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Childhood ruined by terrorism

Courtesy translation

The violence that expanded during the last century and the fear of extremism and the conflict of identities have prompted the historian "Eric Hobsbawm" to call the twentieth century "The Age of Extremes", then what can we call this century and the alarm bells deafen the ears, and the images of war victims blind the eyes, and the cries of the victims of violence and terrorism bleed the hearts and souls. Do we call it the era of the madness of terrorism, or do we call it the era of the setback of the mind, or do we call it the era of human assassination?

Ladies and Gentlemen

Undoubtedly, it is the bewilderment of the mind that makes it difficult to describe this era, as we are witnessing wars that are ravaging people, violence that has surpassed all forms of violence in historical memory, and terrorism that expands and spreads more than all international efforts to confront it, through its studied and systematic exploitation. For all the mechanisms created by the human mind are being used to spread extremist, promote its terrorist approach, and its fanatical beliefs, in order to undermine our humanity and trade in human beings and human organs from women, men, youth, girls, boys and children.

If I had presented in previous reports many terrorist practices conducted by armed groups, today I am presenting the most heinous of those crimes in the history of crimes against humanity, which are crimes against children.

Children who are powerless and innocent in a world that terrorism has lost its certainty, its innocence, and its existence. When childhood becomes subjected to terrorism, it means that terrorism ruins not only their present, but also their future. Hence, the fear for the future is linked to the fear for these children, and it is our human duty and a moral imperative to save them from those who violate their rights towards our freedom and life, because it is a quest to save us, our civilization, and our future that is also threatened. Especially, as we read the terrifying numbers referred to by international reports about the number of recruited children, facing an unknown fate or those who returned from the clutches of terrorism to face the same destiny, which exacerbates their extremism and makes them even more dangerous in the future.

Ladies and Gentlemen

The danger of the recruitment of children by armed groups, especially ISIS and the Houthi in Yemen, lies not only in the geographical and temporal limits of this recruitment, but in its

extensions and ramifications, whether at the level of armed groups or at the level of children themselves. Armed groups use child recruitment as a mechanism in order to establish other criminal phenomena related to trafficking in children and their organs, their enslavement and sexual exploitation, and other terrorist practices. This group of society is exploited, because it is the weakest and easiest to lure, and the most responsive in terms of reshaping their intellectual and ideological ideas, brainwashing them, and consolidating the culture of extremism, violence, and terrorism in them. They are used as a tool to ruin not only their present and the future, but the future of us all.

Then, these children will pose a grave danger in the future, to themselves, their families, and their communities, even after they have survived and been freed from the grip of armed groups, because they were raised on terrorist ideology, and their minds were filled with its deadly ideas. Therefore, there is great difficulty in rehabilitating and integrating them, because this requires special programs related to educational, psychological, cultural and religious aspects, as well as other mechanisms to become able to restore themselves and their true personalities as children. Here lies the great disaster when they do not find a law that prepares them for that rehabilitation environment in order to integrate them in an optimal manner that befits their humanity and their innocent nature.

Ladies and Gentlemen

We are not facing a humanitarian crisis that causes are revealed, and we are not facing a temporary phenomenon that concerns a specific place or country. Rather, we are facing a catastrophe with all the meaning of this word, a disaster that may be more dangerous than all the disasters that have befallen humanity, if we do not mobilize international and local political, cultural, social, economic, educational, psychological, and behavioral efforts in order to fight the phenomenon of child recruitment or face the challenges of their rehabilitation and integration into their families and communities.

Therefore, this phenomenon must be at the top of the agendas of the international community in order to assume our humanitarian, moral and legal responsibilities towards children to find effective ways to protect them and thus protect their future and ours, and reach safety.

Ladies and Gentlemen

If international efforts at the legal and procedural level have not yet been able to surpass terrorist practices and dry up their sources, and to develop international strategies, agreements, charters and protocols capable of confronting this phenomenon, then at the very least, they must work in the same pace which is used by terrorism to spread its ideas and recruit its victims using social media, internet sites, some electronic games and others, through deliberate and systematic media, and strategies with clear goals. There is a remarkable development in realizing the importance of electronic means for these groups. Therefore, these sites must have the same importance or superiority to local international communities, in order to confront terrorism, dry up its sources and save children before they fall into easy prey of terrorism.

Ladies and Gentlemen

How can we secure a future fraught with terror and fear due to armed conflicts, which constitute fertile environments for the expansion of the terrorist phenomenon and consequently the increase in the number of children recruitment, or who are left to their unknown fates after returning from the hands of armed groups?

How do we secure a future in which terrorism outweighs all our efforts to confront it?

How can we be secure in the future when we see the most innocent beings (children) violating their rights, whether by armed groups, or the inability of the international community to develop laws, strategies and programs that protect these children, rehabilitate, and integrate them into their families and communities to be active members in the present and the future?

Is there a way for us to save, rehabilitate and integrate these children, to protect our existence and our future, and to stop the madness of terrorism with the mind of peace, or will we repeat with the philosopher Edgar Morin while we are filled with sorrow for our world fraught with terrorism: Where is the world going?

Then we remain silent with regret over the children whose childhood was assassinated by terrorism, without even having to apologize to them for our inability to save them.