



Save the date

June 2-6, 2025



# 2025 World Congress on Justice With Children

Preventing violence against children in child justice :  
pathways to child-centred systems



# Global Initiative on Justice With Children in a nutshell

The Global Initiative on Justice With Children (JWC) is an initiative that addresses the most current issues related to the rights of children and adolescents in contact and/or conflict with justice systems.

It is led by the Terre des hommes Foundation, in partnership with Penal Reform International (PRI), and the International Association of Youth and Family Judges and Magistrates (IAYFJM). The Global Initiative JWC counts today with multi-level partners such as UNICEF, OHCHR, UNODC, VAC OSRSG, OECD, PRI, AIMJF, the Council of Europe, Backer & McKenzie, Pathfinders SGD 16, more than 120 national and local civil society organizations and human rights and child rights networks, including top recognized universities worldwide. Likewise, it counts with the endorsement of a significant number of Ministries of Justice all over the world. The Global initiative connects professionals from around the world and serves as a global landmark through World Congresses, as well as regional and national advisory meetings.

The Global Initiative's priorities for the future are based on the outcomes of the 2021 World Congress on Justice with Children. The priorities include ensuring digital justice, Justice in times of crises, Community empowerment, Neurosciences and child justice and ending child detention.

## World Congresses

### Lima (2009)

**04** 4 Day Event  800 Participants From 70 Countries

**FOCUS: RESTORATIVE JUSTICE**

The 2009 Congress reaffirmed the principles of child justice and the fundamental rights of the child. Experts worldwide collaborated on the Lima Declaration on Restorative Juvenile Justice.



### Geneva (2015)

**05** 5 Day Event  900 Participants From 80 Countries

**FOCUS: CHILD JUSTICE REFORM**

The 2015 Congress examined prevention and reintegration. Experts developed the final declaration on juvenile justice to strengthen juvenile justice standards in the face of globalisation.



### Paris (2018)

**03** 3 Day Event  1,000 Participants From 102 Countries

**FOCUS: DISENGAGEMENT FROM EXTREME VIOLENCE**

Held at the UNESCO headquarters, the 2018 Congress looked at the challenges, strategies and experiences of strengthening justice systems for children.



### Mexico - online (2021)

**05** 5 Day Event  4,800 Participants from 150 countries

**FOCUS: INCLUSIVE ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR CHILDREN WITHOUT DISCRIMINATION**

The 2021 Congress defined key principles on inclusive justice systems for all children without discrimination, resilience in the face of crises and pandemics, and child-friendly justice for all children in contact with the law.

The World Congress Consortium together with the Child and Youth Advisory Group (CYAG) drafted the Global Declaration on Justice With Children: "Ensuring access to justice for all children: Towards non-discriminatory and inclusive justice systems" signed by UNICEF, UNODC, OHCHR, among others.

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### CHILD PARTICIPATION

Children and young people with lived experiences of the justice system took part in the organisation of the 2021 World Congress and the drafting of the final Declaration. The Global Initiative advocates at international level for a more systemic approach to children's participation in justice systems.



# Objectives of the 2025 World Congress on Justice With Children



1

Advocate for systemic change through increased and improved knowledge and practices in preventing violence against children in the administration of justice



2

Develop and measure effective strategies to prevent violence against children in the administration of justice



3

Enhance child systemic participation within the child justice system



# Violence against children in child justice

*The rise of global challenges, such as conflicts, political instability and widespread violence, social and economic inequalities, pandemic, climate crisis, forced displacement as well as increased connectivity at younger age – all increase children's exposure to many forms of violence including in the child justice systems.-*  
Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children  
Dr. Najat Maalla M'jid  
Advisory meeting for the World Congress on Justice With Children, Bangkok, Thailand  
January 2023



Violence against children in contact with the justice system is a grave concern that demands urgent attention. This may include direct physical violence, sexual abuse, emotional harm and exposure to victimisation. According to the UN Global Study on Children deprived of liberty, children may experience physical abuse, sexual violence, psychological trauma, and even torture as they interact with law enforcement, detention centres, correctional institutions, or court procedures. This alarming reality undermines the principle of justice and disproportionately affects vulnerable and marginalised children, leaving them with long-lasting effects and often perpetuating a cycle of violence.

Intersectional discriminations, such as race, gender, socio-economic status, and disability, further exacerbates these situations. Addressing the unique challenges faced by each child within the justice system is crucial.

In the contemporary context, challenges include the use of technology in legal processes, raising concerns about privacy and fairness, as well as the impact of trauma on a child's developing brain, emphasizing the need for trauma-informed practices and mental health support.

The international framework for protecting children within the justice system is extensive and prioritizes children's rights throughout the judicial process. Key international instruments like the Convention on the Rights of the Child, its Optional Protocols, the United Nations Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty, and the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (Beijing Rules) set clear standards. These standards emphasize the need to treat children in contact with the law with dignity and respect, guarantee their right to legal representation, offer age-appropriate and non-violent alternatives to detention, and protect them from any form of abuse or mistreatment.

The upcoming World Congress on Justice with Children, scheduled for the spring of 2025, will span a full week. This innovative event will take place simultaneously in Madrid and multiple locations globally, bringing together over 200 in-person participants and connecting thousands of individuals online from around the world. Throughout this week, all of them will be actively engaged in a comprehensive program that will include both in-person and virtual activities. The primary goal of this World Congress is to play a fundamental role in establishing collaborations, innovations, and solutions in conjunction with international organizations, member states, academics, NGOs, and children and youth, in order to effectively contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals 16.2 and 16.3, ultimately working towards justice for every child.

In recent years there has been a need to make justice systems resilient to the impact of crises such as armed conflict, climate change and health crises. The main conclusion drawn from the advisory meetings is that in building justice systems resilient to such crises, harmful consequences for children's well-being can be minimized or overlooked. It was recognised that during crises, children are particularly vulnerable to various forms of violence and exploitation, thus necessitating proactive measures to safeguard their rights and protect their physical and mental health.

The project Data for Monitoring the Safety of Imprisoned Children – Data MOSAIC will address and prevent violence against children in child justice systems and the administration of justice. The project aims to facilitate more comprehensive and human-rights based data collection and monitoring systems that can effectively detect all forms of violence children may experience in prison so that it can be responded to. These systems will be sensitive to the unique experiences of different groups of imprisoned children, including girls, LGBTQI+ children, those with mental health needs or disabilities, and children belonging to marginalised groups, racial, ethnic, religious, or language minorities.



In strengthening justice systems to respond effectively and ethically to crises it is imperative to ensure that children are provided with the necessary support and protection, allowing them to thrive even amidst challenging circumstances.

A crucial aspect of ensuring the well-being of children in contact with judicial systems was highlighted during advisory meetings held in 2022 and 2023 in Spain, Thailand, Singapore in preparation for the 2025 World Congress. Following the 2021 World Congress, the Global Initiative and partners are conducting extensive research that aims to understand current data collection and monitoring practices of violence against children in detention, identify areas for improvement based on international standards, develop a tailored data collection tool, engage relevant stakeholders, and prioritise the perspectives of children and young people with lived experiences.

# A new model

## Lessons learned



Past World Congress showed the importance of gathering experts from different backgrounds



2021 online World Congress showed the importance of getting closer to regional realities

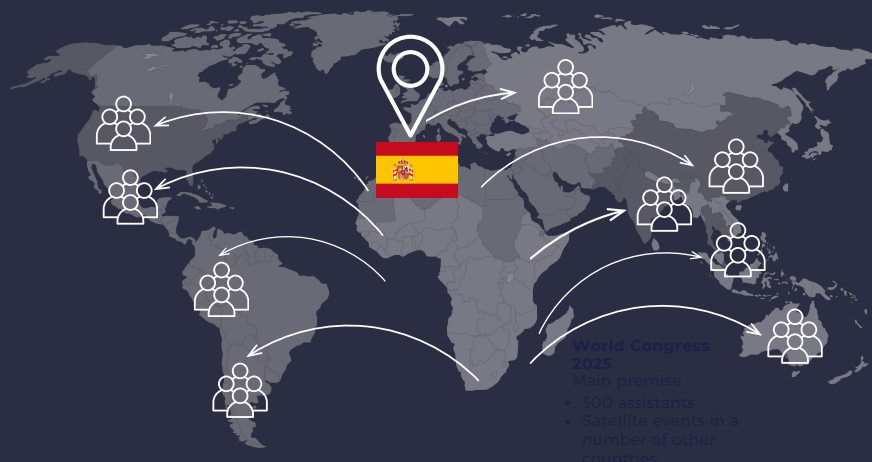


Post COVID world requires hybrid World Congress: on site and online



The current climate conditions make it imperative to find solutions to reduce carbon footprint

The 2025 World Congress will adapt its logistics to modern trends and constraints, such as climate change. The Congress will be both online and onsite, with global simultaneous events. International plenary sessions will be held in a Madrid, Spain and streamed live worldwide. Following these sessions, on-site workshops will focus on creating a new declaration and a five-year action plan. Countries, partners, and stakeholders interested in contributing can organize remote meetings, starting with broadcasting the international plenary sessions. These remote meetings will be followed by on-site workshops at the national and/or regional level, discussing specific and locally relevant topics aligned with the five key themes of the Global Initiative.



# Partners

## Organisers



## With



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## National Advisory Committee



## Other collaborations



**Join us!**

# Contact



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