



European Academy of Childhood Disability

International not-for-profit association

Registered company: 0757.731.534
Registered office: Spoorwegstraat 12, Bruges, Belgium

EACD General Management Committee Members 2023

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Université Libre de Bruxelles, Belgium

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Website:

<https://www.eacd.org>

<https://edu.eacd.org>

Email:

admin@eacd.org

War and conflict situations, whether it is the conflict in the Israeli-Palestinian region, the ongoing war in Ukraine or anywhere else in the European region, are having a devastating impact on the children with disabilities in the conflict zones. Families and children are terrified, in shock, and in desperate need for safety. In conflict, children with disabilities are among the most vulnerable. They often require specialized treatment and services. Without access to services, schools and assistive products like wheelchairs, many children with disabilities face a very real risk of exclusion, neglect and stigmatization as the war or conflict continues.

The Geneva Conventions, international humanitarian laws that establish international legal standards for humanitarian treatment in war and conflict, state that personnel engaging in medical tasks must always be respected and protected. The Geneva Conventions also state that parties to an armed conflict may not impede the provision of care by preventing the passage of medical personnel. They must facilitate access to the ones in need of it, and provide the necessary assistance and protection to medical personnel. Attacks on medical and education facilities are unacceptable.

Even when the Geneva Conventions are respected, war and conflicts hits children with disabilities the hardest, leaving many without access to specialized care and accessible education facilities they need. The implications cannot be underestimated. Lack of access to proper medical and psychological care will prolong or worsen injuries and disabling conditions among children. The risk of being exposed to violence and facing difficulties to access basic services including health and education are exponentially higher for children with disabilities. The risk of violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect for children with disabilities is even further heightened by the death of or separation from caregivers. On top of this, families of children with disabilities in a conflict often lack the means or ability to provide their children with the assistive equipment they need.

Therefore, on behalf of children with disabilities affected by the conflict in the Israeli-Palestinian region, the European Academy of Childhood Disability (EACD) are asking those involved, those who have influence over them, all neighbouring countries and the international community for the following actions for children with disabilities:

1) Invest in providing lifesaving support and long-term rehabilitation services, including psychosocial support and mental health care for children with disabilities.

2) Provide children with disabilities early passage across borders and ensure safeguarding of the human rights of children with disabilities and their access to basic services including health and nutrition, education, child protection and shelter.

3) Increase financial assistance to families with children with disabilities to help provide access to assistive products like wheelchairs, canes and prosthetics.

4) Produce and provide a resource containing information on relevant local rehabilitation resources, care facilities, family support resources and any other information that may help the children with disabilities to access care readily.

5) Provide flexible, unrestricted, multi-year funding to meet the needs of children, including those with disabilities and their families to increase their access to specialized services.

6) Support reconstruction and recovery efforts by prioritising the needs of children, including children with disabilities.

7) End all restrictions on the delivery of humanitarian aid to children and their families.

8) Reach out to one another to promote humanity and peace.