

Forum: Youth Assembly Action Paper I

Issue: Preventing the increasing rates of violence among adolescents

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TOPIC INTRODUCTION

“Every 7 minutes an adolescent is killed by an act of violence”.¹ This statistic is nothing more than a disappointing, but honest truth about the scale and prevalence of adolescent violence in today’s world, and it speaks of how shocking and devastating its impacts can be for the whole of society. The repercussions of adolescent violence can very quickly become devastating both for victims and for perpetrators; with temporary losses of privilege being the suitable consequence in milder cases, to interpersonal violence for older adolescent boys being the second most prevalent cause of death², the issue can quickly escalate and have serious, life-altering consequences.

It is a common misconception that adolescent violence solely affects its victims and perpetrators, when, in fact, the consequences of adolescent violence span across society, undermining education systems through lower academic performance and increased likelihood of premature school departure, to draining financial and judicial resources. It is a direct threat to social stability, while also concurrently hindering childhood development and degrading adolescents’ sense of self-worth. Although the issue of adolescent violence can be found everywhere, it is an unfortunate reality that it has a disproportionate impact on minorities and marginalised groups of society.

One of the most crucial things one must understand about the issue is its importance: the issue is incredibly important because the youth affected by this violence grow up to be adults and members of society, thus showing that, in fact, the issue impacts the whole of future society - the society our generation will be part of. With that, higher rates of adolescent violence carry many potential future issues, hence why conflict prevention and active intervention is key. This reflects this year’s conference theme, “rediscovering diplomacy in an era of political instability”, as both the theme and this topic have the common denominator of conflict

¹ ---. *A FAMILIAR FACE Violence in the Lives of Children and Adolescents Key Findings*. 2017.
<https://data.unicef.org/resources/a-familiar-face/>

² UNICEF. *A FAMILIAR FACE Violence in the Lives of Children and Adolescents*. Nov. 2017.
<https://data.unicef.org/resources/a-familiar-face/>

prevention, while prioritising dialogue and de-escalation of pressing, underlying social tensions marked by the volatility of accumulated frustration.

DEFINITION OF KEY-TERMS

Adolescence

“The phase of life between childhood and adulthood, from ages 10-19. It is a unique stage of human development and an important time for laying the foundations of good health. Adolescents experience rapid physical, cognitive and psychological growth, which affects how they feel, think, make decisions, and interact with the world around them.”³

Delinquency

“Conduct that is out of accord with accepted behaviour or the law.”⁴ In essence, delinquency refers to any action that is illegal or that violates accepted social conduct; further, although it is not limited to young people, delinquency is often associated with misconduct executed by young people.

Homicide

“The killing of a person by another with intent to cause death or serious injury, by any means. It excludes death due to legal intervention or operations of war.”⁵ Homicide refers to the intentional killing of another person, regardless of the specific method they used to carry out said homicide.

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)

“Intimate Partner Violence refers to behaviour within an intimate relationship that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm, including acts of physical aggression, sexual coercion, psychological abuse and controlling behaviours. This definition covers violence by both current and former spouses and partners.”⁶ Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) is a specific form of violence found between two people that have or had a close relationship (usually romantic).

Juvenile

³ WHO. “Adolescent Health.” *World Health Organization*, World Health Organization, 2025, www.who.int/health-topics/adolescent-health#tab=tab_1.

⁴ Merriam Webster. “Definition of DELINQUENCY.” *Www.merriam-Webster.com*, www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/delinquency.

⁵ ---. “Violence Info – Homicide.” *World Health Organization*, 2019, apps.who.int/violence-info/homicide/.

⁶ World Health Organization. “Intimate Partner Violence.” *World Health Organization*, 2022, apps.who.int/violence-info/intimate-partner-violence/.

A physiologically immature or underdeveloped young person who has committed or is being accused of committing a criminal offence.⁷ A juvenile is essentially a person who has committed a criminal act, while still being under the age of adulthood (i.e. under the age of 18).

Perpetrator

“ A perpetrator is a person who commits a crime, illegal act, or any other type of wrongdoing. It literally refers to the person who “did it”. ”⁸

Violence

“Behaviour which is intended to hurt, injure, or kill people.”⁹ Violence tends to be an ‘umbrella term’ for any behaviour which is considered socially unacceptable, or causes harm or injury (both physical and/or emotional).

Youth

“ For statistical purposes, the United Nations -without prejudice to any other definitions made by Member States- defines ‘youth’ as those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years. ”¹⁰

Youth Violence

“ Refers to violence that occurs among individuals aged 10-29 years who are unrelated and who may or may not know each other. It generally takes place outside of the home. It includes a range of acts from bullying, both offline and online, and physical fighting, to more severe sexual and physical assault, to homicide. ”¹¹ Youth violence consists of many different subgenres of violence including homicides, physical violence, sexual harassment, emotional and psychological violence, verbal violence, cyberbullying, gang-related violence and cultural violence and thus it significantly affects many different groups of society.

⁷ Merriam Webster. “Definition of JUVENILE.” *Merriam-Webster.com*, 2019, www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/juvenile.

⁸ Cambridge Dictionary. “PERPETRATOR | Meaning in the Cambridge English Dictionary.” *Cambridge.org*, 18 Sept. 2019, dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/perpetrator.

⁹ Collins English Dictionary. “Violence Definition and Meaning | Collins English Dictionary.” *Collinsdictionary.com*, 27 Apr. 2019, www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/violence.

¹⁰ United Nations. “Youth.” *United Nations*, www.un.org/en/global-issues/youth.

¹¹ ---. “Violence Info – Youth Violence.” *Apps.who.int*, 2022, apps.who.int/violence-info/youth-violence/.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Evolution of Youth Violence

Development throughout the 1970s-1990s

The era of mass-incarceration began in the 1970s, while in 1974 the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention was established, as a measure to address the new-found increase in the arrest of juvenile delinquents alongside the concern about youth violence. Youth violence, however, continued to rise in the 1980s until the 1990s with the arrests for most serious crimes rising 79% from 1985 to 1995 in the US.¹² The trend in the US was an accurate reflection of the situation worldwide, as, during the same time period, youth homicide rates across the globe increased, especially among youths in the 10-24 age bracket.¹³ Increased youth homicide rates were greater in LEDCs, but it must be noted that the increase in rates was often considered a product of the increase in the use of guns as a method of attack¹⁴. Many speculated that youth violence was on the rise during the 1990s because of the leniency of the judicial body, causing a new wave of demand for stricter policy.

Surge in growth between the 2000s and the 2010s

With the coming of the new century, traditional and serious crime rates in the early 2000s began to fall¹⁵; this was a result of a combination of factors including improved policy and technological advancements (CCTV cameras, home alarms, better street lighting etc) which played a big role in identifying perpetrators. Overall there was a decrease in the prevalence of aggressive violent behaviours, such as fighting and bullying, however with the rise of social media there was an alarming rise in cyberbullying. Cyber bullying falls under the definition of youth violence as it is a form of emotional abuse, and the influence of social media is strongly linked with increasing rates of cyber bullying -although the scientific literature still may remain inconclusive on this issue.¹⁶ From 2000-2019, youth homicide rates decreased in most

¹² Rovner, Joshua. "Youth Justice: Lessons from the Last 50 Years." *The Sentencing Project*, 6 Oct. 2023, www.sentencingproject.org/policy-brief/youth-justice-lessons-from-the-last-50-years/.

¹³ Krug, Etienne, et al. *World Report on Violence and Health Edited By*. 2002. https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/42495/9241545615_eng.pdf;jsessionid=...

¹⁴ Krug, Etienne, et al. *World Report on Violence and Health Edited By*. 2002. https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/42495/9241545615_eng.pdf;jsessionid=...

¹⁵ Rovner, Joshua. "Youth Justice: Lessons from the Last 50 Years." *The Sentencing Project*, 6 Oct. 2023, www.sentencingproject.org/policy-brief/youth-justice-lessons-from-the-last-50-years/.

¹⁶ Molcho, Michal, et al. "Trends in Indicators of Violence among Adolescents in Europe and North America 1994–2022." *International Journal of Public Health*, vol. 70, 24 Feb. 2025, <https://doi.org/10.3389/ijph.2025.1607654>.

countries, with MEDCs having greater decreases than LEDCs. This is likely due to MEDCs having the ability to allocate better resources and greater funding to address the issue.

Recent development

In recent years, youth violence rates seem to be decreasing as a result of improved policy, improved technology, improved access to support systems, and the recognition of the issue. In fact, from the 2000s to the 2020s, youth arrests in the US fell 80%¹⁷. Still, although violence has been decreasing it is still an incredibly important and prevalent issue. Nearly 1 in 5 (18%) of adolescents aged 13 to 17 years old declared they had been a victim of violence, while 1 in 8 admitted to being perpetrators of violence themselves. It should be noted that this statistic is much greater in reality as it only includes the adolescents who admitted to being perpetrators. Half of adolescents admitted they had witnessed violence being committed against someone else.¹⁸ Below are attached two bar graphs to help you visualise the issue.

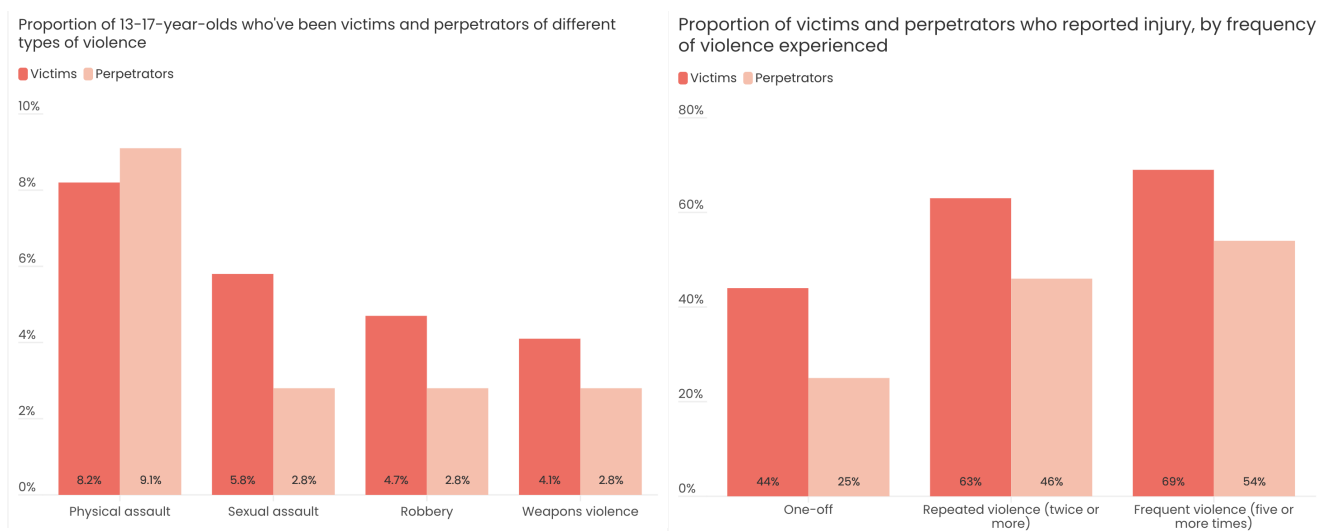


Figure 1,2: The Scale of Violence Affecting Children | Youth Endowment Fund, Nov. 2025

In Figure 1 (the graph on the left) the proportion of 13-17-year-olds who have been victims and perpetrators of violence is shown, where victims are shown in dark pink, and perpetrators are shown in light pink. 8.2% of 13-17 year olds claim they have been victims of physical assault, 5.8% of sexual assault, 4.7% of robbery, and 4.1% of weapons-related violence. Concurrently, 9.1% of 13-17 year olds claim they have been perpetrators of physical

¹⁷ Rovner, Joshua. "Youth Justice: Lessons from the Last 50 Years." *The Sentencing Project*, 6 Oct. 2023, www.sentencingproject.org/policy-brief/youth-justice-lessons-from-the-last-50-years/.

¹⁸ Youth Endowment Fund . "The Scale of Violence Affecting Children | Youth Endowment Fund." *Youth Endowment Fund*, 24 Nov. 2025, youthendowmentfund.org.uk/reports/children-violence-and-vulnerability-2025/scale-of-violence/.

assault, 2.8% of sexual assault, 2.8% of robbery, and 2.8% of weapons violence. In reality the perpetration statistics are likely much higher as perpetrators hesitate to admit they have committed crimes. Overall, this graph is useful as it helps us contextualise the data we are given about adolescent violence in terms of percentage of the demographic, while also helping compare which type of violence is most prevalent.

In Figure 2 (the graph on the right) the proportion of victims and perpetrators who reported injury, by frequency of violence experienced; in essence it helps us understand how frequently injuries occur based on how many times they have experienced violence. For instance, victims who only experienced violence once (or 'one-off') were injured 44% of times, while victims who experienced violence repeatedly (i.e. twice or more, but not more than five times), were injured 63%. Finally, victims who experienced violence five or more times, were injured 69% of times.

Comparative assessment across other groups of society

To further comprehend and contextualise the issue, this section will look at the trend in violence in different groups of society. It is a disheartening, but true fact that minority groups are significantly more affected and subject to adolescent violence. In the United States, a child of African American descent is over twice as likely to be convicted for youth violence relative to their share of the population, while also in general being at higher risk for most physically harmful forms of violence including homicide, fights with injuries, and aggravated assaults.¹⁹ In a comparative scientific study, fighting was reported in 27% of African Americans, 24% of Latinos, 16% of Caucasians, and 6% of Asian/Pacific Islander Youth.²⁰ It must be mentioned that it is not true that some demographics are inherently more violent than others, it is simply that the statistics portray them as such due to the fact that they do not take into account the structural inequalities in their economic hierarchies that these demographics may be exposed to. Oftentimes it is a combination of socioeconomic factors at play and that these research studies are a reflection of many different variables, causing the results to become disproportionate so quickly. Moreover, young males are twice as likely to act violently outside the home than are young females,²¹ which further addresses the fact that males are more often victims of homicide and gang violence which is linked with increased likelihood of them becoming perpetrators.

¹⁹ Youth Endowment Fund. "Beyond the Headlines 2024 Summary | Youth Endowment Fund." *Youth Endowment Fund*, 29 July 2024, youthendowmentfund.org.uk/reports/beyond-the-headlines-2024/summary/.

²⁰ Shetgiri, Rashmi, et al. "Adolescent Fighting: Racial/Ethnic Disparities and the Importance of Families and Schools." *Academic Pediatrics*, vol. 10, no. 5, Sept. 2010, pp. 323–329, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acap.2010.06.004>. Accessed 12 Dec. 2019.

²¹ EBSCO. "Violence by Children and Teenagers | Research Starters | EBSCO Research." *EBSCO*, 2024, www.ebsco.com/research-starters/health-and-medicine/violence-children-and-teenagers.

Finally, higher familial support was associated with decreased odds of fighting for white youth as well as for Latino youth.²²

Fundamental contributing factors

Access to arms, drugs and alcohol

Access to arms, drugs and alcohol misconstrues adolescents' rationality and morality, oftentimes causes adolescents who commit crimes under the influence to lack the comprehension and rationality to understand the consequences of their actions. They increase the likelihood of adolescents becoming more violent as they may impair judgement, and reduce self-control, making adolescents more predisposed to delinquency. Perhaps with the influence of drugs and alcohol, some adolescents may have committed crimes that they would otherwise not have committed, hadn't they been under the influence. Finally, access to arms facilitates violence for adolescents as easier access is directly correlated to greater rates of violence.

Mental Health conditions

It must be noted that mental health conditions, especially ones that are not severe do not have a strong correlation with adolescent violence, in fact, most people with mental health conditions are not violent. However, in combination with some other factors, mental health is a potential contributor to such violence. Mild mental health conditions can be correlated with a lack of adequate emotional regulation which may make an adolescent more prone to becoming perpetrators. Furthermore, more serious mental health issues such as psychosis or schizophrenia carry symptoms such as paranoia, and delusions which can contribute to more violent behaviours. Most importantly, untreated mental health conditions could worsen emotional distress and thus further exacerbate built-up frustration. Another important point that should be taken under consideration, is the prominent influence of trauma and disturbing childhood experiences, which is a significant predictor of youth violence than other mental illnesses.

Societal factors and socioeconomic correlation

Adolescents who come from a more disadvantaged socioeconomic background may become frustrated with their perceived unjustness of society and thus feel more inclined to seek recompensation and turn towards violent behaviours. Additionally, adolescents exposed to lower socioeconomic backgrounds are exposed to more stress, instability and limited opportunities to escape their background, while also concurrently being exposed to more violence, contributing to its normalisation, and potential acceptance. A further point is that a lack of social support may further increase one's frustration as they may struggle with coping with difficult emotions, and potentially result in turning to violence as a coping mechanism, while also being reinforced by the fact that they lack resources and access to education, healthcare and opportunities due to their impoverished state.

²² Shetgiri, Rashmi, et al. "Adolescent Fighting: Racial/Ethnic Disparities and the Importance of Families and Schools." *Academic Pediatrics*, vol. 10, no. 5, Sept. 2010, pp. 323–329, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acap.2010.06.004>. Accessed 12 Dec. 2019.

Individual determinants: impulsivity & emotional dysregulation

Impulsivity increases the likelihood of adolescent violence as adolescents act without fully comprehending the gravity or consequences of their behaviour. Some adolescents who struggle with emotional dysregulation tend to struggle with finding coping mechanisms and thus struggle with expressing their emotions in a healthy manner, making them more prone to reacting disproportionately aggressively in situations linking to an overall increase in rates of violence. Both impulsivity and emotional dysregulation have a common denominator: a poor frustration tolerance. Acting based on strong frustration often leads to violent behaviours.

Exposure to violence and desensitisation

Desensitisation of violence inevitably leads to the normalisation of violence, because when violence is normalised, the consequences and immorality of it tends to become disregarded. This is important as both of the aforementioned aspects are serious deterrents for many adolescents, thus if they are minimised more adolescents tend towards violence. Some adolescents are so overexposed to violence that they begin to think it is the only way of life, causing them to act in a way that they potentially would not have acted otherwise.

Interpersonal influences

Interpersonal influence is one of the most significant contributing factors when it comes to intimate partner violence. Conflicts in romantic relationships as well as jealousy and possessiveness can cause adolescents to commit acts of violence both within the relationship and with people who may be “threatening” the stability of the relationship. Association with peers who also commit acts of violence, normalises violence, causing increased potential for future violence. Moreover, rejection by peers may also contribute to potential acts of violence, as, when adolescents become isolated and ostracised they tend to “seek revenge” on society and their peers and thus stray towards more violent behaviours, as coping mechanisms. Finally, one of the most important factors that increases the rate of violence is familial instability and domestic violence. They cause increased exposure to violence, potential normalisation of violence, trauma, and reduced supervision which all play a key role in increasing potential for youth violence.

Long-term effects on involved parties

Long-term effects on victims

Victims of youth violence experience a lot of long-term effects. One of the most prominent long-term effects are lasting mental health issues including PTSD, chronic anxiety, depression and suicidal ideation, while other also experience physiological changes as a result of the stress from the violence, which can impair brain development and lead to long-term emotional regulation issues. Another aspect and long-term consequence that makes tackling this issue so difficult is that victims often fall victim to the cycle of revictimisation, where victims of violence have an increased likelihood of becoming victims of intimate partner violence. Additionally violence tends to affect the educational outcome of victims causing them to have

lower academic performance, increased likelihood of unemployment, and higher rates of premature academic departure. Furthermore, after being subject to adolescent violence, many victims lose trust in institutions as they believe that the system has failed to protect them, thus potentially causing them to feel abandoned or unsupported, which can lead to them feeling reluctant to reach out and report potential future cases of violence. Finally, a lasting long-term effect of violence is social withdrawal, where victims may feel afraid of being harmed again by society and fellow peers which causes them to naturally isolate themselves, further causing them to have difficulties in creating relationships.

Long-term effects on perpetrators

Perpetrators of adolescent violence often experience developmental trait alterations, such as further desensitisation to pain and violence in the long term. This could link to overall increased likelihood of future violence such as but not limited to: domestic violence, non-partner violence, adult criminality and thus potential incarceration. Moreover, they often experience academic underachievement with increased rates of school dropouts and long-term difficulties in stable employment. This is particularly harmful as unemployed perpetrators not only carry a mental burden themselves by being unemployed, but they also weigh down on the economy as they do not contribute to taxes and remain dependent on government assistance in the long term. It is important to understand that the issue of adolescent violence should be looked at holistically, and to understand that the consequences of it fall on the victim, the perpetrator and on society, in order to address it adequately.

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED

Brazil

Brazil faces serious issues when it comes to adolescent violence with almost 300,000 young people aged 15-29 being killed due to violence in the past 11 years. In fact, 46.5% of all homicides were from youth violence.²³ Many argue that this is because Brazilian youth is heavily exposed to lethal and non-lethal violence, which may be a result of its widespread poverty. Like most countries, youth violence in Brazil consists of mainly male victims and perpetrators, which may be linked to societal norms which often perpetuate the idea that masculinity is comprised of exposure to risk and violent behaviour. Sexual violence in Brazil is also incredibly prominent in young people with 16% (around 14,000) of rape cases in 2024 being in the age range of 15 to 19.²⁴

Honduras

²³ Silva, Martim. "Brazil: Over 300K Young People Dead Due to Violence in 11 Years." *Plataforma Media*, 27 May 2026, <https://www.plataformamedia.com/en/2026/05/27/brazil-atlas-violence-report-youth-homicides-2026/>.

²⁴ Silva, Martim. "Brazil: Over 300K Young People Dead Due to Violence in 11 Years." *Plataforma Media*, 27 May 2026, <https://www.plataformamedia.com/en/2026/05/27/brazil-atlas-violence-report-youth-homicides-2026/>.

Honduras has some of the highest rates of adolescent violence across the globe. Located in Latin America, Honduras historically has some of the highest homicide rates in the world for adolescents and children; this is likely the product of the high rates of organised crime, gang violence and cartel activity. In 2009, the homicide rate was 65% of all violent deaths, and still, daily, thousands of young people are affected and exposed to youth and adolescent violence both as victims and perpetrators. Since 2007, Interpeace, which is an international peacebuilding organisation, has been actively working on resolving the situation. Director of the Central American Youth Programme, Isabel Aguilar, explains that “violence is physical and verbal, but also structural and cultural”, also noting that “the violence Honduras faces today is a combination of Historical, Political and Social factors”, markedly the widespread socioeconomic deprivation, including unemployment and poverty. She argues that often, “violence becomes a means to gain or keep power and even benefit financially.”²⁵ highlighting that the issue seems to be institutional and engrained into society.

Middle East

The Middle East experiences persistent and prolonged conflict, with Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic being among the top five most deadly places in the world for adolescent boys and girls. Collective violence, which includes injuries due to police or military intervention and those resulting from war or civil conflict is the second most common cause of death, which is not an accurate indicator when it comes to our topic on adolescent violence, but is useful when it comes to contextualising the issue. Data suggests that bullying by schoolmates is by far the most common form of violence in schools with more than 1 in 4 adolescents aged 13 to 15 being bullied at school at least one time in the past couple of months. Additionally, in Iraq, Lebanon, Yemen, and Qatar corporal punishment is not yet fully prohibited, which may seriously contribute to the normalisation of violence, and potentially result in it being reflected in adolescent violence rates. Although just 7% of the world’s adolescents live in the Middle East and North Africa, more than 70% of adolescents who died in 2015 due to collective violence were in this region.²⁶

United Kingdom

In the United Kingdom, violence has worsened over the past decade and the number of children and young people who lost their lives to violence in 2022 is higher than 10 years ago. This contradicts the number of children convicted for violent offences, which has fallen over the past decade where in 2022/2023, 14,928 proven violent offences were committed by 10-17 year-olds, which is nearly half the number from 2012/2013. Reflecting global trends, in the UK males accounted for 83% of children cautioned or convicted, 91% of hospital admissions for

²⁵ “Growing up Is a World of Violence in Honduras.” *Interpeace*, 31 Aug. 2011, www.interpeace.org/fr/2011/08/growing-up-is-a-world-of-violence-in-honduras/. Accessed 11 June 2026.

²⁶ UNICEF MENA. “A Profile of Violence against Children and Adolescents in the Middle East and North Africa.” *Unicef.org*, July 2018, www.unicef.org/mena/reports/profile-violence-against-children-and-adolescents-middle-east-and-north-africa.

knife assaults and 87% of homicide victims aged 16 to 24. Females, on the other hand, accounted for 75% of sexual assault victims, where 32% of victims had been assaulted by a current partner or ex-partner. Moreover, children living in the most police deprived areas are 2.5 more likely to be exposed to violent crime, and over the last decade spending on services for young people in England halved down by more than half a billion pounds²⁷. Overall, the situation in the UK is a fairly accurate representation of the situation worldwide.

United States

Youth Violence is classified as a serious public health crisis in the United States, much like in the rest of the world. In fact, for young people aged 10-24, homicide is the third leading cause of death for non-hispanic and African American youth. Moreover, youth violence is a source of great economic strain, with an estimated 122 billion dollars annually being spent on youth homicide and nonfatal physical assault-related-injuries in 2020. Furthermore it must be noted that this statistic does not include the costs related to the criminal justice system and only accounts for medical care and lost work. Undoubtedly, youth violence is a serious economic burden for the United States. Similarly, it is a point of strain for healthcare professionals as emergency departments across the country treat over 800 young people for physical assault-related injuries each day, a fact which is indicative of the load placed on healthcare professionals as a result of this issue.²⁸

United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF)

UNICEF is a specialised agency of the United Nations that works to protect the rights of children across the world. It works in over 150 countries²⁹, strengthening safety nets that protect children, alongside partnering with governments and community advocates to connect vulnerable children to various forms of protection. In addition, it collaborates with governments across various sectors such as health, education, justice and other social services to ensure safety for children in need. Furthermore, UNICEF plays a pivotal role in establishing global alliances and setting technical guidance to comprehensively address violence against children; it does this by improving data availability and building evidence, which helps raise awareness, enhance political will and hold decision makers accountable.³⁰

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

²⁷ Youth Endowment Fund. "Beyond the Headlines 2024 Summary | Youth Endowment Fund." *Youth Endowment Fund*, 29 July 2024, youthendowmentfund.org.uk/reports/beyond-the-headlines-2024/summary/.

²⁸ CDC. "About Youth Violence." *Youth Violence Prevention*, 15 Feb. 2024, www.cdc.gov/youth-violence/about/index.html.

²⁹ ---. "Violence against Children." *Unicef.org*, 2023, www.unicef.org/protection/violence-against-children#what-we-do.

³⁰ ---. "Violence against Children." *Unicef.org*, 2023, www.unicef.org/protection/violence-against-children#what-we-do.

The UNODC is another relevant office of the UN that tackles issues related to illicit drugs, crime, corruption, terrorism and criminal justice. It has supported more than 60 member states in preventing and responding to violence against children. Further, in 2023, the UNODC and the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children (OSRSG-VAC) joined forces to launch the 'Strategy to End Violence Against Children 2023-2030'. As an office, it believes that children have the opportunity to shift and alter societal dynamics, as well as to galvanise and promote positive change, hence why they collaborate with the OSRSG-VAC to create a society free from crime, while still respecting the roles and rights of children.³¹

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

DATE	DESCRIPTION OF EVENT
2 September 1990	Convention on the Rights of the Child is officially adopted; the UN establishes a legally binding international obligation to protect the rights of children across the globe
11 July 1990	African Charter on the Rights and Welfare; it is a regional treaty that was adopted and expands on the Convention on the Rights of the Child
25 May 1996	The World Health Organisation frames violence as a public health issue and crisis; shifts the global narrative of violence being a purely criminal injustice, to a preventable phenomenon that requires intervention.
3 October 2002	World Report on Violence and Health is published; first comprehensive global study on youth violence.

³¹ UNODC. "End Violence against Children." *United Nations : Office on Drugs and Crime*, 2021, www.unodc.org/unodc/en/justice-and-prison-reform/endvac/index.html.

2000-2005	Increase of anti-bullying policies in schools in the US and Europe (add example).
Mid-late 2000s	Rapid development of social media platforms, primarily including Facebook and Instagram, who are both owned by the same parent company; cyberbullying becomes a major contributor to adolescent violence and mental health crises.
14 December 2012	Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting; retriggers global debate on youth violence and gun control.
25 September 2015	The United Nations adopt the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs), where goal 16 includes the reduction of violence.
March 2020	Covid-19 Pandemic and quarantine occur, causing intensifying social isolation, mental health deterioration, an upsurge in digital aggression, as well as an increasing lack of digital etiquette.
2021-Today	In spite of an overall decrease in adolescent violence, ³² it is still a pressing issue in societies across the globe.

RELEVANT UN RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

[UN General Assembly Resolution 40/33](#)

Also commonly referred to as “United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice”, UNGA 40/33 was published on November 29, 1985. It encourages a community-focused approach to reduce delinquency and the overall requirement of legal intervention. Furthermore, it supports and prioritises the well-being, education, treatment, and -most importantly- the social-reintegration of the juvenile offender.

[The Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)

³² ---. “CDC Data Show Improvements in Youth Mental Health but Need for Safer and More Supportive Schools.” *CDC Newsroom*, 6 Aug. 2024, www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2024/p0806-youth-mental-health.html.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child is an international human rights treaty that outlines the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of every child, where a child is defined as any human being below the age of 18. It was published on November 20th, 1989 and is comprised of 54 articles which aim to protect the rights of children across the globe. For our topic five articles are relevant, namely article 6,19,34,37a, and article 34. Article 6 focuses on every child's inherent right to life and thus refers to situations that are more homicide-related, while article 19 focuses on every child's right to be protected from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury, abuse, maltreatment and exploitation which directly links to our topic, making it arguably the most relevant and important article. Concurrently, article 34 ensures that children are protected from sexual exploitation and abuse, and article 37, subsection A, reiterates that no child should be subject to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. Finally, article 39 centres on recovery and adequate reintegration of victims into society.

UN General Assembly Resolution 69/158

Also referred to as the “protecting children from bullying” resolution, UNGA 69/158 was adopted in December 2014. This resolution acknowledges that bullying can have serious long term impacts to a child's physical and mental wellbeing, as well as recognising the need for bullying to be both prevented and eliminated. Finally, it encourages member states to develop long-term plans to counteract the issue and promote prevention-focused approaches rather than reaction-focused approaches. Furthermore, it formally addresses cyberbullying and technology-related violence.

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDG)

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a universal plan of action, adopted by the United Nations and its member states in 2015, to be fulfilled ideally by the year 2030. It consists of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (or SDGs for short), covering a vast array of topics including the five Ps: People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnership. For our topic, two SDGs are relevant, SDG 16 and SDG 11. SDG 16 calls for “Promote[ing] peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, providing access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels”, which means that by 2030, our societies shall be peaceful, thus meaning that we should refrain from violence. Simultaneously, SDG 11 calls for “Make[ing] cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”, where the two key words in this SDG for the topic of adolescent violence are “inclusive” and “safe”. Inclusivity suggests there shall not be any form of bullying and that adolescents shall be accepting, while safety suggests there shall not be any criminality or violence.

UN Human Rights Council Resolution 40/15

This resolution is also referred to as the “Thirteenth anniversary of the convention of the rights of the child” and it was published in March 2019. It essentially reaffirms member state's obligation to implement the right under the convention on the rights of the child, while also raising awareness about the convention of the rights of the child and encourages reflection on

achievements, implementation of best practices and challenges, when it comes to achieving the realization of the convention on the rights of the child. Last but not least, it calls for renewed efforts and wider ratification of the convention.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

CDC Youth Violence Prevention Centres

This is an American initiative that funds community-centred violence prevention programmes in order to build the necessary community capacity to prevent violence-related injury and death in high-risk communities. Overall, their work has improved understanding of causes and consequences of violence, while also informing on how risk and protective factors can positively contribute to or buffer against youth violence. Finally, they strengthen the evidence base for youth violence prevention strategies and approaches, and they have succeeded in their goals with a 17% decrease in homicides in the Chicago centre. Concurrently, in Denver, there was a 37% decrease in delinquency among youth over five years,³³ suggesting that their work overall has been quite successful.

Cure Violence Global

Cure Violence Global is a non-profit organisation that follows a health-oriented approach treating violence as a contagious “disease”. The organisation consists of trained “violence interruptors” who are usually people who used to be perpetrators themselves and who detect and mediate potentially lethal conflicts prior to their escalation. Workers also form personal relationships with individuals that are at high-risk of becoming violent and monitor them, helping them in finding employment, mental health resources and even housing. It is a very successful organisation that campaigns for a systematic change against violence in society and between the year 2019 and 2022 they have achieved a 90% reduction in killings.³⁴

VetoViolence Prevention Toolkit

VetoViolence Prevention Toolkit is a digital resource designed to help individuals to tackle and prevent violence before it even occurs. It helps adolescents and their partners to understand, strengthen, and promote ways to prevent violence among young people, acting as an education and information platform for young people, partners, and educators. Tackling issues like child abuse, child neglect, youth violence and intimate partner violence, it has a broader scope of support resources, which can be even more useful as very often victims and perpetrators of violence also struggle with more than one of the aforementioned, thus helping

³³ ---. “Youth Violence Prevention Center Accomplishments.” *Youth Violence Prevention*, 2024, www.cdc.gov/youth-violence/php/yvpcs/accomplishments.html.

³⁴ Cure Violence Global. “Cure Violence Global.” *Cure Violence*, cvg.org/.

ensure that they both get the help they need. Overall, it is a successful and useful resource however it must be noted that it lacks initiative and doesn't take action.³⁵

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime global youth campaign on preventing youth crime and violence

It is a campaign where young people aged 18 to 29 are encouraged to challenge stereotypes and promote understanding of youth violence through creative expression. By expressing themselves through any of the following: poetry, stories, drawings, photography, videos, music or mixed-media creation, young people, particularly those who have experienced, observed or in general have been impacted by violence are able to contribute to a positive change. The campaign will be finalised in October 2026, where an art exhibition will be presented, however it seems to be on the path to success; it is a good and creative opportunity to allow young people to vent about their experiences with violence while also simultaneously raising awareness within communities.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Strengthening legal policy

Strengthening legal policy is a solution that would help act as a deterrent to perpetrators as well as help provide some comfort for victims. For some states, this may mean creating stronger legal frameworks defining violence and overall having stricter legal consequences. The issue arises however, as, in implementing stricter legal policy, we run the risk of overcriminalising which increases the likelihood of perpetrators reoffending as well as them becoming stigmatised. Perhaps creating laws focused on the rehabilitation and social re-integration of perpetrators and victims may be more beneficial for society as a whole as well as for perpetrators. Finally, it might be useful to create a legal framework that calls for the potential compensation of victims. Nevertheless, it is a good idea to have some of your solutions consist of legal backing, regardless of what your stance may be, in order to make them more feasible and easy to implement,

Education and Community-centred approach

Education and community-centred approaches help undermine the lasting, harmful social stereotypes that contribute to the issue; it ensures a holistic approach that will have long-term success. An example of such an approach could be the creation of education modules in school curricula from early ages which focus on teaching emotional regulation and conflict resolution. Moreover, the creation/establishment of a community support network and

³⁵ VetoViolence. "Youth Violence Prevention Toolkit | VetoViolence." *VetoViolence*, 2024, vetoviolence.cdc.gov/apps/youth-violence-prevention-toolkit/.

program of support for victims and perpetrators alike, may be useful in helping recover from violence, but also in preventing it. Lastly, another effective, community-centred approach could be creating parenting programs on how to deal with adolescents which are prone to committing acts of violence, but also on how to support victims of violence.

Redistribution of concentrated poverty

Given that concentrated poverty is closely linked with increasing rates of adolescent violence, interventions to reduce concentrated poverty might be beneficial. This could happen through economic investment in less economically developed areas in order to reduce rates of poverty as well as increase police support. Furthermore, creating neighbourhoods which have housing designed for low-income, medium-income and high-income people may help redistribute poverty by creating mixed income areas and reducing concentrated poverty, thus having a positive effect on adolescent violence rates.

Potential points to consider when coming up with solutions

One of the key questions when tackling the topic is whether rehabilitation of perpetrators, or punishment of perpetrators should be prioritised, as short term punishment of perpetrators seems to be more effective and “fair” for victims but long-term rehabilitation is more likely to benefit the perpetrator and society as a whole. Additionally something you may consider is that without strict punishment, violence may rise.

Furthermore, given that socioeconomic background is so strongly correlated with adolescent violence rates, another question that arises is the extent to which we can blame perpetrators and the extent to which it is the fault of society? A solution with more society-centre approaches is more likely to be effective as it undermines key, repeating causes of adolescent violence, but it is difficult to hold society accountable and it raises ethical concerns.

Another point to consider when coming up with solutions is who is responsible. For instance you might want to consider if parents are liable for the actions of their children, and if so to what extent they are liable. Moreover, because adolescent violence is comprised of such a vast combination of factors, is it fair to put the blame on only the adolescent? If yes, it might be considered unfair as potentially under different circumstances of upbringing they may not have committed the act of violence. On the other hand, if it is not fair to put it only on the adolescent, the process of assigning responsibility to many contributing factors is lengthy, complicated and potentially unfair.

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Figure 2: The Scale of Violence Affecting Children | Youth Endowment Fund, Nov. 2025, victims and perpetrators of different types of violence

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