



# Convention on the Rights of the Child

Distr.: General  
3 April 2024

Original: English

## Meeting of States parties

### Twentieth meeting

New York, 23 May 2024

Item 5 of the provisional agenda

**Election of nine members of the Committee on the Rights of the Child in accordance with article 43 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child as amended (see General Assembly resolution 50/155)**

## Election of nine members of the Committee to replace those whose terms are due to expire on 28 February 2025

### Note by the Secretary-General\*

1. In conformity with article 43 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the twentieth meeting of States parties to the Convention is to be held at Headquarters on Thursday, 23 May 2024, for the purpose of electing nine members of the Committee from a list of persons nominated by States parties to replace the members whose terms are due to expire on 28 February 2025.

### I. Members of the Committee whose terms expire on 28 February 2025<sup>1</sup>

2. The terms of the following nine members expire on 28 February 2025:

<i>Member</i>	<i>Country of nationality</i>	<i>Member since</i>
Mr. Rinchen <b>Chophel</b>	Bhutan	2019
Ms. Sopio <b>Kiladze</b>	Georgia	2019
Mr. Benyam Dawit <b>Mezmur</b>	Ethiopia	2013
Ms. Mikiko <b>Otani</b>	Japan	2017
Mr. Luis Ernesto <b>Pedernera Reyna</b>	Uruguay	2017
Ms. Ann <b>Skelton</b>	South Africa	2017
Ms. Velina <b>Todorova</b>	Bulgaria	2017

\* Agreement was reached to publish the present document after the standard publication date owing to circumstances beyond the submitter's control.

<sup>1</sup> With regard to professional background and different legal systems, biographical data of the members may be found on the web page of the Committee, under "Membership", by clicking on the name of the individual members. See [www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRC/Pages/Membership.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRC/Pages/Membership.aspx).



<i>Member</i>	<i>Country of nationality</i>	<i>Member since</i>
Mr. Benoit <b>Van Keirsbilck</b>	Belgium	2019
Ms. Ratou <b>Zara</b>	Chad	2019

## II. Members of the Committee whose terms expire on 28 February 2027

3. The following nine members will continue to serve on the Committee until 28 February 2027:

<i>Member</i>	<i>Country of nationality</i>	<i>Member since</i>
Ms. Suzanne <b>Aho</b>	Togo	2015
Ms. Aïssatou <b>Alassane Moulaye</b>	Niger	2019
Ms. Thuwayba <b>Al Barwani</b>	Oman	2022
Ms. Hynd <b>Ayoubi Idrissi</b>	Morocco	2015
Ms. Mary <b>Beloff</b>	Argentina	2022
Ms. Rosaria <b>Correa</b>	Panama	2022
Mr. Brafi <b>Gudbrandsson</b>	Iceland	2019
Mr. Philip <b>Jaffé</b>	Switzerland	2019
Ms. Faith <b>Marshall-Harris</b>	Barbados	2019

## III. Candidates nominated by States parties

4. In accordance with the procedure set out in article 43 (4) of the Convention, the Secretary-General, in a note verbale dated 23 January 2024, invited States parties to submit their nominations for the election of nine members of the Committee by 23 March 2024. All the curricula vitae received by that date are included in the annex to the present document. Addenda to the present note will be issued for nominations received after the deadline.

5. In compliance with the provisions of article 43 (4) of the Convention, the Secretary-General has the honour to list, in alphabetical order, the following persons nominated for election to the Committee and the States parties that nominated them:

<i>Name of candidate</i>	<i>Nominated by</i>
Mr. Andrew Madugu <b>Ali</b>	Nigeria
Mr. Rinchen <b>Chophel</b>	Bhutan
Ms. Diénèba <b>Diakite Traore</b>	Mali
Mr. Timothy P.T. <b>Ekesa</b>	Kenya
Ms. Mariana <b>Ianachevici</b>	Republic of Moldova
Ms. Norah Amilcar <b>Jean François</b>	Haiti
Ms. Sopio <b>Kiladze</b>	Georgia
Ms. Lina <b>Kjostarova-Unkovska</b>	North Macedonia
Mr. Cephas <b>Lumina</b>	Zambia

<i>Name of candidate</i>	<i>Nominated by</i>
Mr. Benyam Dawit <b>Mezmur</b>	Ethiopia
Ms. Zeinebou Taleb <b>Moussa</b>	Mauritania
Ms. Fiona Atupele <b>Mwale</b>	Malawi
Ms. Juliana <b>Scerri Ferrante</b>	Malta
Mr. Benoit <b>Van Keirsbilck</b>	Belgium
Mr. Sansan Kpièmiité <b>Youl</b>	Burkina Faso
Ms. Ratou <b>Zara</b>	Chad

6. In compliance with paragraph 12 of General Assembly resolution 68/268, information regarding the current composition of the Committee, reflecting the balance in terms of geographical distribution and gender representation, professional background and different legal systems, as well as the tenure of current members, is contained in the biographical data of current members, which may be found on the web page of the Committee.

7. In paragraph 13 of its resolution 68/268, the General Assembly encouraged States parties, in the election of treaty body experts, to give due consideration, as stipulated in the relevant human rights instruments, to equitable geographical distribution, the representation of the different forms of civilization and the principal legal systems, balanced gender representation and the participation of experts with disabilities in the membership of the human rights treaty bodies.

## Annex

### Curricula vitae\*

#### Andrew Madugu Ali (Nigeria)

**Date and place of birth:** 23 December 1967 in Kaltungo

**United Nations working languages:** English

**Current position/function:**

Director child development department

**Other main professional activities, in particular related to children's rights:**

Co-ordinator National child rights implementation committee

**Educational background:**

BSC Hons sociology and anthropology

Advanced diploma in social works

**Relevant expertise on children's rights:**

National Co-ordinator/Director of children's policy, program and project for the development of Nigerian children

**List of most recent publications in the field of children's rights:**

Child welfare policies and problem of implementation: Case study Federal Ministry of Women Affairs 2015–2024

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\* Curricula vitae are issued without formal editing.

## **Rinchen Chopel (Bhutan)**

**Date and place of birth:** 24 March 1960 in Bumthang, Bhutan

**United Nations working languages:** English

### **Current position/function:**

Currently serving as the Vice Chair, Rapporteur, Focal Point for Asia Pacific and the Coordinator of the Working Group on Children in Emergencies in the CRC Committee. I was a member of the Working Group of the Day of General Discussions on Alternative Care in 2022 and member of the Working Group on General Comment 26 on Children's Rights and the Environment with Special Focus on Climate Change. Also a member of the Working Group on SDGs and UNICEF, besides active contribution to the ongoing Treaty Bodies' Reform by emphasising cooperation and synergies among the different bodies.

### **Other main professional activities, in particular related to children's rights:**

Beyond the Committee, among many others, I am the Director General the South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children, the Apex Body for Children of SAARC and the Regional Convenor of the NACGs (National Action and Coordinating Group on Violence Against Children) the NGO/CSO platform with chapters in all South Asian Countries. I also serve as the Convenor of the SAIEVAC Interfaith Platform promoting the role of faith-based organisations using spirituality as the strategic entry point for Child Rights and ending violence against children. I am also a Trustee & Board Member of the Global Consortium of Street Children; Ambassador of the European Link Coalition for Animal Rights and Welfare that focusses on protecting children from exposure to cruelty to animals; Member of the Strategic Advisory Group of the Global Child Marriage Monitoring Mechanism of UNICEF HQ; Ambassador of RENEW, the NGO in Bhutan that promotes rights of women and children. I also serve as the Vice Chair of the Project 100 which promotes environment and peace by creating a platform for global 'Change Makers' through transformation and common humane approaches.

### **Educational background:**

I am a medical doctor with postgraduation in public health and specialization in HIV/AIDS with many years of clinical practice at the grassroots in Bhutan. With managerial responsibilities in the Health Ministry, I undertook courses in health care administration, medical education and human resource development. With change in my career, I got a postgraduate degree in humanitarian law and a masters in human rights. I also did a structured standardized course on the CRC and Treaty Body Reporting with UNICEF Innocenti.

### **Relevant expertise on children's rights:**

I have over 30 years of hands-on experience in not only creating institutional mechanisms, legal and policy reforms but also drafting and presenting reports to the Treaty Bodies multiple times for my country. At the South Asia level, I continue to drive ending violence against children movement which includes promoting regional convergence, sharing and learning and networking. The past 3 years in the Committee I have actively contributed in strengthening the jurisprudence of the Committee as well as bringing greater focus on the role of the Committee beyond just periodic reporting.

### **List of most recent publications in the field of children's rights:**

- Addendum to the Compendium of best practices in South Asia for Child Care and Protection Services: 2021.
- The Road Map for developing a South Asia Youth Volunteer Corps – a rationale framework: 2022.
- White Paper on Child labor in Sports: Protecting the Rights of Child Athletes, presented at the 4th Child Labour Conference held in Durban in May 2022 on the Elimination of child labor. – Co-author: 2022.
- SAIEVAC's journey in tackling Child Marriage in South Asia – the Milestones: 2012–2022.

**Diénèba Diakite Traore (Mali)**

[Original: French]

**Date and place of birth:** 4 June 1978, Bamako, Mali**Working language(s):** French**Current position/function:**

After serving as a judge for 10 years, my interest in the reform of the legal system was a determining factor in my decision to continue my career in the central administration of justice. As the Technical Adviser to the Minister of Justice and Human Rights, with particular responsibility for children's rights, I am responsible for:

- Civil law, including in relation to nationality, tackling statelessness, civil status and the protection of refugees
- Children's rights, including the protection of children in contact with the justice system

**Main professional activities, in particular related to children's rights:**

- Responsible for the design, implementation, monitoring and coordination of the country's policy on juvenile justice
- Responsible for matters relating to civil status, nationality and the fight against statelessness
- Responsible for matters relating to the adoption of children
- Responsible for legislation on the protection of children in conflict with the law

Member of the committee responsible for drafting the preliminary bill on child protection in Mali:

- Responsible for matters relating to treaty bodies, treaties and charters on children's rights, and for preparing reports
- Member of the Governing Board of the National Office for War Orphans of Mali
- Member of the Expert Committee for Follow-up on the Safe Schools Declaration in Times of Conflict
- Member of the Coordination and Monitoring Committee on the African Union Campaign to End Child Marriage

**Educational background:**

Inter-University Doctorate in Fundamental Rights, University of Nantes, 2005/06

Research topic: Implementing the ban on child labour in Mali

- Master's degree in Private Law, judicial career option, 2001, Faculty of Legal and Economic Sciences of the University of Mali, research topic: legal research into paternity in Malian law
- Certificate in the Rights and Protection of Children in Conflict Situations, Alioune Blondin Beye Peacekeeping School, June 2019

**Relevant expertise on children's rights:**

- Protection of fundamental rights: expertise in monitoring civil status, combating statelessness, and adoption
- Protection against torture, trafficking in children, economic exploitation of children: expertise in the provision of legal assistance to children in the context of voluntary or forced migration, forced child labour (child victims of genital mutilation, female circumcision, prostitution, education in times of conflict)

- Administration of justice: expertise in juvenile justice, care for children associated with armed and/or terrorist groups, children who use psychotropic substances, children in social emergencies and children in moral danger

**List of most recent publications in the field of children's rights:**

Dissertation on child labour in Mali

**Timothy P.T. Ekesa (Kenya)**

**Date and place of birth:** 29 July 1969 in Kenya

**United Nations working languages:** English, Elementary French)

**Current position/function:**

Executive Director, Kenya Alliance for Advancement Of Children (KAACR)

**Functions:**

Actualizing vision and mission KAACR a national umbrella NGO for children's rights with a membership of 250 CSOs and with ECOSOC status at UN and Observer Status with ACERWC, member of ECPAT International and member of Global Partnership to End Violence against Children. Preparation of periodic reports for renewal of membership to ECOSOC and ACERWC. Ensuring preparation of organizational Strategic Plans (4), implementation of programmes and administration of the organization and collaborating with children line ministries. Actively involved in coordinating CSO supplementary reporting to UNCRC & ACERWC since ratification of both instruments.

**Other main professional activities, in particular related to children's rights:**

I am a member of the 5-member ECPAT International Global Supervisory Board and also a member of the Board the Management Board of the Eastern African Child Rights Network (EACRN) – 14 country national Coalitions Network. I participate in annual UN Commission on Status of Women sessions in New York, USA, was a panellist at the 13th session of the Human Rights Council Rights of the Child Day in 2010 in Geneva among other child initiatives. I participated in A20 lobal Leadership Summit on Child Advocacy in Beijing, China (2019). I also participated in study tour of Child labor free zones in Hyderabad, India (2009), 3rd World Congress on Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Adolescents in Brazil (2008), study of role of municipalities in protecting children in Sweden (2007) and been on a study of children institutions in three states of the USA (2000) under the African Child Law Initiative. I am is one of the three founder members of Child Line Kenya – a toll-free child help line and have served for 3 years as a member of the National Council of Children Services (NCCS) in Ministry of Labour Social Security and Services in Kenya.

**Educational background:**

Masters of Science – Organizational Development (United States International University) – USIU Africa

(2010 – 2011)

Masters of Arts – International Relations & Diplomacy (University of Nairobi 2002–2004) – completed course work)

Post Graduate Diploma in Management & Development of NGOs (Galilee College, Israel) Nov–Dec

2000

Bachelor of Arts Degree in Communications (Messiah College thru Daystar University) 1990 – 1994

Certificate in Magazine Editing and Production (Daystar University College) May 1994

**Relevant expertise on children's rights:**

I have been involved in coordination and preparation of all Kenya state party reports and supplementary/alternative reports to the UNCRC Committee – 1997 (Initial & First), 2006 (Second) and 2016 (combined 3rd, 4th & 5th report). KAACR coordinated the participation of children from grassroots levels to Geneva during the 2nd and 3rd state party reports. I have contributed to the current 6th & 7th CRC report under review. I led the CSOs in preparation and presentation of CSOs supplementary/alternative reports to the UNCRC Committee in Geneva. In 2006, I lobbied the UNCRC Committee to meet with child representatives from Kenya during the Pre Session – first time ever for the Expert s to meet



with children on their own – set precedence. I have also been involved in preparation of both state party and supplementary reports to the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC) initially in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. I also participated in the UN Department of Public Information (DPI/NGO) 58th Conference in 2005 in New York and conducted a workshop on role youth in reforming the UN under theme: Voices for Peace partnership and renewal in my capacity as Secretary to NGO Committee on UNICEF in East and Southern Africa

**List of most recent publications in the field of children’s rights:**

1. Led the Kenyan study of Disrupting Harm Research on Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse spearheaded by ECPAT International, UNICEF Innocenti and Interpol. 2020/21. Nairobi
2. (Was part of the team that compiled) The 2019 Violence Against Children Study. NCCS. Nairobi
3. (Co-compiled & edited): Guidelines for Child Participation in Kenya 2016. NCCS. Nairobi
4. (Co-Edited): Child Participation in Action – Best Practice Booklet – An Experience of KAACR (2014). KAACR. Nairobi
5. (Co-compiled & edited): Second periodic Kenya Country report on implementation of the UNCRC 1998–2004 and 3rd, 4th & 5th State party report 2006–2012 and corresponding Supplementary reports
6. Editor: The Child Magazine (Quarterly) 2012. KAACR. Nairobi
7. (Co-Edited): Guideline on Financial Management for NGOs, CBOs and FBOs – 2007 (Co-Edited)
8. (Co-edited): Trainers Guide for Institutional and Non-institutional care for children – 2003
9. (Co-edited) Defilement/Rape – You can be a Victim (booklet) – 1996

**Mariana Ianachevici (Republic of Moldova)**

**Date and place of birth:** 7 July 1975 in the Republic of Moldova

**United Nations working languages:** English, French, Russian

**Current position/function:**

From 2013 – Chief Executive Officer of the Association for Child and Family Empowerment “AVE Copiii” – a local child protection NGO that has been operating in the Republic of Moldova for 32 years. Currently – one of the largest child protection services provider for refugee from Ukraine & host community children.

From 2020 – President of the Federation for Rights and Resources of People with Autism Spectrum Disorders (Republic of Moldova) – a network of local NGOs advocating for protection & rights of children and young people with autism.

**Other main professional activities, in particular related to children’s rights:**

From 2003 – Child protection consultant at national and international level (Moldova, Georgia, Ukraine, etc.) on alternative care, social services for children & families, prevention and combating violence against children, child protection systems, protection of refugee children etc.

From 2003 – International trainer in the field of child protection (prevention of child-family separation, alternative care, case management, protection of children against violence, referral in child protection, etc.).

From 2005 – Facilitator of workshops & conferences organized by UNICEF, Council of Europe, etc. on child protection, children rights, prevention of violence against children, protection of refugee children etc.

From 2005 – Consultant and facilitator of the process of elaboration of the last two CRCs Alternative Reports for Moldova.

From 2019 – Acting expert in accrediting social services for children and families in the Republic of Moldova.

From 2003 – Co-founder, Member of the Board and Chair of the Alliance of NGOs active in the field of Social Protection of Children and Families (APSCF) from Moldova and of the Regional Network for Child Protection – ChildPact.

**Educational background:**

1998–2000 Master degree in International Relations at Academy of Public Administration, Government of the Republic of Moldova;

1992–1997 Licence degree in Geography and Biology at Tiraspol State University, Republic of Moldova;

From 2000 – Courses in child rights and child protection delivered by UNICEF; UNHCR; Institute International des Droits des l’Enfants, Switzerland; International Social Service, University of Strathclyde & CELCIS, etc.

**Relevant expertise on children’s rights:**

I have a professional career of almost 29 years in child protection with extensive and varied experience in the field of child protection and child rights, both in direct work with children and families at risk and in advising state and non-state actors, at national and international level, on child protection, child rights, care reform, social assistance etc. In depth knowledge of the CRC and its Optional Protocols with experience in monitoring its implementation in the Republic of Moldova and drafting of alternative reports. Trainer and author of guides and reports on child rights & protection.

**List of most recent publications in the field of children's rights:**

1-Sandu, Veronica, BIRTHA, Magdi, Ianachevici, Mariana, Premov, Tamara, Kahlert, Rahel, for ECSWPR Vienna, Austria for UNICEF. Analysis of the Situation of Children and Adolescents in Moldova, 2022.

2-Gaina, Alexandru (Dr.); Ianachevici, Mariana, IMAS Moldova, for NAVANTI Group. Assessing the impact of COVID-19 on people living with HIV, including pregnant women and children. Chisinau, 2022, UNICEF and UNAIDS.

3-Mcgrath, Kieran; Ianachevici Mariana. Guide on implementation of the Intersectoral Cooperation Mechanism on child protection provided by the Government Decision 270/2014. Council of Europe, 2021.

4-Ianachevici, Mariana; Danilescu, Tatiana. Thematic Report: Evaluation of Efficiency and Efficacy of the intersectoral cooperation mechanisms in child rights protection. Chişinău: People Ombudsperson, 2020.

**Norah Amilcar Jean François (Haiti)**

[Original: French]

**Date and place of birth:** 6 October 1954, Haiti

**Working language(s):** French

**Current position/function:**

President of the Port-au-Prince Court of Appeal and University Professor of Law

**Main professional activities, in particular related to children's rights:**

Advisory Judge for Social Protection, Ministry of Justice

Senior Lecturer, School of the Judiciary (children)

Professor of Criminal Law and Criminal Procedure for Minors at the Faculty of Law and Economics, University of Port-au-Prince, and at private universities

**Educational background:**

One-year postgraduate diploma in Public Governance, Laval University/State University of Haiti

Master's degree in Judicial Studies and Administration, State University of Haiti

Advanced diploma, National School for the Judiciary, France, and training of trainers (children)

**Relevant expertise on children's rights:**

Study on child domestic labour for the International Labour Organization

Training in child trafficking for Haitian justice officials

Engagement in child trafficking issues in the United States of America, the United Kingdom and the Vatican

**List of most recent publications in the field of children's rights:**

Haitian legislation on minors, 6th ed.

Juvenile justice law explained to children

The Right to Education, vol. II

Legal guide for education professionals in Haiti

## **Sopio Kiladze (Georgia)**

**Date and place of birth:** Sixteenth January 1984 in Kutaisi, Georgia

**United Nations working languages:** English, Russian

### **Current position/function:**

Since 2021 Ms. Kiladze serves as a member of the Committee on the Right of the Child and as a Vice-Chair since May 2023. She is the Focal Point for Inter-Parliamentary Union.

Since 2023 she is engaged in human rights protection at the regional level in her capacity as a Member of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) of the Council of Europe.

Ms. Kiladze gives lectures on Child Rights as well as in Public International Law at Grigol Robakidze University, Tbilisi, Georgia and is the holder of DAAD Scholarship for research 2022.

### **Other main professional activities, in particular related to children's rights:**

Ms. Kiladze served at Max-Planck Institute for Comparative Law and Public International Law, Heidelberg, Germany 2008–2011. 2012–2016 she has been serving at the Ministry of Interior of Georgia on different leading positions and working on police related reforms, amongst others pioneered for the developing of juvenile justice guarantees for children. In 2015 she became a holder of Medaille of Honour of the President of Georgia. 2016–2020 Ms. Kiladze was elected as a majoritarian MP and has been serving as a Chairperson of the Human Rights Committee as well as of the Child Rights Council (created upon her initiative) of the Parliament of Georgia. As a Member of Parliament amongst others she is the author and led two major reforms in the field of child rights: the Code on the Rights of the Child and the Law on Social Work. She is the author of several legislative amendments aiming protecting children from prostitution and pornography as well as from domestic violence. She launched various awareness-raising campaigns.

Since 2020 she has been working as an expert for various projects related to child rights in cooperation with international organizations: UNICEF, EU, Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung, Expertise France. Amongst many others she developed in Georgia:

Case Management Coordination Mechanism supported by appropriate electronic system in the municipalities ensuring effective coordinated work of all relevant central-, and municipal agencies; Delegation Bylaw defining responsibilities between municipalities and central government social workers; Standards for Social Workers of Healthcare Institutions;

Standards for Psychologists; Trainings for social workers on the Convention of the Rights of the Child; She is currently developing the draft Law of Georgia on Psychologists and leading piloting of positive parenting program.

### **Educational background:**

2006–2011 – Ruprecht-Carls University of Heidelberg, Law Faculty (Erstes Staatsexamen), Germany

2020 – to date – PhD at Grigol Robakidze University

### **Relevant expertise on children's rights:**

Ms. Kiladze has a long-standing and recognized expertise in the field of elaboration and implementation of the relevant legal frameworks for the advancements of children's rights as an author of the Code on the Rights of the Child and the Law on Social Work of Georgia, but also other pieces of legislation, including relevant bylaws. She has arranged a number of events to ensure child participation.

She has brought a new vision to the CRC, enhancing the role of Parliaments in child rights protection. Upon her initiative a special focal point for IPU was set up. She has elaborated the [CRC-IPU Joint Statement](#). She co-organized several regional and international high-level events with IPU and UNICEF in order to raise awareness and guide parliamentarians in child rights protection and promotion.

Recently she has brought a new topic to the CRC: Artificial Intelligence and Child Rights. For focused work on AI she established partnership with the UNICRI Center for AI and Robotics as well as the International Telecommunications Union and the first joint event with CRC is scheduled for May 2024.

**List of most recent publications in the field of children’s rights:**

- S. Kiladze and A. Pirtskhalashvili Manual on Social Work Law (Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung 2018 Tbilisi).
- S Kiladze and P. Turava Guiding Commentaries of the Code on the Rights of the Child (Iuristebis Samkaro 2021 Tbilisi).
- S Kiladze ‘Realization of Child Rights in Municipalities: according to the Code on the Rights of the Child’ Academic Digest 2021. pp. 60–80.
- S. Kiladze ‘Effectivity of Public International Law: A Need for Paradigm Change’1 Torun International Studies 15 2022, pp. 5–23.

## **Lina Kjostarova-Unkovska (North Macedonia)**

**Date and place of birth:** 07.10 1949, Skopje, Macedonia

**United Nations working language:** English

### **Current position/function:**

I am founder and director of the *Centre for Psychosocial and Crisis Action (CPCA) – Malinska, since 1999*. The CPCA is founded to respond to the need for psychosocial assistance and support, primarily to children and young people, but also to families, schools and local communities, when owing to the fast transformation of society (war conflicts, economic and political crises etc.), they fail to perform their primary function. (for ex. during the wars in the region, CPCA organized professionals, students, and volunteers to help and support refugee children and families, as well as the schools affected by the crisis, to meet their rights and needs.) The CPCA' professional involvement in the crisis solutions has created rich research and field-work experience in the domains of learning for development, children's rights, mental and emotional health, psychosocial and crisis intervention.

### **Regular positions held:**

- Program developer, researcher, trainer, supervisor, project evaluator, children rights promoter etc.
- Collaborator and consultant (national and international – MoES, BDE, HCHR, WHO, WB, EU, UNICEF, UNCHR, UNFPA, EPRI, BIM, LB.I etc.)

### **Other main professional activities, in particular related to children's rights:**

I've been responsible for national and international project tasks and activities including research, capacity building and policy development in the fields of children rights and wellbeing, mental and emotional health, school health promotion, crisis, and trauma intervention. Project activities include:

- Development of children' rights based mental health curricula, and crisis intervention program, with mentoring system, for school expert teams in Macedonian schools.
- Continuing HBSC study work, focusing on adolescents' sexual, reproductive, and mental health research evidence, with psychosocial support to LGBTI+ youth and families.
- Conducting research project on children's rights improvement through rights-based budgeting for child protection.
- School expert team program on gender equality in adolescent health.
- Psychological counselling services for children and families at risk.
- Developing and implementing trauma recovery programs of psychosocial assistance in support to refugee families and children, affected by wars and multi-ethnic conflicts in the region.
- Coordinating comprehensive school health promoting projects in communities at risk / in refugee shelters, post-conflict, multi-ethnic, impoverished/

### **Educational background:**

- Master's degree in clinical psychology (1984) – *University of Belgrade, SFR Yugoslavia*
- Postgraduate study in counselling psychology (1982) – *Chico State University, California, USA*
- Study work on protective factors in child development (1989) *Children Hospital – Boston, USA*
- Refugee Studies Program at University of Oxford, UK; (1992)
- Helping the helpers training – Kiryat Shamone Crisis Centre, Izrael – (1994)

- Over 30 years of professional practice in designing and conducting health promotion, and crisis/trauma intervention projects with children, families and communities at risk, providing professional input on psychosocial factors of children's health and wellbeing, resulting from longstanding hands-on experience in the field.

**Relevant expertise on children's rights:**

Children rights on safety, nondiscrimination, active participation, learning for development, continuing education, family protection, social and health protection, gender equality etc., has been highly prioritized in my work, with and for children, no matter the role I was taking, of a trainer, or a program designer, or a policy maker, or of advocate. Always in search for optimization of the conditions for child's rights realization. Thus, most of my professional work has been related to child rights promotion, protection, or intervention activities, mostly with marginalized communities (children and families): refugee, deprived, LGBTI +, trafficking, maltreated, and/or abused.

**List of most recent publications in the field of children's rights:**

2023 – Samdal, O., Budin-Ljøsne, I., Haug, E., Helland, T., Kjostarova – Unkovska, L., Bouillon, E., Brøer, E., Corell, M., Cosma, A. Et. Encouraging greater empowerment for adolescents in consent procedures in social science research and policy projects. *Obesity reviews*, 24(s2), article e13636. <https://doi.org/10.1111/obr.13636> (co-author)

2022 – Comprehensive mental health program, and mentoring system development for school expert teams, in Macedonian schools – UNICEF, BRO, (co-author)

2020 – Kjostarova-Unkovska, L., Do we have a winner? – Gender inequalities in health and adolescents' life perspective in North Macedonia, Margini Coalition, Skopje, 2020, 88 p.

2019 – Kjostarova-Unkovska L., Inequality in health and rights among 13–15 y.o. LGBT youth. – based on HBSC Study data, 2018 – Coalition Margini, 2019, 59p

2018 – Kjostarova-Unkovska L., Right to gender sensitive school – prevention and early intervention of gender-based violence in schools, *Manual for secondary school teachers and school expert teams*, Coalition Margini, Skopje, 2018, 150p.



## Cephas Lumina (Zambia)

**Date and place of birth:** 13 June 1962, Kabwe, Zambia

**United Nations working languages:** English

### **Current position/function:**

- Visiting Full Professor of Constitutional and Human Rights Law, University of Lusaka (2015–present).
- Human Rights Consultant (2002–present).
- Advocate of the High Court of Zambia (admitted 1986).
- Member of the Steering Committee, and Academic Representative for Sub-Saharan Africa, Extra-Territorial Human Rights Obligations Consortium (2016–present).

### **Other main professional activities, in particular related to children’s rights:**

- Member of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and its Working Groups on Communications, Environment (initiator and first Coordinator), Rules of Procedure (Joint Coordinator), Sustainable Development Goals, and Working Methods, 2017–2021. Represented the CRC at the Inter-Parliamentary Union 141st Assembly Workshop on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, 2019; OHCHR United Nations Development Programme Expert Consultation on the International Guidelines on Human Rights and Drug Policy, 2019; and UN Climate Change Conference, 2017.
- Teaching international human rights law at academic institutions in Italy, South Africa, Sweden, Uganda, and Zambia; supervising postgraduate research on human rights topics (including child trafficking, child marriage and children in armed conflict); and conducting human rights training for NHRIs, civil society organizations, lawyers, etc.
- Human rights consulting, e.g., *Reporting on States’ budgetary obligations under the Convention* (UNICEF, 2022); *Constitutional Protection of Children’s Rights in Africa* (International IDEA, 2021); *Study on Harmonization of Laws on Children in Africa with International and Regional Child Rights Instruments’* (African Child Policy Forum/African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child [ACERWC], 2019); and *Human Rights State Party Reporting Manual* (UNDP/Ministry of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs, Zimbabwe, 2009).
- United Nations Independent Expert on foreign debt and human rights (2008–2014).

### **Educational background:**

- Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in International Human Rights Law (Griffith University, Australia, 1999).
- Master of Laws (LLM) in International Human Rights Law (University of Essex, United Kingdom, 1993).
- Bachelor of Laws (LLB) (*with Merit*) (University of Zambia, Zambia, 1985).
- Postgraduate Diploma in the International Protection of Human Rights (Abo Akademi University, Finland, 2003).
- Certificate in International Humanitarian Law (ICRC/University of Pretoria, 2001)

### **Relevant expertise on children’s rights:**

Please elaborate on your areas of expertise under the Convention on the Rights of the Child and related experience:

First-rate knowledge of the Convention and its Optional Protocols, with expertise in general measures of implementation, especially budgets (wrote *UNICEF Guidance Note on Reporting on States’ Budgetary Obligations under the Convention*, 2022; CRC’s Focal Point on corruption and children’s rights, 2018–2021); definition of the child; general principles; harmful practices; children with disabilities; socio-economic rights; environmental health

(CRC's Focal Point on climate change, 2018–2021); children and armed conflict (participated in the drafting of ACERWC General Comment No. 22 on Children in Situations of Armed Conflict); trafficking; and individual communications.

**List of most recent publications in the field of children's rights:**

More than 60 publications (including articles, book chapters and official reports prepared for the United Nations) and 50+ conference/policy presentations on human rights and constitutional law. Below is a selection of relevant recent work:

- 'The Protection of Children in Armed Conflict,' in F Viljoen and D Kuwali (eds), *"All Means Necessary": Protecting Civilians and Preventing Atrocities in Africa* (pp. 120–143) (Pretoria University Law Press 2017).
- 'The Normative Complementarity of the African Children's Charter and the African Women's Protocol in the Context of Efforts to Combat Child Marriage' (2017) 31(1) *Speculum Juris* 41 (with A Olaborede).
- 'Using Public Budgets for the Realization of Children's Rights' (in progress)
- 'Constitutional Protection of Children's Rights in Africa: A Comparative Survey' (in progress).

## **Benyam Dawit Mezmur (Ethiopia)**

**Date and place of birth:** 22 May 1980 in Addis Ababa

**Working languages:** English

### **Position/function:**

Member, and former Chairperson (2015–2017) of the *UN Committee on the Rights of the Child*

Former member (2010–2021) and former chairperson (from 2012–2013, and 2015–2017) of the *African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child* of the African Union (AU), and served as its special rapporteur on children and armed conflict

Eleanor Roosevelt Fellow, Human Rights Program, Harvard Law School (2022–2023)

Professor of Law, and Deputy Dean for Research and Postgraduate Studies, University of the Western Cape (UWC), Cape Town, South Africa and lecture/supervise on an *ad hoc* basis in Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia

Senior Researcher and Coordinator at the Children’s Rights Project, Dullah Omar Institute for Constitutional Law, Governance and Human Rights, UWC

Member of the *Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors* appointed by Pope Francis (2018–present) to advise the Holy Father on “the most opportune initiatives for protecting minors and vulnerable adults”

### **Other main professional activities, in particular related to children’s rights:**

Mr. Mezmur is currently a member of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (and served as its Chairperson from 2015 until 2017) and former member of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child of the African Union (and served as its Chairperson twice from 2012–2014, and 2015–2017). As an academician, Mr. Mezmur has lectured (and supervised) on children’s rights, children’s rights and climate change, the rights of persons with disabilities, international protection of human rights, international family law, and the African human rights system in a number of academic institutions in Africa (Ethiopia and South Africa) and Europe (Belgium, Switzerland, Italy, The Netherlands, UK etc). Mr. Mezmur conducts research on law and policy development on children’s rights in a number of African countries and beyond, and has been involved as a resource person in institutional efforts aimed at providing technical support to governments through UN agencies such as UNICEF and UNHCR. In addition, he has been involved in advocacy work on the rights of the child with treaty bodies and special procedures (on torture, environment, minority issues, sale and sexual exploitation of children, etc) at the UN, as well as at the Human Rights Council.

### **Educational background:**

Doctorate in Law (LLD), (2010), University of Western Cape, (research paper on child rights in intercountry adoption);

Masters in Law (LLM) in Human Rights and Democratization (CHR), (2005), University of Pretoria, South Africa (research paper on child soldiers);

Postgraduate Diploma in international protection of human rights, (2007), Abo Akademi, Finland;

Bachelor of Laws (LLB), (2003), Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia; and Certificates in mental disability law (CEU, Budapest); development law; international criminal and humanitarian law; ESC rights; etc.

### **Relevant expertise on children’s rights:**

Mr. Mezmur has served as the Coordinator of the CRC Committee’s Working Groups on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (2017–2023), Optional Protocol on a communications procedure (OPIC) (2019–2020), and is also the Focal Person for UNICEF (2017–2023). He also served as Coordinator of the Committee’s Working Group that drafted

the Joint General Comment on children's rights and migration; has taken part in the negotiations to draft the 3rd Optional Protocol; and has made submissions to, or participated in, the Human Rights Council, and its Day on the Rights of the Child. Mr. Mezmur also serves/served in Expert Groups/Meetings/Task Forces/Advisory Boards such as on the UN Global Study on Children Deprived of Their Liberty; children's rights and digital media; budgeting for children; children's rights and the business sector; commercial sexual exploitation (ECPAT); violence against children including harmful practices (SRSG VAC); and the right to education. Mr. Mezmur has also been invited as a speaker/moderator to more than 100 international and regional meetings/conferences/workshops in the last decade including recently to the World Statelessness Conference (June 2019, The Hague), the Social Forum of the Human Rights Council, the UN Forum on Minority Issues (2018, 2019), and the Annual High-Level Panel of the Human Rights Council on human rights mainstreaming (Feb 2020). Mr. Mezmur has also been invited to engage with the Pan African Parliament, European Parliament and the Council of Europe (on child marriage, migration, child participation, children with albinism etc).

Mr. Mezmur is a member of the Governing/Advisory Boards of the Children's Institute (South Africa), Keeping Children Safe (UK), All Survivors Project (Liechtenstein), the International Advisory Committee for The International Network Against Accusations of Witchcraft and Associated Harmful Practices and Global Ombuds Board of SOS Children's Village (Austria). He is also a member of the Advisory Board of the Institute on Statelessness (Eindhoven, The Netherlands and London, UK); Expert Committee of the International Children's Prize (Netherlands); Special Advisor to the Supervisory Board Child Helpline International (The Netherlands). Formerly Mr. Mezmur was a Legal Officer (2003–2005) at the ACPF (Ethiopia) and continues to serve on its International Board of Trustees, which is chaired by Mme Graça Machel.

#### **A selected list of recent publications in the field of children's rights:**

Mr. Mezmur has more than 60 published academic and lay publications/reports/etc. on child/human rights in the last few years covering topics such as climate change, digital media, discrimination, SDGs, armed conflict, migration, including:

- “Solely based on their date of birth? Rethinking age-based discrimination against children under the Convention on the Rights of the Child (2023) 36 *Harvard Human Rights Journal* 401–421
- “The calm before the storm? Child rights climate change litigation in Africa” (2023) 56 *De Jure* 543-568
- “Protecting children's rights in the age of digital divide” (October 2022) DEVEX <https://www.devex.com/news/sponsored/opinion-protecting-children-s-rights-in-the-age-of-the-digital-divide-104109>
- “From the margins to the mainstream? Bridging the scholarship gap on statelessness in Africa” (with C Fawole) (Editorial) (2022) 8(3) *African Human Mobility Review* 4-16
- “SDG 1: No poverty” in Michaels R, Abou-Nigm V.R and Van Loon H (eds) (2021) *The Private Side of Transforming our World - UN Sustainable Development Goals 2030 and the Role of Private International Law* (Intersentia Online) pp. 29–55.
- “The protection of internally displaced children in Africa: A doctrinal analysis of Article 23(4) of the African Children's Charter” (with R Adeola) (2021) 65 *Journal of African Law* 1-15
- “Continued reflections on family law issues in the jurisprudence of the UN CRC Committee: The Convention on the Rights of the Child @ 30:” (with O Khazova) (2020) *The International Survey of Family Law* 337-363
- “Technology changing @ a dizzying pace: Reflections on selected jurisprudence of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child” (with A Skelton) (2019) 3 *Peace Human Rights Governance* 275-305

- “‘Every ‘i’ dotted, and every ‘t’ crossed?: The Joint General Comments on the rights of children in the context of international migration in the Horn of Africa” (2019) IV *Ethiopian Journal of Human Rights* 1-33
- “Taking measures without taking measurements? An insider’s views on monitoring the implementation of the African Children’s Charter in the context of armed conflict” (2019) 905 *International Review of the Red Cross* 623-651

**Zeinebou Taleb Moussa (Mauritania)**

[Original: French]

**Date and place of birth:** 10 January 1961, Tintane**Working language(s):** French**Current position/function:**

Founding chair of the non-governmental organization (NGO) Association mauritanienne pour la santé de la mère et de l'enfant, member of Defence for Children International

Member of the National Observatory for the Rights of Women and Girls

Member of the national agency for combating trafficking in persons and migrant smuggling

Chair of the National Coalition for the Global Financing Facility and Chair of the Network for Combating Gender-Based Violence

**Main professional activities, in particular related to children's rights:**

My main activities in the area of children's rights involve managing a programme to combat gender-based violence, particularly sexual violence, including by lobbying the Government of Mauritania and working through international and regional bodies such as the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. I campaign on behalf of children's rights, particularly the rights of migrant children and children in conflict with the law. I am an active member of the National Observatory for the Rights of Women and Girls and have been a member of Defence for Children International, for which I document violations of children's rights, since 2006. I also meet with justice officials every day to raise awareness of the Secretary-General's global study on children deprived of liberty.

**Educational background:**

1980: Scientific baccalaureate (upper secondary leaving certificate)

1982: State midwifery diploma

Training in the preparation of awareness-raising plans

Training in women's rights, gender and gender equality, Nouakchott

Training in documenting human rights violations, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

**Relevant expertise on children's rights:**

My expertise in the field is based on 25 years of experience of managing major programmes to protect children against all forms of violence and discrimination, with a particular focus on sexual violence and children deprived of their liberty. I have developed sociolegal defence centres in my country, specializing in the provision of social, legal and psychological support for child victims of sexual violence and children in conflict with the law. I have organized regional debates on child protection and advocated follow-up on the implementation of the National Child Protection Strategy.

**List of most recent publications in the field of children's rights:**

[https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/report\\_pdf/mauritania0918fr\\_web.pdf](https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/mauritania0918fr_web.pdf)

<https://www.refworld.org/pdfile/5437e0944.pdf>

[https://cridem.org/C\\_Info.php?article=676324](https://cridem.org/C_Info.php?article=676324)

<https://fonadh.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/D%C3%A9claration-Contre-le-viole.pdf>

[https://www.upr-info.org/sites/default/files/documents/2020-12/2.\\_association\\_mauritanienne\\_pour\\_la\\_sante\\_de\\_la\\_mere\\_et\\_de\\_lenfant\\_section\\_defense\\_des\\_enfants\\_international\\_stmt.pdf](https://www.upr-info.org/sites/default/files/documents/2020-12/2._association_mauritanienne_pour_la_sante_de_la_mere_et_de_lenfant_section_defense_des_enfants_international_stmt.pdf)

[https://cridem.org/C\\_Info.php?article=623859](https://cridem.org/C_Info.php?article=623859)

## **Fiona Atupele Mwale (Malawi)**

**Date and place of birth:** 30 October 1974, Zomba, Malawi

**United Nations working languages:** English (fluent), French (basic)

### **Current position/function:**

Judge of the High Court of Malawi (since 2012), and Judge in Charge of the Family and Probate Division (since 2020, responsible for setting up this new division which handles all civil matters relating to family, children (adoption, maintenance, guardianship, custody) and inheritance. I preside over such matters as a trial court and as an intermediate appellate court. I also review such matters from subordinate courts in a supervisory capacity. The court has three sessions a year with vacations in between and I have 36 leave days a year enabling me to take up Committee Sessions.

### **Other main professional activities, in particular related to children's rights:**

2003–2006: Oversaw the Review of the Children and Young Persons Act and all legislation relating to Children in the Malawi Law Commission.

December 2006: Consultant (engaged by Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs to draft Malawi's State Party Report funded by UNICEF on the Convention of the Rights of the Child.

June–July 2012: Consultant to edit and draft Guidelines and Handbooks for the Malawi Police Service and the Judiciary on Child Justice and Diversion and to draft regulations for the Child Care, Protection and Justice Act.

November 2019: Spotlight Initiative – Reviewing Laws and Policies on VAWG, SGBV/HP and SRHR to Respond to Rights of Women and Girls and Aligning them with International Standards

September 2013–July 2017 – Chairperson of the Child Case Review Board

August 2021: Chairperson National Child Justice Forum & National Child Justice Directorate, Malawi Judiciary

### **Educational background:**

2023: Current PhD Candidate, Faculty of Public Law, University of Cape Town (part-time).

2001–2002 Master of Law in Development, (with Distinction), University of Warwick, UK

1997–1998 Bar Vocational Diploma, (Very Competent), Nottingham-Trent University, UK

1994–1997 LLB (Hons) Law Degree, (II.I Honours), University of Leeds, UK

### **Relevant expertise on children's rights:**

- Substantive expertise drafting Malawian Child rights legislation and regulations that conforms with the CRC.
- Consultancy expertise drafting Malawi's CRC Country Report.
- Presiding over court proceedings over children in adoption, guardianship, maintenance, inheritance, and custody in line with the best interests of the child.
- Inspecting childcare institutions, reformatory centres and prisons to ensure that national and CRC principles are upheld.

### **List of most recent publications in the field of children's rights:**

- "Family and Succession Law in Malawi", International Encyclopaedia of Law, Kluwer Law International (2009).
- Numerous High Court published judgments ranging from 2010 to date outlining the best interests of the child, child friendly court room environment and the rights of the child in contact and conflict with the law.

**Juliana Scerri Ferrante (Malta)**

**Date and place of birth:** 16th September 1970, St Julians, Malta

**United Nations working languages:** English

**Current position/function:**

- Chair – Minors Care Review Board in Malta (Hearings of review of all protection orders related to child protection. drafting of legal instruments and recommendations to the Courts, and deciding issues raised and put forward regarding minors and children’s rights under protection orders of out of home care/alternative care. Hear children to understand their needs and wishes to make sure that the CRC principles are all safe guarded. Assure that placements are safe and their rights are fully protected.
- Chair – Immigration Appeals Board which also hears appeals from age assessments. Here too I ensure that CRC principles are put into effect, and such is also quoted in my decisions/judgements.
- Legal Advisor on Child Protection Law and Childrens Rights and Immigration. (Was Part of team of legal drafters and researchers on Child Protection law which emphasised on the Rights of the Child)
- Legal Advisor to the Ministry of Family, Children’s Rights and Social Solidarity, regarding all laws related to Minors thus have an overall view and input in national law.
- Domestic Violence Legal Advisor. (This also includes advising Minors who are alleged victims of Domestic Violence)
- Non-Resident Ambassador of the Republic of Malta.

**Other main professional activities, in particular related to children’s rights:**

- A speaker, (and attended conferences) related to minors, child protection and child care as well as human trafficking – always with reference to laws related to Children’s Rights and Protection.
- Was a speaker representing Malta and forming part of Malta delegation, in the United Nations 81st Committee of the Rights of the Child in Geneve in May 2019, as part of the Malta Delegation.
- Speaker at the Victims Support Europe Conference 2022.
- Speaker at the Anti-Human Trafficking Interministerial Committee- June 2023 (referring to Children’s Rights and Minors Protection in our national laws).
- Lecturer in this field also connected to immigration field re alleged minors in illegal immigration.
- For various years a Court appointed expert in Child abuse cases.
- A Judicator of the Small Claims Tribunal in the Malta Law Courts from 2018 until October 2023.

**Educational background:**

- Doctor of Laws from the University of Malta, after completing studies for other degrees and (LP., N.P) (LL. D)
- Bachelor of Arts in Socio-Legal Studies. B.A. (socio-legal)
- Master’s degree in international law – University of Malta. (Mag.Juris)
- Forensic Courses carried out at Criminal Pol Rome – Utilised as a Court Expert in the Law Courts in Minors Offences.
- Obtained certificates of training in 2019, risk checklist training in 2021 and also obtained a certificate of training in RE-US Transantional Training Workshops on Asylum and Migration, which included child migration from the Faculty of Law in



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Trento University in 2017. Various courses related to training of victim's support and elderly abuse and domestic violence, which also included child abuse

**Relevant expertise on children's rights:**

- A Court Expert since 1993 till 2002, specialized in sexual offences/child abuse and child related offences. Appointed in criminal inquiries.
- A Judicial Assistant in the Family Court from 2012 till 2015.
- In the year 2000, was a member of the Child and Young Person Advisory Board and also a legal advisor to the same Board for various years.
- In 2013–2014, was a member of the National Commission on Child Policy and Strategy.
- Since 2013, involved in the drafting of the Child Protection Law. This involved extensive research in order to compare the laws of various countries and adapting measures from the same, in order to fit the Maltese scenario.
- In the year 2016 and the year 2017, participated in parliamentary committees regarding the Child Protection Law.
- Course lecturer for the new law in child protection to replace the Care Order Act (2016–2017), and Immigration Law which included Minor Protection at University Of Malta.

**Benoit Van Keirsbilck (Belgium)**

[Original: French]

**Date and place of birth:** 4 March 1963, Cochabamba (Bolivia)**Working language(s):** French, English, Spanish**Current position/function:**

Director of Defence for Children International (DEI-Belgium), a leading children's rights organization committed to ensuring the effective implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child at the national, regional and international level, since 2012

Member and teacher at the Interdisciplinary Centre for the Rights of the Child, an academic research and training centre, since 2007; Professor on the Master's programme in Children's Rights

Editor in Chief at the Journal du Droit des jeunes (Children's Right Journal, [www.jdj.be](http://www.jdj.be)) since 1990

Vice-Chair of the National Commission on the Rights of the Child since 2023 and a member of its advisory body since 2015 ([ncrk-cnde.be/en/avis/](http://ncrk-cnde.be/en/avis/))

Member of the Advisory Committee for the global study on children deprived of liberty ([www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRC/StudyChildrenDeprivedLiberty/Pages/Index.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRC/StudyChildrenDeprivedLiberty/Pages/Index.aspx))

**Main professional activities, in particular related to children's rights:**

Speaker at numerous international symposiums, conferences and seminars on issues relating to migrant children, juvenile justice, access to justice, child protection and the socio-legal defence of children, among others; international training officer in the fields of children's rights and juvenile justice, including for the Council of Europe, the European Union, the International Organization of la Francophonie and other international organizations, universities and research centres

Participation in the Council of Europe Group of Experts responsible for drafting the Guidelines of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on child friendly justice; the development of an online training module on the same subject for the Council of Europe HELP (Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals) Programme and participation in the evaluation of the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child

Expert in child justice for many European projects, including Children's Rights behind Bars, My Lawyer, My Rights, PRO-JUS, TALE, Twelve, AWAY and BRIDGE ([www.dei-belgique.be](http://www.dei-belgique.be))

**Educational background:**

Academic qualifications:

1982–1985: Higher Institution for Social Training – Brussels: Bachelor's degree in Social Work

1995 University of Ghent: Postgraduate studies in children's rights

Other training:

Training in juvenile law and the rights of the child at the Jeunesse et Droit (young people and law) training centre and at the summer school of the Kurt Bösch University Institute in Sion (University of Geneva, Switzerland)

Numerous training courses and participation in study days, symposiums and working seminars at the national and international levels

**Relevant expertise on children's rights:**

Benoit Van Keirsbilck has dedicated his entire career of over 35 years to children's rights at the national and international levels. He has a rich and broad experience of working in the field alongside children and families, conducting legal assessments, evaluating social and

legal systems, training professionals, writing articles and publishing books, monitoring legal proceedings at the national and international levels, participating in committees of experts and teaching. He has an in-depth knowledge of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and has followed the Committee's work since it was established, including by participating in a number of monitoring activities. He has been a member of the Committee since 2021 and coordinates the working group on individual communications and the working group responsible for drafting the forthcoming general comment on children's right to access justice and effective remedies.

**List of most recent publications in the field of children's rights:**

- Benoit Van Keirsbilck and Anna Tomasi, "Socio-Legal Defence Model: Realising Children's Rights", in *The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: Taking Stock after 25 Years and Looking Ahead*, ed. Brill/Nijoff, edited by Ton Liefwaard and Julia Sloth-Nielsen, 2016
- Benoit Van Keirsbilck and Sarah Grandfils, "Privation de liberté d'enfants, les défis du monitoring", in *Justice Juvénile: les Fondamentaux* ed., International Institute for the Rights of the Child, Geneva, 2016 (edited by Philip D. Jaffé, Michel Lachat, Paola Riva Gapany, Renate Winter, Jean Zermatten)
- Benoit Van Keirsbilck and Géraldine Mathieu (ed.), *Les droits de l'enfant expliqués aux grands*, Couleur livres, Jeunesse & Droit (ed.), 2014
- Benoit Van Keirsbilck, "La privation de liberté des enfants, l'importance du monitoring", in *Justice Juvénile: les Fondamentaux*, International Institute for the Rights of the Child, 2016
- Benoit Van Keirsbilck, "Rôle des ONG dans la mise en oeuvre de la Convention internationale relative aux droits de l'enfant", in *Regards croisés sur deux décennies d'application de la Convention des Nations-Unies relative aux droits de l'enfant au Nord et au Sud de la Méditerranée*, 2014

## Sansan Kpièmiité Youl (Burkina Faso)

[Original: French]

**Date and place of birth:** 25 June 1978, Loropéni (Burkina Faso)

**Working language(s):** French

### **Current position/function:**

Since 31 May 2023, I have overseen the efforts made to combat violence against children and protect children in emergency situations in my country, Burkina Faso. I am a member of the West African Network for the Protection of Children.

I am a member of the Working Group on Child Protection, which brings together organizations working in the field of child protection in Burkina Faso, including the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the International Organization for Migration, Save the Children International, Terre des Homme Lausanne, and the International Bureau for Children's Rights.

### **Main professional activities, in particular related to children's rights:**

- Trainer in gender-sensitive budgeting and children's rights since 2019
- Trainer in gender-sensitive parenting since 2020
- Trainer/consultant in methodologies for specialized interventions (special education for children and young people with adjustment and social integration difficulties) since 2006
- Trainer in caring for children in situations of mobility since 2020
- Trainer/consultant in caring for children and young people in street situations since 2018
- Trainer/consultant in alternative care, caring for children deprived of their families since 2019
- Trainer (facilitator) for the Strong Families Programme of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime; the purpose of the Strong Families Programme is to strengthen parenting skills and prevent antisocial behaviour in children and young people, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds (poor and vulnerable families)
- Trainer/specialist in child protection (children's rights and welfare, the protection of child victims of violence, protective support for children in mobility situations, victims of child trafficking and related problems etc.) since 2019

### **Educational background:**

2011–2014 – State Diploma for specialized education inspectors, National Institute for Training in Social Work of Burkina Faso

Since 2017, supervising students at the Senior Social Work Administrators' Training College

### **Relevant expertise on children's rights:**

I have 22 years of rich and varied professional experience in the field of child protection and children's rights, working with vulnerable children and families and providing advice and technical support to State and non-State actors at the national and international levels in the areas of child protection, children's rights, the strengthening of family skills, innovations in childcare, and social and educational support. I have in-depth knowledge of the Convention and the Optional Protocols, as well as experience of monitoring the implementation of the Convention in Burkina Faso and drafting alternative reports. As a trainer/consultant, I have participated in drafting several sets of guidelines on child protection:

- National Action Plan (2021–2023) on Combating Violence against Children in Burkina Faso
- National Guidelines on Activities for Child-Friendly Spaces in Burkina Faso

- Coaching manual for case managers on case management, the use of version 2.0 of CPMS+ and the provision of psychosocial support to child victims of violence, including gender-based violence, in Burkina Faso
- Manual on the care and reintegration of children encountered during security operations in Burkina Faso

**List of most recent publications in the field of children's rights:**

Analyse des stratégies d'éducation inclusive des enfants handicapés mentaux dans le système d'éducation de base formelle au Burkina Faso (An analysis of inclusive education strategies for children with mental disabilities in the formal basic education system in Burkina Faso), Senior Social Work Administrators' Training College, Ouagadougou, 2014, 98 p. a.

**Ratou Zara (Chad)**

[Original: French]

**Date and place of birth:** 3 June 1962, Mongo/Guera**Working language(s):** French, Arabic**Current position/function:**

Member of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (2021–2025); Technical Inspector in charge of child protection at the Ministry of Children’s Affairs; Vice-Chair of the Multisectoral Technical Committee for Combating Illicit Migrant Smuggling and Trafficking in Persons; Professor at the National School of Public Health and Social Service, department of preschool education; Director General of Children’s Affairs at the Ministry of Child Protection. My role is to design, develop and coordinate national policy on children’s affairs.

**Main professional activities, in particular related to children’s rights:**

Member of the Committee on the Rights of the Child since 2021, working to protect and promote children’s rights, with significant experience of working with United Nations human rights mechanisms, including the Committee, practising law, and working with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to support the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in Chad; frequent trips to discuss issues surrounding children’s rights at regional and international conferences; designing and developing tools and providing training in connection with the management of transit and referral centres for children in conflict with the law, children involved with armed forces and armed groups, and managing the situation of unaccompanied or separated children; coordinating the child protection sector by leading and co-leading child protection subclusters in partnership with UNICEF and other organizations; implementing international legal instruments for the protection and well-being of children deprived of special protection, including the Presidential Directive to Stop the Recruitment of Children by Armed Groups in Chad.

**Educational background:**

General and specific academic courses in education and childhood, including: Diploma in Technical Administration from the Chadian Institute of Educational Sciences (2007); Master’s degree in Participatory Development Communication, Cotonou, Benin (2004); Bachelor’s degree in Childhood Sciences from the National Institute of Social Training in Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire (2000/03); technical baccalaureate, G1 option, Commercial and Technical Secondary School of N’Djamena (1986).

**Relevant expertise on children’s rights:**

Over the past 17 years, I received training in connection with the following positions: member of the Committee on the Rights of the Child; coordinator of the Working Group on Child Participation; member of the Working Group on the Sustainable Development Goals, in partnership with UNICEF; member of the working group on individual communications under the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure; coordinator of the task force for the periodic review of the State party report; and Director and Director General of Children’s Affairs at the Ministry for Early Childhood Protection. I have acquired considerable expertise in this area.

**List of most recent publications in the field of children’s rights:**

Drafting of national terms of reference on child protection; design of posters, leaflets and training modules for the annual commemoration of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child; preparation of periodic reports on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child; drafting of the Interim Child Justice Strategy for Chad; publication of materials for launching the campaign against child marriage; drafting of legal instruments and publication of the Plan of Action and the Road Map on Child Marriage and Female Genital Mutilation in Chad.