

49th session of the Human Rights Council

Annual full-day meeting on the rights of the child

Panel discussion on Family reunification in the context of migration

Statement by the Federation for Women and Family Planning

9 March

Thank you, President,

I make this statement on behalf of the Sexual Rights Initiative and AWID.

Today's panel on the Rights of the Child and Family Reunification is especially poignant as the war in Ukraine dominates headlines, the mechanisms of multilateralism and this Council's agenda. With the drums of war beating all around us, attention to the rights of the child reminds us of the imperative to foreground the human trauma of armed conflict and humanitarian emergencies that lasts for generations and does not care about political borders.

We stand in solidarity with people in all parts of the world who are subjected to oppression and violence in all its wretched manifestations. We also cannot deny the racism and hypocrisy of wealthy Global North countries, particularly those with colonial legacies, that is currently on display. Despite the universality of human rights and Refugee Convention protections, families fleeing armed conflict, persecution, climate catastrophes and environmental and social degradation, are not all treated equally when they attempt to seek refuge in supposedly safe countries.

The discriminatory application of migration policies based on race, ethnicity or country of origin, deliberately separates children from their parents as a means of discouraging further migration from particular countries or regions. Such practices are in direct violation of international human rights law and should be abhorrent to every one of us.

As we consider the human rights dimensions of children on the move, let us hold a mirror up to our own migration policies in the Global North to confront our role in creating the conditions that force families to flee their homes in the first place and our complicity in undermining the rights of migrant children to family reunification. This includes holding Global North countries accountable for their role in militarization, the global arms trade and extractive industries.

I thank you.