

Saving the Innocent

December 28, 2017

By : **Harun Yahya**

Children are among the most beautiful blessings in this world. They are innocent, wholesome, pure, sweet beings that see and look at everything through positive eyes. To them, everyone is good, everything is a wonder to be discovered. It is impossible to imagine a world without them; a world without their beautiful faces, souls and happy laughter would be intolerable. They are so precious, as soon as they walk into a room, everyone should compliment them and show them how much they deserve respect and appreciation.

Clearly, no sane person would want to imagine, let alone see, a child getting hurt. Similarly, there is no doubt that every good and conscientious person would do everything in their power to protect children and ensure their happiness. And in today's world, there is much to do in this regard.

According to a UNICEF report, three quarters of the world's children (aged two to four), which amounts to 300 million, are subjected to domestic violence (either in the form of psychological aggression and/or corporal punishment). Every seven minutes, an adolescent is killed in an act of violence. For example, in 2015 alone, 82,000 teenagers lost their lives due to acts of violence.

Sexual violence is a big part of the problem, and both boys and girls are particularly vulnerable after puberty. According to surveys, nine million girls (aged 15 to 19) around the world were forced into sexual intercourse or other sexual acts only within the last year.

Predictably, the increasingly volatile atmosphere in the Middle East and North Africa puts children and adolescents in the region at greater risk. The violence in these regions kill more teenagers in the Middle East and North Africa than in all other regions combined. Although only 6% of the world's teenagers live in these regions, they account for more than 70% of violence-related adolescent deaths.

An interesting point about violence against children and adolescents is that in the US, a non-Hispanic black teenage boy is 19 times more likely to be murdered compared to a non-Hispanic white teenage boy. According to UNICEF, "If the homicide rate among non-Hispanic Black adolescent boys was applied nationwide, the United States would be one of the top 10 deadliest countries in the world." Needless to say, these are very troubling figures. Children are among the most vulnerable in our world and they deserve happiness, comfort, love, compassion and protection. They should not be experiencing hostility, aggression or violence.

Another aspect of the problem is the dangerous implications of the violence the children face. According to scientists, vital neural pathways that form during the first 1,000 days of life shape the developing brain. However, for these connections to be healthy, a child needs not only sufficient nutrition and stimulation, but also protection from violence. According to researches, exposure to traumatic events can induce inordinate levels of stress, which means that the body's stress-response system will remain active. This, in turn, can adversely alter the structure of the brain during the early, formative years. In other words, children who experience violence are far less likely to achieve proper social/emotional development. Needless to say, this is a great threat for the future of our world.

No matter how great the dangers they face, these beautiful beings are in no position to defend themselves. Therefore, it is our job to protect them.

What can be done to stop this disturbing trend? Aside from conflict-stricken regions, where help to children can come in the form of asylum in safe countries, there are many viable steps that will at least alleviate the problem. As in almost every other area, education and raising awareness can help greatly.

Governments and NGO's can organize far-reaching campaigns for children and adults. While parents are trained in child development and methods of non-violent discipline and problem-solving skills, children at certain ages can be trained to go to the authorities if they find themselves being bullied or feel threatened in any way.

Violence against children should be heavily punishable by laws and the aforementioned campaigns targeting adults should emphasize the consequences of such actions. People who are found guilty of subjecting children to violence should be shamed publicly, before being punished with severely deterrent penalties.

The public in general needs to be trained and encouraged to protect children, and should be urged to alert the authorities if they suspect that a child might be the victim of abuse. People who help and save children from threats and dangers should be widely recognized and awarded for their bravery.

When the authorities become aware of a threat against a child, they should take immediate action and provide the child in question with the highest level of protection while the suspect is severely punished for making threats. In such cases, offending individuals should never be allowed to come into contact with the child unless an armed officer escorts the child.

A system of guardianship can be established where volunteers, who have passed various psychological and physical tests that confirm their reliability, are assigned with the duty of being the guardian of a child. Without offending the parents, an unhindered connection should be established between the child and the guardian and if for any reason, the child doesn't feel safe and cannot get help from their parents, the child should be able to reach the guardian. If the parents prove to be abusive, violent or somehow ineffective in their duties to protect the child, the guardian should be legally bound to do everything in their power to protect the child from harm, and ensure the child's well-being. The maintenance and viability of this system should be constantly monitored, the guardians should be routinely checked for their mental and physical health and the child should be routinely checked to ensure that there is no problem in the way he or she is being treated by parents or the guardian.

Professional nurses and social workers should pay regular visits especially to certain high-risk houses where they think children might be subjected to mistreatment.

Bullying at schools should never be tolerated and made a criminal offense. Furthermore, children should be trained and encouraged to stand up for each other and against bullies. It is crucial to instill in children the importance of moral values like being compassionate, caring, selfless, gallant and loving towards others.

Children need our help and assistance: It is our duty as human beings to stand up and defend the vulnerable who cannot do it themselves and this is also our duty to the future of our world. Unless we can the trend of violence against children, it is unlikely to have healthy, sound-minded future generations that will be our world's decision-makers in the future.

:: Harun Yahya has authored more than 300 books translated in 73 languages on politics, religion and science.

<https://web.archive.org/web/20171228173231/http://www.riyadhvision.com.sa/2017/12/28/saving-the-innocent/>

<https://www.harunyahya.info/makaleler/masumlari-kurtarmak-lnah43rkv04qy7jb8k>

