THE ACTION ACCORD: ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

Violence is a violation of childhood. Safe childhoods are the foundation of healthy societies. As children, young people, and survivors, our purpose is prevention: we cannot end violence if we respond only after it's happened. And we want you to know: **a world without violence against us is possible.** You must want it enough, and do enough, to make it real. Our hopes are simple: to be loved, cared for, healthy, go to school, play, make friends, and be listened to – safely and without being judged. Mostly, **we want to live free from fear and harm, and to always have someone to turn to.**



When we're not believed, we are alone.
When we live with fear, blame or shame, we are silenced.
When we're harmed by the very people and places meant to protect us, we are unsafe.



If you accept violence as normal, you enable it. If you stay silent, you allow it to continue. We're calling on leaders to carry our lived experiences and voices to the centre of protection, care and recovery. But to speak up, **we need safe spaces, trusted ears, and urgent action based on our words.**

To really end violence against children, you must heal the wounds of the past, change the behaviours of today, and protect the children who will shape the future.

OUR ACCORD

How can you say you're trying to create a better world when we're still trafficked, forced onto the streets, institutionalised, recruited by armed forces, groups and gangs, beaten, forced into labour and marriages, sexually abused, and killed simply because we're children? When we are harmed, healing and justice must be at the heart of action – because trauma can travel through time and across generations. Breaking the cycle starts by changing attitudes and systems, educating adults on children's rights, children knowing how to claim them, and making respect and peace part of everyday life.

We want action under the **Three Ps: Prevent, Protect, Participate** – they're all connected, because we don't live our lives in pieces. Make ending violence against children a priority now and in the future, with proper money and services behind it, and leave no child behind:

PREVENT

- **Violence against us is predictable, but not inevitable;** you know the warning signs and causes, which means you can prevent it. Address the problems putting children at risk; take action to help those who are poor, unequal, excluded, ignored and treated unfairly. Fix the harmful beliefs and ideas that lie beneath violence, like stigma and stereotypes, and spend more on creating better child-friendly services to keep us safe.
- **The more we're left behind, the more at risk we are** of the most serious forms of violence – and context matters. We need stronger child protection and real safety nets, especially in conflicts, climate disasters and other emergencies where we're most at risk.
- **Harmony starts at home.** Families, parents, carers and trusted adults are the most important to keep us safe. But when our homes aren't our havens, we need you to step up. We want safe, loving family environments, and extra support for families at risk. Caregivers need knowledge and support to solve problems without violence, through positive parenting, parent-child dialogues and joint action on tackling violence against women and children.
- **Community spaces can be places of both risk and protection, especially schools.** We want safe schools free from bullying, abuse of power, and peer violence. To ensure communities prevent rather than perpetrate, our top ask is for more awareness raising through government's funding education, training, and awareness campaigns so adults and children can spot risks, report them early, respond appropriately, and know that speaking up is our right.

- **Violence isn't always where you're looking for it, it's found in the silence;** like orphanages that lock us away from our communities, early marriages and FGM behind closed doors, within faith institutions, and places that force labour and economic exploitation. To prevent stolen childhoods, you need to formally search for, recognise and stop these harms.

PROTECT

- **When we're harmed and you don't act, you allow violence to continue.** People in charge need to act fairly and quickly, take responsibility, create and enact stronger laws, and make those that commit violence face consequences. There is no prevention or healing without justice: free from fear, child-friendly and accessible to all.
- **If an adult reacts badly to our truth, it hurts us twice.** How people and systems respond can be as impactful as the violence itself. Don't make us navigate broken or separate services, provide trusted adults who are easy to reach, and multiple safe ways to report. Remove stigma and reintegrate us into our families and communities.
- **Treat the whole, not the part.** A child who faces violence needs more than medicine; they need mental health support and safety to heal. Design services specially for us, make them available to all, judgement-free and sensitive to physical, sexual, and emotional violence. Train social/case workers, and resource child hotlines, counselling, safe spaces, community hubs and emergency shelters.
- **Violence is universal but is not experienced equally or in the same forms**. Recognise the different risks and impacts shaped by who are, including our gender. Prioritise those with disabilities, living in poverty (including period poverty), rural/isolated, displaced, street-connected, without parental care, with no birth certificate, affected by conflict, and LGBTQ+, and others furthest behind, with specific protection plans for different risk-groups.
- **Digital violence is growing much faster than solutions.** We're living our lives online without protection from new forms of harm including AI exploitation, grooming and cyber bullying. Governments need to adopt child-specific digital protection laws to keep us safe and provide awareness training to schools, teachers and caregivers on online violence and teach us in turn, including how and where to report abuse.

PARTICIPATE

- Y**ou can't solve this issue without us, but that doesn't mean the responsibility is ours.** Fund us sustainably, ally with us long-term, and work with children, young people and those with lived experience not just as recipients of protection, but as partners in change.
- **Solutions only work when we shape them,** so resource inclusive participation and co-creation, involving us regularly and at every stage, adapting for those with disabilities. Be sensitive to our experiences of harm, don't pressure us to share, and train adults in child participation and trauma. If we lead the way, the future will be better.
- **Involve us in identifying, tracking and reporting violence against children,** such as peer education, child protection clubs, and child watchdogs to report violations in our communities. We want representative Child and Youth Panels and National Survivor Councils to review government plans, promises and action on violence against children.
- **Being accountable to us means respecting our right to speak out and be taken seriously,** decisionmakers who understand the problem, fund the solutions, name those responsible to act, collect and share data openly and honestly, and report back to us on their actions.

Leaders make promises to us and then forget about them. Remember us. We're your partners in ending violence against children. Now you need to be ours.

You can't make this happen without us, and we can't make it happen without you. It takes all of us, and tomorrow is already too late.

This Action Accord was created through a three-phase process: 1) Drawing on existing research, polls, surveys and consultation data from across the world with thousands of children, young people and survivors globally, including the UN SRSG VAC survey; 2) A validation survey with 128 respondents aged 9-30; 3) Online consultations and focus group with children, young people and survivors across the world from the 2-7th November 2026.