

# THE STATUS AND THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD IN HISTORY

## 18<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

### CHILDREN AS THEIR PARENTS' "PROPERTY"

The concept of human rights is emerging. However, children are not considered as human beings with their own needs and capabilities. They have no rights, are subject to the authority of their father and are workers.

## 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

### THE RECOGNITION PROCESS BEGINS

The idea of providing special protection to children is emerging, as does the concept of «Rights of Minors». Some states pass legislation on schooling, justice and child labour.



## 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

### THE CENTURY OF CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

In the eyes of the law, the child becomes a human being in the complete sense of the term and is entitled to specific rights.

### BIRTH OF CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

1878-1942

Janusz Korczak, a Polish paediatrician and writer, advocates for children's rights and for the adoption of a clear and binding document for States to recognise and defend these rights.

The League of Nations (ancestor of the United Nations) establishes the **CHILD PROTECTION COMMITTEE**.

The League of Nations adopts the **GENEVA DECLARATION**, a landmark document recognising the specific rights of children and the responsibility of adults towards them.

Following the Second World War, the United Nations creates the **INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S EMERGENCY FUND (UNICEF)**, whose mandate extends to all children from around the world.



The United Nations adopts the **DECLARATION OF THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD**, which paves the way for a universal recognition of children's rights and makes the child a true subject of law.

### TOWARDS A CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

1979

The United Nations proclaims 1979 the « **INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE CHILD** ».

20 NOV. 1989

**THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD (CRC) IS UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED BY THE UNITED NATIONS.**

In 54 articles, this document outlines the civil, economic, social and cultural rights of the child.



### A NEW ERA

1990

- The CRC comes into force and becomes an international treaty, following its ratification by 20 States.
- A World Declaration and Plan of Action to improve the situation of children worldwide are adopted at the New York World Summit for Children.
- The Organisation of African Unity adopts the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

1991

The United Nations establishes the **COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD**, composed of independent experts tasked with monitoring the implementation of the Convention by the States Parties.

20 NOV. 1994

**THE INTERNATIONAL BUREAU FOR CHILDREN'S RIGHTS (IBCR) IS CREATED** to protect, defend and promote the rights and well-being of children around the world.

1996

Graça Machel, an expert appointed by the United Nations, produces a report on the devastating impacts of armed conflict on children.

1999

The International Labour Organization adopts the **WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOUR CONVENTION**, calling for the prohibition and immediate elimination of all forms of work that may harm the health, safety or morals of children.

2000

**TWO OPTIONAL PROTOCOLS ARE ADDED TO THE CRC.** They address the fight against the sale, prostitution and pornography involving children and children's involvement in armed conflict.

2005

**THE GUIDELINES ON JUSTICE IN MATTERS INVOLVING CHILD VICTIMS AND WITNESSES OF CRIME**, developed by the IBCR, are adopted by the United Nations Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.

2006

Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro, independent expert, submits a report on violence against children to the United Nations General Assembly.

2011

**A THIRD PROTOCOL IS ADDED TO THE CRC** and allows every child to file a complaint with the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child if they consider that their fundamental rights have been violated.

2015

➤ The CRC becomes the most widely ratified international treaty, with 196 States Parties.

➤ The United Nations includes specific targets to end all forms of violence against children in its 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

2019

- Independent expert Manfred Nowak submits to the United Nations a Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty revealing that nearly 1.5 million children are deprived of their liberty worldwide each year.
- **THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD CELEBRATES ITS 30<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY.**



## WHAT'S NEXT?

Progress has been made, but the challenges remain significant. The mobilisation of all people alongside the world's children is now more urgent than ever to remind world leaders of their commitments to children's rights.

1878

1959

2019