

June 4 – International Day of Innocent Children – Victims of Aggression

“Children have rights. Children want peace.”

This simple yet powerful message resonates around the world this year on the occasion of June 4 – the International Day of Innocent Children – Victims of Aggression. It is not only a message of hope, but also a reminder that behind every statistic there is a child’s life, a child’s fear, a child’s tear, and a child’s dream that should never have been interrupted.

The International Day of Innocent Children – Victims of Aggression was established by the United Nations in 1982 as an expression of concern for the suffering of children affected by armed conflict. Today, more than four decades later, its significance is even greater. At a time when wars, humanitarian crises, forced migrations, and violence continue in different parts of the world, millions of children continue to pay the highest price for conflicts they did not create and do not understand.

For many children today, the word “home” does not mean safety. The word “school” does not always mean learning. And the word “childhood” does not always mean play and laughter.

Some children wake up to the sound of sirens instead of their parents’ voices. Others spend their childhood in refugee camps, far from their homes, friends, and schools. Thousands of children live every day in fear of violence, abuse, discrimination, and neglect. Their childhood is not filled with carefree moments, but with uncertainty and a struggle for safety.

Current global data is alarming: more than 468 million children live in conflict zones, and over 36 million children are displaced due to wars, violence, and crises. These figures are a reminder that millions of children continue to grow up in conditions that threaten their health, safety, and future.

The consequences of aggression against children are not always visible. Beyond physical injuries, there are deep psychological traumas that can last for years. Fear, anxiety, insecurity, loss of loved ones, and interrupted education leave marks that affect a child’s overall development.

Therefore, protecting children must not be limited only to ensuring physical safety. It also requires creating conditions for healthy psychological development, access to education and healthcare, emotional support, and opportunities for every child to grow in an environment filled with respect, care, and understanding.

According to United Nations data, the number of grave violations of children’s rights in conflict areas remains alarmingly high. Killings, maiming, forced recruitment, abductions, sexual violence, attacks on schools and hospitals, and restrictions on humanitarian aid continue to be a harsh reality for many children worldwide.

But this day is not only about children affected by war. It is also about every child who is a victim of domestic violence, neglect, bullying, abuse, or social exclusion. Aggression takes many forms. It does not always come with weapons. Sometimes it comes through insults, threats, neglect, or silence. That is why the fight for child protection begins in every home, every school, and every community.

On the occasion of the International Day of Innocent Children – Victims of Aggression, the Institute of Public Health marks this day and joins global efforts to raise awareness of the need to protect children’s rights and well-being. Through the promotion of healthy and safe environments for growth and development, prevention of violence, and improvement of mental health among children and young people, the Institute emphasizes the importance of timely support and care for every child.

This year’s message calls on us to listen to children—not only when they cry, but also when they are silent. Not only when they ask for help, but also when they try to be brave. Children have the right to be heard, protected, and respected. Their rights must not depend on where they were born, the language they speak, or the circumstances in which they live.

Society is measured by how it treats its most vulnerable members. Therefore, our shared responsibility is to create an environment in which every child feels safe, accepted, and valued—a place where children can learn, develop, form friendships, and build their future without fear.

On this day, we do not only remember the children who have suffered. We reaffirm our commitment to the children living today and to future generations. Let us not allow children’s rights to remain only written words in documents and conventions. Let us turn them into real protection, real care, and real opportunities.

Because every child has the right to childhood.

Every child has the right to safety.

Every child has the right to peace.

And every child deserves a future free from aggression, violence, and fear.