



Press Release

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Fifty-ninth General Assembly
Third Committee
16th & 17th Meetings (AM & PM)

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PRACTICAL APPROACH FOCUSING ON CONCRETE ACTIONS TO PROTECT CHILDREN NEEDED

THIRD COMMITTEE TOLD, AS IT BEGINS DISCUSSION OF CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Children and Armed Conflict, Violence Against Children, Activities of UNICEF among Topics Discussed

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Background

The Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural) met today to begin its consideration of the rights of the child.

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Statements

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ABDULLATIF H. SALLAM (Saudi Arabia) ...

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When speaking of children's rights, the suffering of children in the Palestinian territories could not be overlooked, he concluded. The international community was called upon to ensure respect of Palestinian children's rights under the Convention and other international instruments.

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SAEED AL-HEBSI (United Arab Emirates) ...

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Programmes and plans for children's welfare had been merged with those devoted to advancement of women and the family, he said. Among national accomplishments, he cited the provision of free and mandatory primary education to all, reduction of the infant mortality rate to 6.57 per 1,000, eradication of polio, establishment of specialized centres for care of the physically and mentally disabled, and adoption of legislation on juveniles that was in accordance with the Convention. His country also remained deeply concerned about the situation of Palestinian children.

Mr. ATIA (Libya) said some gains had been made in promotion and protection of the rights of the child, but progress had been uneven. Efforts must remain ongoing to redress threats to children's rights, particularly violence against children, which took the form of trafficking, sexual exploitation and war and armed conflict. For example, the situation of Palestinian children continued to be of concern. The international community must shoulder its responsibility to end the suffering of Palestinian children, as well as the suffering of African children due to poverty, disease and conflict. ...

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SAMIR KOUBAA (Tunisia) said the international community had many times decried the gap that existed between international norms on the rights of the child and their violation in situations of armed conflict. He expressed concern about the precariousness of the situation of many children worldwide – particularly in Africa – due to armed conflict, HIV/AIDS and other diseases, malnutrition, poverty and exploitation, as cited in the report of the Secretary-General, as well as the situation of unaccompanied children. The lot of children living in the occupied Arab territories was also of grave concern; the international community must ensure respect for the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Geneva Conventions for the benefit of Palestinian children and their families.

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