



OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON

**VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN**

# Solutions for Children Previously Affiliated With Extremist Groups: An Evidence Base to Inform Repatriation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration



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# Executive Summary

- Tens of thousands of foreign, Iraqi and Syrian children are being held in detention on suspected ISIS association or terror-related offenses, or in camps. These children are exposed to violence, due process violations and family separation. Securing solutions for these children must be pursued in advance or in parallel with efforts to facilitate repatriation.
- The UN standpoint is that identified children should be repatriated and children born to nationals be granted citizenship. Further, such children should be considered as having been illegally recruited by violent extremist groups, and thus should be treated primarily as victims and decisions concerning them made in accordance with their best interests.
- The international community's approach to repatriation has been uneven. Some countries of origin have refused to receive adults associated with extremist groups, as well as their children. Others are willing to repatriate only children, only orphans or only children under a certain age. Where countries do repatriate, transitional arrangements have varied, including detaining children and the use of rehabilitation centres, through to direct community-facilitated reintegration.
- States and recipient communities must be understood as trying to reconcile competing security imperatives. Without clear evidence on how to prevent recidivism, some States view repatriation as incompatible with their duty to protect citizens. On the other hand, leaving children in detention or camps, denies their most basic rights and may foster new grievances.
- The evidence from the scholarship on children in conflict with the law is that detention and/or punitive sanctions
  - (i) do not reduce crime
  - (ii) increase the risk of reoffending
  - (iii) reduce the likelihood of successful community reintegration.

These risks apply equally to children who have disengaged from violent extremist groups. Moreover, where such children are exposed to violence (especially if this is done with impunity) or interpret their incarceration as an act of State prowess, existing feelings of powerlessness and marginalization are likely to be reinforced.

- The scholarship on child soldiers emphasises that a child's re-acceptance into the family and community is the key factor in successful rehabilitation and non-recidivism. Evidence from Mozambique, Uganda, Sierra Leone and Rwanda all support that when programming prioritizes reintegration, most children grow up to be healthy, valued and contributing members of their communities.
- The juvenile justice scholarship holds that successful rehabilitation involves giving children the opportunity to build the skills they need to access alternate pathways and exercise more constructive life choices. This requires a 'systems thinking' approach whereby an interdisciplinary set of actors work together towards multiple goals, including: addressing the drivers of the behavior, facilitating opportunities for reparation, developing the skills needed to re-enter education or the workplace, and building relationships to support community reintegration.
- While popular, experts have begun to question the efficacy of 'de-radicalization' programs. Practitioners increasingly favour the notion of desistance — a focus on behaviours such as how children disengage from violence, as opposed to an unpacking of why they do it. Another accepted approach is to understand a child's involvement in armed conflict, acts of violence or exposure to indoctrination as a trauma disorder best treated using cognitive behavioural therapy.

- The most common driver of recidivism is community rejection or the absence of livelihood opportunities. The takeaway is that rehabilitation needs to ensure that education and vocation skills goals align with the opportunities a child will likely have access to. Moreover, where the potential for stigmatization, discrimination or rejection is high, interventions around community sensitization, reparation or negotiation will need to be initiated.
- While punishment and detention produce negative outcomes in children, recognizing children's agency and the corresponding need for accountability is often a critical component of rehabilitation. Making reparation can be a pathway for children to grow social interest and reintegrate sustainably into society, whereas denying their crimes may operate consolidate their feelings of marginalization.

# Part 1.

## Background to the Debate Around Repatriation

Between 2009-2017, an estimated 4,640 foreign children became affiliated with ISIS in Iraq and Syria and at least 730 infants were born to foreign parents in these territories. To date around 1,180 children have been repatriated, leaving more than 4,000 in theatre.<sup>1</sup> While many are believed to have died, others are being held in detention or camps. In 2018, a judge from the Baghdad High Court confirmed that his country was holding 900 children in custody, 185 of whom were foreigners and had been convicted under terrorism legislation.<sup>2</sup> What should happen with these children, as well as child affiliates who have already returned or who never left, has become the subject of a polarized international debate.

### 1.5 Million Children are Deprived of Their Liberty

Throughout the world, in any one year, around 1.5 million children are deprived of their liberty; around 35,000 of these children are detained in the context of armed conflict, and 1,500 are detained under national security rules or legislation. Nigeria is known to have detained 1,903 children suspected of association with Boko Haram, while Somalian authorities have detained thousands of children for connection to al-Shabaab. In Iraq and Syria, as of early 2019, the number of children being held in camps sat in the tens of thousands. In many cases, detention follows 'security sweeps' of schools or villages, with arrests based on family associations or assumptions concerning group affiliation.

*The United Nations Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty (2019) 567-592, 659*

The UN is advocating that States coordinate their approaches and set in place repatriation, prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration processes that comply with their obligations under international law.<sup>3</sup> In such processes, children should be

1 J Cook and G Vale, 'From Daesh to 'Disaspora': Tracing the Women and Minors of the Islamic State', International Centre for the Study of Radicalization 2018, 3.

2 The United Nations Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty (2019) 591-603.

3 Key Principles for the Protection, Repatriation, Prosecution, Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Women and Children with links to UN Listed Terrorist Groups, UN Secretary-General (2019).

afforded treatment that is consistent with their rights, dignity and needs, as set out in, inter alia, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990).<sup>4</sup> To this end, States are responsible for providing care and assistance to all children within their jurisdiction, regardless of their nationality, including by identifying children and providing them with documentation. Identified children should be repatriated to their home countries and children born to nationals granted citizenship. Moreover, where the parents of a child are in detention, repatriation determinations should be made taking into account principles on family unity and a best interests determination.

Following repatriation, the international standpoint is that children should be considered as having been recruited by violent extremist groups in violation of international law. The implications are threefold: such children should not be sanctioned for their membership or group association; they should be treated primarily as victims; and decisions concerning them should be made in accordance with their best interests.<sup>5</sup> The legal basis for this is complex, but is grounded in article 4 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (2002), which prohibits the recruitment and use of children by non-State armed groups in hostilities.<sup>6</sup>

It is important to highlight that children being attributed victim status does not preclude criminal liability.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, children recruited and exploited by violent extremist groups may still have committed, or been involved in the commission of, serious offences. Under international law, any such child — provided that they have reached the age of criminal responsibility — can be held legally accountable. However, their victim status should be taken into account in assessing their culpability, and moreover, legal processes must adhere to international juvenile justice standards, which provide children with special rights and protections, irrespective of the gravity of the offence. These include, inter alia, a presumption against prosecution and determinations that are geared towards the rehabilitation and reintegration of the child concerned. Even if a child is found to pose a credible security threat, detention should be imposed only as a last resort, for the shortest period of time and in separation from adults (except when this is deemed to be against a child's best interests).

Despite strong advocacy on the part of the UN and specialist child protection agencies, States have been slow and uneven in their approach to repatriation, bucking the expectation that (particularly Western) States would abide by international norms.<sup>8</sup> Some countries of origin have refused to receive adults associated with extremist groups, as well as their children. Others are willing to repatriate only children, only orphans, or only children under a certain age. Similar trends apply to prosecution. Despite encouragement towards a human rights compliant approach, few States have included child-specific protections in their counter-terrorism legislation and regulatory framework. As such, children risk being disproportionately impacted by the expanded powers and reach of the security sector, including widened definitions of terror offences and elaborated powers of arrest and detention.

This disconnect between international best practice and how States are dealing with children once affiliated with extremist groups, contains important messages that need to be unpacked and taken into account in response strategies. Governments must be understood as trying to resolve a complex set of competing imperatives. On the one hand, they

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4 Security Council Resolution 2178 (2014), see also General Assembly Resolution 70/291 on the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy Review.

5 See Security Council Resolution 2427 (2018), Paris Principles: Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups (2007) para 8.7.

6 The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (2002) criminalizes actions relating to the sale of children, including for the purposes of forced labour.

7 Where a child involvement in a terrorist group is the result of trafficking in persons, international good practice is that the trafficked person should not be held accountable for offences directly connected or related to the trafficking situation.

8 Key Principles for the Protection, Repatriation, Prosecution, Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Women and Children with links to UN Listed Terrorist Groups, UN Secretary-General (2019); The United Nations Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty (2019) 649.

have a duty of care to protect their citizens and others from violence by taking all measures to prevent and counter terrorism. Indeed, the UN has called upon them to prosecute terrorists and develop national legal apparatus that reflect the specificities and seriousness of terror-related offences.<sup>9</sup> Some argue that repatriation — of children or entire families — sits at odds with these obligations. In part, this is because once on home soil, authorities are constrained by their domestic legal apparatus, as well as available resources. Evidentiary deficits are likely to prevent the prosecution of children in a majority of cases, particularly where acts were perpetrated overseas. Experts are uncertain, however, how effective existing rehabilitation and reintegration methodologies will be in preventing recidivism. At the same time, monitoring individuals for an indeterminate period is unlikely to be financially viable. There is no doubt that such concerns have been aggravated by public pressure. There has been highly-publicized reporting around extremist indoctrination processes, and the lasting impact this may have on children's capacity for terrorist violence. In 2018, Germany's domestic intelligence chief Hans-Georg Maassen characterized children affiliated with ISIS as "living time bombs" who could "come back brainwashed with a mission to carry out attacks".<sup>10</sup> His statements followed extensive news coverage concerning the upward trend in terrorist attacks carried out by children; indeed, between September 2014-December 2016, 34 plots involving 44 children in seven Western countries, were uncovered.

The other view is that preventing children from repatriating and participating in accountability processes is equally, if not more, risk imbued. For the thousands of children being held in administrative, pre-trial or post-conviction detention in Iraq and Syria, the evidence is that their exposure to violence is high and the protection of their due process rights is low. Others have been released, but without safeguards or support, bolstering the likelihood of stigmatization and/or community rejection. These children — as they return to an unchanged scenario, potentially with new grievances — are highly vulnerable to being drawn back into an extremist group, or driven down another dysfunctional pathway. This logic applies equally to repatriated children; punitive treatment or denying internationally guaranteed protections risks exacerbating or creating new hostility directed towards State authorities on the part of children themselves, their families and/or their communities.

This debate has left States at an impasse. But the trade-off is not between upholding human rights and maintaining security; it is between short-term and long-term security ends. Thus, even where States accept that upholding children's rights in the administration of justice is the best protection against recidivism, without a clear understanding of what successfully rehabilitating such children entails, they will remain reluctant to take any steps that may expose their citizens to short-term vulnerability. The upshot is that while States are incentivized to act in some way to resolve the status quo, they are not comfortable moving in the precise direction being advocated by the UN. The question is how to propose a framework for repatriation and rehabilitation that responds both to the concerns of States and children's best interests.

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9 see e.g. Security Council resolutions 2178 (2014) and 2396 (2017).

10 See <https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-germany-security-children-brainwashed-children-of-islamist-fighters-worry-germany-spy-chief-idUKKBN1FK1FR> (accessed 12 February 2020).

## Overview of State obligations of States towards children suspected of association with violent extremist groups

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990), together with the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (2002) set out a framework of obligations which States should follow with respect to children affiliated or associated with violent extremist groups. Complementary 'soft law', although not binding, sets out international standards and best practices. These include: the Neuchâtel Memorandum on Good Practices for Juvenile Justice in a Counterterrorism context (2016) and the Paris Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Conflict and Armed Groups (2007).

- The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (2002) prohibits non-state groups from recruiting children or their use in hostilities. It also requires that States take all feasible measures to ensure that children who have been illegally recruited in their jurisdiction are demobilised and released from service.
- States are responsible for providing care and assistance to all children within their jurisdiction, regardless of their nationality, including by identifying children and providing them with documentation.
- As highlighted in Security Council Resolution 2427 (2018), the international standpoint is that identified children should be repatriated to their home countries and children born to nationals be granted citizenship. Following repatriation, children should be considered as having been recruited by violent extremist groups in violation of international law. Such children should not be sanctioned for their membership or group association; they should be treated primarily as victims; and decisions concerning them should be made in accordance with their best interests.
- Under international law, children who have reached the age of criminal responsibility can be held legally accountable for crimes committed. However, their victim status should be taken into account in assessing their culpability.
- Where children are exposed to criminal justice processes, these must adhere to international juvenile justice standards, which provide children with special rights and protections, irrespective of the gravity of the offence. These include, inter alia, a presumption against prosecution and determinations that are geared towards rehabilitation and reintegration.
- The arrest, detention or imprisonment of a child must only be used as a last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time. States should preference alternatives to detention such as care, guidance and supervision orders, counselling, probation, foster care etc.

# Part 2.

## The Evidence on Detaining Children in Conflict with the Law

Given its parallels with children affiliated with extremist groups, a logical starting point is the existing evidence on juvenile criminality and civic deviance. This scholarship is rooted in the idea that children who have been exposed to violence, failed to develop prosocial bonds or did not acquire key reasoning and relational tools, grow up with deficits around certain socio-behavioural capacities. When they encounter challenges, for example failure, rejection or marginalization, they react by engaging in asocial behavioural responses, ranging from misbehaviour through to juvenile criminality, gang membership and drug abuse.

Although it may appear counter-intuitive, punishing children for such behavior, even when it is illegal, produces sub-optimal results. Indeed, the evidence is that punitive treatment, and detention in particular, does not reduce or act as a deterrent to re-offending.<sup>11</sup>

One explanation is that children in detention are highly vulnerable to violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation. This is mainly because power differentials operate to weaken accountability mechanisms, with the result that violence often goes unreported, creating a cycle of invisibility. Girls suffer disproportionately both in terms of their exposure to violence and the gravity of its consequences.<sup>12</sup> It is also clear that the worse the detention conditions, the worse the risks and outcomes. A second reason is that because of their mid-stage cognitive development, the passage of time affects children differently to adults. Removing children from their family and community networks, as well as from educational or vocational opportunities, creates blocks of deficit that interact and compound over time to create social and economic disadvantages. Exposure to the criminal justice system thus operates to reduce a child's long-term potential and place them on a negative trajectory of low expectation and learned behaviors that correlate with recidivism and cyclical patterns of deviance. A final argument against detention is that severing a child's links from society as punishment follows a misinterpretation of how children in conflict with the law view and exist in the world. Detention as punishment implicitly assumes that these children have a stake in and are invested in society, whereas the opposite is more likely to be

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11 S. Pinker *Enlightenment Now: The case for reason, science, humanism and Progress* (2018) 176. Note that similarly negative outcomes have accrued from experiments in drug law enforcement, 'three strikes' programs and programs targeting 'at risk' youths.

12 United Nations Report of the independent expert for the United Nations study on violence against children A/61/299 (2006)

the case. They engage in deviant behaviour as a statement of their 'outsider' status; in the case of violent crime, cognitive separation from society is often a prerequisite. Separating such children from a world they do not feel part of and have actively chosen to disengage from thus not only fails to target the causal issue, it is likely to reinforce or consolidate it.<sup>13</sup>

It is not difficult to link this reasoning with the needs of and challenges faced by children who have been affiliated with extremist groups. Certainly, if children join a violent group as an act of power and agency — and in response to marginalization, disempowerment and social injustice — the risks associated with punitive approaches and detention are acute. If these children are exposed to violence (especially if this is done with impunity) or they interpret their incarceration as an act of State prowess, their existing feelings of powerlessness and marginalization are likely to be reinforced.

### **The consequences stemming from the detention of children**

The United Nations Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty (2019) investigated the situation of children in detention across the world. It found a consistent trend linking detention to feelings of disempowerment, powerlessness, isolation and loss of skills. The study also revealed that when children are detained in the context of armed conflict, the conditions rarely meet minimum standards. Most often, children are kept in overcrowded facilities, frequently alongside adults, and with inadequate access to sanitation, food or healthcare. Recreation, education and skills building opportunities are seldom provided. Many children are exposed to torture, ill-treatment and violence, resulting in severe and long-lasting mental and physical health implications, and sometimes death.

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13 M Gladwell David and Goliath: Underdogs, Misfits and the Art of Battling Giants (2014) 231-243, 248.

# Part 3.

## The Evidence from Child Soldiers

During the 1980s-1990s, the issue of child soldiers rose to the top of the international agenda, largely driven by the civil wars in Sierra Leone, Uganda, Rwanda and Mozambique. Sometimes in the tens of thousands, militant groups engaged children in all aspects of armed conflict, capitalizing on their vulnerabilities, such as being cheaper to maintain and easier to manipulate. While such children were mainly abducted from their homes or schools,<sup>14</sup> experts concede that a number made an active decision to join an armed group. This is not to suggest that such a choice was voluntary; collapsed family and community systems, coupled with inadequate educational opportunities, poverty and limited opportunity left many children highly vulnerable to the lure of remuneration, security, and camaraderie promised by militia.<sup>15</sup>

Following the cessation of these conflicts, States and communities needed to decide how mechanisms of transitional justice would apply to demobilized children. As in the current debate, it was acknowledged that many had been forcibly recruited and exploited, rendering them both victims and perpetrators of violence.<sup>16</sup> Community reintegration was a particularly sensitive issue. A tactic commonly used by armed groups was to force children to perform acts that grossly violated social norms — such as killing a family member or raping an elderly woman. While the rationale was to sever kinship ties and minimize the risk of defection, a further outcome was to decrease the likelihood that children would be accepted back to their communities.<sup>17</sup> The result was that while prosecution alongside adults did not appear to be fair, complete exoneration was also not viewed as a viable option.

In reconciling these challenges, different combinations of punitive and restorative measures were introduced, largely driven by context. Sierra Leone and Rwanda adopted approaches that favoured legalistic justice. Recognizing that children formed bulk of the militia force and perpetrated some of the worst human rights violations, the Special Court for Sierra

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14 GM Musila, 'Challenges in Establishing the Accountability of Child Soldiers for Human Rights Violations: Restorative Justice as an Option', 5 African Human Rights Law Journal (2005).

15 T Stichick Betancourt, I Borisova, T Williams, R Brennan, TH Whitfield, M de la Soudiere, J Williamson, S Gilman 'Sierra Leone's Former Child Soldiers: A Follow-up Study of Psychosocial Adjustment and Community Reintegration' Child Development 81(4) 2010.

16 A Honwana 'Children in War: Reintegrating Child Soldiers' IDS Bulletin Volume 40 Number 1 (2009).

17 N Boothby, J Crawford and J Halperin 'Mozambique child soldier life outcome study: Lessons learned in rehabilitation and reintegration efforts' Global Public Health, 1(1) 87 (2006).

Leone was mandated to try individuals as young as 15 years. The court could not, however, hand down custodial orders and needed to apply internationally recognized juvenile justice principles.<sup>18</sup> In Rwanda, the limitations of the International Tribunal led to the government's decision to elaborate upon the traditional *Gacaca* system. Based on customary norms, this system relied on admissions of guilt, then categorised perpetrators according to culpability, and imposed a range of punitive through to restorative solutions.

In other countries, the absence of States-led strategies meant that customary systems were even more heavily relied upon. In Mozambique, for example, an obstacle to reintegration was the widespread and deeply embedded belief that individuals exposed to death and bloodshed became infected with 'social pollution' that could spread to the wider community. Reconciliation rituals – which both 'cleansed' individuals of their acts and provided the community with protection from ancestral rebuke – proved pivotal in returning children to their communities.<sup>19</sup>

In Uganda, the agreement between the government and the Lord's Resistance Army included reference to the customary mechanism *Fambul Tok*, allowing restorative and punitive sanctions to be pursued in tandem. *Fambul Tok* was a widely accepted means of resolving disputes, focused on bringing all affected parties together and providing perpetrators with an opportunity to take responsibility for their actions and repair harm caused. Critically, this allowed communities to deal with the large number of perpetrators that could not be tried by the Tribunal created, and also children, who fell outside of its jurisdiction. Importantly, in the case of child soldiers, the *fambul tok* process was modified to take account of perpetrators' age and, where relevant, forced recruitment.<sup>20</sup>

The long-term outcomes for these children in terms of reintegration have only been scantily studied. The evidence that does exist, however, supports the idea that community-led reconciliation has played a powerful and positive role in social cohesion and non-recidivism. One longitudinal study tracked the psychological, social and economic functioning of 39 Mozambique child soldiers between 1988-2004. Once demobilized, these children were provided with physical and psychological rehabilitation support by Save the Children over a 6-month at the Lhanguene Rehabilitation Center in Maputo. This support focused on strengthening coping skills, building a sense of social responsibility and promoting self-regulation and security (rather than survival) seeking behaviour. Following this process, reintegration assistance was provided over a 2-year period, alongside community-led traditional cleansing and healing rituals. The research consistently found that these children became trusted, included and productive adult members of their communities – a direct contrast to common perceptions at the time which likened child soldiers to 'future barbarians'. The study found that being accepted by their families and communities was the most important factor predicting successful reintegration. To this end, community sensitization campaigns seemed to play an important role; these targeted local military, police, teachers and community leaders who were encouraged to support the reintegration process and take collective responsibility for returnees' fates. Community-identified works projects, such as water access or health care centres, were also important. By contrast, support – positive or negative – that seemed to single out reintegrating child soldiers had a deleterious impact. Educational stipends, for example, seemed to cause tension in the former child soldiers' families, as well within the wider community.<sup>21</sup>

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18 GM Musila, 'Challenges in Establishing the Accountability of Child Soldiers for Human Rights Violations: Restorative Justice as an Option', 5 African Human Rights Law Journal (2005).

19 A Honwana 'Children in War: Reintegrating Child Soldiers' IDS Bulletin Volume 40 Number 1 (2009); N Boothby 'What Happens When Child Soldiers Grow Up? The Mozambique Case Study; Intervention, 4(3) (2006).

20 H Among 'The application of traditional justice mechanisms to the atrocities committed by child soldiers in Uganda: A practical restorative justice approach' Africa Human Rights Law Journal Vol 13 No. 2 (2013).

21 N Boothby, J Crawford and J Halperin 'Mozambique child soldier life outcome study: Lessons learned in rehabilitation and reintegration efforts' Global Public Health, 1(1) 87 (2006).

These findings are consistent with a similar study that investigated the psychosocial adjustment in 156 male and female former child soldiers over a 2-year period following Sierra Leone's 1991-2002 civil conflict. This research found that around one-third of the children suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety and hostility, and that these tendencies were exaggerated where children had participated in crimes such as murder or rape. As in the Mozambique study, community and family acceptance was associated with better outcomes, including reduced hostility, and improved confidence and prosocial attitudes. Moreover, acceptance seemed to correlate with sensitization campaigns and community discussions around the reintegration of former child soldiers. Reintegration also seemed to have a reciprocal, mutually constituting element. When child soldiers experienced signals of reacceptance and forgiveness, this seemed to be returned with increased positive effort on the part of children, such as by helping others, contributing to community goals and participating in restorative solutions.<sup>22</sup>

Africa's experience with child soldiers carries important lessons that should inform strategies on the rehabilitation and reintegration of children previously associated with ISIS. In particular:

- Criminal justice may not always be sufficient to allow for successful reintegration. This may be because the judicial process does not facilitate reparation, does not reflect local justice norms, or is too far removed from the community.
- Re-acceptance by one's family and community is the strongest predictor of healthy reintegration and non-recidivism. Efforts to support reintegration need to be actively pursued, including through early, inclusive and comprehensive sensitization. Depending on the community, traditional reconciliation ceremonies and projects linked to community needs can facilitate the process of former combatants returning to community life.
- Authorities should consider restorative justice as an alternative or complement to a criminal justice processes. Restorative mechanisms – such as compensation, restitution and rehabilitation - aim to repair the harm caused by crime by responding to the needs of all stakeholders, including the perpetrator.<sup>23</sup> Restorative processes may be particularly suited to crimes committed by children given their status as victim and perpetrator.
- Opportunities to attend school, build vocational skills or engage in livelihoods can aid in the social reintegration of returning children and may act as a deterrent against recidivism.

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22 T Stichick Betancourt, I Borisova, T Williams, R Brennan, TH Whitfield, M de la Soudiere, J Williamson, S Gilman 'Sierra Leone's Former Child Soldiers: A Follow-up Study of Psychosocial Adjustment and Community Reintegration' *Child Development* 81(4) 2010.

23 GM Musila, 'Challenges in Establishing the Accountability of Child Soldiers for Human Rights Violations : Restorative Justice as an Option', 5 *African Human Rights law Journal* (2005).

# Part 4.

## A Rehabilitation Approach to Children in Conflict with the Law

The scholarship on juvenile justice mechanisms holds that, rather than detention, what children in conflict with the law need is an opportunity to ‘reboot’. Such mechanisms aim to vest children with the skills they need — whether self-control, conflict resolution or critical analysis — to access alternate pathways and exercise more constructive life choices. These tools and choices act as a bridge to gaining a ‘stake in society’ — an existence based on connectedness and social interest where there is no need for or incentive to engage in deviant behaviour.

Facilitating such rehabilitation requires a ‘systems thinking’ approach geared towards the child’s eventual reintegration into the community. In practice, systems thinking means developing an individualized program that speaks simultaneously to multiple goals, including addressing the cause of the problem, providing the child with an opportunity to make reparation, providing the child with the skills needed to re-enter education or the workplace, and building the relationships (and relationship tools) needed to support healthy community reintegration. This approach demands the involvement of an interdisciplinary set of professionals, including justice actors, child protection specialists, health and mental health workers, educators and vocational trainers, as well as family members and community representatives. Given the correlations between unsuccessful societal reintegration and reoffending, particular attention needs to be paid to skills building and education. A key lesson from early work on juvenile justice is that when children have deficits vis-a-vis peers, pathways to gaining a stake in society become more difficult.<sup>24</sup> When this combines with stigmatization and suspicion, blocks are formed that result in societal rejection, leading to recidivism and/or new forms of deviant behaviour.<sup>25</sup>

Children previously associated or affiliated with violent extremist groups have often been exposed to heavy ideological and religious indoctrination. A common result is that they develop a highly polarized world view. For example, they may regard war as inevitable, or be unable to identify themselves in a civilian capacity. A critical part of the rehabilitation process will thus be for children to create a new life framework within which to situate themselves. There is evidence

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24 For further discussion of deprivation of liberty of children for alleged association with designated terrorist groups, see the UNODC Handbook on Children Recruited and Exploited by Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups: The Role of the Justice System (2017).

25 For further discussion of deprivation of liberty of children for alleged association with designated terrorist groups, see the UNODC Handbook on Children Recruited and Exploited by Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups: The Role of the Justice System (2017).

that engaging or building relationships with individuals who have previously disengaged from extremism can accelerate and consolidate this process. These individuals seem to have particular success in teaching children how to identify and deconstruct content-manipulated Islamic messaging, and helping them to reconcile a strong Muslim identity with a non-violent civilian life. The work of the Quilliam Foundation is a positive example of how former extremists have been engaged to assist young people withdraw from violent groups and reject jihadism.<sup>26</sup>

A final point concerns interventions geared towards supporting a process of 'de-radicalization' as part of the criminal justice process. The efficacy of such programs has come under increasing criticism in recent years. A commonly held view is that, even if it were possible to condition people alter their views, values and attitudes (something that is questioned by the psychology community of practice), counter-indoctrination may be interpreted as a further act of manipulation by a heavy-handed State, especially to those who already feel controlled and suspicious. Moreover, if the evidence on juvenile criminality is to be followed, de-radicalization may not even be necessary. Case management experience suggests that deviant behaviours do not need to be actively overcome or delegitimized; they tend to fall away and become irrelevant as a child gains the skills and tools they need. Instead, practitioners favour the notion of desistance — a focus on behaviours such as how children disengage from crime or violence, as opposed to an unpacking of why they do it.<sup>27</sup> This approach builds skills, acknowledges children's decision-making abilities, and power to reason; there is also some evidence that programmes focusing on violence disengagement tend to be more effective and less likely to give rise to future discrimination.

An equally accepted approach is to understand a child's involvement in armed conflict, acts of violence or exposure to indoctrination as a trauma disorder. Trauma-focused approaches employ techniques such as including, Risk-Need Responsivity Modelling (RRM), Strength-Based Cognition Theory, Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT), Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR), and Narrative Exposure Therapy (NET). NET, in particular, has been tested with children associated with armed groups for the purpose of terrorism, including Ugandan children and youth involved with the Lord Resistance Army). These therapies can be useful in assisting children to contextualize their involvement in extremism (by understanding the trauma as a series of accumulating events), allow them to distinguish between and reconcile civil life and armed group life, and reduce their proclivity to engage in future acts of violence.

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26 See further 'In and Out of Extremism' Quilliam Foundation (2015). This publication provides case studies of the work of Maajid Nawas and Dr Usama Hasan. Both are former extremists who – by articulating their own narratives of embracing and then rejecting extremism – have contributed to the rehabilitation of many young Britons.

27 Theoretical Frame to Guide Interventions with Children in Conflict with the Law: Promoting desistance from crime and restorative justice programmes from Terre des Hommes, Terre des Hommes (2019).

# Part 5.

## A Framework for Successful Reintegration

The evidence from both the juvenile justice and child soldier scholarship is that the success of community reintegration largely determines whether a child will return to or repeat their past asocial behaviours. Reintegration should therefore be seen as among the most important steps in the juvenile justice process, and one that should be planned from the earliest moment. A key reason for developing rehabilitation and reintegration strategies jointly is to ensure that education and vocation skills goals are aligned temporally and with respect to the opportunities a child will likely have. Another important reason is to establish positive expectations around the rehabilitation process – for the child, their family and the broader community. In many cases – especially where a child’s actions caused harm to a community or its members – the potential for stigmatization, discrimination and even rejection will need to be evaluated. Where a community is reluctant to reintegrate a child, interventions around community sensitization, reparation or negotiation may need to be initiated.<sup>28</sup> It should be noted that boy and girl returnees are likely to face different types of challenges. Boys are more likely to be seen as a security threat, while girls – especially if they were raped or return with infants conceived during the conflict – may be viewed as socially ‘tainted’.

### Assisting rape survivors reintegrate in Uganda

Ugandan girls raped by the members of the Lord’s Resistance Army experienced difficulty reintegrating into their communities. Some were rejected by their parents; others were not allowed to re-enter society at the decision of community leaders. Even when girls were allowed to repatriate, their babies were stigmatized and viewed as an economic burden. In response, the Trust Fund for Victims launched an accelerated learning programme combined with infant day care geared towards helping these young mothers close education gaps and develop a positive bond with their babies. During the school year, the girls carry their children in public while wearing their school uniforms; this is a public statement that being a student and a mother is not a source of shame but a remarkable achievement.

<sup>28</sup> For further discussion of deprivation of liberty of children for alleged association with designated terrorist groups, see the UNODC Handbook on Children Recruited and Exploited by Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups: The Role of the Justice System (2017).

A final point is that reintegration does not end when a child returns to their community. Monitoring is always required, as well as – in some cases – ongoing assistance around livelihoods, security and social cohesion. Evidence from studies of ISIS returnees suggests that even when security clearance is granted, friends, neighbours and potential employers may avoid association with former fighters, either due to fear, resentment or simply to avoid ‘trouble’. The feelings of social isolation created can be detrimental and, especially where they spill over to other areas of social life such as livelihoods, can manifest in new grievances.<sup>29</sup>

### **Operation Zhusan: Repatriating Kazakhstanees Women and Children**

In 2019, at the decision of President Nazarbayev, Kazakhstan authorities launched a 4-stage operation to repatriate Kazakhstanees located in camps in Iraq and north-eastern Syria, including Al-Khol, Anisa, Muhayo-Rovzh. It was observed that the conditions in camps () were extremely difficult. Internees lacked access to clean water, electricity and sanitation; food was in short supply; and there was limited access to medical services and medicine, resulting in regular outbreaks of infectious disease.

In the operation’s first stage, officials visited camps and prisons to identify Kazakhstanees women and children, including children born in theatre. Authorities then sought to verify these identities with family and friends and establish whether they would be accepted upon return. In the case of unidentified children, genomic testing was undertaken to establish family linkages.

Over a 6-month period, a total of 595 individuals were repatriated from camps in Syria: 33 men, 156 women and 406 children, 31 of whom were orphans. All those repatriated did so voluntarily, and on the understanding that they would be held accountable for any crimes committed in theatre under national laws. Upon arrival, 33 men and 12 women were charged under Kazakhstanees legislation. All others were accommodated for one month at a rehabilitation and adaptation Center in Aktau.

Following the repatriation, President Nazarbayev delivered a media briefing, highlighting that the operation was humanitarian in nature, and aimed principally to return children caught up in the civil conflict for reasons beyond their control. To further inform and sensitize the population, consenting friends and relatives were connected to media outlets, and a New York Times journalist was provided access to the Aktau center to report on its work and returnee conditions.

The rehabilitation process brought together a number of specialist agencies, including medical doctors (children received surgical, vaccination and nutrition support), psychologists, educators, social workers, law enforcement officers, lawyers and religious scholars. As staff lacked experience in this area, ongoing training was provided and lessons learned were integrated on an ongoing basis.

To promote peaceful and sustainable reintegration, livelihoods training was provided, and authorities established that families would receive returnees. To counter potential stigmatization, mothers were permitted to choose the name and surname of the child, as well as their place of birth. Ongoing monitoring and support was provided by local rehabilitation centers.

<sup>29</sup> E Harper and N Bondokji ‘Journey Mapping on Selected Foreign Fighters in Jordan’ WANA Institute (2017).

# Part 6.

## The Evidence on Restorative Justice

Significant time has been invested into debates around whether children affiliated with a violent extremist group should be presumptively afforded victim status (in line with the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, 2002);<sup>30</sup> whether they should be considered as having been trafficked (on the grounds that they cannot be considered to have acted voluntarily);<sup>31</sup> and if so, whether trafficked status exempts them from being held accountable for crimes they may have committed. These discussions are clearly important; the answer may determine whether or not a child is tried as an adult in a criminal justice process, or entitled to participate in reparations programs.<sup>32</sup> However, a focus on these issues has meant that an equally important discussion on the utility and importance of accountability when wrongful acts have been committed — both voluntarily and involuntarily — has been pushed to the side.

The evidence suggests that while punishment and detention produce negative outcomes, recognizing children's agency and the corresponding need for accountability is a critical component of rehabilitation, closely linked to them building social interest. This is not to suggest that mitigating circumstances should not be taken into account; simply that approaching accountability as inimical to children's interests may be denying them an important tool by which they can meaningfully and constructively reconnect with society. It also signals a misunderstanding around why some children became engaged in extremism. Again, for those who acted with agency, to feel capable or assert control over their circumstances, a blanket approach to victim status may further entrench these individuals' sense of unimportance and powerlessness.

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30 The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (2002) arts 3, 26; N Benotman and N Malik 'The Children of the Islamic State' Quilliam Institute (2016) 55.

31 See Security Council Resolution 2331 (2016) which draws linkages between trafficking in persons, child recruitment by armed groups and child exploitation by terrorist groups.

32 the Security Council has affirmed that when terror groups have trafficked children or committed sexual violence against children, they should be classified as victims of terrorism, with the purpose of, inter alia, facilitating their access to official support, redress and reparations programs, and to help lift stigma and thus aid rehabilitation and reintegration, see Security Council Resolution 2331 (2016); see also 2018 Addendum to the 2015 Guiding Principles on Foreign Terrorist Fighters (S/2018/1177).

There may be even broader implications. Mark Drumbl explains that stereotyping children as passive victims not responsible for their actions has precluded the application of new knowledge that could reduce their use in armed conflict more generally. Certainly, one of the reasons terror groups recruit children to perpetrate crimes is the perception of them being unlikely perpetrators and thus more able to avoid detection by authorities. Research around so-called honour crimes has likewise found that children are often selected to carry out planned murders on the basis that their age places them under the threshold for criminal responsibility or will be held up as a mitigating factor. These possible externalities need to form part of more balanced discussions if children are to be given the best possibilities to rehabilitate and reintegrate safely and effectively.

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### **Approaches to Restorative Justice**

Restorative justice is an alternate form of justice that can serve as a diversionary tool or be used in combination with other approaches. With respect to children impacted by extremism, restorative approaches aim to promote a child's understanding of the violence they were exposed to and to develop – along with the community or State - a shared sense of responsibility for the events that took place. The logic is that it is when a child takes ownership over their experience, can they make sense of the violence perpetrated and its impacts on others, and take proactive steps to re-establish their place in the community structure. Restorative justice approaches can form part of the rehabilitation process, or take place as part of community reintegration. They might include interventions as diverse as reception ceremonies, reconciliation meetings, apologies, community service, volunteer work, or the production of street theatre. The evidence on the effectiveness of restorative justice is strong. When processes are voluntary and participation is open to all interested persons, the outcomes include reduced stigmatization and risk victimization, and reduced rates of re-offending. Restorative processes can also be empowering for the children involved – providing them with a sense of control and vehicle to take responsibility for their past actions and future life trajectories.

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# Part 7.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

The above discussion suggests that, far from being ‘soft’ on children who have been affiliated with extremist groups, the most effective way to prevent recidivism — either in the form of extremism or variant forms of violence — may be to divert them away from any justice process that exposes them to violence, causes gaps in their social development and education, or introduces new opportunities stigmatization or discrimination. Instead, they need individualized case management aimed at developing the socio-behavioural capacities needed to reintegrate into society and build a meaningful and constructive existence. The implications for programming are quite clear. Children located in Iraq and Syria should be repatriated to their countries of origin, and States — in countries of repatriation, Iraq and Syria — need to set in place accountability processes that reflect juvenile justice principles.

The current discourse — insofar as UN stakeholders are advocating solutions that States feel do not reflect their legitimate interests — is not facilitating this. The reality is that in the current climate, children’s rights arguments are likely to be trumped by State security interests and voter concerns. It follows that States are going to be less receptive to approaches that are grounded in their international obligations, as they are to approaches that will protect their citizens from violence in the short-term and mitigate against recidivism in the long-term.

With no practical means to reconcile these tensions, the result is a level of stasis. This is despite robust evidence that the longer children remain in conditions where they are exposed to violence and violations of due process guarantees, the worse the outcomes will be. An example is the delays that have resulted from pushback against the triaged repatriation of children based on individual risk assessments. Some specialist protection agencies oppose such approaches on the grounds that all children should be afforded the same rights, and the need for consistency in policies. Others argue that prioritizing vulnerable low-risk children is consistent with a utilitarian understanding of best interests and is preferable insofar as it allows States to incorporate ongoing learning into their processes. These questions are highly complex, sensitive and beyond the scope of this paper to reconcile. There is a valid point, however, that repatriation decisions ultimately fall to States and to the extent that triaged repatriation is already taking place, the interests of these children will best be served by all actors cooperating to ensure that this takes place in a safe, transparent and evidence-informed manner.

Polarization in the discourse is also diverting thinking away from the kinds of solutions that might best accommodate the needs of all stakeholders. Against the strong evidence that exists on how to prevent recidivism in children in conflict with the law, this should be viewed as a missed opportunity. Arguably, the most constructive role that can be played by specialist agencies is to provide relevant, evidence-based lessons from the juvenile justice scholarship that States can draw on as they balance risks, craft policy and build their own frameworks. The target audience for such sensitization and evidence dissemination might even be broader. Public constituencies not only have a large stake in stemming extremism and preventing ideologically-motivated violence, they are powerful agents in framing policy debates. To date, a climate of fear has crowded out reasoned and evidence-based strategies, especially around security, migration and civic protections.<sup>33</sup> The potential that carefully crafted messaging might reverse this trend needs to be explored.

A final area where distraction with the problem may be thwarting a solution concerns resource mobilization. The types of rehabilitation and reintegration strategies that the evidence suggests will be most effective are long-term and resource-intensive. As noted, the best practice is for children to not be placed in detention, but instead to be accommodated in home-style facilities that provide access to psycho-social counselling, skills building, specialist medical care (including to deal with issues such as anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorders), education, training, extracurricular activities and opportunities to re-establish connections with family and peers. Following rehabilitation, children should reintegrate into their communities slowly and under close supervision, usually with mechanisms to facilitate continuity of care and support over the medium to long term.<sup>34</sup> How States will finance such programs, and whether they have the professional expertise in the domestic labour force to implement them, needs to be a question at the top of the international community's agenda. One mechanism might be a global fund that can be drawn upon by States to support the rehabilitation of children harmed as a result of terrorist recruitment and exploitation in conformity with juvenile justice best practices. Resources for this might be drawn from assets seized from terrorist groups, or by donor States, as set out in the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism (1999).<sup>35</sup>

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33 A Gore, *The Assault on Reason* (2007) 28,

34 Key Principles for the Protection, Repatriation, Prosecution, Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Women and Children with links to UN Listed Terrorist Groups, UN Secretary-General (2019).

35 The International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism (1999) states that States parties should consider setting up mechanisms whereby funds forfeited from terrorist groups or financiers can be used to compensate the victims of terrorism (article 8). However, should that party be unable to provide the reparation, the State may be secondarily responsible for providing reparation, pursuant to the Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law (2005). The Guidelines on Justice in Matters involving Child Victims and Witnesses of Crime (2009), indicate that reparations for child victims should address costs of social and educational reintegration, medical treatment, mental health care and legal services (Economic and Social Council resolution 2005/20, annex, paras. 35-37). In the Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law (General Assembly resolution 60/147, annex), it is stated that reparation includes rehabilitation. See also legal precedents including *Prosecutor v. Thomas Lubanga Dyilo* (International Criminal Court).

Key Policy Messages	Corresponding Entry Points
Leaving children in detention in Iraq and Syria without access to due process and proper rehabilitation is likely to drive recidivism or create new grievances.	Children located in Iraq and Syria should be identified, provided with documentation and repatriated to their countries of origin. States — in countries of repatriation, Iraq and Syria — need to set in place accountability processes that reflect juvenile justice principles.
Where children are released from detention, but returned to situations where the factors driving their association with extremism remain unchanged, recidivism is likely.	Specialist agencies should support community reintegration programs with a concentration on social cohesion, livelihoods and vocational opportunity.
Without clear evidence on how to prevent recidivism, some States will resist repatriating children formerly affiliated with violent extremist groups insofar as this is deemed incompatible with States' duty of care to protect citizens from violence.	Specialist agencies should glean relevant evidence-based lessons from the scholarship on conflict with the law, juvenile justice and child soldiers, and share this with States as they craft policy and build their own frameworks to support repatriation and rehabilitation.
Detaining or issuing punitive sanctions to children increases the risk of reoffending and decreases the likelihood of successful community reintegration.	States should be encouraged to preference alternatives to detention such as care, guidance and supervision orders, counselling, probation, foster care etc.
Punishment produces negative outcomes in children; juvenile justice should be seen as a process where children develop the skills needed to gain an active and positive stake in society.	Juvenile justice programming should adopt an individualized case management approach, aimed at reintegration. Such programs should prioritize developing socio-behavioral capacities, closing educational and vocational skills gaps, and reestablishing relationships with family and community members.
Exposure to and engagement in violence often leads to mental and post-traumatic trauma in children. Trauma-related externalities – such as a belief in the inevitability of conflict or not being able to identify in a civilian role - can be a block to successful rehabilitation.	When children exhibit trauma disorders, the suitability of cognitive-based therapies should be evaluated. These include Need-Responsivity Model Therapy, Strength-Based Cognition Theory, Cognitive Processing Therapy, Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing, and Narrative Exposure Therapy.
When approached, or perceived, as a form of counter-indoctrination, de-radicalization programs can have reduced impact and, in some cases, can exacerbate existing grievances.	Practitioners should evaluate the efficacy and appropriateness of desistance approaches when working with children who have disengaged from extremist groups.
The most effective means of preventing recidivism in children is through successful community reintegration. Conversely, rejection and lack of livelihoods is the most common driver of recidivism.	Reintegration planning should begin early; programs should prioritize a return to education or the workforce, community sensitization and activities to bolster social cohesion.
While children recruited by extremist groups are entitled to victim status, recognizing children's agency and the corresponding need for accountability may be a critical component of rehabilitation and reintegration. In some cases, denying the importance of accountability might exacerbate feelings of powerlessness and marginalization.	Any restorative justice process should provide a pathway for the child to grow social interest and reintegrate sustainably into society. Examples of reparation are diverse but might include reconciliation processes, apologies, community service, volunteerism etc. Engagement in reparations must be voluntary and not abrogate a child's due process rights.
The most effective rehabilitation and reintegration strategies are long-term and resource-intensive, creating obstacles for developing States.	Specialist agencies should explore mechanisms – such as a global fund - to help States finance comprehensive juvenile justice systems, and complementary programs around rehabilitation and reintegration.

## International legal instruments

- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (2002)  
<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/OPACCRC.aspx>
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990)  
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>
- United Nations Standards Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (1990)  
<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/tokyorules.htm>
- Guidelines on Justice Matters involving Child Victims and Witnesses of Crime (UN Economic and Social Council Resolution 2005/20) 2005  
<http://www.un.org/docs/ecosoc/documents/2005/resolutions/Resolution%202005-20.pdf>
- Standard Minimum Rules for Non-Custodial Measures (1990)  
<http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/45/a45r110.htm>
- Basic Principles on the Use of Restorative Justice Programmes in Criminal Matters (2002)  
<http://www.pfi.org/cjr/about-cjr/un-initiatives/ecosocresolution>
- Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of Their Liberty (1990)  
[http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/res45\\_113.htm](http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/res45_113.htm)
- Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (1955)  
<http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/3ae6b36e8.html>
- Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons Under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment (1988)  
<https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/bodyprinciples.pdf>
- Key Principles for the Protection, Repatriation, Prosecution, Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Women and Children with Links to UN Listed Terrorism Groups (2019)  
<http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/43/a43r173.htm>
- Neuchâtel Memorandum on Good Practices for Juvenile Justice in a Counterterrorism Context (2016)  
<https://theij.org/wp-content/uploads/English-Neucha--tel-Memorandum-on-Juvenile-Justice.pdf>
- Paris Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Conflict and Armed Groups (2007)  
<https://www.unicef.org/emerg/files/ParisPrinciples310107English.pdf>

## UN Information Resources

- Journey into Extremism in Africa: Drivers, Incentives and the Tipping Point for Recruitment UNDP (2017)
- Frontlines: Young people at the forefront of preventing and responding to violent extremism UNDP (2019)
- Handbook on Children Recruited and Exploited by Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups UNODC (2018)
- Roadmap on the Treatment of Children Associated with Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups UNODC (2018)
- Desk review on sport as a tool for the prevention of violent extremism UNODC (2018)
- Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Child Victims of Recruitment and Exploitation by Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups: A Training Manual UNODC
- Justice for Children in the Context of Counter-Terrorism: A Training Manual UNODC
- A Teacher's Guide on the Prevention of Violent Extremism UNESCO (2017)
- Preventing violent extremism through education: A guide for policy-makers UNESCO (2017)
- Youth-led Guide on Prevention of Violent Extremism through Education UNESCO (2017)
- Children Affected by the Foreign Fighter Phenomenon: Ensuring a Child Rights Based Approach UNCCT
- Reference Guide: Developing National and Regional Action Plans to Prevent Violent Extremism UNCCT
- Cradled by Conflict: Child Involvement with Armed Groups in Contemporary Conflict, UNU

### **NGO and Think Tank Publications**

- M Nowak, The United Nations Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty (2019)
- N Benotman and N Malik 'The Children of the Islamic State' Quilliam Foundation (2016)
- Conceptualizing the Drivers of Violent Extremism: An Agenda for Child and Youth Resilience, Terre des Hommes and WANA Institute (2018)
- J Cook and G Vale, From Daesh to Diaspora: Tracing the Women and Minors of the Islamic State, International Centre for the Study of Radicalization (2018)



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