

# UNICEF's Protective Role for Child Victims of War in Ukraine

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## Article History:

Received: Nov 01, 2023

Revised: Dec 20, 2023

Accepted: Dec 23, 2023

Published: Dec 30, 2023

**Keywords:** Rusia-Ukraina War, Child Victim, UNICEF, Blue dots, UNCHR

## Abstract

*The conflict that erupted in Ukraine on February 24, 2022, had a devastating impact on the people caught in the middle of the fighting, especially children. The conflict forced many of them to flee their homes, resulting in a population decline, and exposing them to a range of threats from surrounding countries, including human trafficking, slavery, organ sales, and other forms of exploitation. The primary objective of this research is to examine the role of UNICEF in protecting child victims of war in Ukraine due to the Russian-Ukrainian conflict. To achieve this, the study uses a descriptive qualitative method, including data collection through literature reviews, including journals, books, and other related literature. It also applies the concepts of transnational crime and child protection as regional security analysis tools. The study's results reveal that child protection is essential to ensure children's rights are safeguarded, and they can live in a safe and stable environment, free from the dangers of war. To this end, UNICEF has been working closely with other international organizations, such as UNHCR, to provide support to refugee children through the Blue Dots program. UNICEF has taken significant steps to mitigate the impact of the conflict on children, including providing emergency assistance, establishing temporary learning centers, and offering psychosocial support.*

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

War is an escalation of conflict that has the potential to violate human rights. Although the international community has regulated how to uphold human rights in war situations, the reality is that the complexity of the situation during war makes it difficult for each party to ensure the rights of civilians, including children's rights<sup>1</sup>. This is why the intervention of international organizations such as UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund), which is part of the United Nations (UN) agency that specifically deals with the interests of children, is important. This article will look at the extent of UNICEF's role in providing protection to child victims of the war between Russia and Ukraine.

The war between Russia and Ukraine is perhaps the longest direct military confrontation this century. Indeed, tense relations between Russia and Ukraine began to heat up in 2014. It was triggered by Russia's intervention in Ukraine through the Euromaidan movement in late November 2013. Demonstrations broke out in the capital Kiev against President Viktor Yanukovich who won the 2010 Ukrainian presidential election. On February 22, 2014, the National Legislature removed Viktor Yanukovich from office on the grounds that he was unable to perform his duties. Then on March 4, 2014, Russian President Vladimir Putin, said that he would keep troops in Crimea, the outermost part of Ukraine<sup>2</sup>. According to Putin, Russia has the right to enforce this policy as an effort to protect Ukrainian citizens of Russian descent who are terrorized in Ukraine. Putin argues that the troops using the Crimean occupation are local self-defense forces. There are at least three factors behind the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, namely geopolitical factors, demographic factors, and socio-political factors.

In the context of geopolitics, there are three attributes that are usually connected to each other in a conceptual framework. These are territorial interpretation, natural resources and power distribution. Intervention in these three factors can increase escalation. This cannot be separated from the central position of the two countries. It should be noted that Ukraine is one of the geopolitical pivots in the Eurasian region, which is under the influence of the US and its allies such as the EU and NATO<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> J. Pearn, 'Children and War†: Children and War', *Journal of Paediatrics and Child Health*, 39.3 (2003), 166–72 <<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1440-1754.2003.00124>>.

<sup>2</sup> ANTARA, 'Krimea Tolak Otonomi Untuk Tatar', *April* 4, 2014 <<https://www.antaranews.com/berita/427693/krimea-tolak-otonomi-untuk-tatar>>.

<sup>3</sup> State Statistics Committee of Ukraine, 'Nationalities of Ukraine', *All-Ukrainian Population Census 2001*, 2001 <<http://2001.ukrcensus.gov.ua/eng/results/general/nationality/>>.

Meanwhile, Russia supplies 80% of the EU countries' excess gas, which must flow through Ukraine<sup>4</sup>.

In terms of demographics, more than half of Crimea's population is ethnic Russian, at 58.3%. The rest are ethnic Ukrainians at 24.3%, Crimean Tartars at 12.1%, and ethnic minorities at 5.3%<sup>5</sup>. This has been a strong motive for the two countries to compete for the protection of Ukrainian citizens of Russian descent who are prone to discrimination. Meanwhile, from a socio-political perspective, the intervention was triggered by Russia's anger at the ousting of president Yanukovych who was a close ally of Russian President Vladimir Putin. In addition, this was exacerbated by the position of European countries. NATO and its allies perceive that Ukraine has strategic value to Russia, as it is a dividing country between Russia and the NATO alliance, causing NATO's efforts to expand its membership into Eastern Europe to be perceived by Russia as a threat to its territorial integrity. Conversely, NATO sees its efforts to bring Ukraine into NATO as a deterrent to Russia's planned invasion of Ukraine. However, such accusations have been repeatedly denied by Russian spokespersons as a form of Western provocation to escalate tensions<sup>6</sup>.

In the armed conflict between Russia and Ukraine, there is an issue that we need to observe carefully, namely the condition of children who are victims of war. Where there are indications that many children have been killed, injured, disappeared, captured or taken as hostages, even as modern-day slaves. Since the start of the Russian military operation into Ukraine on February 24, 2022, OHCHR recorded 4,450 civilian casualties in the country of Ukraine, 1,892 killed and 2,558 wounded. This number consists of 478 men, 308 women, 30 girls, and 52 boys as well as 953 adults whose gender is unknown<sup>7</sup>. In addition, the United Nations estimates that 2.8 million are displaced in Ukraine and others have fled to neighboring countries. In addition, it is reported that 64% of children in Ukraine are on the move since February 24 to neighboring countries including Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Romania, and

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<sup>4</sup> M. A. Pranoto, 'Membaca Ulang Motif-Motif Konflik Di Ukraina', *Catatanmap-Menuju Indonesia Jaya* <<https://catatanmap.wordpress.com/2014/08/07/membaca-ulang-motif-motif-konflik-di-ukraina/>>.

<sup>5</sup> Ukraine.

<sup>6</sup> S. Hidriyah, 'Eskalasi Ketegangan Rusia-Ukraina', *Bidang Politik, Hukum, Dan Keagamaan*, XIV.4 (2022).

<sup>7</sup> UNHCR, 'UNHCR, UNICEF Launch Blue Dot Hubs to Boost Protection for Children and Families on the Move across Europe', *UNHCR*, 2016 <<https://www.unhcr.org/news/press/2016/2/56d011e79/unhcr-unicef-launch-blue-dot-hubs-boost-protection-children-families-move.html>>.

Scolavia<sup>8</sup>. This puts children at risk of threats such as human trafficking and child exploitation, which often occur in chaotic conditions such as war<sup>9</sup>. Afshan Khan of UNICEF's regional director for Europe and Central Asia said:

*“Displaced children are extremely vulnerable to being separated from their families, exploited, and trafficked. They need governments in the region to step up and put measures in place to keep them safe”<sup>10</sup>.*

This condition has attracted the attention of the public and international organizations to help the children victims of war.

Efforts to help the condition of children victims of war are organized in an Intergovernmental Organization (IGO) scheme, IGOs are organized based on reach, purpose, or membership. One of the IGOs is UNICEF (*United Nations Children's Fund*) or the United Nations agency for children as an international organization that helps children in the world and keeps children alive. And help them grow and realize their potential. The establishment of UNICEF in 1946<sup>11</sup>. UNICEF's goal is to provide a wide range of assistance to children, from short-term assistance during armed conflicts, natural disasters and humanitarian crises, to long-term survival programs<sup>12</sup>.

In light of the ongoing large-scale movement of refugees into neighboring countries, many of them children and women, UNICEF is working with UNHCR to provide essential information and services for children through the Blue Dot program, which provides reliable and accurate information services including documentation and family reunification services. Information is provided through multiple channels, in accessible and child-friendly formats, multiple languages, and in online/digital form<sup>13</sup>.

Judging from the current situation of the war between Russia and Ukraine, there are still many victims of war, including children as victims of war. Where Islam is very protective of children is explained from the hadith Sunan Abu Dawud no. 2247 from the book of Jihad:

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<sup>8</sup> UNICEF, ‘11 Months of War in Ukraine Have Disrupted Education for More than Five Million Children’, 2022 <<https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/11-months-war-ukraine-have-disrupted-education-more-five-million-children>>.

<sup>9</sup> M. D. Monte and M. M. Mentzelopoulou, ‘Russia’s War on Ukraine: The Situation of Children in and Outside Ukraine’, *European Parliamentary Research Service*, 2022.

<sup>10</sup> UNICEF, *The Impact of the War in Ukraine and Subsequent Economic Downturn on Child Poverty in Eastern Europe and Central Asia*, 2022.

<sup>11</sup> UNICEF, ‘War in Ukraine: Support for Children and Families’ <<https://www.unicef.org/emergencies/war-ukraine-pose-immediate-threat-children>>.

<sup>12</sup> CNN Indonesia, ‘Seluk Beluk UNICEF: Sejarah, Tujuan, Dan Program’, *CNN Indonesia*, 2022 <<https://www.cnnindonesia.com/internasional/20220522143209-140-800594/seluk-beluk-unicef-sejarah-tujuan-dan-program>>.

<sup>13</sup> UNICEF Europe and Central Asia, ‘What Are the Blue Dots Hubs?’, 2022.

حَدَّثَنَا عُثْمَانُ بْنُ أَبِي شَيْبَةَ حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ آدَمَ وَعُبَيْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ مُوسَى عَنْ حَسَنِ  
 بْنِ صَالِحٍ عَنْ خَالِدِ بْنِ الْفَزْرِ حَدَّثَنِي أَنَسُ بْنُ مَالِكٍ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ  
 وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ انْطَلِقُوا بِاسْمِ اللَّهِ وَبِاللَّهِ وَعَلَى مِلَّةِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا شَيْخًا فَانِيًا وَلَا طِفْلًا  
 صَغِيرًا وَلَا امْرَأَةً وَلَا تَغْلُوا وَضُمُّوا غَنَائِمَكُمْ وَأَصْلِحُوا وَأَحْسِنُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ  
 الْمُحْسِنِينَ

Uthman ibn Abu Shaibah narrated to us Yahya ibn Adam and Ubaidullah ibn Musa from Hasan ibn Shalih and Khalid ibn Al Fizr narrated to me Anas ibn Malik that the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said:

*"Go in the name of Allah, on the religion of the Messenger of Allah, and do not kill the old, the young, and the women. And do not betray (in the distribution of the ghanimah), and collect your spoils of war. Make peace and do good, surely Allah loves those who do good."* (Hadith reported by Abu Dawud).

From this hadeeth, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) explains the manners of fighting the polytheists, explaining not to do injustice to civilians and people who are not involved in the war. So what happens is that many children flee to various countries to protect themselves from war. This triggers the occurrence of Human Trafficking where human trafficking cases where most of the victims are minors, children will be forced into labor and tortured and even killed to take their organs and be traded. Meanwhile, the Koran itself has explained the rights of children which are explained in the Koran Surah Al-Kahf ayat 46.

الْمَالُ وَالْبَنُونَ زِينَةُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَالْبَاقِيَةُ الصَّالِحَةُ خَيْرٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ ثَوَابٌ وَخَيْرٌ أَمَلٌ

Meaning: *"Wealth and children are the adornment of the life of the world, but continuous good deeds are better in reward with your Lord, and better to hope for"*. (Al-Kahf ayat 46)

Regarding Surah Al-Kahf ayat 46, it explains that a child is a great favor that Allah SWT has given, exceeding any favor in the life of the world. So when we are given a child by Allah SWT we are obliged to be grateful for it. A child is also a beauty that cannot be explained in words. Children who have noble morals, obey their parents and

become children who fear Allah SWT. Based on what has been described, this research is very important to discuss because of the case that occurred, namely the war between Russia and Ukraine which until now has had an impact on the many victims of war, especially children who are affected by the ongoing war, while Islam has taught us that children and women must be protected when war takes place.

## **II. METHODOLOGY**

This research is an effort to be able to analyze how the role played by the international organization, namely the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in providing protection for children of war victims who escaped due to the Russia - Ukraine war. This research uses a qualitative approach. The data in this research is in the form of various legal documents, reports, newspapers, articles, and other relevant sources scattered on the internet. The data collected then tried to be analyzed through descriptive analysis techniques using the concepts of transnational crime and child protection as weapons of regional security analysis.

## **III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **AN OVERVIEW OF THE CONDITION OF CHILD VICTIMS OF THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR**

Russia's invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022 when Putin announced a special military operation to militarize and denazify Ukraine. Within minutes, missile strikes began across Ukraine, including the capital city of Kyiv which eventually displaced a third of Ukraine's population. Thus causing millions of Ukrainians to flee the country which eventually triggered the refugee crisis<sup>14</sup>. The case of children as victims of war in Ukraine is an example of a transnational threat, which is a threat that originates from beyond national borders and affects state and regional security and stability. In this case, children who are victims of war are experiencing suffering and losses due to the conflict in Ukraine, and they need assistance and protection from international parties.

Transnational threats such as these show that the conflict in Ukraine is not only impacting the country itself, but also affecting regional security and stability. This poses a challenge for countries in the region to address the negative impacts of the conflict and ensure that children's rights are protected underpinning the transnational threat. War also has a profound impact on childhood, which can affect children more than adults. The impacts on children's lives are as follows:

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<sup>14</sup> Ukraine Refugee Situation, 'Situation Ukraine Refugee Situation', *Operational Data Portal*, 2022 <<https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>>.

1. Children often experience disruptions in education, and one of the most damaging effects of war is the way it disrupts and destroys children's education. Education is truly the best weapon against poverty and conflict.<sup>15</sup>.
2. Children are often forced to move between refugee camps where they may wait years in very difficult circumstances to resume a normal life<sup>16</sup>.
3. War destroys local economies, agriculture, industry, jobs, and infrastructure. Because current conflicts usually occur in the poorest countries. Which has a huge impact. Parents struggle to feed their children and provide them with basic necessities. And children are forced to stay home to look after siblings or work instead of going to school, or even end up on the street in poverty<sup>17</sup>.
4. The bombs and bullets of war often kill, maim and disable children. Some are recruited as soldiers and placed directly on the firing line. It is estimated that dozens of young people under 18 die each year in war. After the conflict has ended or subsided there are explosives that pose a threat for years. And eventually children may lose limbs, eyesight and more<sup>18</sup>.

The conflict in Ukraine has had a major impact especially on children who have left their homes and fled to neighboring countries due to the prolonged conflict. The escalating conflict and humanitarian crisis in Ukraine has destroyed the rights and health of children in Ukraine. Russia's indiscriminate attacks have destroyed many infrastructures such as bombing schools, hospitals and orphanages. And the WHO (World Health Organization) has reported that attacks in Ukraine have hit health care, including maternity and children's hospitals in the past month<sup>19</sup>. According to the UN high commissioner for human rights on March 27, 2022, at least 99 children have been killed and 126 injured. But the actual figure is likely to be much higher, explosive weapons have a devastating effect on children, who are more likely to die or be injured

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<sup>15</sup> Child Abuse and Neglect, 'The Impact of "the War That Drags on" in Ukraine for the Health of Children and Adolescents: Old Problems in a New Conflict?', *Elsevier*, 128.2 (2022).

<sup>16</sup> S. Nasıroğlu and V. Çeri, 'Refugees and Mental State of Refugee Children', *Middle East Journal of Refugee Studies*, 1.1 (2022), 43–76  
<<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.12738/mejrs.2016.1.1.0003>>.

<sup>17</sup> UNICEF, '11 Months of War in Ukraine Have Disrupted Education for More than Five Million Children'.

<sup>18</sup> The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health, 'Children: Innocent Victims of War in Ukraine', *The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health*, 6.5 (2022), 279  
<[https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/S2352-4642\(22\)00102-X](https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/S2352-4642(22)00102-X)>.

<sup>19</sup> Health.

by explosions and live with disabilities and psychological trauma for years<sup>20</sup>. War-time violence and trauma will have long-term adverse effects on development, physical health, mental well-being, and education.

The Russian invasion of Ukraina had such a huge impact on child victims of the war that many of them were forced to leave the country and seek shelter mostly in the neighboring European Union countries of Poland, Romania, Hungary, Slovakia, Czech Republic, and Moldova. Ultimately children and women suffered the consequences of the war. According to UNICEF (International Children's Emergency Fund) almost half of those fleeing are minors and need better protection, as they are at greater risk of trafficking and exploitation<sup>21</sup>.

Children are at high risk of being targeted for violence and going missing. As well as raising significant concerns about human trafficking, human trafficking and migrant smuggling affecting people fleeing conflict. Reports have emerged of a potentially abusive and exploitative situation in Ukraine. It was recorded at 4am on February 24, 2022, when the Russian offensive against Ukraine began, at 24:00 midnight. The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) recorded 7,256 civilian casualties in the country: 3,496 killed and 3,760 wounded. This includes: A total of 3,496 people killed (1,268 men, 821 women, 76 girls, and 93 boys, as well as 69 children and 1,169 adults of unknown gender)<sup>22</sup>.

1. In Donetsk and Luhansk regions: 3,793 victims (1,865 killed and 1,928 wounded)
2. In Government-controlled areas: 3,216 casualties (1,750 killed and 1,466 wounded)
3. In territory controlled by Russian-affiliated armed groups: 577 casualties (115 killed and 462 wounded)
4. In other regions of Ukraine (Kyiv city, and Cherkasy, Chernihiv, Kharkiv, Kherson, Kyiv, Mykolaiv, Odesa, Sumy, Zaporizhzhia, Dnipropetrovsk, Poltava, Rivne, Vinnytsia, and Zhytomyr regions), which were under Government control when the casualties occurred: 3,463 casualties (1,631 killed and 1,832 wounded).

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<sup>20</sup> Saryono and others, 'Sikap Politik Dan Hukum Internasional Indonesia Terkait Penyerangan Rusia Ke Ukraina', *Jurnal Citizenship Virtues*, 2.2 (2022).

<sup>21</sup> Monte and Mentzelopoulou.

<sup>22</sup> OHCHR, 'Ukraine: Civilian', *United Nations Human Rights*, 2022 <<https://www.ohchr.org/en/news/2022/05/ukraine-civilian-casualty-update-11-may-2022>>.



Most of the civilian casualties recorded were caused by the use of explosive weapons with a wide area of impact, including shelling from western artillery and multiple launch rocket systems, as well as missile and air attacks. As of August 28, 2022, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) recorded that the military conflict had resulted in 5,298 deaths while the number of injured reached 7,432 with the following details<sup>23</sup>:

No	Nama	Dewasa / Orang	Anak-Anak / Orang
1	Korban Jiwa	5.298	365
2	Korban Luka	7.432	623

**Figure 1:** Data on casualties incurred as a result of the Russia - Ukraine invasion  
Source: UNHCR

The data above explains that children have been affected by the war in Russia - Ukraine, with 365 children killed and 623 children injured. OHCHR said that:

*"We believe that the actual number of casualties is much higher, as the receipt of information from some locations was delayed due to intense fighting, and many reports are still awaiting confirmation."* <sup>24</sup>.

According to OHCHR, the estimated number of casualties is still higher due to several locations that are still at war. The war in Ukraine continues to have an unprecedented impact on the lives of families and children, as active fighting and attacks continue to have a devastating impact on the civilian population and civilians, forcing people to flee their homes in search of safety, protection and assistance. So millions of refugees from Ukraine have crossed borders into neighboring countries, not only that many of them have been forced to move internally. Where they desperately need protection<sup>25</sup>.

<sup>23</sup> OHCHR.

<sup>24</sup> OHCHR.

<sup>25</sup> Pascale Morau, 'Ukraine Regional Refugee Response Plan and Flash Appeal', *Regional Refugee Coordinator for the Ukraine Station*, 2022.



**Figure 2:** Displacement of refugees from Ukraine

Source: UNHCR

From the picture above explains the countries inhabited by refugees where cross-border movements of Ukraine since 2022, the map explains that refugees from Ukraine who fled or moved to surrounding countries to protect themselves from the threat of war that occurred in Russia and Ukraine. Below is the data on the number of refugees in the countries surrounding Ukraine<sup>26</sup>:

**Tabel 1:** Refugee data and percentage of refugee children.

No	Country	Number of incoming refugees	Percentage of refugee girls	percentage of refugee children Male
1	Poland	4,300,000	19%	18%
2	Republic of Moldova	1,000,000	17%	17%
3	Romania	1,250,000	17%	17%
4	Hungary	1,000,000	18%	17%
5	Slovakia	750.000	19%	18%

Sourch: UNHCR

The data points to refugees from Ukraine registered with the RRP (Regional Refugee Response Plan) where the population figures are of Ukrainians affected by the

<sup>26</sup> Situation.

war especially in terms of access to public services, the population figures are estimates based on current or provisional baseline assumptions. Taking into account that refugees remain in the above countries or may transit to other countries. It is difficult to draw any conclusions at this time due to the unstable and unpredictable situation<sup>27</sup>. The above statistics were compiled from data provided by the competent authorities. While every effort has been made to ensure that all statistical information has been verified, the figures are subject to continuous triangulation of information and sources. Therefore, changes in figures can be rhetorical. Where data on the war that took place during the war was taken to ascertain how many citizens from Ukraine fled to neighboring countries to protect themselves from the threat of the war.

Children and families in Ukraine have experienced another year of violence, trauma, destruction and displacement. Children continue to be killed, injured and deeply traumatized by the violence that has triggered large-scale displacement. Not only that, but many of the facilities: schools, hospitals, and other civic infrastructure on which they depend have been damaged or destroyed. Families have been separated and their lives torn apart<sup>28</sup>. The war in Ukraine has had a huge impact on children who are victims of long-term impacts that may be experienced by child victims of war in Ukraine such as trauma and mental health disorders, hampered education, loss of parents, poor living conditions.

## **UNICEF'S ROLE IN PROTECTING CHILD VICTIMS OF THE RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN WAR**

The war that occurred in Ukraine and Russia had a major impact as explained in the previous chapter, the impact of this conflict has harmed many people, especially children who are victims of war in Ukraine. So that there is a sense of concern for child victims of war in Ukraine, one of the organizations that play a role in helping children in Ukraine is UNICEF as an international organization that helps children in the world. In this chapter, the author will describe the collaboration between UNICEF and UNHCR in creating Blue dots to help children affected by war in Ukraine. Which then leads to the role of UNICEF in protecting child victims of war in Ukraine, which will explain what assistance UNICEF has done to help protect child victims of war.

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<sup>27</sup> Situation.

<sup>28</sup> UNICEF, *The Impact of the War in Ukraine and Subsequent Economic Downturn on Child Poverty in Eastern Europe and Central Asia*.

## UNICEF AND UNHCR COLLABORATE IN CREATING BLUE DOTS TO PROTECT REFUGEE CHILDREN

UNHCR's efforts to find a permanent solution to the refugee problem begin with each refugee's need for a different set of core rights (Human Rights) that are individually created by God. UNHCR's efforts to find a permanent solution to the problem begin with each refugee's need for different core rights (Human Rights), which are individually created by God. **Moniz.** Hal inilah yang dilakukan oleh organisasi internasional yaitu UNICEF (*United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund*) sebagai organisasi yang melindungi anak-anak to help children from various threats. So UNICEF provides steps to protect children from threats by collaborating with the international organization UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) as an organization that helps protect refugees, by establishing a program called Blue dots as a service to help Ukrainian refugees and especially children in obtaining protection and information services and family reunification.

Part of a concerted effort to improve the protection of children, with a growing number of children victimized in conflicts within and outside of their country and the special needs of children on the move across Europe. UNHCR, the United Nations and UNICEF established specialized support centers for children and families along the most frequently used migration routes in Europe<sup>29</sup>. Twenty child and family support centers, known as Blue Dots, will provide a safe space for children and their families providing essential services such as: play, protection and counseling in one location. These centers aim to support vulnerable families on the move, especially unaccompanied or separated children, who are at risk of illness, trauma, violence, exploitation and trafficking. *Blue Dots* are currently operating in Greece, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia.



<sup>29</sup> UNHCR, 'Ukraine Emergency in Neighboring Countries "BLUE DOTS"- Children and Family Support Hubs', *UNHCR Operational Data Portal (ODP)*, 2022 <<https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/91739>>.

**Figure 2:** Child and family protection *Blue dots* support center route

Source: UNHCR

This route map explains the operation of Blue Dots in areas of Europe where the blue dot is an operation that will soon be in operation and the dark red arrow line is the main route and the pink arrow is the next route. The Blue Dots center comes at a time when two-thirds of women and children cross Europe in February, 60 percent of women and children come from the sea through border crossings. The aim of Blue Dots is to identify and protect children and young people traveling alone, and reunite them with their families wherever possible. According to Volker Türk of the UNHCR high commissioner explained,

*“we are concerned about the welfare of unaccompanied boys and girls on the move and unprotected across Europe, many of whom have experienced war and hardship in making these journeys alone.”*<sup>30</sup>.

It explains the welfare concerns of unaccompanied boys and girls who are on the move and unprotected across Europe, many of whom have experienced war and the difficulties of traveling alone. This is why *Blue dots* plays a key role in identifying children and providing the protection they need in unfamiliar environments. At the heart of the partnership is the concern for vulnerable children and families who are on the move themselves, leading to violence, abduction, trafficking, organ trafficking and exploitation.

UNICEF and UNHCR worked together to establish the Blue Dots program in Europe to provide vulnerable children and families with welfare and protection. Child and family protection support centers (blue dots) structure the minimum protection and referral delivery of social services for children and families. They aim to improve accessibility, continuity and standardization of social services for children and families. Improving accessibility, continuity and standardization of services provided by different partners, as well as predictability through a recognizable system of *Blue dots* labels.

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<sup>30</sup> UNHCR, ‘Ukraine Emergency in Neighboring Countries “BLUE DOTS”- Children and Family Support Hubs’.

## BLUE DOTS AND THE WAR CHILD PROTECTION PROGRAM

Child and family protection support centers (blue dots) structure the minimum protection and referral delivery of social services for children and families. They aim to improve accessibility, continuity and standardization of social services for children and families. Improving accessibility, continuity and standardization of services provided by different partners, as well as predictability through a recognizable system of blue dots labels. UNICEF and UNHCR have jointly established blue dots in the following countries receiving refugees fleeing Ukraine: Czech Republic, Hungary, Republic of Moldova, Poland, Romania, Slovakia<sup>31</sup>.

To respond to the critical need for security, stability, accurate information and specialized protection UNICEF and UNHCR have jointly established Blue Dot in the above countries as protection and support centers and spaces where refugees can find accurate information and referrals for health care, education, psychosocial and more. All under one roof. The services available at blue dot aim to help all refugees, with a focus on children as they are most at risk, as well as people with disabilities, and vulnerable families. Ukrainian refugees are fleeing to neighboring countries to safety from the threat of war between Russia and Ukraine but many of those fleeing are children and women. This is where UNICEF and UNHCR come in to protect children, vulnerable families and people with disabilities who are at risk of violence, murder, organ trafficking, slavery and other threats.

*Blue dots* have become a recognizable modality of emergency assistance and a dedicated location to provide Mental Health And Psychosocial Support (MHPS) as well as providing legal assistance available to support the identification of compelling social protection and service needs to immediately ensure that those needs are met. and proved to be a good example of cooperation between UNICEF and UNHCR<sup>32</sup>. They are the umbrella for service providers to operate under that meet the safeguards. Other partners who wish to assist such as national and local authorities and any legal services are welcome to operate as long as they meet the safeguards. The services offered by blue dots are:

1. Identification services, or referral of children at risk to appropriate services.

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<sup>31</sup> UNHCR, 'UNHCR, UNICEF Launch Blue Dot Hubs to Boost Protection for Children and Families on the Move across Europe'.

<sup>32</sup> UNHCR, 'UNHCR, UNICEF Launch Blue Dot Hubs to Boost Protection for Children and Families on the Move across Europe'.

2. Identification and referral to others in need of appropriate support and services.
3. Mental health services and psychosocial support.
4. Legal counseling assistance
5. Information and advice services
6. Family relationship services (in coordination with the Red Cross family network/ humanitarian organizations)
7. Child and family friendly spaces, including for breastfeeding.

The above services are shown as an aid program, to help refugees who are fleeing. In the minimum capacity of blue dots which efforts are made to help children affected by the war in Ukraine. Here are some of the things Blue Dots does to help these children: Education: Blue Dots helps provide access to education and learning materials for children affected by the war in Ukraine, Protection: Blue Dots works with local organizations to ensure that children's rights are protected and they are not exposed to the risk of violence and discrimination, Health Support: Blue Dots helps meet children's basic health needs, such as ensuring they have access to clean water and nutritious food, Rehabilitation and Recreation: Blue Dots also helps create safe and enjoyable environments for children, such as facilitating recreational and recovery activities for those affected by war, Advocacy: Blue Dots also coordinates with governments and local agencies to fight for children's rights and ensure that they are involved in policy-making processes that affect their lives.

Currently includes 3 experts consisting of 3-6 professionals (1-2 case workers, 1-2 child psychology/psychosocial staff and 1-2 legal aid providers)<sup>33</sup> and interpreters plus mobile teams that can deploy from blue dot locations to other locations facing new or increased refugee influxes. As well as linking to national services to ensure that children are referred to specialized services, and to track and provide monitoring on high needs cases.

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<sup>33</sup> UNHCR, 'UNHCR, UNICEF Launch Blue Dot Hubs to Boost Protection for Children and Families on the Move across Europe'.



**Figure 3:** Staff from *Blue dots* greeting Ukrainian children

Source: UNCHR

While the way each works is almost different, ideally, there will be a dedicated private room so they can interact in privacy with particularly vulnerable cases and locations and services should be accessible to people with disabilities. They work together to meet children's basic needs, such as education, health, and protection. ensure that children affected by the war in Ukraine receive adequate assistance and have access to the services they need to build stable and productive lives. In an effort to provide family reunification for children who have lost their families, blue dots works by providing blue stickers with unique identification numbers to refugee and migrant children who are at risk of losing contact with their families while crossing borders. These blue stickers are attached to the child's clothing or belongings. The identification number on the sticker is then recorded in a database accessed by humanitarian workers around the world.

## **EMOTIONAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT SERVICES FOR CHILD VICTIMS OF WAR**

Many Ukrainian children and young people have witnessed violence and destruction, and have been separated from parents, lost family members and friends, and experienced other traumatic events, both in Ukraine and on their migration journeys<sup>34</sup>. However, upon arrival in another country they will face challenges associated with the complexities of navigating the post-migration environment, such as discrimination and

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<sup>34</sup> L. Cerna, 'Refugee Education: Integration Models and Practices in OECD Countries', *OECD Education Working Papers*, 203.203 (2019).



reconfigured family life. These events can trigger feelings of sadness, despair, anger, and guilt, and can lead to post-traumatic stress disorder. *post-traumatic stress disorder* (PTSD), anxiety disorders, sleep disorders, or depression<sup>35</sup>. Reported a higher prevalence of mental health with very high rates of PTSD. Without adequate psychosocial support the traumatic experiences and stress that children in Ukraine may have experienced could have a long-term impact on their development<sup>36</sup>. As the stressful and traumatic situations that Ukrainian children and adolescents may experience can leave a lasting impact on their development, it is crucial that they have access to professional psychosocial services. In addition to general counseling and psychological support, UNICEF has worked with Save the Children partner the Netherlands to establish a psychosocial helpline with Ukrainian language experts. Counseling/psychologist helplines have been launched by the ministries of education in Estonia and Austria so that Ukrainian children can receive psychologist support in their mother tongue.

In providing psychological services, UNICEF is working with various partners, including Save the Children Netherlands, which is helping to set up a counseling/psychology service, and the Estonian and Austrian ministries of education to provide psychological services for Ukrainian children. When a child loses contact with their family or becomes separated from them during travel, humanitarian workers can look up the child's unique identification number in the "*Blue dots*" database and match it with the identification number on the blue sticker. In this way, humanitarian workers can identify and connect children who have lost contact with their families with their families or relatives who may already be in a safe place. In addition, the blue dots program also uses technology to help speed up the process of finding families and allows humanitarian workers to track children in need of assistance faster and more efficiently.

## EDUCATION SERVICES FOR WAR-AFFECTED CHILDREN

To ensure education for children affected by the Russia-Ukraine war, UNICEF is working with partners in Ukraine and neighboring countries to deliver creative, versatile and flexible solutions that combine low-tech and high-tech methods to reach all children in crisis situations - both in Ukraine and in developing countries. to neighboring

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<sup>35</sup> J. Goncalves Junior and L. M. de Amorim, 'The Impact of "the War That Drags on" in Ukraine for the Health of Children and Adolescents: Old Problems in a New Conflict? Child Abuse & Neglect', 128 (2022) <<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2022.105602>>.

<sup>36</sup> Into, 'Education and Support Provision for Displaced Ukrainian Students', *Irish National Teachers' Organisation*, 2022.

countries - and minimize disruption to their learning<sup>37</sup>. In helping to provide education services for war-affected children in Ukraine, UNICEF divides its services into two: services within Ukraine and education access services in neighboring countries. Inside Ukraine, UNICEF and its partners have<sup>38</sup>.

Access to Education Services within Ukraine	Access to Education Services in Neighboring Countries
Providing access to formal and non-formal education to more than 1.4 million children.	Enrollment of Ukrainian refugee children into the national preschool and school system and access to accredited care, learning and development programs.
Provision of educational supplies for 771,000 children	Provided assistance to more than 588,000 war victims to access formal and non-formal education.
Psychosocial assistance and life skills education to 300,000 children	Giving more than 448,000 children access to individualized learning.

**Tabel 2:** Education Service Support by UNICEF

Sourch: UNICEF

## THE RELEVANCE OF CHILD PROTECTION OF VICTIMS OF WAR IN ISLAM

UNICEF's role is to build a safe environment and protect children from threats. The purpose of the components suggested by UNICEF is to promote mutual understanding of protecting and providing child protection rights. Then there is a need for cooperation with other sectors in providing assistance in protecting children. Not only that, the state has the responsibility to fulfill the rights to child protection and must build a national and community-based child protection system with a coordinated and holistic approach. This integrates contributions from various sectors and actors. In line with Islam where Islam also has rules in warfare, there are rules to prevent enormous damage. The first target in war is the enemy soldiers who participate in the war. Other

<sup>37</sup> UNICEF, 'War in Ukraine: Support for Children and Families'.

<sup>38</sup> UNICEF, *The Impact of the War in Ukraine and Subsequent Economic Downturn on Child Poverty in Eastern Europe and Central Asia*.

than soldiers, women, children, religious scholars, and the elderly should not be killed in accordance with the hadith of the Messenger of Allah . ﷺ:

حَدَّثَنِي أَنَسُ بْنُ مَالِكٍ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ انْطَلِقُوا بِاسْمِ اللَّهِ وَبِاللَّهِ وَعَلَى مِلَّةِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا شَيْخًا فَانِيًّا وَلَا طِفْلًا وَلَا صَغِيرًا وَلَا امْرَأَةً وَلَا تَعْلُوا وَضُمُوا غَنَائِمَكُمْ وَأَصْلِحُوا وَأَحْسِنُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

Anas reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ retrieved:

*“Go forth in the name of Allah, with Allah and on the religion of the Messenger of Allah, do not kill the aged, the helpless, children and women, and do not commit treason, collect the spoils of war, and do good, for indeed Allah loves those who do good.”* (HR. Abu Dawud).

The Prophet also prohibits in war not to kill women, children and kill old people who are helpless where the hadith above shows us not to kill children because children are the successors of the next generation. The Prophet also forbade allowing children to be in an environment that could harm or hinder good growth and development. The meaning of this dangerous environment is war. This is explained in the hadith:

*"Hadith from Abu Bakr ibn Abi Shibah, from Muhammad ibn Bisyr and Abû Usâmah, from `Abaidullâh ibn `Umar, from Nafi, from Ibn `Umar saying that in some wars women were killed. So the Messenger of Allah forbade killing women and children"* (H.R. Muslim).

And the prophet SAW also forbade violence against children and women to be kind to children and women because they have a gentle nature and feelings that are incompatible with acts of violence. However, this does not mean that boys can be treated harshly. The Prophet said: Hadith from Qutaibah, from Lahiah, from Abi `Usysyanah, from `Uqbah bin `Amir that the Prophet said:

*“Do not treat your daughters harshly, for indeed they are gentle-minded and sensitive human beings..”*(H.R. Ahmad).

Acts of violence and the killing of children are prohibited by the Prophet SAW these actions are very hated by God. in accordance with the hadiths above that in any war we are required not to kill children because children have a hearty and gentle nature not only children but women, religious leaders, and vulnerable elderly people should not be targeted in war.

#### **IV. CONCLUSION**

UNICEF's role is reflected in its efforts to protect and fulfill the rights of child victims of the Russia-Ukraine war. This was done in conjunction with another international organization, UNHCR, which produced the Blue dots program that specifically provides protection to child victims of war who have fled to neighboring countries. Both organizations have been instrumental in ensuring that children in Ukraine receive the necessary protection and support to return to normal life. This is done for example by providing services for children and families such as identification services, health services, legal aid and so on. In addition, UNICEF and UNHCR have also provided assistance with water supply, sanitation, nutrition and education. In particular, UNICEF pays more attention to the revitalization of the education process for children affected by war. In Islam, where war is the last resort to achieve a goal, Islam also prohibits the killing of people who do not take part in war such as children, women, the elderly and religious leaders. Islam upholds justice and compassion. Children are a gift and the future of the nation and religion, so in war children should not be victims of war. This indicates that UNICEF's role in protecting child victims of the Russia-Ukraine war is in accordance with Islamic values.

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