

# France Failing Unaccompanied Migrant Children

UN Committee Urges France to Guarantee Migrant Children Their Rights



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*Unaccompanied migrant children at a new camp in Lyon, France, on March 5, 2025. © 2025 Romain Doucelin/NurPhoto via AP Photo*

In a [damning report](#) published last week, the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child concluded France is responsible for grave and systematic violations of the rights of unaccompanied migrant children. The committee noted that due to flawed and arbitrary age assessment procedures many unaccompanied children find themselves homeless, deprived of healthcare, and forced to live in degrading and undignified conditions, instead of being protected, cared for, and supported.

The committee's findings are consistent, in many respects, with the findings of Human Rights Watch's investigations carried out in [Paris](#), [Calais](#), [Marseille](#), at the [French-Italian border](#), and in the [Hautes-Alpes](#) region in recent years.

These children often find themselves on the streets, without access to education or medical care, while they appeal their flawed assessments, which can last months or even years, placing children in extreme precarity and depriving them of their fundamental rights. Between [50 and 80%](#) of these appeals overturn the assessments, but decisions can sometimes be delivered after the child has reached the age of majority, permanently depriving them of rights they should have been granted as children.

In addition, many of these children may also be subjected to [degrading treatment](#) by the police, denied their freedom and [arbitrarily detained](#). This issue is especially prevalent, at the French-Italian border between Menton and Ventimiglia, where migrant children have been summarily [deported to Italy](#), in violation of European and international law.

Warnings from Human Rights Watch and numerous [nongovernmental organizations](#) and [institutions](#) have multiplied in recent years, and France was recently [condemned](#), in January 2025, by the European Court of Human Rights for “failing to protect” a Guinean child.

The committee is clear in its [recommendations](#) to France: all children—or anyone claiming to be a child—should benefit from the presumption of minority throughout the assessment and appeal process and be guaranteed their fundamental rights, including housing, food, water, and education. The French authorities need to listen to the committee and urgently ensure these vulnerable kids get the protection and care they are entitled to.