

INTERNATIONAL LEGAL PROTECTION OF CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

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Abstract: This article examines the key aspects of the international legal protection of children's rights as one of the priority areas of modern international law. Special attention is paid to the role of the United Nations in establishing universal standards for the protection of children's rights, as well as to an analysis of the central international instrument — the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The content of children's rights, their classification, and the principles of their implementation are explored. The article also examines universal and regional international instruments aimed at ensuring the protection of childhood, as well as the activities of organizations such as UNICEF. The conclusion emphasizes the need to improve international mechanisms for the protection of children's rights in the context of contemporary global challenges.

Keywords: International law; children's rights; protection of children's rights; United Nations; Convention on the Rights of the Child; UNICEF; international instruments; human rights; childhood; international organizations.

Introduction

The international legal protection of children's rights represents a crucial area of modern international law, aimed at ensuring the full development of the child's personality, safeguarding their dignity, freedom, and fundamental rights. In the context of globalization, increasing international mobility, and the escalation of social problems, the protection of childhood is becoming especially important and requires coordinated efforts by states and international organizations.

A child, as a special subject of law, requires additional protection, since due to age, physical, and psychological immaturity, they are unable to fully exercise and defend their rights independently. For this reason, the international community has developed a system of special norms and mechanisms aimed at ensuring children's well-being and protecting them from violence, exploitation, discrimination, and other threats.

A key role in establishing international standards in this area is played by the United Nations, within which foundational documents have been developed, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This international treaty enshrines a broad range of civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights of children and serves as a universal legal basis for national systems of child protection.

In addition, significant contributions to the development of the international legal protection of children's rights are made by organizations such as UNICEF, as well as regional bodies, including the Council of Europe, which develop additional standards and monitoring mechanisms.

The international legal protection of children's rights constitutes a complex and multilayered system of norms, principles, and institutions aimed at creating conditions for the harmonious development of the child and ensuring their rights on a global scale. The relevance of this topic is driven by the need to further improve the mechanisms for the realization and protection of children's rights in the face of modern challenges.

Main Body

The Concept and Content of Children's Rights

Children's rights represent a set of norms enshrined in international and national legal instruments, aimed at ensuring conditions for the full physical, mental, spiritual, and social development of the child's personality. Of particular significance in shaping the modern understanding of children's rights is the Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted under the auspices of the United Nations, which establishes universal standards for the protection of childhood.

According to international law, a child is recognized as every human being below the age of eighteen years, unless, under the applicable law, majority is attained earlier. This definition underpins the entire system of international protection of children's rights.

The content of children's rights encompasses a broad set of rights and freedoms, which can be conditionally divided into several main groups:

1. Personal (Civil) Rights

These include rights that ensure the individual freedom and inviolability of the child. Among them:

- the right to life, survival, and development;
- the right to a name and nationality;
- the right to know their parents and receive their care;
- the right to protection from violence, abuse, and exploitation.

2. Political Rights

Although children have limited political capacity, international norms recognize for them:

- the right to express their views on matters affecting their interests;
- the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion;
- the right to freedom of association and peaceful assembly.

3. Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights

This group of rights is aimed at ensuring an adequate standard of living and development for the child:

- the right to education;
- the right to health care and medical assistance;
- the right to social security;
- the right to rest and leisure;
- the right to participate in cultural life.

4. Special (Protective) Rights

These are granted to children in particularly vulnerable situations:

- refugee children;
- children with disabilities;
- children without parental care;
- children in conflict with the law.

A fundamental characteristic of children's rights is their comprehensive and indivisible nature: all rights are interrelated and must be realized in their totality. Furthermore, international law establishes key principles underlying the protection of children's rights: the best interests of

the child, non-discrimination, the right to survival and development, and respect for the child's views.

Thus, the concept and content of children's rights encompass a multifaceted system of legal norms aimed at comprehensive protection of the child's personality and the creation of conditions for their harmonious development in modern society.

International Instruments in the Field of Children's Rights Protection

The international legal protection of children's rights is based on a system of universal and regional normative instruments that establish basic standards for the treatment of children and obligate states to ensure their observance. A central place in this system is occupied by documents developed within the United Nations.

1. Universal International Instruments. The key document is the Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted in 1989. It: enshrines a broad list of children's rights (civil, political, social, economic, and cultural); establishes state obligations to protect them; and introduces an international monitoring mechanism through the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

Conclusion

Thus, international instruments in the field of children's rights protection form a coherent system of legal norms aimed at ensuring the well-being of the child. They establish universal standards that are binding upon states and serve as the foundation for national mechanisms for the protection of children's rights.

The international legal protection of children's rights represents a crucial element of the modern system of international law, aimed at ensuring a dignified life and the comprehensive development of every child. The adoption and development of key documents such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child, developed under the auspices of the United Nations, marked a significant step toward recognizing children as independent subjects of law.

An analysis of the concept and content of children's rights demonstrates that they are comprehensive and universal in nature, covering all major spheres of life — from personal freedoms to socio-economic guarantees. International instruments, both universal and regional, form a unified system of standards binding upon states and contribute to the harmonization of national legislation.

At the same time, despite significant achievements, practical implementation of these norms remains a pressing concern. Violations of children's rights, including violence, exploitation, discrimination, and limited access to education and medical care, continue to occur in many countries around the world. This underscores the need to further strengthen international monitoring mechanisms and enhance the role of organizations such as UNICEF.

Thus, the effective protection of children's rights is only possible through close international cooperation, consistent implementation of accepted obligations, and the prioritization of children's interests across all areas of state policy. In today's world, advancing the system of international legal protection of children's rights remains one of the key tasks of the global community.

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