

*Opening Conference
Of The Second International
Academic Week
On
Children in Armed Conflict*



"A Specific Focus On The Situation In Afghanistan"
3 p.m CET, 22 November 2021

**OPENING CONFERENCE OF THE
SECOND INTERNATIONAL ACADEMIC WEEK ON CHILDREN IN ARMED
CONFLICT**

**"THE RIGHT OF CHILDREN TO EDUCATION IN ARMED CONFLICT.
A SPECIFIC FOCUS ON THE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN"**

November 22, 2021

3.00 p.m. – 6.00 p.m. CET

Second International Academic Week: November 22-29, 2021

The right to education for children living in armed conflict will be the key-topic of the Second International Academic Week organized by the *Universities Network for Children in Armed Conflict*, scheduled from 22 to 29 November 2021. The First Academic Week, launched in November 2020, focused on the topic of girl children in armed conflict.

Children are the most vulnerable persons affected by the tremendous consequences of armed conflict. They are particularly subject to widespread and systematic violations of their human rights with physical, mental, emotional, and material repercussions.

Armed conflicts also cause a series of severe indirect consequences for children. They experience a double trauma in situation of conflict. On one hand, children suffer gross violations as abduction, forced removal from families, illegal detention, recruitment. On the other hand, they are deprived of their daily life which include going to school and of their natural right to study and build their future. Furthermore, schools become often specific a military target including in small villages when only one school is present.

As the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Virginia Gamba, underlined, “education is an absolute necessity, not just for the children themselves but also for global peace, stability and prosperity for all. Schools should be treated as sanctuaries and it is our common responsibility to ensure that every child has access to an education, even at times of conflict”.

According to the 2019 Report of the Global Coalition Protecting Education from Attack “It is Very Painful to Talk About: The Impact of Attacks on Education on Women and Girls”, attacks on education have a devastating impact on all students and teachers, but they can have particularly debilitating long-term consequences for girls and women, including early pregnancy, stigma associated with sexual violence and children born from rape, and lost education.

The recently adopted UNSC Resolution 2601 (2021), emphasizes the invaluable role that education plays for individuals and society, including as life-saving safe spaces. The UN Security Council members noted that providing, protecting and facilitating the continuation of education in armed conflict should remain a key priority for the international community.

In the opening conference of the Academic Week organized by the *Universities Network* a case study will be dedicated to the right to education for children and especially for young women in Afghanistan. In fact, Afghan women and girls are denied going to school, experiencing a deprivation of liberty that they never faced in the last twenty years.

During the three hours conference, the *Universities Network for Children in Armed Conflict* aims at analyzing and reflecting on the importance to adopt preventive measures to protect and guarantee the right to education of vulnerable children who live in conflict scenarios. Some questions arise on this topic:

How to protect children in armed conflict from all forms of violence by providing them with a safe and secure environment allowing for education and access to basic needs?

What should the academic community do to ensure the right to education of children involved in armed conflict?

What should States and civil society actors do to fulfill and guarantee children’s right to education?

How crucial is the role of education in establishing and ensuring long-term peace, stability and security?

Welcome addresses 3.00 p.m. - 3.20 p.m.

1st Roundtable 3.20 p.m. - 4.20 p.m.

The right to education for children in armed conflict: humanitarian and legal challenges

Moderator

Debora Capalbo, Sapienza University of Rome (Italy)

Speakers

Fausto Pocar, University of Milan and International Institute of Humanitarian Law (Italy)

Jan Marie Fritz, University of Cincinnati (USA)/University of Johannesburg (South Africa)

Ahmeda Alfatlawi, University of Kufa (Iraq)

Radoslaw Malinowski, Tangaza University College/HAART (Kenya)

Annamaria Rufino, University of Campania “Luigi Vanvitelli” (Italy)

2nd Roundtable 4.20 p.m. - 5.20 p.m.

Which right to education for Afghan women and young girls: analysis and future perspectives. Voices from Afghanistan

Moderator

Simona Lanzellotto, Lawyer, Expert on legal protection of vulnerable people

Speakers

Silvia Scarpa, John Cabot University (Italy)

Nazifa Mersa Hussain, Mediator from Afghanistan

Muhammad Jawas Haidari, Sociologist from Afghanistan

Hussain Reiza, Anti-corruption Researcher, Co-founder and Director of Najiba Foundation and trainee of the Universities Network Autumn School

Ljubomir Petruljeskov, Program Lead, International Development Law Organization (IDLO)

Maria Caterina Federici, University of Perugia (Italy)

Conclusion 5.20 p.m. - 6.00 p.m.

How can academic community, institutions and civil society work together?

Moderator

Laura Guercio, Coordination Committee of the Universities Network for Children in Armed Conflict/University of Perugia (Italy)

Speakers

Fausto Pocar, University of Milan and International Institute of Humanitarian Law (Italy)

Katherine Cocco, Child Protection Specialist, UNICEF New York (tbc)

Rossella Miccio, President of Emergency

Nevena Saykova, Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA)

Scientific Coordinators of the International Academic Week: Laura Guercio (University of Perugia, Italy), Fausto Pocar (University of Milan, Italy)

Scientific Organizing Committee: Simona Lanzellotto, Debora Capalbo, Giovanna Gnerre Landini

