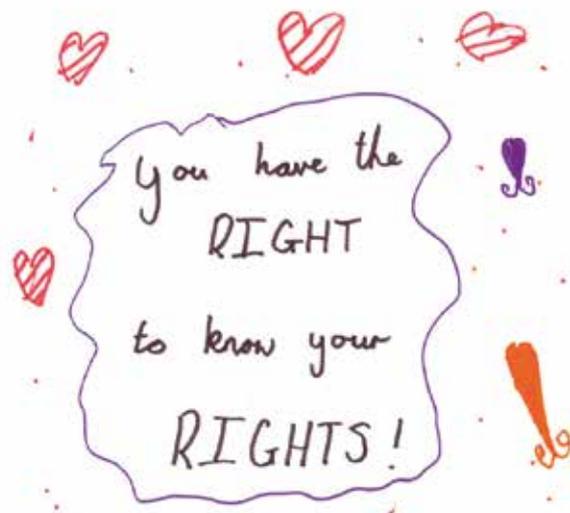


STATEMENT ON CHILDREN'S RIGHTS IN NORTHERN IRELAND 2

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S RESOURCE PACK



LEGACY OF THE CONFLICT

What does the UNCRC say?

Article 13: Sharing thoughts freely

Children have the right to share freely with others what they learn, think and feel, by talking, drawing, writing or in any other way unless it harms other people.

Article 19: Protection from violence

Governments must protect children from violence, abuse and being neglected by anyone who looks after them. Governments should also provide programmes of support to protect children and young people who experience violence, abuse or neglect.

What does the UNCRC Committee say?

The Committee on the Rights of the Child expressed its concern with the UK Government at the fact that in Northern Ireland, children face violence, including shootings, carried out by those involved in paramilitary-style attacks, and recruitment by paramilitary style gangs.

The Committee recommended that the Government:

- Effectively protect all children from violence, from paramilitary-style groups, as well as from recruitment into these groups.

What's the situation in NI?

The impact of the 'Troubles' and the divisions underlying it, continue to significantly impact on the lives of our children and young people, all of whom were born after the Good Friday Agreement. The communities most deeply affected by the Northern Ireland conflict are also those in areas with the highest rates of mental ill-health and child poverty, and the lowest levels of educational attainment. On a daily basis, the children living in these communities deal with the ongoing impacts of a conflict not of their making, and which ended before they were born.



STATEMENT ON CHILDREN'S RIGHTS IN NORTHERN IRELAND 2

CAMPAIGN RESOURCE

November 2020



LEGACY OF THE CONFLICT

In 2018 we asked the government to:

To make sure all children and young people are kept safe from the effect of the 'troubles' including paramilitary style assaults, NICCY calls on our Government to:

1. Ensure children and young people feel safe in their neighbourhoods;
2. Address the continuing impacts of the conflict on children and young people's mental health, family breakdown, child poverty and educational under achievement;
3. Support children and young people to play a central role in building a peaceful future in Northern Ireland, recognising that over many years, children have acted as human and child rights defenders; and
4. Provide information about the conflict to children and young people with a view to achieving a shared narrative about the conflict.

So how is NI doing at protection children from the legacy of conflict in NI?

The impact of the 'Troubles' and the divisions underlying it, continue to significantly impact on the lives of our children and young people, all of whom were born after the Good Friday Agreement. Unfortunately, NICCY is of the view that little progress has been made in addressing the 2018 SOCRNI recommendations.

Segregation continues to be a part of daily life for children and young people in Northern Ireland in accessing services, with segregated living significantly affecting how they live their lives. In Belfast, the vast majority of public housing is segregated into Protestant or Catholic areas. Children are largely educated in separate schools, with only 7% of children attending integrated schools.

The communities most deeply affected by the Northern Ireland conflict are also those in areas with the highest rates of mental ill-health and child poverty, and the lowest levels of educational attainment. On a daily basis, the children living in these communities deal with the ongoing impacts of a conflict not of their making and which ended before they were born.



LEGACY OF THE CONFLICT

Children and young people's knowledge of conflict, and opportunities to discuss and make sense of 'the Troubles' are still limited. More consistent, and safe, opportunities are needed for young people to explore the past and the impact that it still has on our communities, especially around how inequalities can arise in society and why conflict, including prejudice, stereotyping, sectarianism and racism may arise in the community.

Our recommendations to Government:

- 1. Make sure children are properly protected from trauma, violence or mistreatment in their communities, including from all forms of violence by non-State forces (paramilitaries). They should also be protected from being recruited by these forces.**
 - This should involve full monitoring and evaluation of the pilot programmes to tackle paramilitarism. The Government should invest more in those programmes that are particularly effective and lead to positive outcomes.**
- 2. Tackle the ongoing impact of conflict (e.g., mental ill health, family breakdown, child poverty and educational under attainment) and make sure children and young people get suitable services in their communities. Information about the conflict should be provided to children and young people with a view to achieving a shared understanding.**
- 3. Make sure the school curriculum promotes understanding and integration between communities from an early age and regularly throughout school. Children from Catholic and Protestant schools must be given more opportunities to work together and integrate through education and working together.**
- 4. Support children and young people to play a central role in building a peaceful future in Northern Ireland. Government should recognise that children and young people have been Human Rights Defenders in this country for many years. Make sure children and young people are supported to explore and celebrate their culture, and to recognise the right of others to celebrate theirs.**