



Franciscans International
A voice at the United Nations



Kampala



58th Session of the Human Rights Council
Item 3: Interactive Dialogue with the Special Representative of the Secretary General on
violence against children
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Delivered by: Nicholas Kugonza via video statement

Thank you, Mr. President.

We commend the Special Representative's engagement with African regional mechanisms as well as with religious and traditional leaders. The focus of her mandate on addressing trafficking in children is very important. We are particularly concerned by the persistence of violence against children in Uganda who are subjected to trafficking, early marriages, teenage pregnancies, and Female Genital Mutilation.

As reported, children in Sub-Saharan Africa are more likely to be trafficked than elsewhere in the world. High rates of poverty and hunger in regions such as Karamoja have resulted in children being trafficked into major urban centers for labor, street begging, and sex exploitation. Young girls and women are also vulnerable to domestic sex trafficking. Inadequate policy and institutional frameworks impede implementation of existing prohibitive legislation tackling this issue.

Persistence of patriarchal social structures deprive girls of continued education and often lead to child marriages. They increase the risk of early pregnancies which have devastating consequences on girls' health, education, and economic opportunities. Female Genital Mutilation continues to be practiced among girls as young as 15 years old. Despite various concerted efforts, this practice, perceived as a rite of passage in certain communities, persists at the expense of women and girls' health.

In this context, we are calling upon the Special Representative to dedicate part of her mandate on tackling the interconnected nature of these issues in the Sub-Saharan region, engage with national authorities to exhort them to implement existing legal frameworks and allocating adequate funding to address violence against children in a holistic manner.

We thank you.