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The Impact of Conflict on Childhood Education in Europe

 Attacks on childhood education are occurring all around the world. UNICEF reports that almost 30 million children are out of school in emergency or conflict-afflicted countries. This is about half of all children worldwide. Children are terrified, and most children are afraid to go to school. This is a violation of the children’s right to education. Education is a fundamental human right, as stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 26(1):

 “Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.”

 However, millions of children are deprived of educational opportunities as a result of poverty and conflict. The United Nations has worked hard to support emergency education programs, but these programs are severely underfunded.

 The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has education for all. The system is open to all citizens and provides students with free education, books, and health services. Saudi Arabia is fortunate to have no impact from conflict on education. Saudi Arabia has helped to support childhood education in areas of conflict in Pakistan through the Saudi Fund for Development.

 Appropriate and attainable safety measures, such as the prevention of using schools for military purposes, should be taken to eliminate obstacles to accessing and completing education for children during times of conflict. Measures should be taken to include sufficient emergency education funding for children impacted by conflict.

 The impact of conflict on childhood education is an unfortunate reality for far too many children worldwide. The damage done to these children and their countries last far beyond the conflict itself. Member states must come together to ensure that appropriate measures are taken to help repair the damage done and to help build a better future that does a better job of protecting their right to education.