

Policy Brief v1

The Global Treaty for the Absolute Protection of Children from Warfare & Armed Conflict

**Proposed by
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1. Introduction

Children are the most vulnerable members of society, yet they continue to be disproportionately affected by war and armed conflict. These conditions disrupt their education, health, and security, with long-term consequences for societies worldwide. While existing international laws provide some protection, they fail to prevent wars or internal conflicts from being waged in areas where children reside.

The Rufina Children's Foundation proposes The Global Treaty for the Absolute Protection of Children from Warfare and Armed Conflict, a legally binding international agreement ensuring that the presence of children and their caregivers serves as an absolute barrier to armed hostilities. This treaty establishes a new international legal framework that prohibits military aggression and armed conflict in any location where children are present, making such acts criminally prosecutable.

2. The Urgent Need for This Treaty

Children as war's silent victims

- At least 468 million children live in conflict zones globally (UNICEF, 2023).
- Over 100,000 children have been killed or maimed due to armed conflict in the past decade (Save the Children, 2022).
- Millions face displacement, starvation, lack of healthcare, and recruitment into armed forces.

Limitations of existing international law

- Frameworks such as the Geneva Conventions, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and the Rome Statute of the ICC prohibit attacks on civilians, but:
 - Do not prevent warfare or armed conflict from occurring in areas where children reside.
 - Lack robust enforcement mechanisms strong enough to deter violators.
 - Do not criminalize the act of initiating conflict in child-occupied zones.

A New Legal Standard: Absolute Protection of Children from Warfare and Armed Conflict

This treaty closes legal and moral gaps by establishing a non-negotiable principle: no group or nation may engage in hostilities where children reside, and their caregivers must also be protected as integral to the child's wellbeing.

3. Key Provisions of the Treaty

1. **Absolute prohibition of war and armed conflict in areas with children.** No state or non-state actor shall initiate armed conflict where children are known to reside.

2. **Criminal accountability for violators.** Military leaders, policymakers, militia commanders, and others who violate this treaty shall face prosecution by the International Criminal Court (ICC) or other designated international bodies.
3. **Mandatory peaceful dispute resolution.** All conflicts must be addressed through legal, diplomatic, or non-violent means as a first and binding step.
4. **Creation of Child Protection Zones (CPZs).** Governments must designate zones that house children and families as off-limits to all forms of military and surveillance activity.
5. **Inclusion of caregivers in protection scope.** Legal protections apply to children's guardians and caregivers, recognizing their essential role in a child's survival and safety.
6. **International sanctions for treaty violators.** The United Nations and other governing bodies shall impose sanctions, including asset freezes, trade bans, and international isolation.

4. Global Implementation & Enforcement Strategy

United Nations General Assembly & Security Council

- Formal recognition and ratification of the treaty as an international legal standard.

International Criminal Court (ICC)

- Amendment to the Rome Statute to classify war against nations with children as a war crime.

Regional & National Endorsement

- Encourage regional blocs (AU, EU, ASEAN) and national governments to incorporate the treaty into domestic legal systems.

Global Advocacy & Civil Society Engagement

- Collaborate with international child rights organizations (e.g., Save the Children, UNICEF, Amnesty International) to build public awareness and diplomatic momentum.

5. Call to Action

We urge governments, international organizations, and global humanitarian actors to:

- Ratify and implement The Global Treaty for the Absolute Protection of Children from Warfare and Armed Conflict.
- Push for legal reforms to empower international courts to hold violators accountable.
- Establish and enforce Child Protection Zones in every conflict-prone nation.
- Ensure the safety of both children and their caregivers in conflict settings.

Conclusion: A World Where War Can Never Touch a Child

The Rufina Children's Foundation calls upon global leaders to protect children and those who care for them. This treaty represents a transformative shift in how humanity defines war, peace, and justice. Let children, and their guardians, be the line no bullet or bomb shall ever cross.