



## WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT . . . .

### THE WTC/PENTAGON ATTACKS AND THE BOMBING OF AFGHANISTAN

The Voices of Youth Project has been monitoring what young people are saying about the terrorist attacks against the US and the subsequent bombing of Afghanistan. The site [www.unicef.org/voy/](http://www.unicef.org/voy/) has received 75 unsolicited messages on these issues. The majority of the messages may be found on the Young People and Social Change discussion board linked from the VOY homepage. Messages are also under Meeting Place/Children and War/Discuss . A summary of the main trends of the discussion is found below.

- Kids in a US classroom have been discussing how tragic the September 11<sup>th</sup> events are, but also how there are other tragic situations around the world and that other people also suffer.
- Many messages express children's thoughts on the fate of Osama Bin Laden. Some messages say two wrongs do not make a right and another suggest that he should be killed. Yet others suggest that this would lead to a cycle of violence and that killing Osama Ben Laden would be too easy--that he should be made to live with the world he has tried to create. One message simply states that death does not justify death.
- The majority of messages express sorrow for the deaths of innocent people but at the same time young people know it is unrealistic to go to war and not expect civilian casualties.
- Some messages look at the broader policy context and make reference to the children in Iraq who have died due to the US-led blockade and to children in Palestine who have died from Israeli military action. Others blame the US for its arms sales around the world and one message from a 13 year old, outlines war and food shortage as the two most important and related problems.
- There is an exchange between a youth from the West Bank and Gaza showing support for those who fight against Israel and another from the United Kingdom who suggests that fighting for the well being of Palestinians rather than fighting against Israel may be a better approach.
- One message looks to recent events to understand history—referencing the blind hatred he sees for Muslims as providing a window on or a glimpse of how it was possible for young Germans to support the Nazis during the Second World War.
- Many messages outline the forgotten conflicts suggesting that there are many children dying around the world in conflicts that the world does not care about.
- Finally one 11 year old writes about raising 500 dollars for victims of the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks.

Each person who cheers when the US bombers destroy Afghan cities will be no better than those who cheered the World Trade Centre bombing. Those who support the US war in Afghanistan as "a form of retaliation", also support the terrorist actions that will be directed against the United States of America, which will also be "a form of retaliation". Like many say, if America retaliates against terror.....terror will retaliate

against America. It is true that everyone has the right for revenge, but in doing so, you are no better than the terrorists themselves.

Young boy, 16, Australia

I am an American...Muslim...Human. I've seen kids die in Pakistan, Palestine India and many more. We must go to their homes, mosques, synagogues, churches, sites, towns, wherever, BUT WE MUST DO IT FAST. I suggest that UNICEF ask children from other nations to be part of the program by going to the hot spots and give food, shelter, clothing and whatever else . Believe it or not, we children can understand each other better than adults will ever. I hope we can save all the children. One life is one too many.

Young boy, 14, USA

Dear the U.N.,

We children of the United States of America, feel that the biggest conflict right now is, peace throughout the world. Peace throughout the world will make a safer environment for all children, not just in the U.S.A. We must also stop poverty, and terrorism as soon as possible. We must act now to make a better nation, we must improve healthcare, and fight terrorism as soon as possible. Lets take a stand, United as one. We need the support of the U.N. to help us through these crucial times.

Sincerely, The Children of the U.S.A.

2 young boys, 12, USA

Now there is a war in Afghanistan, on the border with Pakistan. They put anti-personnel mines and many children that want to cross the frontier to go to a near country are hurt or killed. But these anti-personnel mines, why do they make them? how many children are hurt by the mines? Luckily in our country, Italy, these things don't happen nowadays. In a school trip to Trieste, some times ago, we visited an underground tunnel that crossed the border between Italy and Croatia, and they said that there were mines in it, during the Second World War, and that many children who went through the tunnel to escape war were injured or killed by the mines. We are very sorry that these children are hurt.

3 young girls, 14, Italy

I don't believe that anyone should be killed even if they do kill thousands of people.

DIPLOMACY is the ONLY way to finish this conflict ONCE AND FOR ALL . Ignorance on both sides started this conflict and it's history and ignorance is going to fuel it. Something to think about:

If I punch you for every time you punch me and visa versa then when will it stop once it has started

If you do believe that we should revenge the September 11 attacks then join Osama Bin Laden cause you are no better then him cause that is the reason he is using but disguising it as Jihad.

Young boy, 15 Australia

How can America define terrorism by it self killing hundreds of children in Afghanistan? Isn't that terrorism and if not then what should be it called ? Has not the United Nations failed to fulfil the need for which it was created ? That was to stop the horrors of war, the United Nations is to be reminded of that.

Young girl, 11 Pakistan

13 November 2001, New York

### **Voices of Youth**

[www.unicef.org/voy](http://www.unicef.org/voy)

UNICEF, 3 UN Plaza, NY, NY, 10017, USA

Tel: 1-212-326-7563 / Fax: 1-212-824-6481

Email: [voy@unicef.org](mailto:voy@unicef.org)