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A child-rights approach to their management,  
rehabilitation, and reintegration

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Policy Brief

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International Centre for  
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## Abstract

State practices relating to the repatriation of child returnees from Northeast Syria continue to be inconsistent and incomplete. With an increasing number of European countries escalating their efforts to bring home women and children from the camps, it is imperative that these practices include holistic policies towards child returnees that address the wide range of issues presented not only in the short- but also in the mid- and long-term. This includes recognition that experiences, and therefore their resulting needs, can differ depending on many factors unique to each child and also that many countries have a number of policies and measures that can inform each other's child returnee management practices and should be utilised. This policy brief provides a child rights-based approach to the management of child returnees based on the concept of the best interest of the child and offers some observations and recommendations for states on how to develop comprehensive policies for the management of child returnees.

**Keywords:** refugee camps, Northeast Syria, repatriation, rehabilitation, reintegration, child returnees, rights-based approach

# Introduction<sup>1</sup>

Nearly 22,500 children are still being held in the camps in Northeast Syria under inhumane conditions resulting in numerous human rights violations.<sup>2</sup> Countries such as Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan,<sup>3</sup> Kosovo,<sup>4</sup> and Albania<sup>5</sup> have repatriated women and children since 2019, though more recently in 2022, several European countries<sup>6</sup> have increased the pace of repatriation of women and children from the camps as well. Whilst these European countries may collectively have a number of policies and measures in place, some lessons can be learned from the Central Asian and Western Balkan states that have been repatriating children both a larger scale and for a longer time.<sup>7</sup> Drawing from the experiences in different countries contributes to a more consistent, comprehensive, and effective approach to the management of child returnees. Such an approach should be firmly grounded in the best interest of child to facilitate a successful rehabilitation and reintegration into society.

The children who have lived under the rule of ISIS and in the Northeast Syrian camps do not represent a homogenous group, however, meaning their management upon return is complicated. Their experiences, and therefore their resulting needs, can differ depending on many factors such as age, gender, exposure to indoctrination and radicalisation, and level of violence they have suffered and/or witnessed. Similarly, upon return they face a range of health problems ranging from malnutrition to influenza, are often traumatised, and due to separation from parents may suffer from mental health problems that can manifest years later.<sup>8</sup> These children lack proper education and have been deprived of a normal childhood. Appropriate responses upon return may vary further depending on whether the child was born in the conflict zone or in an EU country, are returning accompanied by a parent or unaccompanied, and whether they have returned as part of a formal repatriation process or through some alternative mechanism.

<sup>1</sup> This policy brief is based on work conducted in the context of RAN and the authors would like to acknowledge the contributions by Thomas Renard, Alexander von Rosenbach, Juha Saraainen, Jennie Sivenbring, Maurween Morau and Alessandra Mapelli.

<sup>2</sup> Mehra, Tanya., Wentworth, Matthew., Thorley, Abigail. 'The European Court of Human Rights Sitting on the Fence?: Its Ruling and Impact on the Repatriation of European Children from North-East Syria' 16 September, 2022, <https://icct.nl/publication/european-court-of-human-rights-ruling-impact-on-repatriating-european-children-from-northeast-syria/> ; Rights and Security International 'Abandoned to Torture: Dehumanising rights violations against children and women in northeast Syria', October, 2021, <https://www.rightsandsecurity.org/action/research/entry/abandoned-to-torture-dehumanising-rights-violations-against-children-and-women-in-northeast-syria.> ; Ní Aoláin, Fionnuala 'Position of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism on the human rights of adolescents/juveniles being detained in North-East Syria.' May 2021, [https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Terrorism/SR/UNSRCT\\_Position\\_human-rights-of-boys-adolescents-2021\\_final.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Terrorism/SR/UNSRCT_Position_human-rights-of-boys-adolescents-2021_final.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Bulan Institute for Peace Innovations, 'The Repatriation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Women and Children from Syria and Iraq: The Experiences of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan', June, 2021, <https://bulaninstitute.org/the-repatriation-rehabilitation-and-reintegration-of-isis-associates-in-central-asia-report/>.

<sup>4</sup> Shtuni, Adrian. 'Rehabilitation and Reintegration Path of Kosovar Minors and Women Repatriated from Syria', *International Republican Institute*, 14 September, 2021, <https://www.iri.org/resources/new-report-supports-rehabilitation-of-kosovo-youth-and-women-with-connection-to-violent-extremism/#:~:text=At%20least%2081%20children%20were,Syria%20and%20Iraq%20to%20440>.

<sup>5</sup> Semini, Llazar. '13 Albanians, others from Kosovo are repatriated from Syria' 28 May, 2022 <https://apnews.com/article/islamic-state-group-middle-east-syria-albania-iraq-57d8b19ef5cafef5a63e8180d0d1346f>.

<sup>6</sup> In 2022 a total of 135 children have been repatriated from Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Netherlands, Sweden and United Kingdom, see: Rights and Security International 'Global Repatriations Tracker', Accessed December 16, 2022, <https://www.rightsandsecurity.org/action/resources/global-repatriations-tracker>.

<sup>7</sup> Are not the same as in West European countries, the different approaches to repatriation and the management of children in these regions can be useful for other countries to inform their policies for the management of child returnees.

<sup>8</sup> The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN), 'Key Points: Traumatic Separation and Refugee & Immigrant Children', 2018, [https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/tip-sheet/key\\_points\\_traumatic\\_separation\\_and\\_refugee\\_immigrant\\_children.pdf](https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/tip-sheet/key_points_traumatic_separation_and_refugee_immigrant_children.pdf).

To address this myriad of challenges, states need to develop a comprehensive policy for their management, rehabilitation and reintegration. The Secretary General of the United Nations,<sup>9</sup> numerous UN Special Rapporteurs,<sup>10</sup> the Council of Europe,<sup>11</sup> the European Commissioner for Human Rights,<sup>12</sup> and the European Parliament<sup>13</sup> have all indicated that the ‘best interest of the child’ should be the primary consideration in these policies. This policy brief provides a child rights-based approach to the management of child returnees based on the concept of the best interest of the child and offers some observations and recommendations for states on how to develop comprehensive policies for the management of child returnees.

## Rights-Based Approach to Child Returnees

States need to develop holistic policies towards child returnees that address the different issues not only in the short- but also in the mid- and long-term.<sup>14</sup> The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is considered universal and the best interest of the child is one of the four principles that supports a rights-based approach. According to article 3 of the CRC the best interest of the child shall be the primary consideration in all decision concerning children whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institution, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies.<sup>15</sup> Additionally, the non-discrimination principle is widely recognised in international law.<sup>16</sup> Children should thus not be treated differently because of their parents’ ideological beliefs, involvement in terrorist-related activities or, upon return, their possible conviction. When children are suspected from involvement in criminal offences, the best interest of child requires

9 United Nations Security Council, ‘Children and armed conflict Report of the Secretary-General’, 23 June 2022, <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Secretary-General-Annual-Report-on-children-and-armed-conflict.pdf>.

10 United Nations Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, ‘Submission by the UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism and the UN Special Rapporteur on arbitrary, summary and extra-judicial executions in the case of H.F. and M.F. v. France (Application no. 24384/19) before the European Court of Human Rights’, [https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Terrorism/SR/Final-Amicus\\_Brief\\_SRCT\\_SRSsummex.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Terrorism/SR/Final-Amicus_Brief_SRCT_SRSsummex.pdf).

11 Council of Europe, ‘On the Application of the European Convention on Recognition and Enforcement of Decisions Concerning Custody of Children and on Restoration of Custody of Children’, 7 February 1995, <https://rm.coe.int/rec-95-6e-on-the-application-of-the-european-convention-on-recognition/1680a3b40d>.

12 Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, ‘Hearing of the Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights in the cases of H.F. and M.F. v. France and J.D. and A.D. v. France’ 30 September 2021, [https://www.coe.int/en/web/commissioner/news/-/asset\\_publisher/easZQ4kHrFrE/content/hearing-of-the-grand-chamber-of-the-european-court-of-human-rights-in-the-cases-of-h-f-and-m-f-v-france-and-j-d-and-a-d-v-france](https://www.coe.int/en/web/commissioner/news/-/asset_publisher/easZQ4kHrFrE/content/hearing-of-the-grand-chamber-of-the-european-court-of-human-rights-in-the-cases-of-h-f-and-m-f-v-france-and-j-d-and-a-d-v-france).

13 European Parliamentary Assembly, ‘International obligations concerning the repatriation of children from war and conflict zones’, 30 January 2020, <http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-en.asp?fileid=28581&lang=en>

14 Austria, Belgium, Czech, Estonia, Spain, Finland, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Slovenia, Sweden, and Poland all have legal or policy provisions mandating the obligation to assess the best interests of the child before issuing a return decision but these provisions typically extend only to unaccompanied children and do not relate to the ongoing management of the child upon return: European Migration Network, *Approaches to Unaccompanied Minors Following Status Determination in the EU plus Norway: EMN Synthesis Report*, Brussels, Directorate General Migration and Home Affairs (European Commission), 9 August, 2018, <https://emn.ie/publications/approaches-to-unaccompanied-minors-following-status-determination-in-the-eu-plus-norway-emn-synthesis-report/>.

15 Together with the non-discrimination principle (Article 2), the right to survival and development (Article 6) and the right to be heard (Article 12) are the four principles of the CRC and are interconnected. Convention on the Rights of the Child, 2 September 1990, E/CN.4/RES/1990/74, Articles 3.1.

16 This means that all children should be free from any kind of discrimination based on their or their parents’ race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth, or other status. Convention on the Rights of the Child, 2 September, 1990, E/CN.4/RES/1990/74, Articles 2(1) & 5 ; European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, 3 September, 1953, Article 1 ; Protocol 12 to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, 1 April, 2005, Article 1 ; International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 23 March, 1976, UNGA Res 2200A(XXI), Article 24(1).

prioritization of alternatives to prosecution, where possible. Depending on the age criminal liability children may be investigated and prosecuted.<sup>17</sup>

According to UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (the Committee) the concept of the child's best interests is 'dynamic, flexible and adaptable' and consists of three dimensions.<sup>18</sup> As a substantive right, this means that the best interest of a child should be the primary consideration when several interests are at stake, it creates an obligation for states to directly apply it and can be invoked before a court. As legal principle it can provide guidance on interpretation and as rule of procedure it requires states to make an impact assessment of the decision concerning a child whether this concerns an individual child or group of children. The UN recognises that all policies relating to repatriation, prosecution, rehabilitation, and reintegration of children should be firmly based on the principle of the best interest of a child.<sup>19</sup>

Following the Committee guidance on which elements should be taken into consideration to determine the best interest of a child, a non-exhaustive list has been provided which will now be applied in the context of child returnees:<sup>20</sup>

1. **Child's view:** The right to be heard (Article 12 of the UNCRC) is closely linked to the best interest of the child. This means that every child that is capable of expressing his or her views, should have a right to freely express their views and that subsequently those views are given due weight, in accordance with their age and maturity. **A child returnee should therefore be actively involved in decisions that have an impact on their future such as custody matters, choice of school, rehabilitation programmes and in particular with interventions in the medium term and long term.** These could include where a child wants to live after the parent is released from prison. In Italy, the law stipulates that assisted and voluntary return can be decided by a Juvenile Court only after listening to the opinions of both the child and their guardian, along with other factors.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Risk assessments are conducted in Belgium on all returnees aged 12 and older, with some basic information being gathered on those aged below 12. In the Netherlands the age of criminal liability is 12, but children below this age can be heard as witness in criminal proceedings of their relatives. In France the age of criminal liability is 13 years. It appears that one child of 18 years has been charged upon return from Syria in July 2022 in France. In Finland only those aged 15 years and above are investigated for potential crimes committed in the conflict zones and this must first be first authorized by the National Prosecution Authority and the same age threshold applies for Sweden. See: Human Rights Watch, "My Son is Just Another Kid" Experiences of Children Repatriated from Camps for ISIS Suspects and Their Families in Northeast Syria', November, 2022, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2022/11/21/my-son-just-another-kid/experiences-children-repatriated-camps-isis-suspects-and> , at p. 23.

<sup>18</sup> Committee on the Rights of the Children, *General comment No. 14 (2013) on the right of the child to have his or her best interests taken as a primary consideration (art. 3, para. 1)*, New York, United Nations, 2013, [https://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/docs/gc/crc\\_c\\_gc\\_14\\_eng.pdf](https://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/docs/gc/crc_c_gc_14_eng.pdf) , page 3.

<sup>19</sup> United Nations, *Key Principles for the Protection, Repatriation, Prosecution, Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Women and Children with Links to United Nations Listed Terrorist Groups*, New York, United Nations, April, 2019, [https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/sites/www.un.org.counterterrorism/files/key\\_principles-april\\_2019.pdf](https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/sites/www.un.org.counterterrorism/files/key_principles-april_2019.pdf).

<sup>20</sup> The best interest of the child is closely linked to the non-discrimination principle, the right to life, survival and development as well as the right to be heard. The fact that the list is a non-exhaustive means that other elements could be taken into consideration depending on the circumstances and context. See: Committee on the Rights of the Children, *General comment No. 14 (2013) on the right of the child to have his or her best interests taken as a primary consideration (art. 3, para. 1)*, 2013.

<sup>21</sup> Though, again, this applies only to unaccompanied children. Law on "Protection Measures for Unaccompanied Minors" (law n. 47/17) : The Chamber of Deputies and the Senate of the Republic, *Law n.47/17 Provisions on the protection measures for unaccompanied foreign minors*, 21 April, 2017, <https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2017/04/21/17G00062/sg>.

Children that are born and raised in Syria and Iraq with exposure to terrorist ideology can often struggle to process and express their own emotions and views.<sup>22</sup> **It is important to develop and encourage child returnees to build their identity, create a sense of agency and feeling they can shape their lives. Stimulating child returnees to develop their own thoughts and ideas free from coercion will be helpful in reintegrating them into society.**

2. **Identity:** According to Article 8 of the UNCRC, the right to identity includes nationality which is an essential pre-requisite to many other rights. Without a nationality, a child returnee cannot acquire travel documents to travel, register in a municipality, attend school or make use of any other social services. The majority of the child returnees were born in Syria and Iraq and do not have any birth certificates, meaning that the nationality of a child likely needs to be established.<sup>23</sup> DNA testing is requested in certain circumstances as condition to establish nationality and repatriation and can pose lengthy legal and practical obstacles. If DNA testing is not conducted with proper safeguards, it may violate the right to privacy of the child in question.<sup>24</sup> France's policy seemingly addresses delays by stipulating that support is offered to all who land in France regardless of nationality and DNA identification is conducted after arrival as opposed to before.<sup>25</sup>

Children also have the right to a name and family relations which are intended to allow a child to retain family ties and to identify one's own identity within a larger community. The humanitarian narrative established in Kazakhstan aims to move away from the emphasis on risk and threat and helps re-establish the sense that the child returnees are Kazakh citizens first and foremost, engendering public support to bring them home.<sup>26</sup> **EU members need to take the right to an identity into account when young children that were born in Syria and Iraq are being repatriated. This could include deciding whether the place of birth should be changed to shield the child from stigmatisation, but also to protect the child from media scrutiny upon arrival and to respect their anonymity.** In some EU member states, training is provided to the media on how to deal with child returnees considering their vulnerabilities.<sup>27</sup> **In the long term, EU Member states need to think about how and when the child will be informed about their (true) identity, their place of birth and the role and motivations of their parents to travel to Syria or Iraq. Building a family narrative in which the parents and extended family are involved could be helpful but could also provide support to the parents and extended family on how to deal with the media, local community, and public perception.**

22 Save the Children, When am I Going to Start to Live? The urgent need to repatriate foreign children trapped in Al Hol and Roj Camps, September 2021,

[https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/pdf/when\\_am\\_i\\_going\\_to\\_start\\_to\\_live\\_final\\_0.pdf/](https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/pdf/when_am_i_going_to_start_to_live_final_0.pdf/).

23 This is often argued to be a lengthy and resource-intensive procedure, though Tajikistan's operation saw 84 children from 47 families having restored or issued new documents in just two months: Farrell, William B., Burnashev, Rustam., Azizi, Rustam., Babadjanov, Bakhtiyar. *Processes of Reintegrating Central Asian Returnees from Syria and Iraq*, Washington D.C., United States Institute of Peace, 2021, [https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/2021-07/sr\\_498-processes\\_of\\_reintegrating\\_central\\_asian\\_returnees\\_from\\_syria\\_and\\_iraq.pdf](https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/2021-07/sr_498-processes_of_reintegrating_central_asian_returnees_from_syria_and_iraq.pdf).

24 United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT), *Handbook Children Affected by the FTF phenomenon: ensuring a child right-based approach*, New York, United Nations, 2019, [https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/sites/www.un.org.counterterrorism/files/0918\\_fff\\_handbook\\_web\\_reduced.pdf](https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/sites/www.un.org.counterterrorism/files/0918_fff_handbook_web_reduced.pdf), para. 99.

25 France receives returnees from numerous contexts including Afghanistan, Yemen, Libya, and Syria, though standardised forms are used to gather information directly from parents. Further, this policy appears to only apply to those who have already arrived in France.

26 Wolfe, Sarah and Orozobekova, Cholpon. 'Lessons Learned from Kazakhstan's Repatriation and Rehabilitation of 'Foreign Fighters'', *Bulan Institute for Peace Innovations*, 2021,

<https://bulaninstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Lessons-Learned-from-Kazakhstans-Experience.pdf>.

27 For example, in the Netherlands the National Support Centre for Extremism can provide support to families and professionals on how to deal with the media. See: Regiobureau Integrale Veiligheid Oost-Brabant (RIVOB), 'Handreiking bij terugkerende minderjarigen' ["Guide for Minor Returnees"], September, 2019,

<https://www.rivob.nl/action/?action=download&id=33>. Updated version of February 2021 on file with the authors.

Cultural and religious background are an important part of one's identity. Understanding the cultural and religious background of the child is also relevant to how a child deals with and processes trauma and perceives society. Practice from professions which deal with similarly traumatised children shows that trauma may manifest differently in different cultures and that in some cultures talking about trauma is not considered appropriate. In Kosovo children receive arts and games therapy to help them deal with trauma, anger, or grief, to release tension, as well as to express and manage their feelings and emotions in non-verbal ways.<sup>28</sup>

Building an identity and learning to formulate their own views and learning how to respect different views is seen as a protective factor in addressing the intergenerational transmission of radical views. Community workers in Kazakhstan conduct what they term "primary socialisation activities" which include games, enrichment courses in drawing, sculpting, and poetry. They take children to cinemas, theatres, museums, and entertainment venues to show them the alternative to the life they had in Syria and help them adapt to a new civilian life.<sup>29</sup> Schools can also contribute with lessons on citizenship, religious diversity and democratic values in building the identity of the child.<sup>30</sup> Kosovo's Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, for example, partnered with the International Organization for Migrants to deliver cultural and sports activities in order to prepare for the transition of children into the formal education system.<sup>31</sup> Yet, at the same time authorities should be cautious that child returnees and their families have freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

**3. Preservation of the family environment and maintaining relations:** Parents will ideally (where suitable) have primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of the child. It is typical in EU countries for adult/parent returnees to be arrested upon arrival back in their home nation, this leads to at least temporary separation of a child from their parent as parents are taken into custody as soon as they arrive.<sup>32</sup> Psychologists working with children in similar circumstances consider that such separation is potentially traumatic and suggest that organising a transition at the airport between the mother and the designated custodian could be a reassuring factor for children.<sup>33</sup> Who the designated custodian is differs between countries, it could mean that a child is placed in a state institution or, in the example of France, children are placed with foster families as soon as they are separated from their parents.<sup>34</sup> In Belgium, Finland, the Netherlands, and Sweden, foster family placement seems to be utilised more in the mid- to long-term timeframe; it should be noted that Belgium's policy

28 Ruf, Maximilian and Jansen, Annelies, 'Study visit: Returned Women and Children – Studying an Ongoing Experience on the Ground.' Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) Centre of Excellence, December 20, 2019 [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation\\_awareness\\_network/ran-papers/docs/ran\\_study\\_visit\\_kosovo\\_11\\_10122019\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/ran-papers/docs/ran_study_visit_kosovo_11_10122019_en.pdf).

29 Shapoval, Dr. Yulia. 'Kazakhstan's Approach and Experience in Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Repatriates', *Search for Common Ground*, 2021, <https://www.sfcg.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/KZ-approach-and-experience-in-rehabilitation-of-repatriates-EN.pdf>.

30 In Kazakhstan this is also addressed in rehabilitation centres, with many activities having an emphasis on Kazakh culture to support a developing sense of citizenship, identity and reintegration, such as music and dance, food preparation and local religious practice. Wolfe, Sarah and Orozobekova, Cholpon. 'Lessons Learned from Kazakhstan's Repatriation and Rehabilitation of 'Foreign Fighters'', *Bulan Institute for Peace Innovations*, 2021.

31 Shtuni, Adrian. 'Rehabilitation and Reintegration Path of Kosovar Minors and Women Repatriated from Syria', *International Republican Institute*, 14 September, 2021.

32 This is true of (among others) Belgium, Sweden, the Netherlands, and France where children are taken by child social services whilst criminal investigations are conducted into their parents. In Finland, however, repatriated women have not been arrested upon their entry back to Finland. So far, none of them have been prosecuted. Many of them left to the region before the travel and support to a terrorist organization has been criminalized in Finland.

33 de la Peña, Cristina Muñiz, Pineda, Lisa and Punskey, Brenda. 'Working with Parents and Children Separated at the Border: Examining the Impact of the Zero Tolerance Policy and beyond', *Journal of Child & Adolescent Trauma*, volume 12, issue 2, 2019, pp. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7163859/>.

34 This policy being dependent on the availability of foster families or children's homes means that children will often also be separate from their siblings in France and temporary placements of days, weeks, or months occur.

sees placement with extended family as preferable with foster institutions being considered only if this option is not suitable. In Tajikistan, children are placed in state-run orphanages and specialized boarding schools where only short visits by extended family are permitted. So far there is no clarity as to when the children will return to their family.<sup>35</sup> **When separation is considered necessary, the relevant authorities should ensure sufficient contact with the parent and other family members could be maintained.** This could be through physical visits, where possible, through phone call or video call. Children can suffer from fear of abandonment or develop attachment disorders in the absence of this type of contact.<sup>36</sup> The experience in Sweden with 23 child returnees indicates that ‘there is an increased risk of reinforcing the child’s trauma and creating more anxiety and insecurity in the child’.<sup>37</sup>

While a stable and normal family life is considered a protective factor, any extended family that embraces violent extremist ideologies could pose a risk factor. **The violent radical beliefs and views of the extended family need to be taken into consideration among other factors in determining where the children would be placed into custody.**<sup>38</sup> A recent study explores the transgenerational transmission of radical views from parents and other family members to children which underlines the important role parents play – directly and indirectly – in forming and shaping the views of their children.<sup>39</sup> Although there is limited experience in practice, the research findings point out that critical thinking and exposure to other ideologies and thinking are vital. One of the challenges is that when these families with radical views do not necessarily commit any criminal offences making it difficult to impose any interventions and could violate their right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion. **The key is building trust with these families and engendering a willingness to accept interventions on a voluntary basis.**

There is no consistency in the repatriation policy across European countries. Finland is committed to repatriating of all mothers regardless of the risk they pose, whereas some other countries were more reluctant to repatriation. For example, France,<sup>40</sup> Belgium,<sup>41</sup> and

35 Farrell, William B., Burnashev, Rustam., Azizi, Rustam., Babadjanov, Bakhtiyar. *Processes of Reintegrating Central Asian Returnees from Syria and Iraq*, 2021, page. 14.

36 In many cases, judicial discretion and case-specific assessment seems to play a significant role in decisions regarding parental contact with the child whilst the mother remains incarcerated, though criteria for these assessments is not particularly clear. Belgium and France will allow supervised visitation with incarcerated parents at some point after return where permitted by courts. In the Netherlands this will only be allowed if assessed to be in the best interests of the child, with child protection officers given discretion.

37 Repatriate the Children Sweden, ‘Reception of Returnees: Reintegration and Rehabilitation after Repatriation from Northeast Syria - Guidance Document for Emerging Practices With Lessons From Sweden’, December, 2022, at p. 21, [https://www.repatriatethechildren.org/\\_files/ugd/55b791\\_032bc225aa6648efa3fd6af9ab5ce33c.pdf](https://www.repatriatethechildren.org/_files/ugd/55b791_032bc225aa6648efa3fd6af9ab5ce33c.pdf).

38 In Kosovo, 2020 showed that all of the female returnees that had pled guilty to criminal charges had only received suspended sentences served in the community. This is likely a result of both Kosovo’s apparent determination to maintain the family unit and, more broadly speaking, the assessment of the threat that women may pose likely being influenced by “entrenched social biases that underestimate the agency of women and overestimate their innate nonviolence” Avdimetaj, Teuta. and Coleman, Julie. *What EU Member States can learn from Kosovo’s experience in repatriating former foreign fighters and their families*, The Hague, Clingendael, May, 2020, [https://www.clingendael.org/sites/default/files/2020-06/Policy\\_Brief\\_Kosovo\\_experience\\_repatriating\\_former\\_foreign\\_fighters\\_May\\_2020.pdf](https://www.clingendael.org/sites/default/files/2020-06/Policy_Brief_Kosovo_experience_repatriating_former_foreign_fighters_May_2020.pdf).

39 Layla van Wieringen, et. al, *Van Ouder Op Kind*.

40 Bauer-Babef, Clara, ‘French delegation calls for ‘emergency’ repatriation of children in Syria as winter nears’, *EURACTIV*, November, 2021, <https://www.euractiv.com/section/non-discrimination/news/french-delegation-calls-for-emergency-repatriation-of-children-in-syria-as-winter-nears/>.

41 For example, Belgium which decided to repatriate children under the age of 12 years. See: Radio-télévision belge de la Communauté française (RTBF) ‘Belges en Syrie : le gouvernement ouvre la porte au rapatriement des mères détenues dans les camps syriens’, March, 2021, <https://www.rtb.be/article/belges-en-syrie-le-gouvernement-ouvre-la-porte-au-rapatriement-des-meres-detenu-es-dans-les-camps-syriens-10711514?id=10711514>.

Kyrgyzstan<sup>42</sup> have repatriated only orphans, children without their parents or children of a certain age. While these policies may evolve, they have an impact on how these children will be able to maintain family ties when their parents are incarcerated sometimes far away from the children, separated or still in Syria.

4. **Care, protection and safety of the child:** This element relates to the wellbeing of a child in the broadest sense and includes, for example, physical and emotional wellbeing. Child returnees should be protected from all forms of physical or mental violence.<sup>43</sup> **A stable and safe environment is vital to building resilience and to the reintegration process of a child returnee.** For example, Kazakhstan's rehabilitation centre in Aktau was completely refitted to meet the anticipated needs of child returnees, with particular attention paid to making the environment welcoming for children.<sup>44</sup> **In addition to adequate living conditions,<sup>45</sup> emotional care and extracurricular activities such as music or art lessons can also help child returnees, in particular very young children, to deal with traumas and to (re)integrate into society.** In Kazakhstan, rehabilitation work with child returnees focuses on building critical thinking skills and active socialization through structured leisure time activities, such as visits to museums and exhibitions, and familiarization with the history and culture of Kazakhstan.<sup>46</sup> **Providing a child returnee with a coach, a youth worker or a mentor in the medium term and long term as role models can be helpful as they can also check in on the wellbeing of the child on a regular basis.<sup>47</sup>**

**Considering the complexity of the needs of a child returnee, the involvement of multiple stakeholders ranging from municipal officers, teachers, physicians, psychologists, youth workers, religious counsellors and local police, is necessary.<sup>48</sup>** This is already the case in many countries conducting repatriation efforts, though some countries differ with regard to whether lead agencies are at the federal/national level or at the municipal level. Decentralisation/municipal control in Sweden, the Netherlands, and Belgium for example raises the possibility of a discrepancy in consistency of care between municipalities or regions. Albania on the other hand established an interdisciplinary commission composed of teachers and employees of the psycho-social service for child returnees and the assessment of their educational and psycho-social needs.<sup>49</sup>

42 Though, repatriation and reintegration decisions cannot be justified as in the best interests of the child solely on the basis of family unity without a proper examination of the individual child's best interests in a documented process. UNICEF, OHCHR, IOM, Save the Children, PICUM, ECRE, Child Circle, *Guidance to respect children's rights in return policies and practices: Focus on the EU legal framework*, Childhub, September, 2019, [https://childhub.org/sites/default/files/library/attachments/2019\\_guidance\\_childrens\\_rights\\_in\\_return\\_policies.pdf](https://childhub.org/sites/default/files/library/attachments/2019_guidance_childrens_rights_in_return_policies.pdf).

43 Article 19 UNCRC states that children have a right to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development.

44 Shapoval, Dr. Yulia. 'Kazakhstan's Approach and Experience in Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Repatriates', *Search for Common Ground*, 2021.

45 In Uzbekistan, returnees who are single mothers with children receive small apartments paid for from the Social Support Fund: Farrell, William B., Burnashev, Rustam., Azizi, Rustam., Babadjanov, Bakhtiyar. *Processes of Reintegrating Central Asian Returnees from Syria and Iraq*, 2021.

46 Further, Kazakhstan's Shan rehabilitation centre incorporates psychological treatment into simulation games, fairy tale therapy, art therapy (drawing, modelling), and watching videos all aimed at patriotic education and socialization of children in Kazakh society. Ibid. ; Shapoval, Dr. Yulia. 'Kazakhstan's Approach and Experience in Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Repatriates', *Search for Common Ground*, 2021.

47 In Uzbekistan, child psychotherapists work with the child returnees to remove negative sound associations and phobias and all repatriated children study at schools which provide regular monitoring by psychologists: Farrell, William B., Burnashev, Rustam., Azizi, Rustam., Babadjanov, Bakhtiyar. *Processes of Reintegrating Central Asian Returnees from Syria and Iraq*, 2021.

48 Kazakhstan's rehabilitative approach involves input from numerous professional disciplines including medics, lawyers, social workers, teachers, theologians and psychologists: Shapoval, Dr. Yulia. 'Kazakhstan's Approach and Experience in Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Repatriates', *Search for Common Ground*, 2021.

49 The Countering Violent Extremism Center, *Albania's Perspective on R&R Policies*, Albania, The Coordination

Police and intelligence services are also typically involved in both pre- and post-return work as well as the judiciary (in both a criminal and welfare-protection capacity), civil society organisations, and in some cases dedicated national support teams and centres once children have returned.<sup>50</sup> **Having a single point of contact – or a dedicated case worker – for each individual child returnee would also be effective to properly liaise with the child, parent and relevant authorities.**

**5. Situation of vulnerability: This element requires that the management of child returnees takes the specific circumstances of the children into consideration.** The UNCRC specifically mentions children ‘being a refugee or asylum seeker, victim of abuse, living in a street situation, etc.’<sup>51</sup> This means in the context of child returnees, a distinction should be made between children taken to conflict zones, children born there, the exposure and/or participation of violence, exposure to radicalisation and indoctrination, the level of stigmatisation and the duration children stayed in poor living conditions in the camps. **Understanding the experience of the children and in particular the differences because of the gender and age of the child returnees is important to develop an individualised return plan that caters to the specific needs of the child.** Programme Managers in Albania identify that their process always starts with an evaluation of the child’s needs and an individualised protection and reintegration plan being developed.<sup>52</sup> Also, culture can influence both how girls and boys process trauma and how they are treated, making it sometimes more difficult to recognise. When separation is required, in the best interest of the child, the impact of the separation can differ for girls and for boys.<sup>53</sup>

**Furthermore, relevant authorities may need to be trained in making such gender- and age-specific assessments, where appropriate, and the interventions should be tailored to the unique circumstances of the child.** Gender should also be taken into account in the rehabilitation and reintegration programmes for children and their parents.<sup>54</sup> Kazakhstan uses personalised and separate work plans for school-age children and toddlers.<sup>55</sup>

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Center for Countering Violent Extremism – Albania, 2021,

<https://rm.coe.int/ms-dervishi-presentation-conf2021-2759-3604-7365-v-1/1680a5a0a8>.

50 The Dutch approach for example has bespoke systems in place, both local and national which provide support for family members and professionals who come into contact with child returnees and assists with everything from language and cultural difficulties to trauma recognition and radicalisation prevention. Sweden and Belgium have similar centralised or local centres and task-forces to deal specifically with radicalisation to violent extremism and also have centralised providers utilised for initial threat assessment and repatriation preparation.

51 United Nations Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, *Guidance to States on Human Rights-Compliant Responses to the Threat Posed by Foreign Fighters*, New York, United Nations, 2018,

<https://www.un.org/sc/ctc/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Human-Rights-Responses-to-Foreign-Fighters-web-final.pdf> ; United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, *Children Affected by the Foreign Fighter Phenomenon: Ensuring a Child Rights-Based Approach*, New York, United Nations, 2019, [https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/ctitf/sites/www.un.org/counterterrorism.ctitf/files/ftf\\_handbook\\_web\\_reduced.pdf](https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/ctitf/sites/www.un.org/counterterrorism.ctitf/files/ftf_handbook_web_reduced.pdf).

52 These consider the child’s age, whether they are stateless, whether they are arriving unaccompanied, their exposure to violence, whether they have gaps in their education, whether they have had access to vaccinations etc. Girls may have been exposed to gender-based violence, whereas boys are treated as adults and may have been forced to carry out violence: Global Community Engagement Resilience Fund, ‘Rediscovering Childhood in Albania After Camps in Syria’, <https://www.gcerf.org/rediscovering-childhood-in-albania-after-camps-in-syria/>.

53 Brown, Katherine E., and Mohammed, F.N. *Gender-Sensitive Approaches to FTF Child Returnee Management*, The Hague, International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, 2021, <https://icct.nl/app/uploads/2021/12/Gender-Sensitive-Approaches-to-FTF-Child-Returnee-Management.pdf>.

54 Ibid. Rehabilitation and reintegration programmes for women often focus on their parenting skills but should also be shaped by the experience and needs of women such as lack of transferable skills due to the limited roles they in ISIS.

55 Shapoval, Dr. Yulia. ‘Kazakhstan’s Approach and Experience in Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Repatriates’, Search for Common Ground, 2021.

6. **Health:** The right to health is enshrined in Article 24 of the UNCRC. In the short term this would require dealing with malnutrition and providing primary healthcare such as regular vaccinations and dental care. Kosovo's system, for example, includes municipal family medicine centres which provide vaccinations, dental services, and follow-up medical check-ups for all returnees.<sup>56</sup>

Providing healthcare includes not only physical healthcare but also mental healthcare. Traumas suffered by younger children may have more serious long-term effects than for older children. Traumas that have occurred at an early age, in a prolonged manner, can result in so-called 'early toxic stress disorder', which triggers a number of psychological difficulties for the child similar to post-traumatic stress disorder for adults.<sup>57</sup> This could result in long-term difficulties in school (such as attention deficit disorder), socially (such as difficulties trusting people), or in identity and wellbeing (insecurity, anxiety, depression). Early toxic stress may also correlate with higher chances of drifting towards juvenile delinquency.<sup>58</sup> **Considering that these effects have a long-term impact, and some manifestations can only become visible after a certain time, it is clear that medium-term and long-term support and care are needed.**

Children returning from Syria and Iraq have generally accumulated several traumas, related to their situation in a conflict zone, detention in the camps such as war trauma, exposure to violence, mistreatment or abuse from a parent, death of a parent or sibling.<sup>59</sup> The repatriation process could further lead to trauma due to separation from the mother, possible separation from siblings, stigmatisation by the local community, and/or exposure to the media. The potential development/worsening of this trauma needs monitoring. In the Netherlands, children are placed in an institution for three months of medical, psychological, and psychosocial needs assessment and care.<sup>60</sup> Comparatively, in Sweden and France these health examinations are conducted at the airport with transfer to a hospital only taking place if it is assessed that immediate medical care is necessary.<sup>61</sup> In many countries, continuous investigation is made into the suitability of the parent as a guardian, though Sweden will only begin such an assessment after there are no more outstanding suspicions of terrorist or war crimes.

Children may also develop a feeling of guilt in cases where a parent has been left behind, died or is incarcerated. When parents are incarcerated, this may additionally lead to a feeling of injustice and resentment against the government, making it potentially more difficult to engage with the child. The cumulation of traumas (or 'cumulative risk') means that it generally takes several months before professionals can really start identifying and addressing specific traumas suffered by the child. As a result, the psychological support provided to the child will

56 Shtuni, Adrian. 'Rehabilitation and Reintegration Path of Kosovar Minors and Women Repatriated from Syria', *International Republican Institute*, 14 September, 2021.

57 Johnson, Sara B., Riley, Anne W., Granger, Douglas A., Riis, Jenna. 'The science of early life toxic stress for pediatric practice and advocacy', *Pediatrics*, 2013, volume 131, issue 2, pp. 319-327  
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4074672/>.

58 Ibid.

59 These factors reinforce the importance of treating these children as victims in line with United Nations Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force 'Guidance to States on Human Rights-Compliant Responses to the Threat Posed by Foreign Fighters': UN Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, *Guidance to States on human rights-compliant responses to the threat posed by foreign fighters*, 2018 ; United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, *Children Affected by the Foreign Fighter Phenomenon: Ensuring a Child Rights-Based Approach*, 2019.

60 It is Dutch policy not to separate children under 9 months of age from their mothers so children of this age will be transferred to custodial institutions with their mothers. Similarly, Belgian children under 3 years of age may remain with their incarcerated mothers but only where it is deemed preferable by a judge based on the capacity and resources of the prison.

61 In Sweden it is more common for security services to transfer the whole family to a 'safe location' for further action planning and in France just the child will be transferred to a reference centre for psychological/ psychiatric assessment.

need to develop progressively. It also highlights the importance of continuity between the first diagnostic in hospital and the longer-term treatment approach. **Creating a ‘safe space’ in which children can progressively externalise their traumas, for instance through a playful or artistic approach, is very important and this should be offered without stigmatisation or anticipation of psychopathological needs.**

7. **Education:** For child returnees it is important to return to ‘normal’, ordinary life typical of a child in the country in question as soon as possible. **School plays an important role in achieving this. Schools provide a safe and structured environment which are essential for the wellbeing and development of a child.**<sup>62</sup> Children detained in the camps have no access to formal education. UNICEF has supported the creation of self-support education centres in al-Hol camp, but it is not clear what type of schooling (if any) is still provided.<sup>63</sup> Some experts indicated that mothers were providing some form of home schooling themselves, as a result several of the child returnees were able to speak in the language of their home country. Finland is the only known European country which extended structured developmental and pedagogical support to those children who remain in the conflict zones. For a time, it offered schooling conducted over WhatsApp for children in camps in the AANES to begin addressing educational needs prior to return.<sup>64</sup>

Schools may face various challenges when dealing with child returnees, such as language and cultural differences, or trauma, and they may have an educational deficiency compared to other children of the same age. Schools may also be confronted with hostile questions from the media or from parents. In some countries, dedicated schools have been set up to help refugee children integrate into society. **In addition to language lessons, older children are also offered classes in democratic values, like tolerance for different opinions, global citizenship, collaborating with and respecting the rights of others.** In Uzbekistan, mentors from neighbourhood associations keep track of each repatriated child, and official imams and religious scholars counsel families about the fallacy of extremist and terrorist ideas.<sup>65</sup> The experience from such schools and programmes would be helpful in designing and developing on-boarding programmes for child returnees. **In addition, monitoring the social and educational development of child returnees over a longer period of time is important.** Most ongoing trauma, education, employment etc. support offered by countries engaged in repatriation efforts is available to child returnees either up until adulthood or for as long as they wish to continue to access it.

## Conclusion

The vast majority of the children are born in Syria and Iraq and now being held in the camps are under the age of 12 years. The children have been subjected to multiple human rights violations and especially children that have lived in areas controlled by ISIS and exposed to violent extremist ideology are vulnerable. Children should be treated first and foremost as victims. Their interest should be the primary consideration during all the decisions that affect them from repatriation to rehabilitation and reintegration into society. Considering the inhumane conditions in the camps,

62 In Uzbekistan, after repatriated children are enrolled in schools or preschools, they are assigned psychologists and teachers who provide care and tutoring. Unipath, ‘Reintegrating Returnees: Uzbekistan Cited as a Model for How to Repatriate Spouses and Children of ISIS Fighters’, 26 July 2022, <https://unipath-magazine.com/reintegrating-returnees/>.

63 UNICEF, ‘UNICEF supports self-learning at Al-Hol camp’, 18 June 2019, <https://www.unicef.org/syria/stories/unicef-supports-self-learning-al-hol-camp>.

64 CBC Radio, ‘How the Finnish government held a secret school in a Syrian detention camp’, 22 December, 2021, <https://www.cbc.ca/radio/thecurrent/the-current-for-nov-8-2021-1.6241033/how-the-finnish-government-held-a-secret-school-in-a-syrian-detention-camp-1.6292830>.

65 Unipath, ‘Reintegrating Returnees: Uzbekistan Cited as a Model for How to Repatriate Spouses and Children of ISIS Fighters’, 2022.

repatriation of children that are still in the camps is an imperative to protect their human rights. Several European countries were reluctant to repatriate their citizens, including children in which case the perceived security considerations prevailed over best interest of the children.



So far there is limited in depth experience of the management of child returnees, but some preliminary observations in Sweden demonstrate that the best interest of a child facilitates the rehabilitation and reintegration of child returnees.<sup>66</sup> Furthermore, Human Rights Watch conducted research among 100 children that have been repatriated indicating that the children are doing considerable well and that reintegration is possible.<sup>67</sup>

As the number of repatriation of children and their parents is accelerating in several European countries, such as in Germany, Netherlands and Sweden, it is important that a child-rights approach to their management, rehabilitation, and reintegration is developed to address the myriad of challenges in the short, mid and long term. (see Appendix 1) The best interest of a child cannot be afterthought, but should be central in both the policy and practice with child returnees. States need to invest in the capacities of relevant stakeholders to provide adequate and tailor-made support to child returnees to facilitate a successful rehabilitation and integration into society.

<sup>66</sup> Repatriate the Children Sweden, 'Reception of Returnees: Reintegration and Rehabilitation after Repatriation from Northeast Syria - Guidance Document for Emerging Practices With Lessons From Sweden', December, 2022, at p. 33, [https://www.repatriatethechildren.org/\\_files/ugd/55b791\\_032bc225aa6648efa3fd6af9ab5ce33c.pdf](https://www.repatriatethechildren.org/_files/ugd/55b791_032bc225aa6648efa3fd6af9ab5ce33c.pdf).

<sup>67</sup> Human Rights Watch, "My Son is Just Another Kid" Experiences of Children Repatriated from Camps for ISIS Suspects and Their Families in Northeast Syria', 2022.

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## Appendix

### Table 1. Child best interests into policy perspective

	Short-term	Mid-term	Long-term
<p><b>Identity</b></p> <p><i>Right to nationality</i></p> <p><i>Right to privacy and personal data</i></p> <p><i>Right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Establish nationality</li> <li>- Ensure proper (travel) documentation</li> <li>- Get official existence: social security number but also address practical issue: determine which place of birth?</li> <li>- Register at municipality</li> <li>- How to protect the identity of the child</li> <li>- What role for the media: any attempts at shaping public opinion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Help develop a narrative about the situation of parents and identity of a child</li> <li>- Build identity and create agency of own life</li> <li>- What information is shared with the school and other stakeholders?</li> <li>- What is societal perception?</li> <li>- Preparing local community, neighbourhood:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What information could/should be shared?</li> <li>- Who should know about these children?</li> <li>- What should they know and why?</li> </ul> </li> <li>- How to deal with stigmatisation?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Consider religious and cultural counselling</li> <li>- Continue to build family narrative</li> </ul>
<p><b>Child view</b></p> <p><i>Right to be heard</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Let the child share his or her own experience</li> <li>- Depending on age, involve child in the individual reintegration plan:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- School</li> <li>- Care</li> <li>- Custody</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Will the child be heard as witness or perpetrator in criminal proceedings? Provide for child-friendly questioning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Depending on age, develop a dialogue with child to hear his or her views on:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Housing</li> <li>- Schooling</li> <li>- Religion</li> <li>- Extracurricular activities</li> <li>- Care</li> <li>- Contact with mother and (extended) family</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Depending on age, continue a dialogue with child to hear his or her views</li> <li>- Hear the child where it wants to live when the parent is released from prison</li> </ul>

<p><b>Preservation of the family environment and maintaining relations</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Map the resilient and risk factors of the extended family?</li> <li>- If the parent is detained, how to maintain link with parent (physically or phone? Is the prison nearby?)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Does the mother lose custody temporarily or permanently?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What kind of relationship will the mother have with the child after prison?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Care, protection and safety of the child</b></p> <p><i>Right to development</i></p> <p><i>Right to be free from torture</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide a stable and secure home for the child</li> <li>- When parents are detained, how to deal with custody: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- With extended family?</li> <li>- With foster family?</li> <li>- With an institution?</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Psycho-social support to the (foster) family</li> <li>- Social/administrative support for the (foster) family?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How to develop extra-curricular interests?</li> <li>- Consider arts, music</li> <li>- Build trust and open dialogue with the child</li> <li>- Consider providing a coach or mentor for the child</li> <li>- How to deal with intergenerational transmission of radical views?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What support is needed after custody has ended?</li> <li>- How to monitor development and needs of child?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Situation of vulnerability</b></p> <p><i>Gender-sensitive and age-specific approach</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Born in EU countries v. born in conflict zones</li> <li>- Duration of stay in conflict zone</li> <li>- Exposure to violence</li> <li>- Nationality of children</li> <li>- Process of repatriation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Accompanied v. unaccompanied</li> <li>- Voluntary v. sent back by third country</li> <li>- With parent(s) v. orphans</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		
<p><b>Health</b></p> <p><i>Right to Health</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- First medical care (medical check-up, malnutrition, etc)</li> <li>- First psychological support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dental Care?</li> <li>- Vaccinations?</li> <li>- Treat (cumulative) trauma</li> <li>- Build resilience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Address traumas over long term (link between early stress disorder and juvenile delinquency...)</li> <li>- Long-term psycho-social support</li> <li>- Monitor reintegration?</li> </ul>

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