



Forum: Human Rights Council

Issue: Addressing Child Marriage in Africa

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Overview of the Issue

Enforced Child Marriages deprive children of their basic human rights, taking away their freedom of choice and enslaving them to spend the rest of their lives with an estranged person. This affects the young women and girls immensely not only mentally but physically too. Forced Marriages are a direct violation to several key national and international laws. With 38% of children under the age of 15 getting forced into marriage in Sub Saharan Africa, with over 700 million women today having been forcefully married as children, the threat is visibly clear and very prominent in the continent of Africa. Laws that focus on setting a minimum age of marriage are an essential way to safeguard and protect young boys and girls from being forced into marriage before they are ready. Despite heavy opposition from several countries several have made exceptions to the minimum age of marriage, with 93 countries legally allowing children to marry before the age of 18 with parental consent. "If the amount of young girls and women getting forced into marriage does not instantly reduce, the global number of women married as children will increase to 1.2 Billion by 2050" (girlsnotbrides.org)

This Research report will cover some of the most important facts and decisions related to the Issue at hand, including the prominent countries involved and resolutions suggest in order to fight the fight against Child Marriage. The purpose of this Research Report is to aid delegates in coming up with viable resolutions and ideas to combat the issue at hand yet still reminding them of the severity of the situation.

Key Terms

Forced Marriage: A marriage in which one or both of the parties is married without his or her consent or against his or her will

Arranged marriage: A marriage in which both parties consent to the assistance of their parents or a third party (such as a matchmaker) in identifying a spouse.

Child marriage: A marriage in which at least one of the parties is a child. According to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, a child is “every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier”.

Conventions on the Rights of the Child: A United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is a human rights treaty which sets out the civil, political, economic, social, health and cultural rights of children.

(Wikipedia)

Countries and Organizations Involved

15 African countries with the highest rates of Child marriage:

1. Niger: 76%
2. Central African Republic: 68%
3. Chad: 67%
4. Bangladesh: 59%
5. Burkina Faso: 52%
6. Guinea: 52%
7. Mali: 52%
8. South Sudan: 52%
9. Mozambique: 48%
10. Somalia: 45%
11. Nigeria: 43%
12. Malawi: 42%
13. Eritrea: 41%
14. Madagascar: 41%
15. Ethiopia: 40%

(girlsnotbrides.org)

With having the number #1 international ranking of highest child marriage rates in the world, 76% of Niger’s population gets married before the age of 18. 3 in 4 girls in Niger get married before the age of 18; this differs depending on the region. In one area of Niger, 89% of all girls are married as children. The legal age of marriage in Niger is 15, even though there have been laws proposing for the age to be increased to 18, nothing has been finalized yet. Niger is one of 12 countries selected to be part of UNFPA and UNICEF’s Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage. (girlsnotbrides.org)

Major Organizations involved

Girls Not Brides: Girls Not Brides is a global partnership of more than 900 civil society organizations from over 95 countries committed to ending child marriage and enabling girls to fulfill their potential. Girls Not Brides has National Partnerships in eight countries: Bangladesh, Ghana, Mozambique, the Netherlands, Nepal, Uganda, the United Kingdom and the United States. (girlsnotbrides.org)

Plan-International because I'm a girl: Plan's Because I am a Girl campaign aims to support millions of girls to get the education, skills and support they need to transform their lives and the world around them. Girls around the world raised their voices for justice and equality by taking over more than 600 positions of power to mark International Day of the Girl. (plan-international.org)

The United Nations Population Fund: The UN has been dealing with this issue in cooperation with national governments and NGO's for decades. UNFPA promotes programmes and legislation designed to end child marriage. UNFPA supports evidence-based, girl-centred investments that empower girls with the information, skills and services they need to be healthy, educated and safe, helping them make a successful transition to adulthood. UNFPA also works to support the needs of married girls particularly in family planning and maternal health. (unfpa.org)

Plan International UK: Since 1937, Plan International has been promoting the rights of children around the world. They work with our partners in more than 50 countries; making sure children in some of the poorest communities are safe and protected from violence. Providing access to essential services, including education, healthcare, clean water, and toilets. (plan-uk.org)

Related UN resolutions and Previous Approaches to Solving the Issue

One of the more direct and recent approaches that attempts to solve the issue, was a United Nations resolution passed on the 2nd of July 2015:

“On Thursday 2 July, the United Nations Human Rights Council unanimously adopted a resolution co-sponsored by over 85 States to strengthen efforts to prevent and eliminate child, early and forced marriage, a practice that affects 15 million girls every year. The resolution is the first-ever substantive resolution on child marriage adopted by the Council.

It recognises child marriage as a violation of human rights “that prevents individuals from living their lives free from all forms of violence” and that has “wide ranging and adverse consequences on the enjoyment of human rights, such as the right to education, the right to the highest attainable standard of

health, including sexual and reproductive health”. It also recognizes child marriage as a “barrier to sustainable development” that “helps to perpetuate the cycle of poverty”.

Supported by a cross-regional group of 88 States, including from countries with high rates of child marriage, the resolution demonstrates global support for ending child marriage and making it a human rights and development priority in the post-2015 development framework.” (girlsnotbrides.org)

Operative clause examples from 2015 UN Resolution

NOTE: THE 2015 UN RESOLUTION HAS BEEN PROVIDED SOLELY TO AID DELEGATES DURING THE PROCESS OF COMING UP WITH IDEAS. PLAGIARISM WILL BE EXAMINED FOR AND DELEGATES WILL BE PENALIZED FOR PLAGIARISING

Works Cited

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Appendix

