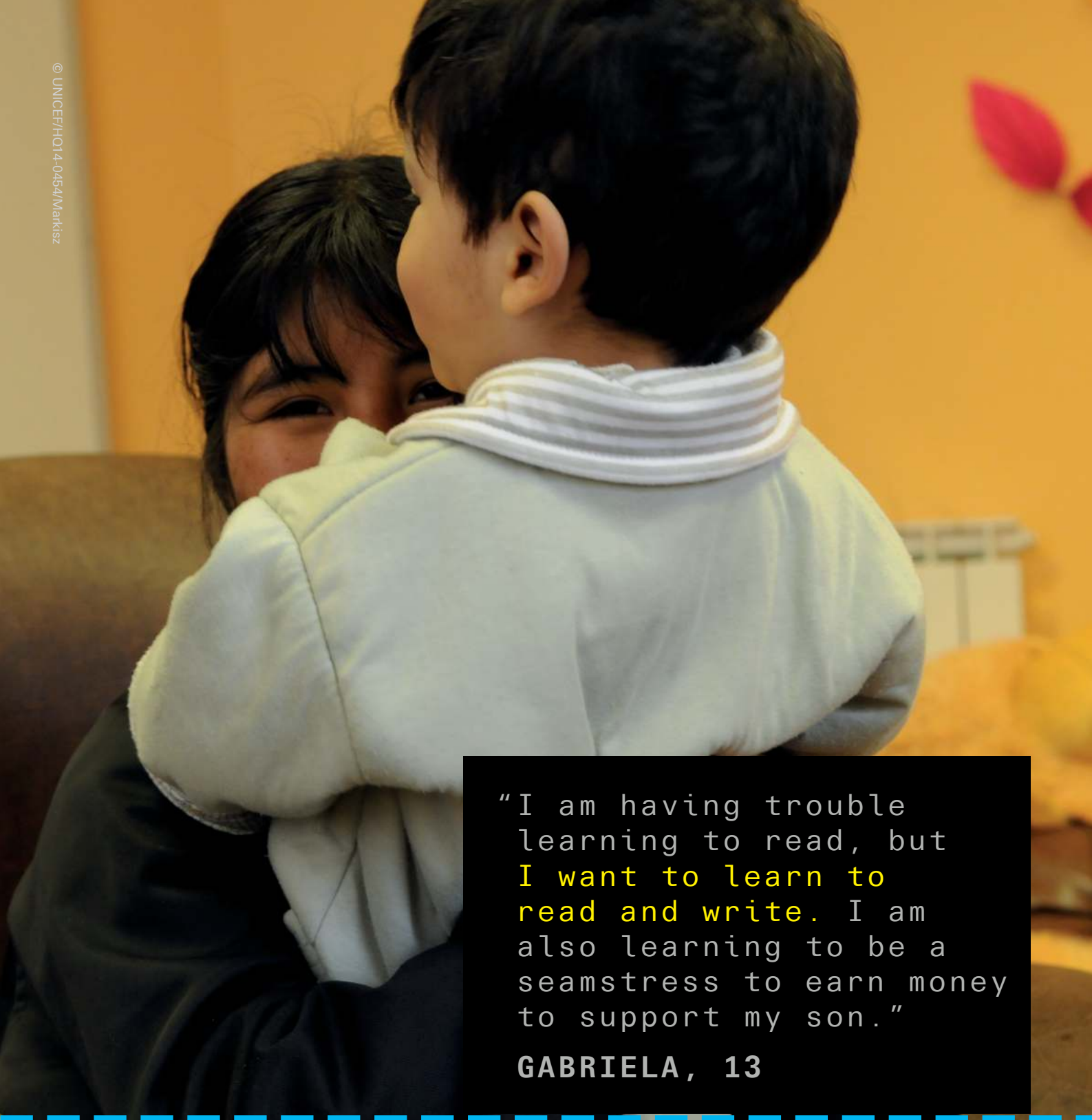
## UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

### ARTICLE 19

“ States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child. ”

Source: UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (1989)





“I am having trouble learning to read, but I want to learn to read and write. I am also learning to be a seamstress to earn money to support my son.”

**GABRIELA, 13**

**Gabriela\*, 13, cuddles her 1-year-old son, Juan, at a Unicef supported therapy centre in Potosí, Bolivia.**

Abandoned by her mother at age 3, Gabriela lived with her grandmother and never went to school. Left alone most of the day while her grandmother worked, she was molested several times and had her son as a result of being raped by a 50-year-old neighbour. Gabriela and Juan have been living at a nearby shelter since his birth. Gabriela now goes to school and receives counselling and other social care at the centre.

\* name changed to protect identity

# LEVELS OF VIOLENCE ARE TOO HIGH EVERYWHERE

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is now 25 years old. While it has led to rapid improvements in child wellbeing, governments are yet to do enough to fulfil their commitment to protecting children from violence and abuse.

This is a problem that affects all countries. Earlier this year, UNICEF published a comprehensive review of the violence that children face.<sup>5</sup>

This groundbreaking report documented the widespread nature of physical, sexual, and emotional violence against children, and the prevalence of other forms of abuse and neglect. It found that violence is now a leading cause of injury and death among children.<sup>6</sup>

In some regions, the child murder rate is astonishingly high, especially for teenagers. An adolescent boy in Latin America, for example, is 70 times more likely to be murdered than in the UK.<sup>7</sup>

But murder is only the tip of the iceberg. In 58 countries, more than half of younger children are violently disciplined in their homes or at school, while government-led surveys in Swaziland, Tanzania, Kenya, and Zimbabwe have shown that as many as one in three

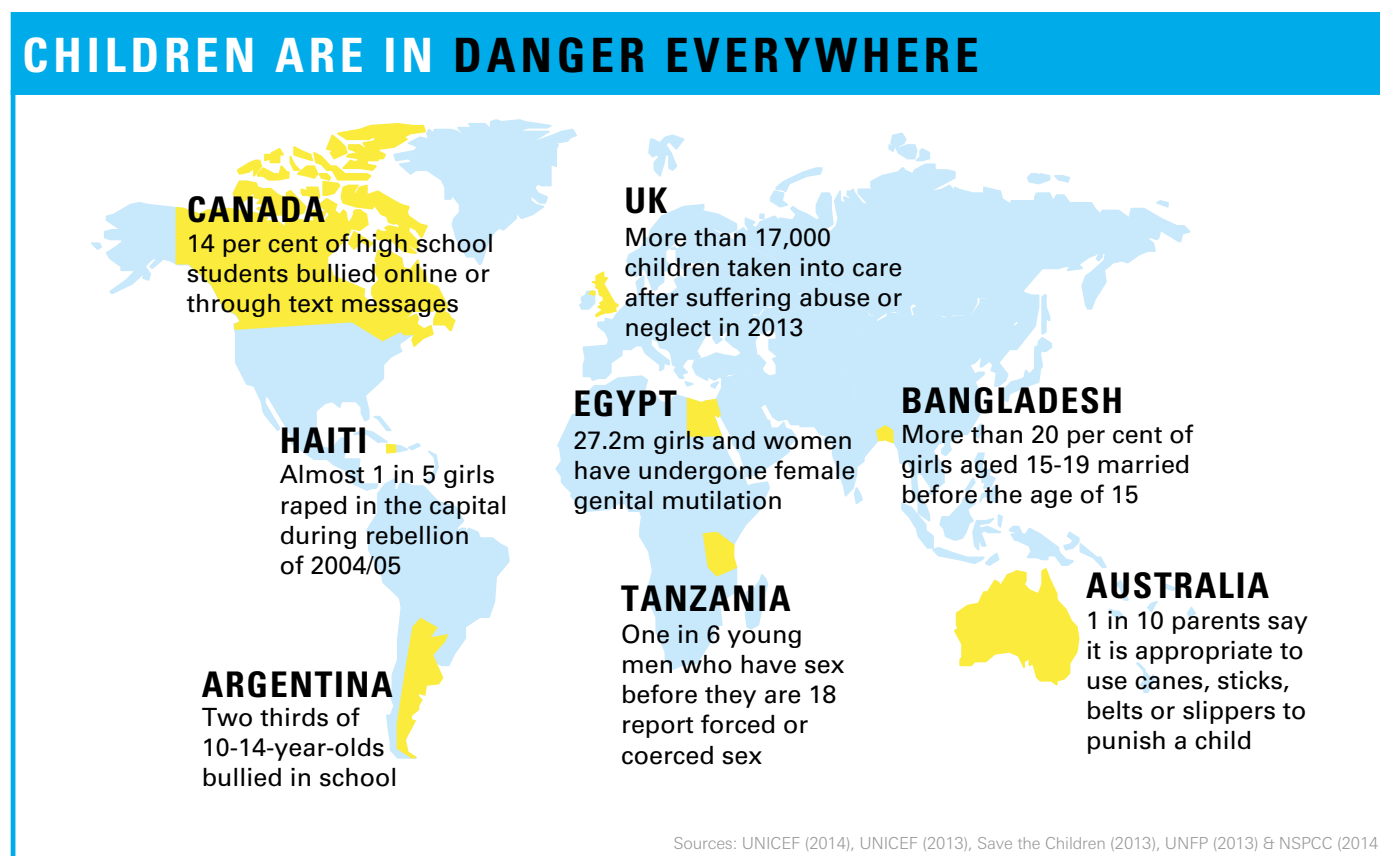
girls and one in six boys experience sexual violence.<sup>8</sup> In the United States, nearly a quarter of adolescent girls and one in ten adolescent boys reported at least one incident of sexual abuse, assault or harassment within the previous 12 months.<sup>9</sup>

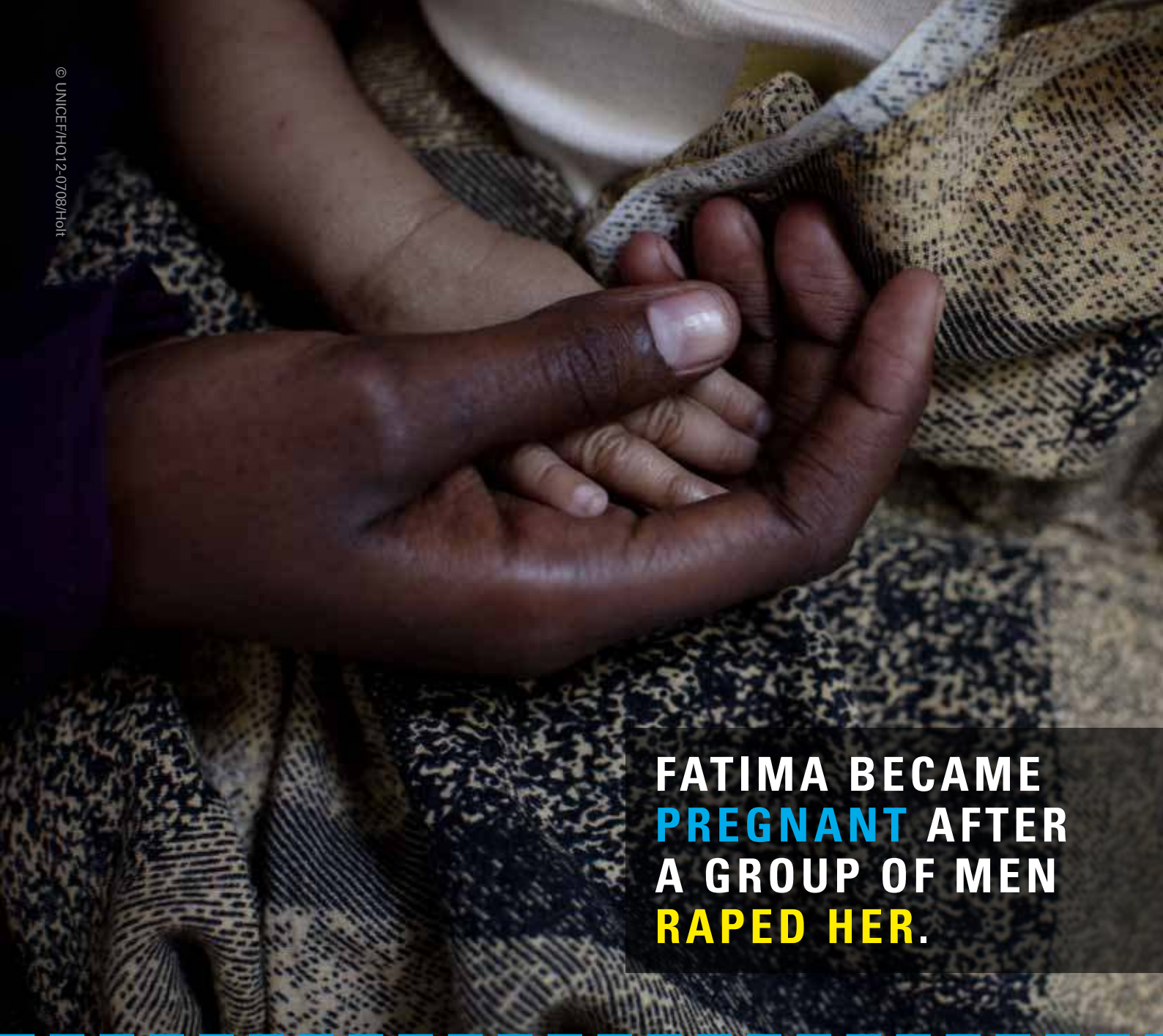
The most vulnerable children are locked in cycles of abuse and exploitation, where they face violence day after day. One in nine girls in developing countries is married before their 15th birthday, while more than 125 million women have been subjected to female genital mutilation (FGM), most in early childhood or adolescence.<sup>10</sup>

There is also no room for complacency in richer countries, even those such as the UK that have achieved recent reductions in violence. Every year, 7 per cent of children in the UK are victims of violent crime, while a quarter of young people have been subjected to some form of sexual abuse before their 18th birthday.<sup>11</sup>

All forms of violence against children are unacceptable and, while children in some countries face greater dangers than in others, no country – rich or poor – is currently able to provide children with the full protection they need.

Figure 2





**FATIMA BECAME  
PREGNANT AFTER  
A GROUP OF MEN  
RAPED HER.**

**Fatima\*, 16, holds her newborn in a shelter for girls and women who have suffered sexual violence, in Mogadishu, Somalia.**

Fatima became pregnant after a group of men raped her. The Unicef-supported shelter provides food and a safe place to sleep, as well as education and psychological and social support.

Some 45 per cent of girls in Somalia are married by the age of 18, while 98 per cent of women age 15 to 49 have endured female genital mutilation (FGM). Sexual violence often goes unpunished or unreported, as survivors fear for their lives. Unicef has supplied post-rape treatment kits to all districts in Mogadishu through hospitals and health centres, as well as providing training to health workers on the clinical management of rape and how to provide psychological care.

\* name changed to protect identity

# FOR MANY CHILDREN, THEIR HOME IS A PLACE OF DANGER

Children have a right to feel safe at home. Indeed, when children around the world are asked what makes them feel safe and happy, “being with family” is by far the most common response.<sup>12</sup>

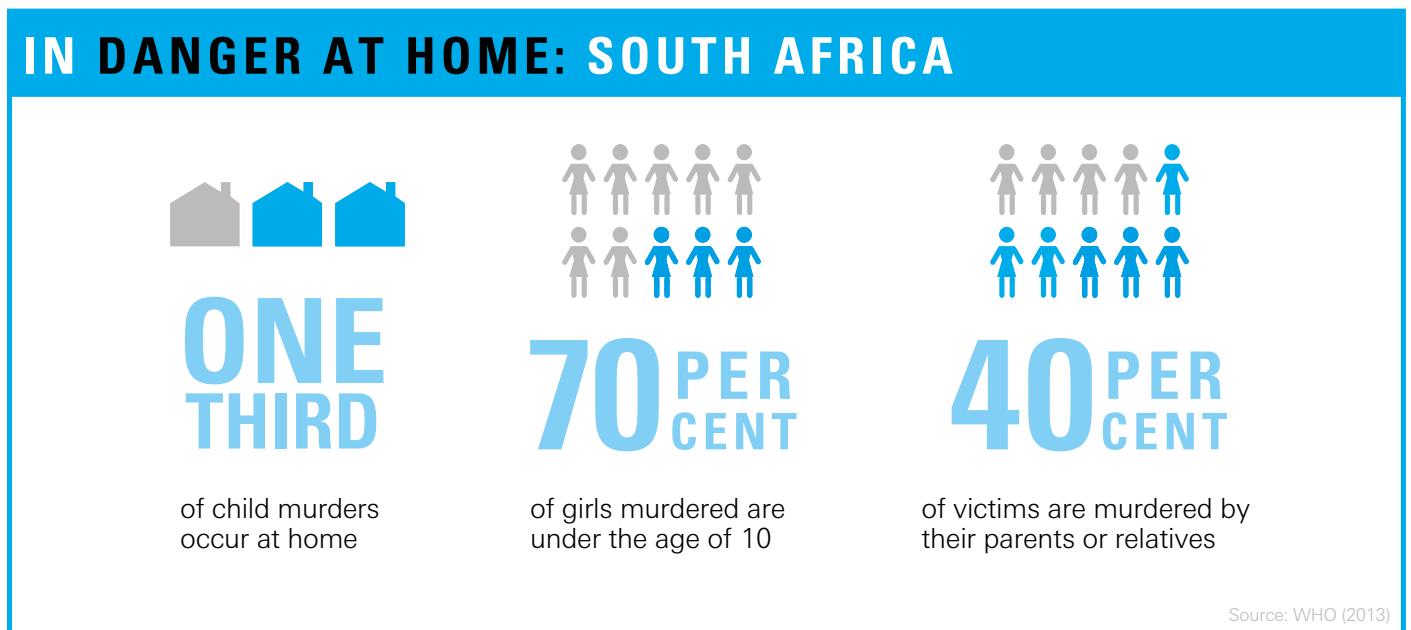
Yet for too many, violence begins early and begins in the home. Young children remain especially vulnerable to violence at home, experiencing high levels of emotional, sexual, and physical abuse including violent discipline, and others forms of negligence and neglect.

One in six children is subjected to the most severe forms of corporal punishment.<sup>13</sup> In some countries, like Uganda for example, children are punished by being burned, with parents scarring them with hot knives and other objects for minor instances of bad behaviour.<sup>14</sup>

In the worst cases, extreme physical abuse by parents or other family members is a constant and overwhelming presence in a child’s life, leading to a cycle of vulnerability from which there is often no escape.<sup>15</sup> In South Africa, one study found that a third of child victims of murder are killed by their mothers and another one in five by their fathers or other family member.<sup>16</sup>

Children are also harmed by their exposure to the violence suffered by others in their families, especially when their mothers, brothers or sisters are abused. Globally, estimates indicate that as many as 275 million (one in seven) children witness violence in the home.<sup>17</sup> This creates deep scars – as children are traumatised by the suffering of a family member and often by a sense of guilt at violence that they can’t do anything to prevent.<sup>18</sup>

Figure 3



**THIS 9-YEAR-OLD GIRL FROM SIERRA LEONE BEARS LARGE SCARS AFTER HER MOTHER BURNED HER FOR STEALING AROUND 50P.**

# AT SCHOOL, LEARNING THE LESSON OF VIOLENCE

Education is vital to every child's future and is especially important to those who come from poor families and communities, where education can provide a route out of poverty.<sup>19</sup>

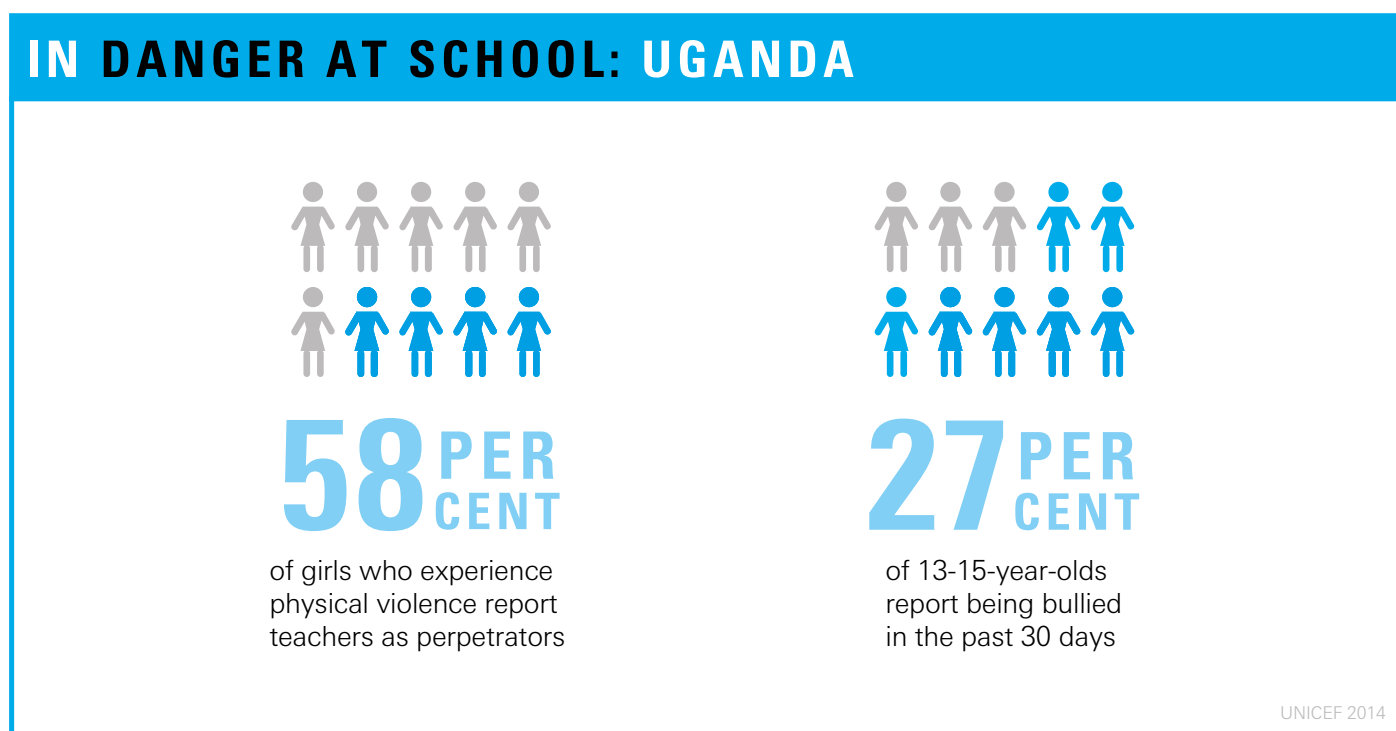
However, children are often in danger in the very place that should be dedicated to their safety and learning. Some never even attend school, or stop attending, because violence or the fear of violence on the journey to school stops them.<sup>20</sup> In Pakistan, for example, parents often refuse to let their daughters go to school if they think it is too far away, or if they think it is not equipped to ensure their privacy and safety.<sup>21</sup>

Those who do go to school can experience chronic bullying by their peers, or corporal punishment and other forms of abuse practised by their teachers, with fewer than half of the world's children protected by law from violent discipline in the classroom.<sup>22</sup> In Tanzania and Uganda, for example, more than half of children who are physically or sexually abused are abused by their teachers – learning the lesson that violence is apparently acceptable from those who have authority over them.<sup>23</sup>

Violence does not just take place within schools. In too many countries, the education system is itself under attack, with at least 70 countries experiencing armed violence against schools and universities by terrorists, state militaries, or armed criminal groups over the past five years.<sup>24</sup> Schoolchildren have been killed or injured in these attacks, and many more have lost all access to education.

The attempted murder of Malala Yousafzai, and the kidnapping of 276 Nigerian girls by Boko Haram, has finally woken the world up to the struggle that children face from those who will kill to stop them receiving an education.

Figure 4





**SCHOOLCHILDREN  
AND TEACHERS LIVE  
IN FEAR OF MURDER,  
THEFT AND EXTORTION.**

**In El Salvador, armed police protect children and teachers at schools in the most violent areas, such as this school in Quezaltepeque.**

Schoolchildren and teachers live in fear of murder, theft and extortion. School attendance is among the lowest in Latin America, and violence is one of the main reasons. One in three Salvadorean children in Year 6 of primary school report having been robbed in the past month and four in ten report being bullied.

# CONFRONTED EVERY DAY BY VIOLENCE IN THEIR COMMUNITIES

As they grow up, children face increased danger outside the home with violence becoming a leading cause of death as young people reach their late teens.<sup>25</sup>

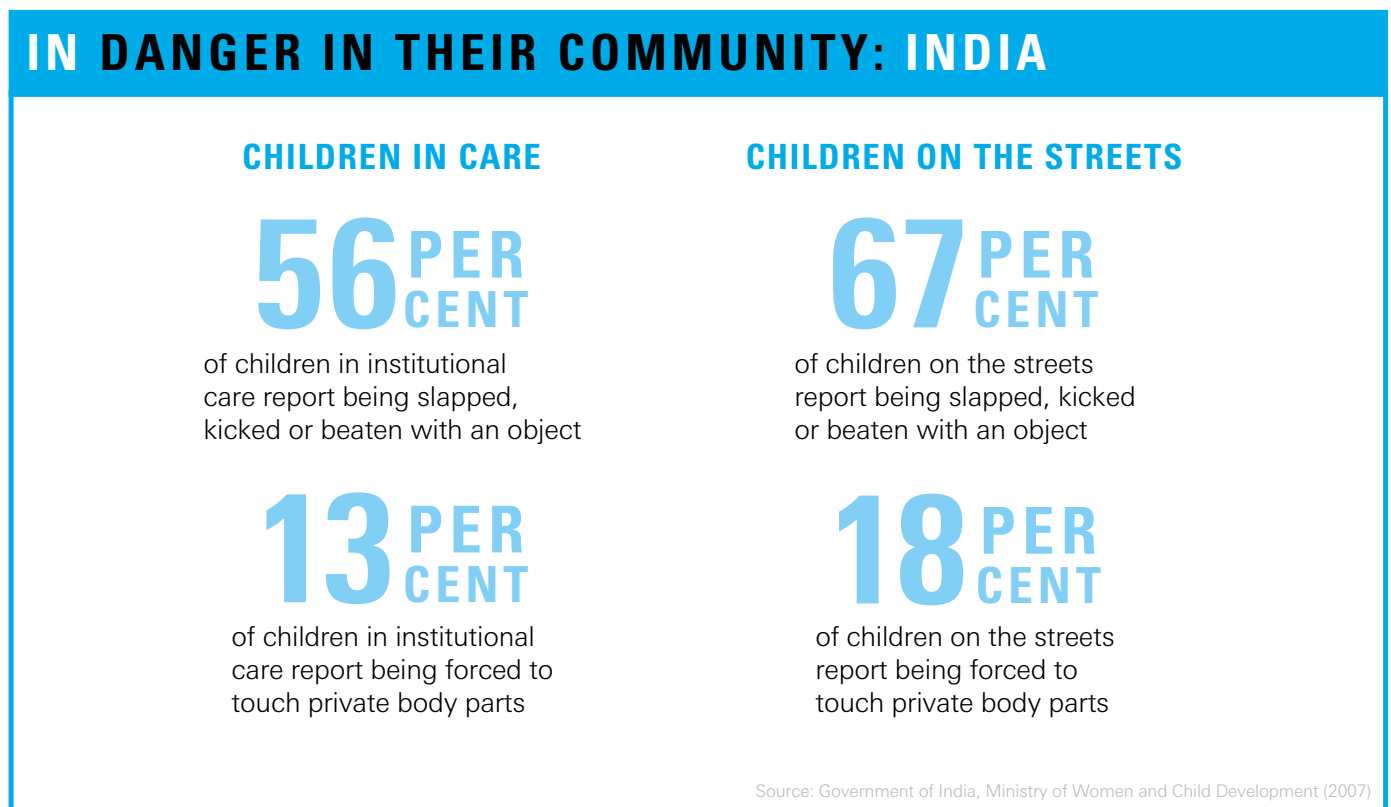
In many countries, gang- and drug-related violence is rife, especially in fast-growing cities that have seen little investment in infrastructure or justice systems.<sup>26</sup> In Latin America and the Caribbean, where adolescents face the heaviest burden from violence, nearly a third of all murders are estimated to be gang- or crime-related.<sup>27</sup>

Girls, meanwhile, become increasingly at risk of sexual and domestic violence as they grow older; to bullying, harassment, and attack in the neighbourhoods in which they live; and to cultural practices such as child marriage and female genital mutilation.<sup>28</sup> Many adolescent girls experience multiple forms of victimisation. In Tanzania, for example, more than four in five of young women who have been sexually abused also experience other physical violence.<sup>29</sup>

Violence, abuse and neglect often force children to live away from their immediate family, indeed many children have seen their main caregivers killed. Often children without the support of immediate family suffer from further neglect and abuse, either on the streets, in care homes, or when they are formally or informally adopted.<sup>30</sup> A study in Romania, for example, found that nearly half of children in residential institutions were beaten routinely.<sup>31</sup>

Children in penal institutions, detention and refugee camps are also at heightened risk, abused in and by institutions that should protect them. In Indonesia, children in migrant detention centres report being beaten by sticks, burnt by cigarettes or even being administered electric shocks.<sup>32</sup> Despite the scale of the violence they suffer, they have no-one to turn to for protection from abuse.

Figure 5







SOMETIMES  
YOU MAKE  
**BAD CHOICES**  
BECAUSE YOU  
DON'T GET  
**ENOUGH LOVE.**

**El Salvador has the highest  
murder rate of children  
and adolescents in the world.**

Children are not only being killed and injured, they are also being pushed into crime by powerful gangs. Since 2011, El Salvador has been trying alternative responses to custodial sentences for child offenders.

Children, like Elena\*, spend time in detention centres, where they get an education and have workshops to teach them basic skills.

Elena has been in detention for two years and even though her time in the centre can be lonely and difficult, she wants to make the most of it.

\*name changed to protect identity

“Sometimes you make bad choices because you don't get enough love. People think all kids join gangs because they're poor but it's not always like that. I had everything I needed. My mom worked too much, she worked to give us everything. But she didn't show her love.”

**ELENA, 17**

# VIOLENT CONFLICT DESTROYS YOUNG LIVES

Violent conflict has a devastating impact on children, with millions of children living in communities that are directly affected by conflict. Alarming, while the world saw a decline in the number of wars after 1990, recent years have seen an upsurge in conflict, especially in the Middle East and Africa.<sup>33</sup>

As a result, threats to children are multiplying. Children in conflict zones around the world are being killed, injured, and traumatised by bombing and shelling of their towns and communities. It has been estimated that one third of casualties from landmines and other explosive remnants of war are children.<sup>34</sup>

In Syria, for example, over 70 per cent of child casualties are caused by explosive weapons. While in Afghanistan, more than half of those killed by explosives in 2013 were children, mostly boys.<sup>35</sup>

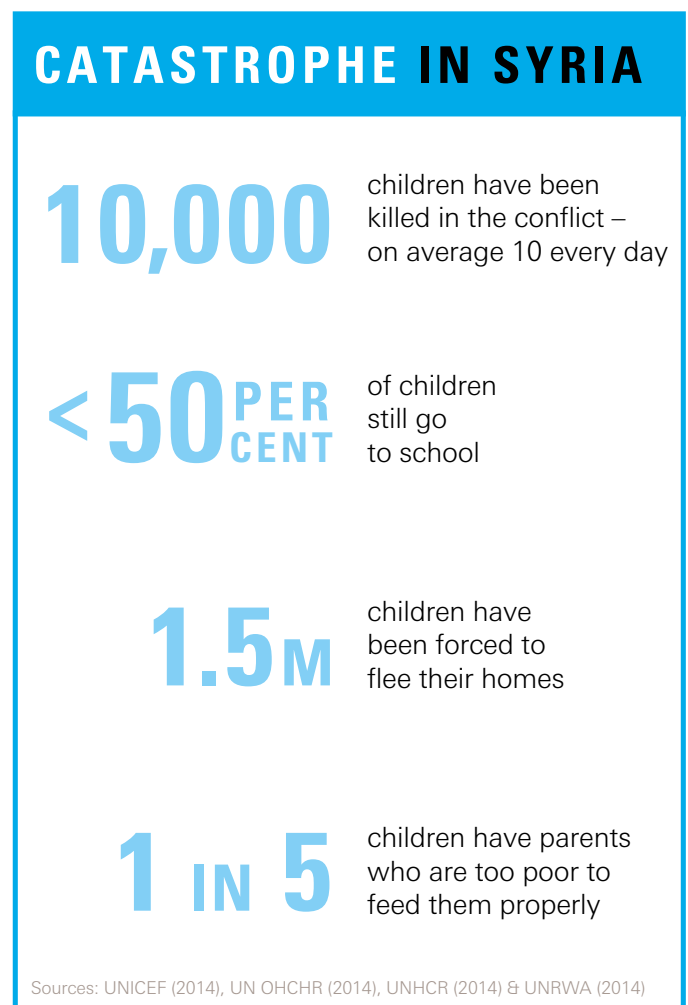
Children are particularly vulnerable to antipersonnel mines, as they get injured while playing, or tending livestock or collecting water; and, in comparison to adult victims, children are far more likely to die or sustain greater physical injuries and emotional trauma.<sup>36</sup>

Children are not just killed directly by fighting, the risk of death from disease and malnutrition increases as conflict destroys homes, livelihoods and basic infrastructure, as well as causes economic decline. In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) alone, more than 2.7 million children are estimated to have died as a result of conflict, most of them as a result of the destruction of the country's social services and economy.<sup>37</sup>

As in many other conflicts, sexual violence and the recruitment of children into armed groups has been rife in DRC. Rape has been used systematically as a weapon of war, with more than 5,000 cases involving children reported in 2012 and countless more unreported.<sup>38</sup> At the height of the war, as many as 30,000 children were believed to be fighting in one of DRC's many militias.<sup>39</sup>

In these conditions, many children live in a state of perpetual fear. Conflict exacerbates their vulnerability to all forms of violence, as the rule of law breaks down and institutions fail. The impact can be felt for a generation or more after the conflict has ended, as cycles of violence maintain their hold over a traumatised population.

Figure 6



# **DON'T CRY. MUM DIDN'T DIE. SHE IS WATCHING US FROM HEAVEN.**

**Children have borne the brunt of indiscriminate violence and have witnessed unspeakable abuse during the conflict in Syria. Millions have lost loved ones, schools and homes. Falak, age 12, is one of more than 1.5 million Syrian children who have been forced to flee their homes.**

When the fighting reached their street, Falak's family attempted to flee Syria by car. A sniper fatally shot her father and a tank then fired at the car, killing her mother, a brother and her cousins' father.

Falak now lives with her three surviving younger siblings, her aunt Siham and two cousins at a house in Amman, Jordan. They share the home with dozens of other child refugees from Syria.

Falak looks after her younger brother and sisters.

*"When my brother and sisters cry, I try to make them feel better. I tell them, 'Don't cry. Mum didn't die. She is watching us from heaven.' I don't cry in front of them. I cry when I go to sleep.*

*"It's safe here. My siblings and I need to get an education because we've missed a lot. I would love to go to school here."*

**FALAK, 12**

# IT IS OFTEN HIDDEN AND UNSPOKEN

Many children are too frightened to tell anyone what has happened to them or have no-one whom they think it is safe to turn to.<sup>40</sup> Others report their abuse, but to no avail.

In Tanzania, for example, approximately half of girls and a third of boys attempt to tell someone they have been sexually abused, but only 13 per cent of girls and fewer than 4 per cent of boys received any meaningful help in dealing with the trauma they have suffered. But there are children who do report their abuse.<sup>41</sup>

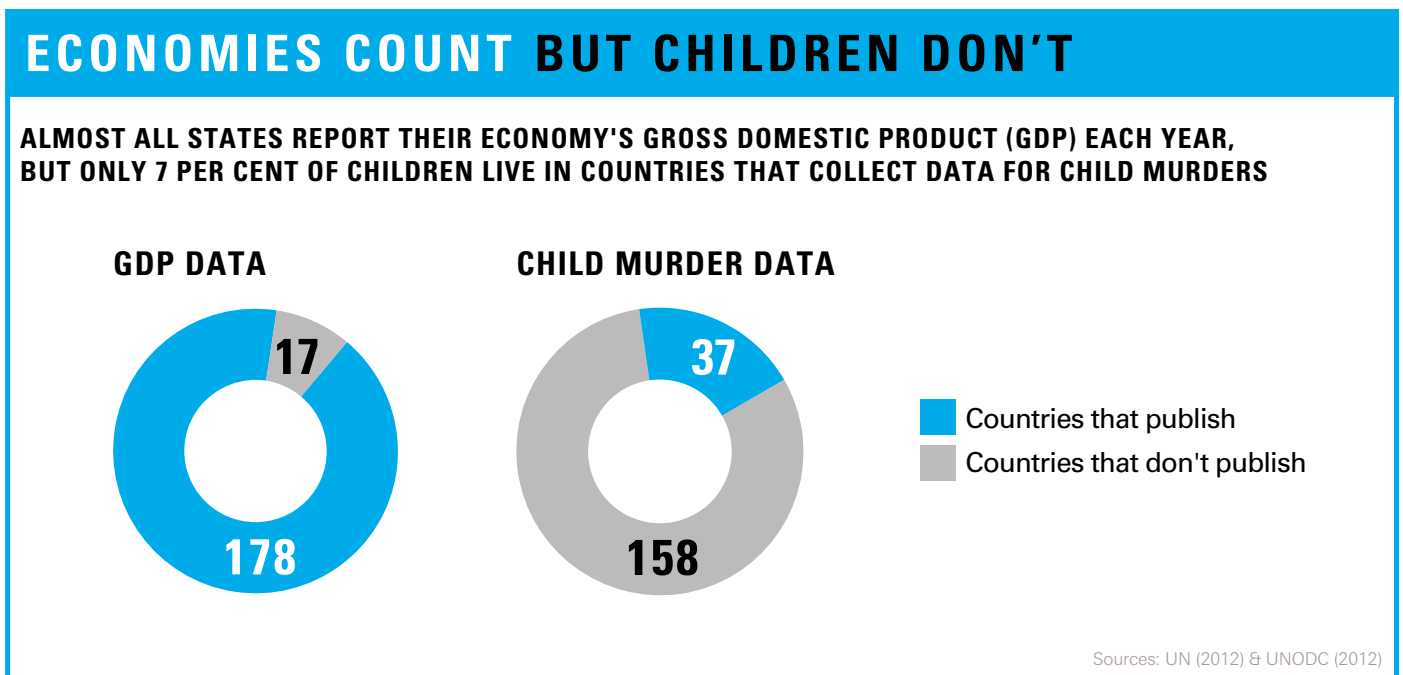
In many countries, recent years have seen the exposure of systemic abuse that has been perpetrated over many years or decades, seemingly without the necessary action being taken to protect children. In some of the most shocking cases, the police and criminal justice systems have failed to act despite clear evidence of wrongdoing. Children complained, yet no-one was prepared to listen to them.

The pervasiveness of denial can be seen in the widespread failure to collect evidence on the scale of violence that children suffer. Most countries do not report the number of children who have been murdered, and this lack of data collection is more common for other forms of violence. Whether it's at home, in schools and other institutions, or in the community, violence against children remains hidden, unreported.

Currently, only a minority of governments make a systematic attempt to understand, record, and track the violence that children are subjected to.<sup>42</sup> The contrast is stark with, for example, the investment and effort that governments put into collecting economic data.

This is powerful evidence that – in many countries – child victims and survivors of violence simply aren't a priority.

Figure 7





## A MORE CHILD-FRIENDLY APPROACH TO REPORTING ABUSE

A detective and a social worker at a police station in northern Sierra Leone talk to a seven-year old girl who was sexually abused by an 18-year old boy . The boy, a close neighbour, forced her to have sex with him. Sierra Leone has made great steps in providing a more child-friendly approach to child abuse investigations.

© UNICEF/SLE2013-0005/Asselin

# CHILDREN ARE DENIED JUSTICE AND REDRESS

The United Nations has called for all countries to impose a comprehensive and explicit legal ban on violence against children, but so far only 41 countries have taken up this call.<sup>43</sup>

Although many countries have some legislation in place, protection remains incomplete, with only 2 per cent of countries reporting a comprehensive legal framework to prevent incidents of violence. Fewer than one in 10 countries have established effective, child-friendly reporting mechanisms and only one in eight countries provide their children with adequate legal redress, including compensation.<sup>44</sup>

And even the best laws are meaningless if they are not enforced. Children need access to mechanisms that are designed to allow them to report abuse safely and in confidence. They must then receive support from police and justice systems that are trained and equipped to respond to them in a way that is appropriate to their age.<sup>45</sup>

Children affected by violence also have a right to restitution, including appropriate compensation, and to counselling and other forms of support that will allow them to rebuild their lives.

The majority of the world's population, however, lives without any meaningful access to justice, while 230 million children do not have any form of legal identity.<sup>46</sup> In these circumstances, it is unsurprising that justice remains out of reach for most child victims of violence.

There is also an urgent need to amplify the voices of children themselves, enabling them to stand up for their own rights and for the rights of other children.

Figure 8





**EXTREMISTS ARE  
FRIGHTENED OF  
BOOKS AND PENS.**

In 2012, Malala Yousafzai, a 16-year-old girl from Swat, Pakistan, was shot in the head by a Taliban gunman on her way home from school. Showing great courage and determination, Malala continues to speak out for girls' education in her country and around the world. Her 16th birthday – 12 July 2013 – was celebrated around the world as 'Malala Day'. In 2014 Malala was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for her work in a "common struggle for education and against extremism."

"We realised the importance of pens and books when we saw the guns. Extremists are frightened of books and pens. The power of education frightens them."

**MALALA, 16**

# VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN IS A KEY MARKER OF INEQUALITY

Children are more likely to suffer from violence if they live in the world's poorest countries or if they live in communities, especially in cities, that are impoverished and isolated.<sup>47</sup>

In every country in the world, children who are marginalised by income, class, ethnicity, religion, gender or disability are much more likely to live their lives in danger than other members of society, with many of the most vulnerable children suffering from multiple, and interlinked, forms of deprivation.<sup>48</sup>

Violence also creates barriers to economic development. Research from the United States suggests that a survivor of violence in childhood is 60 per cent more likely to be living in poverty than a neighbour who was not victimised.<sup>49</sup>

Violence starves children of opportunities and pushes them into a cycle where they are more likely to experience repeated victimisation, or to suffer from displacement, child labour, child marriage, trafficking and other forms of exploitation, in poor and rich countries alike.<sup>50</sup>

The perpetrators of violence meanwhile use their power and status to evade responsibility for their crimes, assisted when society gives the abuser, and not the victim, the benefit of the doubt. Time and again we see how the powerful systematically manipulate societies to deprive children of the rights to justice and a life free of violence.

Figure 9







**TWO YEARS AGO,  
CELINE WAS  
RAPED BY A  
MEMBER OF AN  
ARMED GROUP  
AND BECAME  
PREGNANT.**

**Two years ago, Celine was raped by a member of an armed group and became pregnant.** She is now helped by a Unicef-supported centre for girls who have survived sexual violence and other abuse. The centre in Bukavu, Democratic Republic of Congo, provides a safe space to sleep for mums and their babies as well as health, education, vocational training and psychological care. Celine is learning sewing skills.

“I don't know  
how I'll take  
care of my son and  
little brother.”

**CELINE, age 16**

# ALL VIOLENCE CAN BE PREVENTED

Too many people continue to mistakenly believe that there is something inevitable about the violence that children suffer or even that children deserve it.

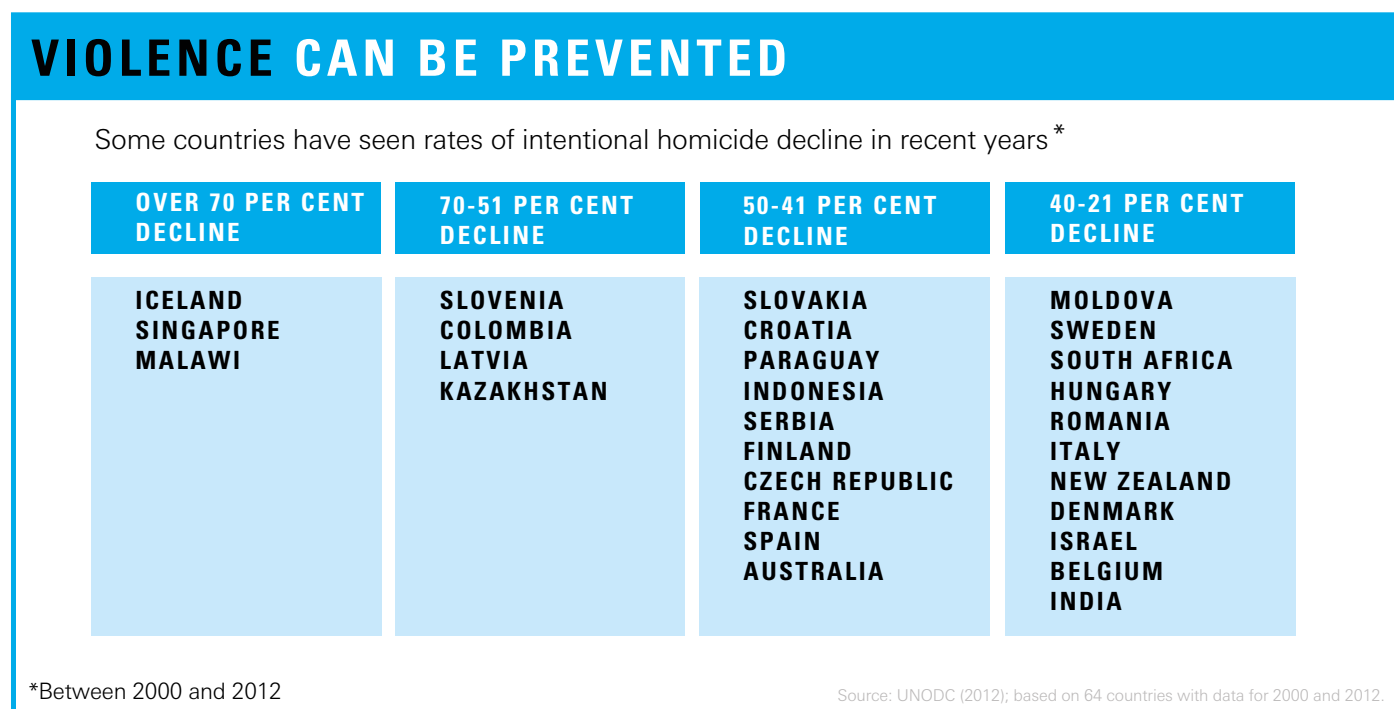
Violence is often passed off as part of the ‘rough and tumble’ of growing up. Too many defend the rights of parents, teachers, and other carers to ‘discipline’ children through what is sustained physical abuse.<sup>51</sup> Too many ignore powerful evidence of how common sexual abuse is, both of girls and boys. And too many stigmatise and blame victims, denying children the justice and respect they need.

Yet we know – with great certainty – that rapid reductions in violence are possible, because they have been achieved in many countries. While levels of violence are still too high in the UK, violent crime – including against children – has seen dramatic declines over the past 10 years.<sup>52</sup> Similar progress has been seen in many other industrialised countries.<sup>53</sup>

Meanwhile, across Latin America, extremely high levels of violence have prompted action at national and local levels, as a new generation of political and community leaders begin to get serious about the problem.<sup>54</sup> While in Sierra Leone, the country’s Special Court was the first tribunal to focus specifically on crimes committed against children, resulting in groundbreaking convictions of those responsible for wartime crimes against children.<sup>55</sup>

These, and other, examples show that governments can take action, and that when they do, rapid gains for children are achievable. Yet the responsibility for ending violence belongs not to just with governments, but with society as a whole. That means putting the rights and best interests of children first – and taking urgent action to ensure these rights are protected.

Figure 10



**THE GANGS  
GET CHILDREN  
TO COMMIT  
ROBBERY AND  
ASSAULTS.**



**Abused by her stepmother, Farida (16) ran away from home and fell into the hands of the violent Palaces gangs in Zinder, Niger. The gangs get children to commit robbery and assaults. Girls are especially vulnerable and are often victims of abuse.**

Today Farida is back in school, thanks to a Unicef-supported shelter for girls. The shelter helps Farida and other young victims of violence to reintegrate and reunites them with family.

**“I would really like to become a lawyer and defend the cause of children.”**

**Farida, 16**

# A HIDDEN EMERGENCY

**Across the world, violence against children imposes a triple burden on them.**

Children suffer **direct** physical and emotional violence that is either life-ending or life-changing. They are damaged by the violence they **witness** in their homes and communities. And they pay the

price when violence **erodes** the economies and societies on which their futures depend.

Children can pay for violence with their lives, either directly when they are murdered or indirectly as violence denies them food, health care, and other vital resources. And violence also causes massive damage to children's health and wellbeing, through

## BODY AND BRAIN

### VIOLENCE HAS A LASTING IMPACT ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN'S BRAINS



- Parts of the brains of maltreated children can be **6 per cent smaller** than normal, affecting their cognitive development
- Child victims' brains have similar patterns of activity to soldiers exposed to combat
- **A third** of victims are likely to develop enduring post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms

**10**  
MILLION

the most recent estimate of numbers of health life years lost because of violence – either through death or disability

**37** PER CENT

the possible increase in likelihood of infants suffering from diarrheal diseases if their mothers are exposed to family violence

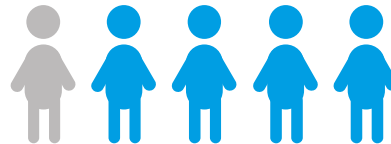
## DEVELOPMENT AND RELATIONSHIPS

### EXPOSURE TO VIOLENCE MAKES IT HARDER FOR CHILDREN TO FORM NORMAL RELATIONSHIPS

Studies of children who were exposed to domestic violence show:



**A third** become aggressive themselves



**One in five** act out or have difficulties making friendships

### CHILDREN LOSE THEIR HOMES

**80**  
PER CENT

of people fleeing their homes are estimated to be women and children

**8**  
MILLION

children were forced to leave their countries in 2013

### EDUCATION SUFFERS

**5.1**  
PER CENT

less likelihood of graduating from high school in the United States, if you go to a violent school

**12**  
PER CENT

less likelihood of completing school in Tajikistan, if you are a girl that has been exposed to conflict

injuries that can have lifelong consequences, and through the emotional impact of violence.

Violence can have a profound psychological and developmental impact, reducing children's capacity to learn, work, and become fully functioning adults. It destroys trust and undermines society, weakening the families and communities on which children

depend and preventing them from forming lasting relationships throughout their lives.

And violence can feed further violence, putting children at risk of repeated attack or becoming violent themselves. Once it takes root, the cycle of violence can echo down through the generations.

## LOST POTENTIAL

### VIOLENCE HAS A DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON CHILDREN



- In the US, abused children are **twice as likely** to be unemployed later in life
- They are also **60 per cent more likely** to be living in poverty

### CHILDREN ALSO SUFFER INDIRECTLY

- In Brazil, youth violence is estimated to cost nearly **£12 billion** every year
- A study funded by the UK government estimated that the total cost of domestic violence – including the cost of services, loss of employment, and emotional costs – was almost **£16 billion** in 2008
- At the global level, violence against children is estimated to cost around **£2 trillion**, destroying more than **4 per cent of global GDP**
- The European Union estimates that **for every £1 invested** in preventing violence, there is a **social return of £85**

## VULNERABILITY TO VIOLENCE

### VICTIMS CAN BECOME TRAPPED IN A CYCLE OF VIOLENCE:



### STUDIES ON CHILD ABUSE HAVE SHOWN THAT

- **17 PER CENT** of adult rape victims were sexually abused as children
- **2 TIMES** more likely to experience sexual assault after the age of 16 if a girl is raped during childhood
- **1 IN 3** child abusers were themselves abused during childhood
- **17 PER CENT** more likely that abused boys will be violent to their future partner
- **30 PER CENT** more likely to be a violent offender if victim of child abuse

## CHAPTER TWO

# IN OUR HANDS TO **END VIOLENCE**

# IN OUR HANDS TO END VIOLENCE

**Across the world, governments have agreed to protect children from violence, but they are yet to fully meet these obligations. Ending all forms of violence has not been seen as an overriding priority for international and national action. Today, we have a historic opportunity to change this.**

The world is setting new global goals that could end violence against children for good. The UK and other governments need to work together to reach an agreement that will keep every child safe.

If they fail to act, the world's children, especially the most vulnerable, will continue to be exposed to an epidemic of violence.

In some countries, levels of violence could even grow, as rapid urbanisation, rising inequality and other factors increase the risks that children face.

Violence against children will also make it far more challenging to meet many of the other global goals that leaders will commit to in 2015, as progress on poverty, education, and health is undermined by violence and fragility.

A new global commitment, however, could trigger rapid change. Violence against children is not inevitable. Effective strategies for responding to and preventing it already exist. We simply need to implement them.

# IN OUR HANDS TO END VIOLENCE

## LIVES FREE FROM VIOLENCE

The right of children to enjoy lives that are free from violence is enshrined in international law.

Article 19 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child gives countries the obligation to protect children from “all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse”. The Convention also emphasises the need to shelter children from armed conflict (Article 38) and to safeguard them from the impact that violence can have on their parents’ ability to support their development (Article 27).<sup>56</sup>

In September 2000, the Millennium Declaration was agreed by 189 world leaders. In it they promised to ensure the right of citizens of all countries to “live their lives and raise their children in dignity, free from hunger and from the fear of violence, oppression or injustice”.<sup>57</sup>

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which were set out after the summit, have led to substantial improvements in the lives of children, focusing global attention on the need to invest in health, education, and poverty reduction, and to focus on the needs of children who come from the poorest and most vulnerable families.

But peace and security, rule of law and access to justice were not fully integrated into the MDGs. This has hampered efforts to reduce violence over the past decade, while a failure to increase the resilience of societies has become a significant obstacle to the achievement of the MDGs, with children affected by violence the most likely to miss out on development progress.<sup>58</sup>

We now have a historic opportunity to put that right. In May 2014, the World Health Assembly agreed that the world needs to do more to ensure the health system addresses violence against children. It has asked the Director General of the World Health Organization to prepare a global plan to ensure this happens.<sup>59</sup>

Violence against children is also at the heart of proposals for a new development agenda that will agree a set of goals to build on the achievements of the MDGs. In September 2015, the world’s leaders will gather for a summit in New York where they will

finalise this agenda. It is vital that they make strong commitments to ending violence against children and set out plans to make these commitments a reality.

## TURNING AGAINST VIOLENCE

In 2006, the United Nations Secretary-General submitted a landmark report to the international community on ending violence against children.<sup>60</sup> This report marked a turning point, building consensus behind its core argument that “no violence against children is justifiable; all violence against children is preventable”.<sup>61</sup>

Subsequent years have seen the development of an international coalition dedicated to ending violence, with the Committee on the Rights of the Child demanding a “massive strengthening” of measures to prevent violence, protect child victims and witnesses, and punish perpetrators of violence against children.<sup>62</sup>

Children have also demanded that urgent action is taken to protect them from violence. In a consultation held in Brazil, Ghana, Guyana, India, Kenya, Malawi, and Russia, for example, children spoke of their desire to be safe and protected within their families, and to be free from the omnipresent threat of violence at home and in their communities. They complained of physical and sexual violence, of bullying and other forms of harassment, and of specific threats such as communal and gang violence.<sup>63</sup> It also called for clear targets for eliminating all forms of violence against children.

As the world’s countries have come together to design a new universal and sustainable development agenda to replace the MDGs, they have responded to the demands made by children. A High Level Panel on the post-2015 agenda, chaired by the leaders of the United Kingdom, Liberia, and Indonesia, called for a “a fundamental shift – to recognise peace and good governance as a core element of wellbeing, not optional extras.”<sup>64</sup>

A working group (the Open Working Group) of UN member states has prepared an initial proposal for a new set of goals and targets. It also called for clear targets for eliminating all forms of violence against children.<sup>65</sup>



# IN OUR HANDS TO END VIOLENCE

It has been suggested that:

- **Children should be at the heart of the new agenda**, through a renewed commitment to guaranteeing the protection, survival, and development of all children, enabling them to reach their full potential.
- **The new goals should be universal** with targets for all countries, not just poor ones. This provides a basis for tackling violence and insecurity in all communities, while recognising the special challenges facing the most vulnerable countries.
- **No one should be left behind** by the new agenda because of their age or gender, race, ethnicity, or religion, or because they are poor, have a disability, or face other forms of vulnerability. This has created a new emphasis on the needs of the most vulnerable children.

The working group's proposal – which will form the basis of further negotiation between all countries in 2015 – underlines the indivisible links between development, peace and security, and human rights.

It has proposed that the world should adopt a goal to “promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.” <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/focussdgs.html>

Most importantly, the working group has put its weight behind a series of ambitious targets for ending all forms of child violence and torture, both as part of this goal, and as a contribution to achieving gender equality, ensuring children are safe enough to learn, and protecting them from conflict.

It also includes a series of measures for strengthening the resilience of children – and the families, communities, and societies they depend on – from the spectrum of dangers that prevent them from reaching their full potential.

These proposals, if included in the final agenda, have the potential finally to place a campaign to end violence against children at the top of the international development agenda, and to ensure accelerated delivery of the rights set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

## FROM COMMITMENTS TO ACTION

Goals and targets are meaningless without a commitment to implement them. Ending all forms of violence and torture against children requires:

- A transformation in the **social and cultural attitudes** that make violence acceptable and creates a climate of impunity in which perpetrators thrive.
- A willingness to search the world for **evidence of what works** and to tailor that to different social and cultural contexts.
- Investment in the **policies, systems, and programmes** that will keep children safe and respond to the needs of children affected by violence.
- A commitment to **gathering and publishing data**, and to being accountable for results.
- **Partnerships at global, national, and local levels** that are dedicated to ending violence against children, and that give a prominent role to young people themselves.

The cycle of violence against children will not be broken without commitment from all governments, and will also require the active engagement of civil society, the private sector, parents, and all those prepared to work together for the safety of children. A recent review of progress across 100 countries demonstrates considerable progress, as a growing number of countries adopt the laws and policies, and implement the programmes, needed to prevent violence against children.<sup>66</sup> The review found:

*[A] growing visibility of violence against children on the policy agenda and in public debate, and a gradual recognition of the human and social cost of this phenomenon, together with the high social return that investment in prevention can bring.*

Based on global experience, Unicef has gathered evidence that demonstrates how countries are developing systems that protect children from violence and respond to their needs. The most promising models include: providing children with a safe environment that builds their resilience in the face of violence while addressing the power imbalances that increase their vulnerability; listening to children's voices; and providing all those who care for children with the knowledge and skills required to provide children with the protection they need.

# UNICEF'S SIX STRATEGIES

In *Ending Violence Against Children: Six Strategies for Action*, Unicef sets out six strategies for ending violence against children and some examples of the policies and programmes it supports under each strategy.<sup>67</sup>

Although no-one can yet provide all the answers to the question of how violence can be ended, we have examples of what works from countries all across the world. Unicef is working with governments and other partners to implement the most effective strategies, providing people with the foundation to accelerate the work of keeping every child safe.



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## STRATEGY 1. SUPPORT PARENTS, CAREGIVERS, AND FAMILIES

To reduce levels of violence that children face at home, while strengthening their ability to care for and protect their children.

More than 50 per cent of children from families participating in a parenting programme in Kenya report an improved relationship with their parents.

A three-year study in Turkey created a positive family environment for underprivileged mothers and their children and resulted in a 79 per cent decrease in physical disciplining.

### ROVING CAREGIVERS

In Jamaica and other islands in the eastern Caribbean, roving caregivers – members of the local community trained with Unicef support – provide early childhood services and information for parents of newborns and toddlers in hard to reach areas. The programme has delivered significant and positive changes to parenting practices and the cognitive development of infants.

## STRATEGY 2. HELP CHILDREN MANAGE THE RISKS THEY FACE

By ensuring they can protect their own rights to a life free from violence and can face challenges and solve problems without resorting to violence.

Taking part in a life skills programme led to adolescent girls in Uganda reporting a 50 per cent drop in having sex against their will.

A programme in 150 schools in Brazil is helping children living in slums overcome their cognitive and emotional issues caused by violence.

### ELA

In Sierra Leone and Tanzania, the Empowerment and Livelihood for Adolescents (ELA) programme implemented by UNICEF in partnership with BRAC sees peer mentors provide information on child rights and protection from violence to girls, help them resolve conflict, and provide information on sexual and reproductive health and gender issues.

# UNICEF'S SIX STRATEGIES

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## STRATEGY 3. CHANGE ATTITUDES AND SOCIAL NORMS THAT ENCOURAGE VIOLENCE AND DISCRIMINATION

Support through far-reaching campaigns to ensure no form of violence is seen as justifiable.

In the **United Kingdom**, Unicef UK's Rights Respecting School Award is based on principles of equality, dignity, respect, non-discrimination and participation. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child provides the framework of values for the Award. A Rights Respecting School is a community where children's rights are protected and promoted. More than one million children in the UK now attend schools that are becoming rights respecting.

### THE MA'AN

In **Jordan**, corporal punishment was banned in 1981. Despite this, children still experience high levels of emotional and physical abuse at school and home. In 2007, a Unicef survey found that more than half of children reported physical abuse by teachers or school administrators. To reduce this violence, in 2009 UNICEF initiated the Ma'An (Together) campaign for safe schools nationwide.

The campaign promoted new disciplinary methods in schools, advocates to end social tolerance of violence in schools, and media coverage to spread the message nationwide. After the first year of the campaign implementation, a survey showed an impressive average decline of 28 per cent in physical violence in schools. The survey found that more boys were subjected to physical and verbal violence than girls. Almost two thirds of boys (62 per cent) endured physical violence compared to just 22 per cent of girls.

## STRATEGY 4. PROMOTE AND PROVIDE SUPPORT SERVICES FOR CHILDREN

Ensure children receive help, support and care when they experience violence, and that they can safely report violent incidents.

In **Sudan**, the introduction of family and child protection units in police stations has led to a fivefold increase in cases being handled.

In 2010, **Malawi** set up an extensive child protection system, including a network of 300 community victim support units, four one-stop centres, 14 child justice courts, two reformatory centres, a social rehabilitation centre and 10,200 community-based child care centres.

### FAMILY AND CHILD PROTECTION UNITS

Since 2010, in response to physical and sexual violence against children in **Kenya**, Unicef has been supporting Child Protection Centres as a key component of Kenya's national child protection system. These 'one-stop shop' centres offer counselling and referral to various services including medical care and legal support for children who have experienced violence. The Centres also raise awareness in the communities about the impact of violence against children. The Malindi centre alone has managed over 5,000 cases in the first 20 months of operation and has successfully reintegrated 20 children with their families.

# UNICEF'S SIX STRATEGIES

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## STRATEGY 5. IMPLEMENT LAWS AND POLICIES THAT PROTECT CHILDREN

Support ensuring that all citizens realise that violence against children is unacceptable and will be punished when it occurs.

A training programme in **Indonesia** in 2011 led to a more systematic approach to addressing child protection by the National Development Planning Agency – with increased commitment by the government to build a national protection system.

In 1979, **Sweden** was the first country to prohibit any form of corporal punishment, resulting in an 80 per cent decrease over a 35-year period.

### STRENGTHENING CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEMS

With support from Unicef, the Government of **Viet Nam** developed a national project to respond to child neglect, child sexual abuse and violence, child labour, and juveniles in conflict with the law. Community-based Child Protection Systems were established in eight provinces in 2011, coordinated efforts to prevent violence and protect children. In response to the positive impact of the new initiative, the Government has expanded its operation to cover two-thirds of the country

## STRATEGY 6. CARRY OUT DATA COLLECTION AND RESEARCH

Support ensuring that violence is no longer hidden, while creating a growing understanding of the most effective ways to prevent it.

A global private-public partnership has led to national Violence against Children Surveys being held in nine countries, with further surveys being planned or currently implemented in another seven countries.

In **Chile**, the prevalence of child abuse has been systematically measured since 1994 through the implementation of four surveys, held at six year intervals, informing awareness and child abuse prevention programmes.

### TOGETHER FOR GIRLS

Unicef is part of the Together for Girls global initiative that aims to build a worldwide movement to end violence against children, with a particular focus on sexual violence against girls. The initiative supports governments in conducting national household surveys to document the magnitude, nature and consequences of violence against children. To date, National Violence against Children Surveys (VACS) have been completed in nine countries around the world (**Cambodia, Haiti, Indonesia, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Swaziland, Tanzania and Zimbabwe**).

# THE RISK OF A FAILURE TO ACT

**The consequences of not acting to end violence are substantial, and risk undermining the broader global development agenda.**

## **IF WE FAIL TO END VIOLENCE:**

**Children will continue to suffer unnecessary and unacceptable levels of violence.** Every 5 minutes, a child dies because of violence. Every day that leaders fail to act, more than 340 children will die, while many more will continue to suffer terrible physical and psychological injuries, and will be robbed of their chance to live a normal life.

**Violence will remain one of the greatest dangers to children's health.** In recent years, the world has made significant strides towards protecting children from the diseases that lead to millions of preventable deaths, and has the potential to end these threats to children by 2030. But the epidemic of violence is yet to receive the same level of attention from the international community despite the fact that 12 children die every hour.

**Levels of violence could increase in some countries.** In many parts of the world, a number of drivers – including rapid urbanisation, youth unemployment, and rising inequality – are creating new risks for children. If these countries were to follow the trend seen in the world's most violent countries, the number of children murdered globally by 2030 could increase substantially. In a growing number of countries, broader gains in children's health will be cancelled out by the burden of violence.

**Conflict could further multiply the levels of violence children face.** Conflict has the potential to suddenly and substantially increase the risks that children face. Recent years have seen growing numbers of children affected by war, and a rapid growth in the numbers of those forced from their home by conflict. If this trend intensifies, decades of progress in improving child wellbeing will be threatened.

**Another generation will grow up thinking violence is acceptable.** 139 million children will be born in 2016, the year in which implementation will begin of a new set of global development goals.<sup>69</sup> If these children grow up in societies where violence is seen as normal and acceptable, many will turn to violence themselves, perpetrating the cycle.

Governments must also accept the risk that violence poses to the broader post-2015 agenda and to its aspiration to ensure the "protection, survival and development of children to their full potential". The proposed post-2015 goals for children represent a substantial increase in ambition over the MDGs, as the world aims to end extreme poverty, stop all preventable deaths, and ensure all children leave secondary school able to read and write, and having gained the skills they need for the modern world. If these children grow up in societies where violence is seen as normal and acceptable, many will become violent themselves as they become older, perpetrating the cycle of violence.

If the epidemic of violence against children continues – or intensifies – these aspirations may prove to be far out of reach, as violence ensures that many millions of children fail to see the benefits from global development. In other words, **the post-2015 agenda as a whole will be gravely compromised if governments are not serious about reducing violence.** Without this commitment, their promises to children will be empty ones.

## CHAPTER THREE

# ENDING VIOLENCE



# ENDING VIOLENCE

## In 2015, the world has an opportunity to take a decisive step towards ending violence against children.

By including a **robust target** in the new development agenda, the world's governments will signal their determination to make ending violence a global priority.

This is a **universal agenda**, with both rich and poor countries needing to act to protect children from violence.

International action will be needed to support the **most vulnerable states**, and a focus on child safety and wellbeing must be integrated into work to strengthen justice institutions, and to build effective health and education systems.

A concerted campaign to end violence against children must begin as soon as the new development agenda is agreed. A group of **trailblazer countries** should therefore work together to begin implementation, demonstrating to the rest of the world what it will take to bring the epidemic of violence under control.

The United Kingdom has an opportunity to be a convenor of this group, building on its existing commitments to children at home and internationally.

It could:

- lead the push to secure a global commitment to end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence and torture against children by 2030
- take immediate steps to build momentum by forming a global coalition to end violence
- work both at home and internationally to turn global commitments into action that makes children safe
- ensure the epidemic of violence against children can no longer be ignored, by collecting the data and evidence needed to track progress and ensure accountability

# SEIZING THE OPPORTUNITY

Today, hundreds of millions of children live in fear of violence. Around the world, Unicef is already working with its partners to protect these children and to respond to the needs of children who have been exposed to violence.

The United Kingdom has been at the forefront of global efforts to tackle the violence that children face, demonstrating leadership in areas such as female genital mutilation, child marriage, and sexual violence in conflict.

At home, its action plan to prevent violence against women and girls aims to challenge the attitudes and behaviours that allow violence to happen, provide support to survivors of violence and the families of victims, and ensure that perpetrators of violence are brought to justice.

This leadership provides a foundation for the UK to join with Unicef and other national and international partners to ensure that the post-2015 agenda protects all children from violence. This will form part of a broader mission to address all the dangers that children face, whether from disease, hunger, natural disasters or conflict.

For the new framework to deliver for future generations, we must start planning now for a world free from violence. The UK Prime Minister has called for agreement on a clear, concise and inspiring set of goals. As the UK government works with international partners to achieve this, it must ensure the commitment is not lost to helping all children in danger.

The UK and other governments must commit to keeping every child safe.

## THE PRIORITIES ARE FOR THE UK TO:

- 1. LEAD THE PUSH TO SECURE A GLOBAL COMMITMENT TO END ABUSE, EXPLOITATION, TRAFFICKING AND ALL FORMS OF VIOLENCE AND TORTURE AGAINST CHILDREN BY 2030**
  - The UK should ensure the target proposed by the Open Working Group to “end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence and torture against children” remains in its current form in the post-2015 development agenda. This target is fundamental to the future of the world’s children, and has the potential to ignite public interest in the new global development agenda. Other related targets should also be retained (see Figure 11).
  - It should also continue to support a robust goal to “promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels”. This goal will ensure a broader focus on building societies that can keep children safe and provide them with the opportunities they need for the future.
  - The UK should ensure targets are retained in areas such as trafficking, sexual violence, child marriage, female genital mutilation/cutting, and the recruitment of child soldiers. It should support targets for ensuring access to justice and promoting the rule of law, as these will play a vital role in building societies that are able to protect children from violence.
  - The UK should ensure the broader needs of children – in health, education, and wellbeing – remain central to the post-2015 agenda, in order to increase the resilience that protects children from violence.
  - Finally, while it is essential that violence against children is tackled in all countries and communities, the post-2015 agenda must focus on children who are most vulnerable due to income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, and disability. The needs of the poorest and most vulnerable states, and especially conflict-affected countries, must be placed at the centre of the agenda, ensuring the world’s most vulnerable children are not left behind.



# SEIZING THE OPPORTUNITY

## 2. TAKE IMMEDIATE STEPS TO BUILD MOMENTUM BY FORMING A GLOBAL COALITION TO END VIOLENCE

- The UK government should take the opportunity to convene a group of trailblazer countries as the basis of a global coalition to end violence against children. These countries should work together to set out plans to take action to implement the peaceful societies goal from the post-2015 agenda, and in particular the target to end violence against children.
- Each trailblazer country should make commitments to both domestic and international action, and to building models that other countries can adopt. Governments should consult widely as they develop costed plans to prevent and respond to violence, drawing on the energies of all those prepared to make a commitment to children's safety.
- The global coalition should include international and regional institutions, civil society and private sector organisations, and ensure a strong voice for children. UNICEF is committed to supporting all countries prepared to build robust systems that can protect all children from danger, ensuring existing programmatic work protects a growing proportion of vulnerable children.
- The UK should ensure sufficient resources are available to form the global coalition and to support the full participation of the poorest countries in this coalition, enabling the coalition to be launched at, or shortly after, the September 2015 summit when the post-2015 agenda will be adopted.

Figure 11

## POST-2015 PROPOSALS FOR ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

### END VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN...

- End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence and torture against children
- Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation
- Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation
- End recruitment and use of child soldiers
- Build and upgrade education facilities that are child-, disability- and gender-sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all

### ...REDUCE THE IMPACT OF VIOLENCE IN THEIR FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES...

- Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere

### ...AND ENSURE ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR ALL

- Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels, and ensure equal access to justice for all
- Provide legal identity for all, including birth registration

Source: Draws on the Open Working Group outcome document.

# SEIZING THE OPPORTUNITY

## 3. WORK BOTH AT HOME AND INTERNATIONALLY TO TURN GLOBAL COMMITMENTS INTO ACTION THAT MAKES CHILDREN SAFE

- The UK should develop a strategy to end violence against children through its own development programme and ensure that this strategy is central to its work in all the priority countries in which it is working to end poverty.
- The strategy should focus on the six key actions to prevent and respond to violence, drawing on current best practice, and using new data to monitor and be accountable for progress: (i) supporting parents, caregivers, and families; (ii) strengthening child and adolescent life skills; (iii) changing attitudes and social norms that encourage violence and discrimination; (iv) promoting and providing support services for children; (v) making laws and policies that protect children work; and (vi) carrying out data-driven research.<sup>72</sup>
- The UK should work with all its development partners to promote stronger legal frameworks to protect children from violence, and to ensure these frameworks are implemented.
- The UK has reached the target of spending 0.7 per cent of its gross national income on development assistance. It can now allocate a fair share of these resources to ending violence against children and should consider reporting on an annual basis on the impact of expenditure on this cross-cutting priority.
- The UK should ensure that its health, education, and social protections programmes tackle violence and improve the resilience of children, while doing more to ensure that violence does not prevent these programmes from achieving results for children.
- At home, the government should set out the policies, programmes, and finance that will be needed to end violence against children living in the UK and meet universal post-2015 targets.

## 4. ENSURE THE EPIDEMIC OF VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN CAN NO LONGER BE IGNORED, BY COLLECTING THE DATA AND EVIDENCE NEEDED TO TRACK PROGRESS AND ENSURE ACCOUNTABILITY

- The UK should continue to champion the data revolution that is needed to measure progress against post-2015 targets to end violence against children, ensuring the international community accepts the need to collect new data and develop new violence indicators, rather than rely on existing, inadequate data sources.
- In particular, the UK should ensure that indicators are included in the post-2015 goals, and in national data collection systems at home and abroad, for monitoring: (i) violent deaths and injuries; (ii) the prevalence and reporting of physical and sexual abuse; and (iii) perceptions of the acceptability of violence against children.
- The UK should support an expert group – to include representatives from the statistical offices of each of the global coalition’s members, as well as other experts – to prepare a plan for generating the data needed to measure all major forms of violence against children.
- The UK should seek commitment from all global coalition countries to implement the new measurement system from 2016 onwards, with regular collection of data based on common standards and methodologies, adapted as appropriate to national circumstances.
- The UK should also should review and invest in research into the perceptions, experiences, and needs of children who are most vulnerable to violence or who have already experienced violence. This will have a significant impact on our understanding of how violence shapes children’s lives, and of the social, political, economic, and cultural drivers of high levels of violence.
- Finally, the UK should join with partners around the world to raise awareness of the post-2015 target to end violence against children, building public support for putting the needs of vulnerable children at the heart of the post-2015 agenda.

**This young girl and her mum have fled their home because of the conflict in Central African Republic (CAR).**

More than 2 million children have been affected by the crisis. Violence is making food and water scarce. Serious human rights violations, including forced recruitment of children into armed groups and sexual violence, are widespread.

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**VIOLENCE THREATENS  
HER LIFE IN CENTRAL  
AFRICAN REPUBLIC**

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# THANKS

**UNICEF UK WOULD LIKE TO THANK  
THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE FOR THEIR  
HELP IN PRODUCING THIS REPORT:**

**DAVID STEVEN (AUTHOR) AND**

**ALISON BURT**

**ALISON WORSLEY**

**CLAUDIA CAPPA**

**JANE FREWER**

**KARIN HEISSLER**

**MARLIES DE GROOT**

**MATT KENT**

**SUSAN BISSELL**

**THERESA KILBANE**

# DEFINITION OF VIOLENCE

The definition of violence in this report is based on Article 19 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child that defines violence as “all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse”.<sup>70</sup>

This report recognises violence against children to include all types of violence as defined in General Comment No 13, by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, including neglect or negligent treatment, mental violence, physical violence, corporal punishment, sexual abuse and exploitation, torture and inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, violence among children, self-harm, harmful practices, violence in mass media, violence through ICT and institutional and system violations.<sup>71</sup>

The report therefore uses data and evidence for all forms of violence including:

- interpersonal violence, or violence committed between individuals, whether in the family or in the community
- collective violence, or violence committed by a larger group of people, for social, economic, or political motives
- self-directed violence, or violence committed by the person on themselves, including self-inflicted injuries and suicide

**WE LIVE IN A DANGEROUS  
WORLD WHERE MILLIONS OF  
CHILDREN ARE SUFFERING AND  
DYING UNNECESSARILY.**

**EVERY 5 MINUTES, A CHILD DIES  
BECAUSE OF VIOLENCE.**

**THIS IS WRONG AND IT IS  
TIME TO CHANGE.**

**UNICEF UK'S CAMPAIGN  
FOCUSES ON THE FIVE MAIN  
DANGERS THAT CHILDREN FACE:  
VIOLENCE, DISEASE, HUNGER,  
WAR, AND DISASTERS.**

**WE WILL DO WHATEVER IT  
TAKES, UNTIL EVERY CHILD  
IS SAFE.**

**PLEASE HELP US.**

**UNICEF.ORG.UK**

**FOR  
EVERY  
CHILD IN  
DANGER**

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