ISPCAN Statement Condemning Violence Against Children During Civil Unrest

Aurora, CO April 2021

ISPCAN is deeply concerned over the growing number of allegations of ill treatment, detention, and killing of children in various countries around the world which are experiencing social and political unrest and crises related to migration, asylum, and violent extremism, and unlawful seizure of property.

Children are being arbitrarily detained, summarily executed, and tortured while in detention. In these countries where civilians are bearing the brunt of unrest, it is troublesome to see children steadily and increasingly fall prey to violent acts, including from law enforcement (either as casualties or direct targets); they are denied lifesaving, survival, and development services and witness first-hand battered, injured, or dead parents or guardians, other children, and other family members. The trauma and abuse have lifelong consequences on children who are powerless, and are innocent victims. Governments are responsible for the safety of families and children.

ISPCAN supports the right to protection for all children and in all situations, as enshrined in the United Nations’ Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), ratified by 196 countries. The UN’s Sustainable Development Goals also make it the responsibility of all countries and parties to ensure that all children are free from all forms of violence.

ISPCAN calls on State Parties to:

1. Stop all violent acts against children.

2. Fulfil the commitment they made in ratifying the CRC, adhere to all other relevant international standards.

3. Institutionalize measures to protect all children caught up in all form of crisis from acts of violence and abuse through accountable government programs.

4. Safeguard children’s access to adequate physical, mental health, and psychosocial support services.

5. Act now with a sense of urgency in the face of increased risks of violence against children in this time of the COVID-19 pandemic.

6. Collect adequate data on children and families affected to ensure care in the short and long term.

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1 ISPCAN: International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse & Neglect
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