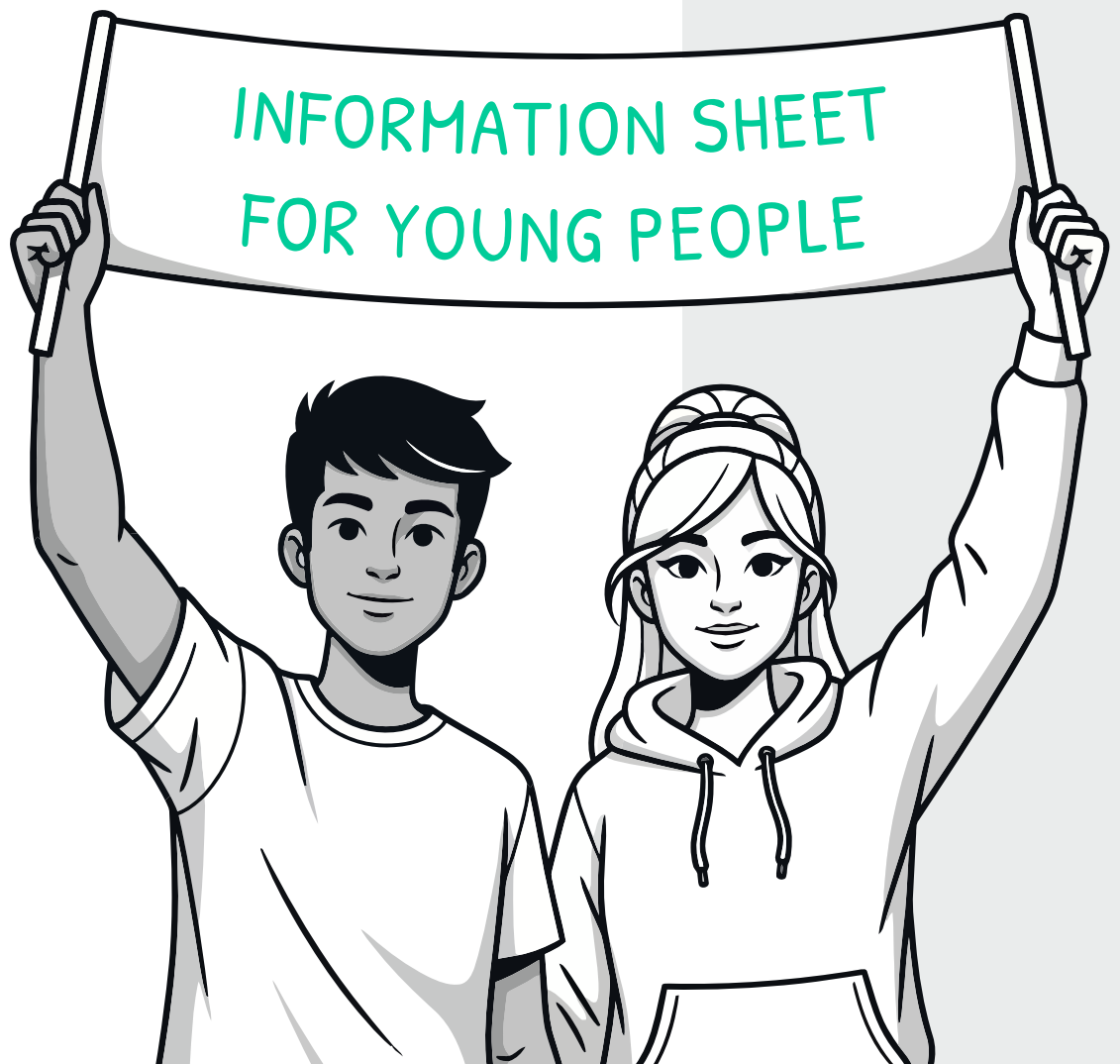


JUSTICE FOR CHILDREN

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY

CHILD- AND YOUTH-LED ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN



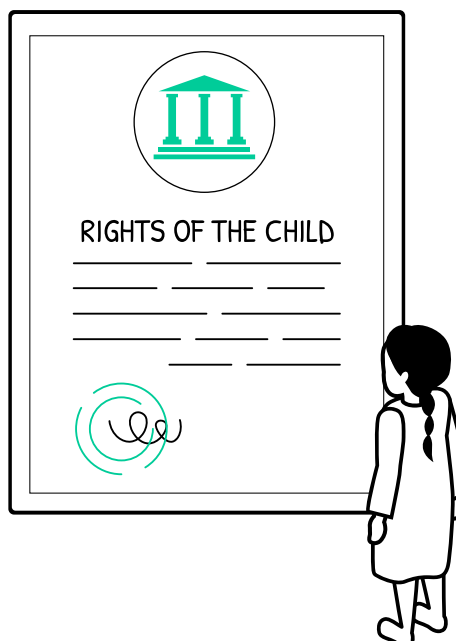
Introduction

This information sheet is designed to help you understand something called the ‘International Convention on Crimes against Humanity’, a newly proposed law which would apply to all countries, and how you can get involved if you are interested in hearing more and taking part in some action with us.

What is a convention?

- A convention is like a promise between countries.
- Countries agree to follow certain rules and work together.
- It is written down, signed, and then made official.
- Once a country accepts a convention, it must make sure it uses it in its own country and encourages other countries to do the same.
- Conventions can be about peace, trade, protecting the planet, or defending people’s rights.

Examples are the Convention on the Rights of the Child – where countries promised to respect and protect children’s rights, and the Paris Agreement – a convention where countries promised to fight climate change together.



What are crimes against humanity?

A crime against humanity is when very serious crimes are carried out against ordinary people (not soldiers) on a large scale or as part of an organized plan. It's not just one random crime - it is planned and

can be repeated to hurt or control groups of people. Crimes against humanity can happen during times of conflict and war, but also during times of peace.

Examples include:

Killing many people.

Forcing people out of their homes.

Making people slaves or child soldiers.

Torturing or imprisoning people unfairly.

Hurting people through rape, sexual violence, or forced marriage.

Targeting people just because of their age, race, religion, gender, or identity.

Making people “disappear” and hiding what happened to them.

Separating and discriminating against a group (apartheid).

Crimes against humanity are about attacking people on purpose, in a big and organized way, to take away their safety, freedom, and dignity.



What is the International Convention on Crimes against Humanity?

The International Convention on Crimes against Humanity is a plan for a new global law between countries. It would make sure countries work together to stop and punish terrible crimes like mass killings, slavery, or forced displacement. It would also make sure victims, including children (those hurt, treated unfairly, or affected by these crimes), are protected and helped. Right now, there are conventions for genocide (the deliberate destruction of a specific group of people) and war crimes (rules that apply in wars, which people fighting the wars must follow), but not for crimes against humanity.

This Convention would fill that missing piece. We know children all over the world suffer from wars and violence. They are often hurt in the same ways as adults, but the harm to children can last much longer. Children's experiences and harms can also be different from adults, and they have specific rights to be protected. A new international convention would make sure children are clearly protected, listened to, and given help to recover. If the convention includes these specific points about children, it would also be the first-ever international law to do so.

What is happening now with the International Convention on Crimes against Humanity?

The United Nations (the international organization that helps guide countries in peace and security) has already drafted the text for the new Convention (this is called the '*Draft Articles*').

Early next year (between January and April 2026), countries can give feedback and suggestions for improvements to the text.

Only officials from countries can do this, not organizations or individuals.

A group of international organizations (including Terre des hommes and War Child) has reviewed the text and created a summary of the areas where they think it is weak for children affected by these crimes. Below is a summary of what we think would make it better.

Key Demands to Improve the Convention

Below are some areas of the Convention that organizations think are weak for children. These are proposed as a starting point for you to debate, choose, and demand from your country's government:

MENTION CHILDREN CLEARLY

The Convention should say children are victims with rights.

A CHILD IS...

It should be clear that the definition of a child is anyone under 18.

CRIMES AGAINST CHILDREN

The law should:

- Say that hurting children because of their age is persecution.
- Recognize forced pregnancy of girls and others, as well as women.
- Treat forced marriage as a serious crime.
- Include denying children safe water and banning all forms of slavery and slave trade.

CHILDREN ACCUSED OF CRIMES

Children under 18 should not be tried in adult courts.
They should be treated as victims first and helped to recover.



VICTIMS AND WITNESSES

Children must be able to take part safely in court cases, and their voices must be heard.

REPARATIONS (HELP AND SUPPORT)

Children should get full and quick help, including:

- Money and support for school, health, and recovery.
- Counseling and care for trauma.
- Community support so they are accepted and included.

CHILDREN UNLAWFULLY RECRUITED

Children should not be made to join armed groups or used in violence. Experts are still discussing how to make sure this is clearly seen as a crime and that children harmed in this way receive justice and care.

THE NEW LAW MUST PROTECT CHILDREN,
GIVE THEM JUSTICE, AND HELP THEM HEAL.

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS AND BEST INTERESTS
SHOULD ALWAYS COME FIRST.



How Can Young People Get Involved?

To get the changes above into the Convention, we need to convince countries to make these suggestions next year at a big meeting at the United Nations. We would like to work with groups of children and youth to campaign for these changes. We would like to support young people to discuss and decide on the changes they care most about from the list, and support them to create a plan for convincing leaders of their country to listen and support these changes.

A child and youth-friendly version of the Justice for Children in the Future Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes against Humanity document has been drafted as a way to support the engagement of young people in the process. It can be used by any organization or youth group who are interested in participating in advocacy around this topic.



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