

European Union 

Recipient of the 2012 Nobel Peace Prize®



FACTSHEET Children in Conflict

Facts & Figures:

- 1 billion children live in conflict-affected areas, of which 300 million are under the age of five
- 7 million children are refugees
- 12.4 million children were displaced in their country in 2011
- There were 28 million conflict-affected children out of primary school in 2011
- There were 250.000 child soldiers in 2009
- Three out of the five countries with the highest child mortality rates in 2011 were conflict countries



Credits: Baalbek, Lebanon, 2008 © EC / ECHO / Samuel Rodriguez

Key messages

Children are among the **most vulnerable victims of conflict**. Conflict affects children in multiple ways. Boys and girls can be killed or injured, recruited by armed groups, separated from their families or forcibly displaced. Also they often cannot go to school during and in the immediate aftermath of conflicts.

Moreover, the violence experienced or witnessed during conflict has **long-term repercussions on children**. Even though children can find extraordinary ways to cope with traumatic experiences, the long-term psycho-social effects of conflict may undermine their future.

Despite these devastating consequences, **global humanitarian funding for children affected by conflict is limited**. Indeed, child protection and education in emergencies are among the least funded humanitarian sectors, since the more immediate life-saving provisions of food, shelter and medicine often take priority.

Receiving the **2012 Nobel Peace Prize** for its achievements in peace on the European continent, the EU decided to dedicate the prize money to help boys and girls around the world who are deprived of growing up in peace. The EU will fund humanitarian projects providing children in conflict situations with education.

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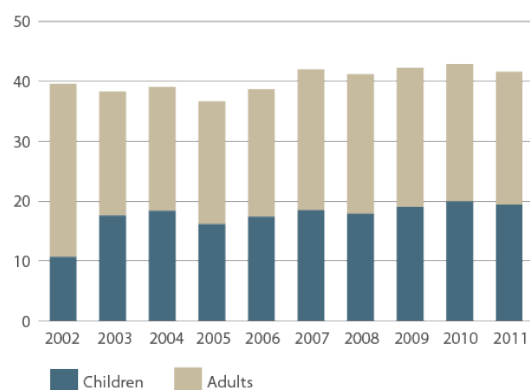
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Humanitarian situation and needs

Refugees and IDPs (millions)



Sources: UNHCR Global Trends 2011, Statistical Yearbooks 2002-2010

There were over **1 billion children living in countries affected by conflict** in 2009, including 300 million under five (UN estimates). Many children are among the civilian casualties of war. In Afghanistan, 1,756 children were killed or maimed in 2011. Children are also often recruited by armed groups, as combatants, intelligence sources, for forced labour and also for sexual exploitation. Moreover, children are frequently victims of landmines and unexploded ordnances.

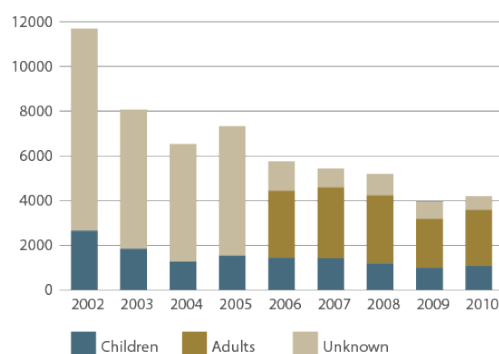
In 2011, **7 million children were refugees and 12.4 million children were displaced within their own country due to conflict**, according to UNHCR. They are equally at risk of becoming orphaned or separated from their families.

In addition, as their parents' livelihoods are destroyed and basic services are disrupted, the number of children suffering from malnutrition and dying from preventable or curable diseases increases in conflict situations. During a decade of conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, researchers estimated that an additional 5.4 million people died due to the conflict, almost half of them children.

28 million children were out of primary school in conflict-affected countries in 2011 (UNESCO estimates). As a result, only 79 percent of children in conflict-affected poor countries are literate, compared to 93 percent in other poor countries. And there is a growing trend of attacks against schools.

While children benefit from most of the humanitarian assistance delivered, sectors specifically targeting children, such as child protection and education are strongly underfunded on the global level. Over the last decade education was the least funded humanitarian sector, with almost two thirds of needs unfunded and an

Landmine victims

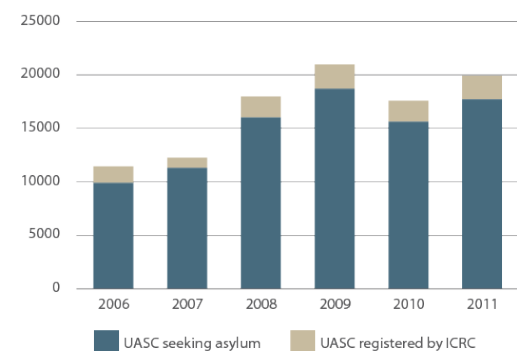


Sources: Source: International Campaign to Ban Landmines, Landmine Monitor (2003-2011)

allocation of only 3% of overall humanitarian assistance.

This is largely due to more immediate life-saving emergency relief often taking priority in a crisis. The EU's humanitarian projects for children to be funded with the Nobel Peace Prize money are meant to create awareness and advocate for the needs of children in conflict globally.

Registered unaccompanied and separated children (UASC)



Sources: UNHCR Statistical Yearbooks (2008, 2010), UNHCR Global Trends (2009, 2011), ICRC Annual Reports (2002-2011)

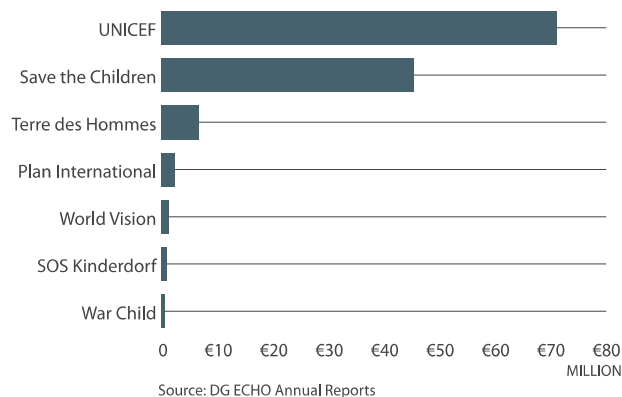
The European Union's Humanitarian Response

The EU's humanitarian aid is committed to address the specific needs of children affected by conflict. Its humanitarian aid department, ECHO, dedicates more than half of its funding to conflict-affected areas and 12% of its budget to child-focused relief organisations, much more than the global average.

In 2011, it gave over € 100 million to projects implemented by UNICEF and Save the Children alone.

The EU supports children affected by conflict, namely through child protection activities, psycho-social support, mine risk education, and actions against the recruitment of child soldiers.

EU humanitarian aid for children through specialised partner organisations (2011)



This commitment is in line with the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid, which states that "in responding to humanitarian needs, particular vulnerabilities must be taken into account. In this context, the EU will pay special attention to women, children, the elderly, sick and disabled people".

The EU Commission Staff Working Document on Children in Emergency and Crisis Situations (2008) addresses, in particular, the issue of children associated with armed forces and groups. The EU also adopted EU Guidelines on Children Affected by Armed Conflicts, which provide a common basis for action by EU Member States and the European Commission.

In action: Assisting Children Affected by Conflict



In Colombia, one out of four guerrilla or paramilitary soldiers is less than 18 years old. The European Commission, through its partner Save the Children UK, supports a project that prevents child recruitment by armed groups in the outskirts of Cali and Medellin. Thanks to the creation of child-friendly spaces where children can play, paint or take pictures, the project is able to keep children off the streets after school, protecting them from illegal recruitment. About 900 children benefit from this programme. The project is also working

together with local authorities and training teachers in view of promoting the enrolment of vulnerable children in the official education system. (Photo credits: Colombia, 2008 © Save the Children UK)

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has again seen escalating violence in the eastern part of the country in 2012, uprooting hundreds of thousands of people from their homes. Children that have to escape the fighting with their families are considered one of the most vulnerable groups. They bear the scars of their experience - both emotional and physical. The European Commission works with War Child, a specialised NGO, on a project in north and south Kivu, aimed at empowering more than 20,000 children and young people, professionals, community members and humanitarian actors in eight war-affected communities. The aim is to improve community-based responses in order to give adequate support, care and protection to their children. In order to do so, the action strengthens community based child protection networks to prevent, mitigate and respond to child abuse, violence and exploitation. It also promotes services, norms, behaviours and practices that minimize children's vulnerability. (Photo credits: DRC © EC / ECHO / François Goemans)





In the Occupied Palestinian Territory (oPT), the European Commission is funding a UNICEF project that provides psychosocial support to children in the hardest-hit conflict-affected areas of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. This project also aims at strengthening coordination mechanisms for child protection and mental health and psychosocial support, including rapid assessment, referral and case management and community-based child protection networks. In another project, this time with Save the Children Sweden, the European Commission assists Palestinian ex-detainee children in the West Bank with a post-trauma rehabilitation programme. This project promotes the re-integration of ex-detainee children into their communities by

enhancing their psychosocial wellbeing and coping capacity through in-depth counselling and school and community-based re-integration activities. (Photo credits: Al Kuhuf Park, Occupied Palestinian Territories, 2012 © ACF)

In order to protect children and adolescents that have escaped the violence in Syria, the European Commission works with Save the Children in Jordan, where 16 child and adolescent friendly spaces were created. These are places where youngsters can meet, play and talk about their experiences. Around 2.400 Syrian refugee children are being trained in a two-month age-appropriate programme that will help them coping with future challenges and recovering from traumatic experiences. Negative coping mechanisms such as engaging in child labour and early marriage are currently witnessed among the refugees. This EU funded project aims to prevent these practices through informing both parents and children about the associated risks and alternative opportunities. In addition, over 5.000 families are provided with clothes, blankets and heating. (Photo credits: Zaatari Camp, Jordan, 2012 © EC / ECHO / Dina Baslan)



Helping children to start a new life: the Republic of South Sudan marked its first anniversary as an independent country this year. Civilians are still bearing the brunt of the series of communal conflicts and border disputes, which



South Sudan 2012 © UNICEF / Ohanesian

continue to uproot people from their homes. The risks facing children with no parents or relatives to look after them is a matter of great concern. With European Commission funding, UNICEF runs child protection projects throughout the whole country to help these children to start a new life. Child protection workers from different implementing partners help with family tracing, reunification and other services. Some 2.400 were reunified with their families or placed in interim care. 9.000 receive psychosocial support and other protection services in child-friendly centres.