



# Building a world where children are at the heart of peace and security

Annual Report 2022–2023



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# About Us

The Dallaire Institute for Children, Peace and Security was founded by General Roméo Dallaire in 2007 and Dalhousie University, located in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, has provided a home to the Institute since 2010. General Dallaire first experienced the issue of children used as soldiers as the Force Commander of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda during the 1994 genocide. During this time, General Dallaire realized that he and his troops were ill-prepared to face them. Drawing on this experience, the Dallaire Institute was created with the unique premise that preventing violence against children requires a dual lens that is focused on prioritizing the protection of children as well as understanding the significant operational impacts upon security sector actors.

Through interdisciplinary and applied research, global advocacy, academic and practitioner training, and community engagement, the Dallaire Institute advances innovative strategies for preventing the recruitment and use of children in armed conflicts and violence. Uniquely, the Dallaire Institute works directly with the security sector to implement this prevention strategy. The Dallaire Institute has 15 years of experience working directly with security actors, including the military, police, intelligence, and corrections, to strengthen operational, strategic, and tactical capacities to prevent the recruitment and use of children in armed conflicts and violence.

The Dallaire Institute advances understanding about the fragile contexts that threaten children, increase their vulnerability to extreme violence and insecurity, and diminish their agency to positively impact change. These challenges perpetuate cycles of inequality and violence that continue over generations. Through this work, the Dallaire Institute hopes to build a more holistic, prevention-oriented approach to the issue of children recruited and used in armed violence that complements current efforts while providing innovative solutions with the ultimate vision of building a world where children are at the heart of peace and security.

## Acronym List

<b>ACOE</b>	African Centre of Excellence for Children, Peace and Security
<b>AU</b>	African Union
<b>CPS</b>	Children, Peace and Security
<b>CRSV</b>	Conflict-Related Sexual Violence
<b>DRC</b>	Democratic Republic of Congo
<b>K4P</b>	Knowledge for Prevention
<b>LACOE</b>	Latin American Centre of Excellence for Children, Peace and Security
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children’s Fund
<b>VPS</b>	Vancouver Principals
<b>WPS</b>	Women, Peace and Security
<b>YPS</b>	Youth, Peace and Security

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# Introduction

In 2022, the Dallaire Institute for Children, Peace and Security released our new **strategic plan for 2022-2025** as we work towards our vision of a world where children are at the heart of peace and security. As co-creators of the **Vancouver Principles on Peace-keeping and the Prevention of the Recruitment and use of Child Soldiers**, the Dallaire Institute has worked collaboratively with the Government of Canada since 2017 and will continue to work with partners to accelerate action on the Vancouver Principles.

Our regional Centres of Excellence in Kigali and Montevideo help to ensure we can effectively implement our strategies based on values of cooperation and collaboration. We have further consolidated our partnerships in Rwanda, Uruguay, Mozambique, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and South Sudan. Our ability to work directly with the security sector to improve interactions with children in armed violence prioritizes both the protection of children and the security sector.

Research on morally injurious events and the connection to military personnel encounters with children, which can lead to negative mental health outcomes, has been gaining international recognition. It also supports the Dallaire Institute’s unique approach of working directly with the security sector. Effective prevention requires data on what makes children susceptible to recruitment and use. To address this, the Dallaire Institute’s Knowledge for Prevention (K4P) Project has created the first early warning predictive model that helps to identify the combination of factors that increase or decrease the likelihood of children’s recruitment and use. In 2022, we focused on developing action pathways to prevent conflict escalation and improve child protection.

Community and children’s perspectives must be integrated into both our advocacy and capacity building approaches for effective prevention that is built on trust. In 2022, we built momentum by creating dialogue between communities and the security sector through our Women’s Networks. There is an urgent need to build a global agenda that advocates for and learns from the inclusion of children’s perspectives in building peace and security – hence the launch of our **Children, Peace and Security Policy Checklist** in 2022. In 2023, we will strengthen our engagement of our Youth Advisory Council.

The Dallaire Institute has now influenced new research, policy creation and partnerships that collectively aim to challenge and alter the perpetual cycles of violence that expose children to armed violence.

*Peace is possible, violence is preventable, and children must be at the heart of the solutions.*



KELLY CLARK FOTOGRAHY/INTACT FOUNDATION

The Dallaire Institute’s founder, General Roméo Dallaire, and Executive Director, Dr. Shelly Whitman, with Martin Vidal, Director of the Latin American Centre of Excellence, and Arsène Tshidimu, Deputy Director for Regional Programs at that African Centre of Excellence.

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## VISION

**A world where children are at the heart of peace and security.**

## MISSION

**To prevent the recruitment and use of children in armed violence and transform cycles of violence.**

# Strategic Priorities 2022–2025

### **PRIORITY ONE**

#### **Accelerating action on the Vancouver Principles**

More than 100 countries have endorsed the Vancouver Principles, which strengthen normative frameworks by protecting children in armed conflict and operationalize child protection within UN peacekeeping. By recognizing the unique challenges posed by the recruitment and use of children in conflict, endorsing governments commit to ensuring that all peacekeepers — military or police, and civilian staff — receive the necessary preparation to take appropriate and preventative action. The Dallaire Institute advocates universal endorsement and supports policy and doctrine implementation nationally, regionally, and in the context of peace processes.

### **PRIORITY TWO**

#### **Increasing the operational effectiveness of the security sector**

More than 100,000 security personnel are deployed globally on peace support operations each year, most of whom are in conflict zones where children are recruited and used by armed forces and armed groups. Therefore, any meaningful steps to prevent this grave violation must also focus on the security sector. In partnership with national, regional, and international security sector training institutions, the Dallaire Institute integrates curricula and delivers scenario-based, prevention-oriented training to prepare military, police, and civilian personnel to prevent the recruitment and use of children in armed violence.

### **PRIORITY THREE**

#### **Integrating children’s and community perspectives in security sector responses to prevent the recruitment and use of children**

Varying levels of mistrust pervade conflict-affected areas and impede collaboration between communities and the security sector actors charged with their protection; yet communities hold key information and resources for preventing the recruitment and use of children. The Dallaire Institute facilitates collaboration between communities and security sector actors to co-develop prevention strategies, working with local partners to develop and implement gender-responsive, community-based capacity-building programmes that reflect context-specific drivers of recruitment and use. By creating platforms that build trust, we strengthen linkages and promote community-informed security sector responses. This complements our prevention efforts as we integrate child-centred indicators into conflict early warning systems and engage and highlight youth and children as agents of sustainable peace.

## PRIORITY ONE

# Accelerating action on the Vancouver Principles

## Renewed Commitment and Engagement at the Dallaire Institute's African Centre of Excellence

The African Centre of Excellence for Children, Peace and Security (ACoE) in Kigali, Rwanda, is the Dallaire Institute's hub on the African continent to prevent the recruitment and use of children in armed violence. In a historic moment for the Dallaire Institute, a **country host agreement** was signed with Dalhousie University and the Rwandan government to continue the work of the ACoE to facilitate all continental programs focusing on child protection and furthering the Vancouver Principles. Maj Gen Ferdinand Safari, the former Director General of Policy and Strategy at the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Rwanda, was granted early retirement to join the Dallaire Institute as the Director for the ACoE.

In May 2022, the Honourable Harjit S. Sajjan, Minister of International Development of Canada, joined senior Rwandan security sector actors to discuss how preventing the recruitment and use of children is essential to achieving broader conflict prevention. Following the roundtable, the Minister announced that the **Government of Canada** would support the Dallaire Institute and its ACoE to accelerate action on the Vancouver Principles across Africa. In November, the German Federal Foreign Office announced a 1.8M Euro grant renewal to continue projects that began in 2019, strengthening program delivery and sustaining our impact.

Engagement with regional bodies like the African Union is key to accelerating action on the Vancouver Principles across the African continent. In 2022, the ACoE co-chaired the AU Coordination Working Group on children in armed violence with UNICEF and provided recommendations for a continental framework for monitoring, reporting and accountability. In October, the Dallaire Institute's statement to the AU Peace and Security Council on preventing the growing number of violations committed against children, including recruitment and use, was featured in the AU's **communiqué** on October 5, 2022.

In February 2023, the ACoE hosted a workshop to commemorate the International Day Against the Use of Child Soldiers, also known as **Red Hand Day**. The workshop brought together military, police, civilian personnel and policy-makers from over 12 African countries to discuss tangible steps to advance a Children, Peace and Security Agenda and to implement the Vancouver Principles across Africa. The workshop highlighted the urgent need to recognize that the recruitment and use of children is not solely a humanitarian or child protection issue but one of national security. Governments must invest long-term in prevention efforts and implement the Vancouver Principles if we are to end cycles of violence and build sustainable peace.



**“Children need to play sports on the playground, not fight wars on battlefields.”**

—Honourable Harjit S. Sajjan, Minister of International Development of Canada



## Expanding Our Mission to Latin America

The Dallaire Institute's Latin American Centre of Excellence for Children, Peace and Security (LACoE) is now established in Montevideo, Uruguay. Martin Vidal, a key collaborator on the Vancouver Principles since 2017, officially ended his tenure as Uruguayan Ambassador to Canada in December and joined the Institute as the Director for the LACoE. Through the LACoE, the Dallaire Institute will continue to enhance the implementation of the Vancouver Principles in peacekeeping operations and adapt concepts focused on child protection in armed conflict to the complex insecurity that affects many parts of Latin America and the Caribbean, where armed violence is fueled by criminal organizations.



High-level participants at the 2022 K4P Symposium in Montevideo, Uruguay.

## Continued Partnership with the Dallaire Centre of Excellence for Peace and Security

Advancing the protection of children affected by armed conflict is a common goal shared between the Government of Canada and the Dallaire Institute. In recognition of this strategic partnership, a Contribution Agreement between the Dallaire Centre of Excellence for Peace and Security within the Canadian Armed Forces, the Department of National Defence and the Dallaire Institute was created to advance the **Vancouver Principles** (VPs). Activities over the last year included:

The **2022 Knowledge for Prevention Symposium** in Montevideo, Uruguay

The **Gender, Childhood, and Community Engagement in Peacekeeping** workshop

The 7th volume of **Allons-y: Journal for Children, Peace and Security**

VP3 Early Warning  
VP11 Contribution of Women

VP4 Child Protection Focal Points  
VP11 Contribution of Women

VP5 Training  
VP13 Mental Health

In November 2022, the Dallaire Institute hosted its 4th **Knowledge for Prevention (K4P) Symposium**, this time in Montevideo in collaboration with the Ministry of Defense of Uruguay. The event also marked the 5th anniversary of the Vancouver Principles, to which Uruguay was one of the founding endorsers. The Symposium brought together regional representatives from civil society organizations, security forces, diplomats, the UN (including Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Virginia Gamba), and youth advocates working towards a better future, including those with lived experience of armed violence. **Discussions** highlighted the need to contextualize a Children, Peace and Security agenda for the region and the importance of meaningfully engaging youth in peacebuilding. The Symposium marked the beginning of new relationships in the region that will support the continued growth of the LACoE to accelerate action on the Vancouver Principles.

To date, **106** nations have endorsed the Vancouver Principles, including **15** states in Latin America.



Check out our podcast about the LACoE to learn more.

**“The best way to protect children is to make a political commitment that you actually mean.”**

—UN SRSG CAAC, Virginia Gamba

## PRIORITY TWO

# Increasing the operational effectiveness of the security sector

## Understanding Moral Injury in Military Personnel Who Encounter Children Used in Armed Violence

The Dallaire Institute was created with the unique premise that preventing violence against children requires a dual lens focused on prioritizing the protection of children as well as understanding the significant operational impacts upon the security sector actors who encounter them. As the nature of peace support operations evolve, military personnel are increasingly likely to encounter children in conflict contexts. Understanding the effects of these encounters is essential to future operations and the health and well-being of military personnel and their families.

Encountering children recruited and used can lead to serious **moral injuries** in security personnel if they are not equipped to deal with the mental health implications of being exposed to children in armed violence. Many veterans are haunted by internal conflict, resulting in feelings of intense shame and guilt which can lead to depression, isolation and sometimes suicide. The Dallaire Institute's research aims to improve care for those who experience mental health difficulties and improve operational effectiveness by enhancing training, policy, and prevention strategies.

A systematic review of the literature revealed a lack of existing research on the contexts, effects, and strategies for protecting military personnel and the children they encounter. To understand the nature and mental health impacts of such encounters, Phase I of the Dallaire Institute's research involved in-depth interviews with veterans of the Canadian Armed Forces who encountered children during military deployments. Phase II used a participatory action research approach, centering the perspectives and experiences of participants and enabling them to guide the development of prevention or intervention programs. **Preliminary research** has identified key themes that require more comprehensive investigation, such as the nature of encounters with children, occupational or personal context, and health consequences.

The next steps of this research will involve a women-focused workshop, a more culturally diverse group of actively serving personnel with lived/living experience, those who have experienced large-scale suffering from their encounters, and those who do not identify health consequences as a result. The study has identified opportunities to enhance training, planning, and treatment which will be further developed to improve operational effectiveness and enhance resiliency for military personnel, veterans, and their families.



**"I'm not broken, I'm part of a system that has issues."**

—Research Participant

### LEARN MORE

- [Volume 7 of \*Allons-y: Journal of Children, Peace and Security\*](#)
- [The potentially morally injurious nature of encountering children during military deployments: A call for research](#)



### THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS

This project is funded by Veterans Affairs Canada – Family Well Being Fund. The research is a collaborative effort between the Dallaire Institute at Dalhousie University, the Centre for Addictions and Mental Health, The MacDonald Franklin Operational Stress Injury Research Centre, and Mount Saint Vincent University.

## BUILDING THE CAPACITY TO PREVENT THE RECRUITMENT AND USE OF CHILDREN: OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS

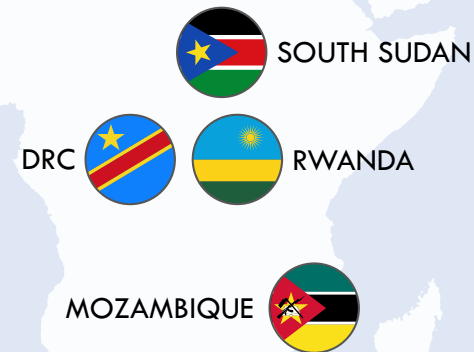
**22** TRAININGS

**2,981** SECURITY SECTOR ACTORS TRAINED

**238** SECURITY SECTOR ACTORS TRAINED WERE WOMEN

**4** LANGUAGES OF OPERATION AND TRAINING DELIVERY

**ENGLISH, FRENCH, SPANISH, PORTUGUESE**



## Strengthened Capacity to Work with Francophone Nations

Building the capacity of security sector actors to prevent the recruitment and use of children as soldiers is critical to improving peace and stability on the African Continent. The Dallaire Institute has expanded its programming and advocacy interventions in Francophone nations where recruitment and use of children in armed conflict remains a major concern, such as the DRC and Rwanda. This has enabled us to work with la Francophonie member states to ensure that all parties to the conflict comply with commitments made to prevent grave violations against children.

## Preventing Grave Violations of Children's Rights in Mozambique



Since 2017, increased violence and attacks by actors in the northern region of Cabo Delgado, Mozambique have caused great disruption and destruction of communities, with more than 700,000 internally displaced people, half of whom are children. In 2020, the Dallaire Institute's **predictive model** showed a high probability of the recruitment and use of children in Cabo Delgado, discovering evidence of this grave violation by insurgents. Since then, we have been working with the Government of Mozambique's Ministry of Defence and UNICEF to strengthen the technical and institutional capacity of Mozambique's security sector to prevent grave violations against children.

In 2022, the Dallaire Institute conducted the first ever Child Protection Focal Point course in Mozambique to a cohort of 33 security sector actors (18 men and 15 women) who had previously attended the Dallaire Institute's basic training and Training of Trainers courses, further building their capacity to monitor and report grave violations. We also partnered with the European Union Training Mission (EUTM) to conduct a briefing session for Mozambique's Quick Reaction Force which will soon be deployed to Cabo Delgado.

In coordination with our partners, the Dallaire Institute celebrated Red Hand Day in Maputo, the capital of Mozambique, in April 2022. Distinguished guests included Graça Machel, author of the ground-breaking UNICEF report, **The Impact of Armed Conflict on Children** (1996). Machel expressed serious concerns over the situation of children in Cabo Delgado, highlighting the need for training on existing protection mechanisms. Building the security sector's capacity to prevent and report grave violations, including the recruitment and use of children in armed violence, is key to protecting children and promoting their rights and improves the effectiveness of security operations.

PRIORITY THREE

# Integrating children’s and community perspectives in security sector responses to prevent the recruitment and use of children

## Building Bridges for Prevention



Over the past three years, the Dallaire Institute has facilitated the **Women for Children, Peace and Security Network in South Sudan**. The Network, now 45 members strong, provides a space for women-led civil society organizations to engage with issues such as conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) and the prevention of the recruitment and use of children, and lead the effort to raise these issues with those in positions to make a difference. In June 2022, the Network met with the Honourable Harjit S. Sajjan, Minister of International Development of Canada and shared their perspectives on the challenges facing their communities, and particularly those faced by women.

*“Women are suffering in silence and are dying in numbers because they are heartbroken and feel powerless to prevent their children from recruitment by armed forces. We thank the Dallaire Institute for providing this space for us to share our stories and raise awareness.”*  
—Norah Zanjay

## The Children, Peace and Security Policy Checklist

In June 2022, the Dallaire Institute published a Children, Peace, and Security (CPS) policy checklist (available in **English** and **French**) of ten actions governments and leaders can take to build a global agenda for CPS that recognizes the inclusion of children’s perspectives and experiences as a critical dimension to sustaining global peace

The Network’s impact has extended beyond South Sudan and inspired similar initiatives in the DRC. In November and March, the Dallaire Institute held its first two community dialogues in Kananga, a post-conflict region in the DRC, with participants from women’s civil society organizations, members of provincial parliament, traditional leaders, church leaders, local Government Ministries, and members of the Armed Forces.

In 2023, a special meeting of the Network was held to honor **International Women’s Day**. The meeting - which brought together 45 representatives of women-led civil society organizations - provided a space to raise awareness about CRSV and the prevention of recruitment and use of children in armed violence.

*“I often hear about ‘experts.’ I personally consider myself an expert because I’ve been through horrible scenes, rape and more, and now I’m telling you what I’ve seen and experienced.”* —Women’s Network participant

These dialogues create trust between community members and security sector actors and provide an opportunity for further collaboration when developing new approaches to prevent grave violations against children. The dialogues have also helped security forces to gain a better understanding of the community’s lived experiences and local perspectives, needs, and solutions, which improves the relevance and effectiveness of security sector responses.

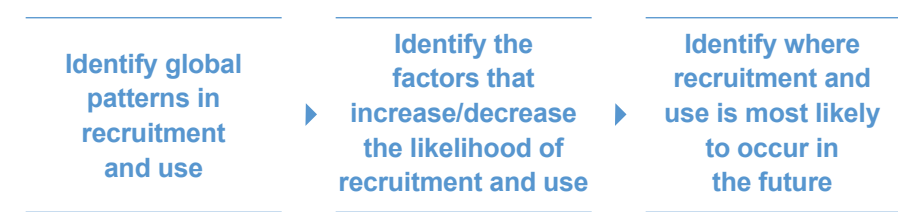
Check out our podcast on **Bringing Local Actors in South Sudan Together**.

and security. The CPS agenda complements and reinforces the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) and Youth, Peace, and Security (YPS) agendas, but addresses the specific needs of children and highlights children’s agency to positively impact change.

## From Early Warning to Early Action

Preventing the recruitment and use of children in armed violence is paramount to breaking cycles of violence and improving the protection of children and communities in fragile environments. Timely, reliable, and systematic data on what makes children susceptible to this grave violation is required to inform early action that can effectively prevent recruitment. Despite the prevalence of children’s involvement in modern conflicts and violence, there are currently no early warning systems that include child-centered indicators or are focused on recruitment and use. To address this gap, the Dallaire Institute’s **Knowledge for Prevention (K4P)** research project created the first **early warning** predictive model that identifies combinations of factors that affect the likelihood that children are recruited and used in armed violence.

*Our data on the recruitment and use of children allows us to:*



Over the past year, the Dallaire Institute’s team has collected data on the recruitment and use of children between 2010 and 2022, developed modelling based on this data to understand factors associated with recruitment, and piloted the use of this modelling combined with other forms of conflict forecasting, expert opinion, and contextual analysis to develop an early warning system and early action pathways to improve prevention efforts.

These efforts have greatly improved our modelling, have informed the development of our programming in Mozambique, and are supporting advocacy efforts on other situations flagged by the early warning system. Through engagement with our new LACoE in Uruguay and other state, intergovernmental, NGO, and early warning partners, we are developing the networks, understanding, and support needed for effective early warning dissemination and early action to prevent the recruitment and use of children in armed violence.



Dallaire Institute staff with youth speakers from across Latin America at the 2022 K4P Symposium.

## Engaging Youth in the Children, Peace and Security Agenda

In June 2022, the Dallaire Institute hosted a side-event on Engaging Youth in Building a Children, Peace and Security Agenda at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Kigali, Rwanda. The event was an opportunity to bring youth together to discuss the Institute’s recently published CPS policy checklist. The response was enthusiastic, and many expressed a desire for further engagement on this topic.

In November 2022, the Dallaire Institute hosted a panel on The Centrality of Youth in Advancing a Children, Peace and Security Agenda at its annual **K4P Symposium**, the first in Uruguay. The panel brought together youth from Uruguay, Colombia, and Mexico working on peace and security initiatives and researchers from Canada and Uruguay. The Symposium also included youth with lived experience of recruitment and use in armed violence, who shared powerful **opening remarks** for the first panel discussion. Working with youth continues to remind us of how crucial it is to engage children and youth meaningfully so we can sustainably end cycles of violence and inequality and build a more peaceful and prosperous future.

*“We need to get rid of that narrative of childhood, that children don’t know or don’t understand the issues”*

—Participant at the K4P Symposium

## Thank you to our supporters. We could not do this work without you!

Dalhousie University New Wave Fund

Department of National Defense, Government of Canada

Fund for Innovation and Transformation, Government of Canada

German Federal Foreign Office

International Development Research Centre

Social Science & Humanities Research Council of Canada

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## Thank you to our International Advisory Council for your guidance and expertise

Marc-Andre Blanchard, former Canadian Ambassador to the United Nations  
Charles Brindamour, CEO of Intact Financial Corporation

Roméo Dallaire (chair), former UN Force Commander and Canadian Senator

Michaëlle Jean, former Governor General of Canada

Robert Muggah, founder of Brazil's Instituto Igarapé

Louise Mushikiwabo, Secretary General of La Francophonie

Myrah Oloo, youth advocate and Giants of Africa alum

James Orbinski, Director of the Dahdaleh Institute for Global Health Research

Carlos Alberto dos Santos Cruz, former United Nations Force Commander

Fredrik Schiller, former Swedish Ambassador to South Sudan

Masai Ujiri, President of the Toronto Raptors and founder of Giants of Africa



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## Financial Overview

Total Annual Operating Budget  
**\$3,292,062.63**

Advocacy and Research  
**\$464,802.48**

Operating Expenses  
**\$867,796.15**

Programming Activities  
**\$1,959,464.00**

## Learn more:

### Advocacy Briefs

The Dallaire Institute's Regional Approach to Preventing the Recruitment and Use of Children in Armed Violence

Building a Children, Peace and Security Agenda in the Democratic Republic of Congo

Visit our website for more Resources.

### 2022–2023 Shaar Shalom Lecture at Dalhousie University

International human rights and Canada's role in a polarized world

A conversation with The Honourable Bob Rae, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations, and LGen (ret) The Honourable Roméo A. Dallaire, Founder of the Dallaire Institute, moderated by Dr. Shelly Whitman, Executive Director of the Dallaire Institute.



Dallaire Institute staff and participants at the ACoE's 2023 commemoration of Red Hand Day





Peace is possible,  
violence is  
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