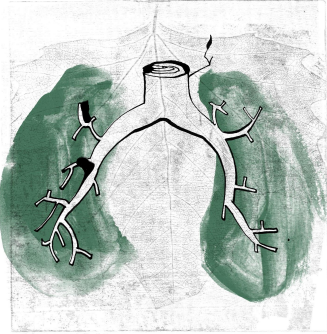


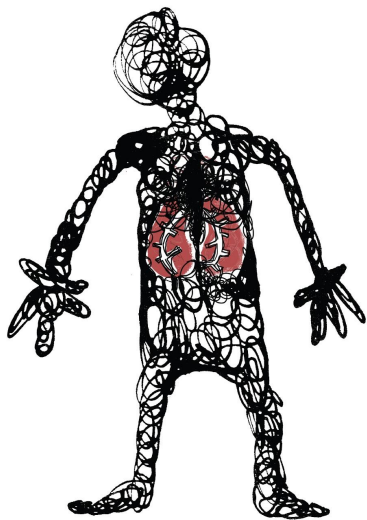


Pesticides & vulnerable groups exposure: a breach of children's rights



Isabelle Kolebinov - Child Rights International
Network (CRIN)

Illustrations by Miriam Sugranyes, CRIN



International Framework: main recent UN developments on children's rights and toxics

⇒ Health impact of exposure

- Joint report 2017 on pesticides: Special Rapporteur on the right to food and SR on toxics and human rights (A/HRC/34/48)

*"Children are most vulnerable to pesticide contamination: **higher dose per unit of body weight***

*"Exposure to **even low levels of pesticides**, for example through wind drift or residues on food, may be very damaging to children's health"*

*"**Pregnant women** who are exposed to pesticides are at higher risk of miscarriage, pre-term delivery and birth defect"*

- 2016 Report of the Special Rapporteur on toxics and human rights on the theme of children's rights (A/HRC/33/41)

*Exposure starts **before birth** through the mother's own exposure: "**pre-polluted**" children*

*"**silent pandemic**"*

*Impacts can be irreversible and can even be **passed down from one generation to the next***



⇒ Children's rights affected by exposure

➤ UN Convention on the rights of the child

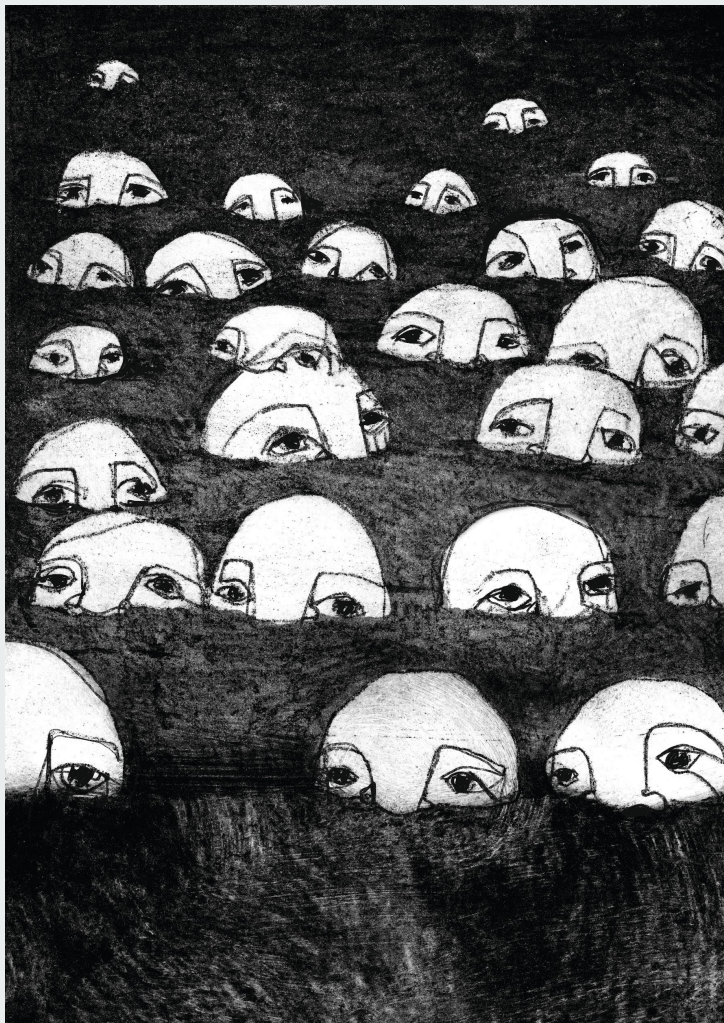
Rights to **life**, to “the **highest attainable standard of health**” and to develop as persons “to the maximum extent possible”, right to **education**, to recreation and **play**, right to **information**

Right to **physical integrity**: “non-consensual physical or mental intrusion against the body constitutes a human rights violation”

Children's **right to be heard**: States should “prevent childhood exposure, in recognition of the right of **present and future generations** to be heard”

Obligation of States to prioritize the **best interests of the child** when designing environmental and public health norms, and ensure access to information and effective remedies.

Businesses to identify, prevent and mitigate exposure of children to toxics and to ensure greater transparency.



➤ 2020 Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (A/HRC/43/30)

Childhood exposure to pollution and toxic substances, including **known or suspected disruptors of the normal functioning of human endocrine systems**

States must **prevent childhood toxic exposure** to protect children's rights to life, survival, development, health and bodily integrity.

➤ 2020 Human Rights Council Resolution 45/30 on "the realisation of the rights of the child through a healthy environment"

Preventive and precautionary approach

"Urges States to ensure the right of the child to the enjoyment of the **highest attainable standard of physical and mental health**, by inter alia: (...) Identifying and **eliminating sources of exposure** of children to indoor and outdoor air pollution and substances of high concern, such as heavy metals and **endocrine disrupting chemicals**."

➤ **Call for the global recognition of the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment at the UN level**

Possible resolution in September at the Human Rights Council. 1000+ civil society organisations and Statement supported by more than 60 States delivered at the March session of the HRC.



European framework and potential synergies
with the children's rights framework

- EU Strategy on the rights of the the child 2021-2024

Rights based strategy: an instrument for mainstreaming a children's rights perspective in all relevant policies, legislation and funding programmes.

Many references to the **right to live in a clean and healthy planet**, to enjoy and respect the natural environment

References to other EU strategies and plans:

- EU Farm to Fork strategy
- Europe's beating cancer plan
- Reference to the EU Chemicals Strategy for sustainability is missing for the moment



More resources available at:

<https://home.crin.org/issues/toxics>

Art exhibition available at:

<https://home.crin.org/projects/environment-and-toxics>

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