



Instituto
Interamericano
del Niño, la Niña
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OEA

Second Meeting of the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Network on Security

Public Security in the Americas and the Caribbean: Parliamentary Responses to Organized Crime and Violence

Public security and justice: institutional capacities to address crime

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Valparaíso, Chile
October 22, 2026

Regional context

Child poverty and violence remain obstacles to the comprehensive development of children and adolescents.

- 188 million children and adolescents live in the region.
- 81 million children and adolescents are affected by child poverty.
- 17.4 million children and adolescents in child labor (2024)

- The regional homicide rate among children is 12.6 per 100,000 inhabitants, **four times the global average** of 3 per 100,000 (2023)

Violence and crime affect children in multiple ways, often simultaneously

Direct victims

Homicide, disappearance, sexual violence, trafficking and sexual exploitation, with a differentiated impact on girls.

Recruitment by criminal groups

Surveillance, drug transport and sale, extortion, robbery, contract killing and sexual exploitation.

In contact with the justice system

Adolescents with a dual status as victims and offenders.

Affected environments

Families, schools and communities under the control of criminal groups; displacement and human mobility.



Hinders the comprehensive development of children:

- ❑ School exclusion and lack of opportunities
- ❑ Limited State presence
- ❑ Stigmatization
- ❑ Fear of reprisals and distrust of institutions
- ❑ Revictimization and scarcity of specialized services

Six conditions to strengthen protection and justice systems

01 Territorial presence

Local child protection systems linked to social protection and territorial development policies.

02 Intersectoral coordination

Pathways for early risk detection, referral and immediate response across child protection, justice, security, education and health.

03 Legal framework

Updated criminal offenses, including online conduct. Enhanced due diligence and child-adapted proceedings for victims.

04 Specialization

Judges, prosecutors, public defenders, police and technical teams trained in the rights of children and adolescents.

05 Data and early warning

Records and data disaggregated by age. Early warning reports. Local preventive management mechanisms.

06 Sustainable financing

Classified and protected budget. Programs for children, adolescents and families with budget priority (health, education, social protection, special protection).

Criteria for a specialized response

Best interests

Guides every State decision and measure. The impact of any measure, policy or law on the living conditions of children and adolescents must be assessed. (art. 3 CRC)

Specialization

Prevent revictimization. A child and adolescent rights approach must be applied in investigation, proceedings and the enforcement of measures, as well as in all interventions. Recognize the instrumentalization of children by organized crime.

Differential and intersectional approach

Specific measures for the most excluded groups, those most exposed to violence or facing aggravated or cumulative rights deprivations.

Intersectoral coherence

Child policy must be coordinated with health, education, social protection, security and justice policies.

Participation

Children and adolescents must be among the stakeholders consulted and heard in policy development, including security policy.

Four actions within the reach of parliaments

1 Legislate

Criminalize all forms of recruitment, use and exploitation of children and adolescents by adults, including online

2 Protect standards

Avoid regressive reforms and align proceedings with inter-American standards.

3 Budget

Allocate protected resources to prevention, local protection systems and measures to guarantee rights.

4 Listen

Incorporate the views of children and adolescents into the legislative process.

THANK YOU



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