Global Conference on Justice for Children Deprived of Liberty

GLOBAL CONFERENCE ON JUSTICE FOR CHILDREN DEPRIVED OF LIBERTY

Side Events

1. Arbitrary by Default: Palestinian Children in the Israeli Military Court System

DATE & TIME 19 December

VENUE CICG, Geneva, Switzerland

ORGANISER Defence of Children International (DCI)

MODE/LANGUAGE: **Hybrid, English/Arabic**

DESCRIPTION

This side event will discuss the deprivation of liberty experienced by Palestinian children in the Israeli military justice system, specifically Israeli use of administrative detention or imprisonment without charge or trial. The number of Palestinian children detained has quadrupled in the last year with increased instances of ill-treatment and torture. Further conversation will consider the future of Palestinian children under Israeli occupation, specifically Israeli military courts and authorities.

2. From Participation to Intergenerational Partnership: Redefining Child Justice with Youth Leadership

DATE & TIME 19 December

VENUE CICG, Geneva, Switzerland

ORGANISER Defence for Children International (DCI)

MODE/LANGUAGE: **Hybrid, English**

DESCRIPTION

This side event will serve as a vibrant platform for youth leaders with lived experience in justice systems as children, to take centre stage, driving conversations on justice system reform through live, intergenerational dialogue with policymakers and high-level stakeholders. The event will not only explore successful examples of youth-policymaker collaboration from across the globe but also facilitate interactive sessions where attendees will co-create actionable solutions.

3. Roundtable Discussion on: Children Deprived of Liberty and Impacted by Armed Conflict
Case Studies from Sudan, Yemen, and Ukraine

DATE & TIME 19 December

VENUE CICG, Geneva, Switzerland

ORGANISERS Penal Reform International (PRI) and Defence for Children International (DCI)

MODE/LANGUAGE: **Hybrid, English/Arabic**

DESCRIPTION

Children are among the most vulnerable in armed conflicts, and those deprived of their liberty are particularly exposed to violations of their rights. This roundtable will focus on both children already deprived of liberty before conflict and those newly detained because of it. By exploring case studies from Sudan, Yemen, and Ukraine, the event will shed light on the challenges faced by these children and propose ways to enhance their protection and reintegration.

4. SHE LEADS: Enhancing Access to Justice for Girls

DATE & TIME 19 December

VENUE CICG, Geneva, Switzerland

ORGANISERS Defence of Children International (DCI) – She Leads

MODE/LANGUAGE: **Hybrid, English/Arabic**

DESCRIPTION

Despite global advancements, girls continue to face unique barriers in accessing justice due to age, gender discrimination, and socio-economic factors. This event aims to provide a platform for discussing strategies and best practices to improve access to justice for girls, while integrating girls' insights in the draft General Comment 27 (CRC). By bringing together girls' advocates, experts and policymakers, this event will highlight the challenges girls face in accessing justice and present innovative solutions to empower them at the local, regional and international levels.

5. Delegated Mediation in Criminal Matters in Africa: Challenges and Outlook

DATE & TIME 18 or 19 December

VENUE CICG, Geneva, Switzerland

ORGANISER Terre des Hommes

MODE/LANGUAGE: Hybrid, English/French

DESCRIPTION

Criminal mediation makes it possible to avoid a trial and encourages an out-of-court solution between the parties to repair the damage suffered by the victim of an offence committed by a third party, while at the same time holding the offender accountable. As a diversionary measure, delegated criminal mediation can be applied at any stage of the proceedings. It is conducted by independent mediators who act under the aegis of the judiciary. In some countries, it has been found that more than 50% of people remanded in custody would be eligible for criminal mediation based on their charges. Such a measure could therefore make it possible to drastically reduce incarceration rates and should be favoured by States that are considering the practical implementation of non-custodial measures.

6. Data on Children in Detention

DATE & TIME 19 December

VENUE CICG, Geneva, Switzerland

ORGANISER UNICEF

MODE/LANGUAGE: Hybrid, English

DESCRIPTION

While there is wide recognition of the devastating impact that even one day in detention and incarceration has on a child's physical, emotional and mental development, the actual number of children in conflict with the law who are deprived of liberty, both globally and in many countries, is unknown. Accurate and reliable figures of the size and basic characteristics of this population are crucial to inform policies and programming at the country level and to ensure that the standards set in international, regional and national legal frameworks are upheld.

7. Building a child-friendly justice system for young people deprived of their liberty : Prospects for CFJ-EN's advocacy efforts

DATE & TIME 18 December

VENUE CICG, Geneva, Switzerland

ORGANISER Child Friendly Justice European Network (CFJ-EN)

MODE/LANGUAGE: In person, English

DESCRIPTION

This side event will showcase CFJ-EN's work in child-friendly justice for young people deprived of their liberty, focusing on our recent policy paper on solitary confinement and our forthcoming storybook containing personal accounts from our Young Justice Transformers. By sharing evidence-based practices and real-life experiences, we aim to foster dialogue with a global audience on the reform of justice systems to prioritise the protection of children and young people in custody and discuss preparations for the World Congress on Justice with Children to be held in Madrid in 2025.

8. Migration and Workstream on Alternatives to Detention

DATE & TIME 18 December

VENUE CICG, Geneva, Switzerland

ORGANISERS UNICEF, UNHCR, UNNM, Migration Youth & Children Platform (MYCP)

MODE/LANGUAGE: **Hybrid, English**

DESCRIPTION

This side event is organized to bring attention to the issue and alternatives to child immigration detention. Amid increasing global and regional dialogues on migration, youth on the move have been deprived of liberty by virtue of their status, with at least 77 countries legally allowing the detention of children. In amidst the Global Compact for Migration (GCM) Regional Reviews, in the lead up to the 2025 Global Forum for Migration & Development and 2026 International Migration Review Forum, and building upon the Advocacy Brief by the Taskforce for Children Deprived of Liberty, we hope to support global advocacy and mobilization around ending child immigration detention, and promoting community-based alternatives which uphold the rights and welfare of every child on the move.

9. Bridging the Gap: Advancing Access to Justice in the MENA Region, Africa and Europe: The DCI Socio-Legal Defence Centres

DATE & TIME 19 December

VENUE CICG, Geneva, Switzerland

ORGANISER DCI

MODE/LANGUAGE: **Hybrid, English/Arabic**

DESCRIPTION

This event will focus on Socio-Legal Defence Centres (SLDCs) as an exemplary practice in promoting child-friendly justice within the MENA region, Africa and Europe. These centers provide direct psychosocial and legal assistance to children in contact with the justice system, acting as a vital referral pathway towards relevant services. Furthermore, they collect data for evidence-based advocacy to influence policy changes at all levels. A recent innovation has been the creation of national coalitions of actors, including relevant ministries, UN agencies, and NGOs, which act as a platform to discuss and

collaborate on delivering change for children deprived of liberty and finding alternatives to detention. The objective is to showcase successful implementations, facilitate expert discussions, and highlight innovative strategies to enhance the legal and social environments for children. By convening practitioners, policymakers, and advocates from different regions, the event aims to advance the creation of a more inclusive, supportive, and effective justice system for children globally.

10. 'Help Way Earlier!' How Australia Can Transform Child Justice to Improve Safety and Wellbeing

DATE & TIME 18 December

VENUE CICG, Geneva, Switzerland

ORGANISER Australia's National Children's Commissioner, Anne Hollonds

MODE/LANGUAGE: **Hybrid, English**

DESCRIPTION

This side event by Australia's National Children's Commissioner Anne Hollonds will outline the findings of her recent report to the Australian Parliament and explore the key lessons to be learned internationally from this work about reform of child justice. Some of these lessons include how to achieve advocacy impact on the most challenging of children's rights issues: child justice reform. It also focuses on the importance of understanding the barriers to evidence-based action and why it is that governments choose not to act on the evidence, and why the public does not hold them accountable. Another key theme is how 'politics' get in the way of 'prevention' of harm and 'protection' of children's rights. It is important to center the voices of children because they can start to 'shift the dial' for change in difficult environments.

11. Protecting Children Detained from Torture and Ill-Treatment Through Access to Justice at All Levels

DATE & TIME 18 December

VENUE CICG, Geneva, Switzerland

ORGANISER OMCT and Child Friendly Justice European Network (CFJ-EN)

MODE/LANGUAGE: **In-person, English**

DESCRIPTION

This event has the objective to shed light on the realities of children deprived of liberty and on the specific obstacles that they face in accessing justice, leading to longer periods of detention, lack of application of alternatives to detention, and consequently higher occurrences of ill-treatment and torture. It will look at different aspects and levels of access to justice for children detained, including the importance of legal representation for children, the role of regional or international, public interest litigation practices for the wide recognition of rights of children deprived of liberty, the role of National Preventive Mechanisms and

civil society organisations in monitoring of detention, and the importance of accessible complaint mechanisms for children, among others. This side event will also showcase the Child Friendly Justice-European Network's work in advancing child-friendly justice for young people deprived of liberty, focusing on its recent policy paper on solitary confinement and the upcoming storybook featuring personal stories from our Young Justice Transformers. Ultimately, this side event will show how access to justice for children deprived of liberty is key to reduce detention and prevent torture.