



# CRIN Annual Report 2011-2012

Children's rights: A Global Perspective

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# Introduction

From being sentenced to death and life imprisonment, to suffering repression for participating in protests - if the past year has shown us anything, it is that children continue to suffer a wide variety of rights violations across the world. In this context, CRIN continued to identify persistent as well as new and neglected children's rights violations as targets for monitoring and campaigning.

With the support of our members, we have remained vigilant for information on children's rights violations as they have appeared in the news. Using our mailing lists, website and social media, we have brought major issues to the attention of the global child rights community and helped propagate expertise, good practice and the sharing of resources. Through our campaign work, we have reported on and challenged ongoing violations and systemic problems, such as the lack of transparency in international organisations and the disgraceful continued inhuman sentencing of children. Building on our previous work, we continue to act as a vital source of information on children's rights around the world and a major focus for political and social activism by a global network of activists.

But in the past year we also turned our attention to developing and supporting stronger forms of advocacy. This is of particular importance because our research shows that children's rights advocacy is not advancing quickly enough and that while traditional and softer forms of campaigning are important, they are not having sufficient impact. In view of this, CRIN has been moving towards a new stage in our work; one which explores how we can most usefully support national level campaigns and encourage the use of stronger forms of advocacy – including legal action – to challenge violations of children's rights. CRIN's work in 2011/12 was the first step towards this goal, but we hope that it will set the stage for collective action within the children's rights movement.

Indeed, at the core of our mission as a children's rights organisation is our resolve to pursue advocacy that enacts change. Fruit of this objective is our new advocacy tool: the “Children's Rights Wiki”. Its purpose is to build a clearer picture of the violations of children's rights that persist in a given country, with the eventual goal of matching these abuses with the available mechanisms as possible avenues of redress. With the new Wiki, we not only seek to inspire collective action in this direction – an ambition we put to the test with a pilot project with partners in Turkey – but also to develop CRIN's role in supporting strong and effective advocacy globally.

– The CRIN team

# About CRIN

## Our vision

CRIN envisions a world in which every child enjoys all of the human rights guaranteed by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

## Mission

Guided by our passion for social and legal change, CRIN is building a global network for children's rights, increasingly focused on active advocacy. We press for rights, not charity, and advocate for a genuine systemic shift in how governments and societies view children.

Our foundation and inspiration is the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which we use to bring children's rights to the top of the international agenda. We launch advocacy campaigns, join and support international children's rights coalitions, and strive to make existing human rights enforcement mechanisms accessible for all.

## The values that guide our work

- We believe that the only means of bringing long-term positive change to children's lives is through the strong and explicit promotion of their rights. We are not afraid to challenge harmful beliefs and practices concerning children. We recognise this will often be controversial.
- We believe that information is a powerful tool, indeed a prerequisite, for effective advocacy in children's rights and that it must be freely available and widely disseminated.
- We believe that it is by working together with a broad range of actors committed to a similar vision that we will be most effective and influential.
- We believe that children, civil society, and other activists all have the right to participate and express themselves freely and openly in all matters affecting them.

## Our objectives

- To enable the child rights community, and others, to understand and work individually and collectively for the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international and regional human rights standards.

- To educate and inform, particularly on new and emerging issues in children's rights.
- To focus on working with key networks and organisations, identified by their ability to achieve greater recognition of children's rights.
- To support and fuel the advocacy initiatives of members and other child rights organisations, for example by hosting petitions and providing a platform for joint campaigns.
- To lobby and advocate for the implementation of children's rights and their mainstreaming in all United Nations and regional human rights mechanisms.

# Chapter 1: A global overview of children's rights

## The year's highlights

Juvenile justice was at the top of CRIN's agenda in the past year. A trend has emerged among some States which have lowered or proposed lowering the minimum age of criminal responsibility well under the age of 18. In response, CRIN produced a report which goes beyond proposals to raise or lower the minimum age of criminal responsibility by a year or two. The report instead emphasises the need to separate the concept of responsibility from criminalisation, and to stop making children criminals.

This need for legal reform in criminal justice systems around the world was also the impetus for CRIN's campaign to stop child offenders from being dealt inhuman sentences, namely corporal punishment, life imprisonment or the death penalty. Unfortunately, progress in this area was lacking, as Sudan, Iran and Egypt all sentenced persons who committed an offence while under the age of 18 to death.

When it comes to challenging regressive laws, a number of African States set a pioneering example to those that still authorise corporal punishment of children. In the past year alone, South Sudan and Togo joined Tunisia and Kenya in banning corporal punishment in all settings, including the home.

The tide is also turning against those that cover up cases of child sex abuse, from religious institutions to trusted celebrities. Public outcry against it and the demand for accountability in 2011/12 have led to new precedents around the world, with key court rulings and convictions handed down in the United States and the United Kingdom, as well as large scale inquiries into alleged abuse in Belgium, the Netherlands, Ireland and Australia.

The good news continued with the UN General Assembly's unanimous adoption of the Optional Protocol for a complaints mechanism to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, until now the only international human rights treaty with a mandatory reporting procedure to not have, in addition, an existing or draft complaints mechanism. Meanwhile, Uruguay became the first State to ratify the Convention concerning Decent Work for Domestic Workers.

However, the UN Secretary-General's "list of shame", a list of the countries that violate

international standards on children and armed conflict, has grown considerably over the past years. Armed groups in Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and Iraq, all feature on the list, as well as the Syrian Government forces who regularly shell, burn, loot and raid schools, as well as assault or threaten teachers, students, and medical personnel.

But on a more positive note, while discussions on children's rights and the private sector usually reflect on the latter in a negative light, the private sector affirmed that it can indeed act in defence of children's rights, after two corporate sponsors of the Boy Scouts of America announced they would no longer donate funds to the organisation as long as it bans gays from joining. The Boy Scouts case suggests that corporations can take a firm stance against discrimination and other violations of children's rights

## Issues in focus

### Children's freedom of expression and association

In the past year, we have witnessed a momentous global awakening of citizens reacting to violations of their human rights, with the Arab Spring as the single most significant demonstration of the power of the people to challenge injustice; of ordinary men, women and children all taking a stand. The movement in the Middle East and North Africa has also served to galvanise citizens in other regions to do the same. The chants of protesters have reverberated across the world, albeit in different contexts, all the way to New York, Madrid, Chile and Russia.

With the growing human rights movement was part of the driving force for ongoing advocacy, we continued to promote children's civil and political rights across various regions of the world, always drawing attention to regressive laws, policies and responses to children exercising their civil and political freedoms or to the work of those who seek to defend these freedoms.

While children's right to freedom of expression and association rarely form part of children's rights advocacy as a stand alone issue, upholding these rights is fundamental for the realisation of all children's rights, as they allow children to have a say about issues that concern or interest them, and to communicate whether their rights are being upheld or otherwise. In fact, this right is a good marker for gauging perceptions of children in any society, because the extent to which children are able to express their opinions and feelings can show how much they are recognised as rights holders.

In the past year, however, a number of countries have sought to silence children and young people when they have taken to the streets to demand greater respect for human rights. In Chile, and to a lesser extent in Honduras, university and secondary school students have been gathering in their hundreds of thousands to demand reform of the country's underfunded public education system. But their demands have been met with tear gas, pressurised water hoses, arrest and detention, and in some cases even death as a consequence of authorities' use of violence to quell protests.

The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and its Rapporteurs on the Rights of Children and Freedom of Expression condemned the Chilean authorities' use of violence to disperse the student protesters, and urged the government “to adopt the necessary measures to ensure full respect for the rights to freedom of expression, assembly, and association, imposing only those restrictions as may be strictly necessary and proportional, and taking into account the State's special obligation to guarantee the rights of children.”

Meanwhile during Russia's biggest protests in 20 years, in which citizens decried political fraud during the country's elections last year, authorities prevented young people from taking part in rallies by imposing mandatory extra school days on weekends to coincide with major days of protest. Unsurprisingly, both Russia and Chile have pushed through legislation to ban unsanctioned protests.

## Firewalling children's right to access information

In the past year, we have continued to see how children's rights are still curtailed in the name of child “protection” through bans on “harmful” information. No one would argue against protecting children, but claims of protection are being spuriously used to justify restricting children's other fundamental rights. It is often the lack of transparency by some States, and the overt prejudice by others, in defining “harmful” information, that is the main cause for concern.

In 2011, we saw a growing trend, namely among ex-Soviet States including Ukraine, Moldova and Russia, of restricting children's access to information on issues such as sexuality. In these countries, laws with a city-specific or nationwide span have been proposed or approved banning discussion of homosexuality in schools, references to it in public information that can be accessed by children like advertising, and public expression of support for the rights of sexual minorities. In these cases, the use of “protection” represents a façade for institutional discrimination against sexual minorities, and what the European Parliament condemned as “misconceptions about

homosexuality and transgenderism". But these attempts to limit the information children can access are also dangerous and counter-productive.

Children's rights advocates fear that imposing broad restrictions on children's access to information couched in arguments about child protection not only contributes to discrimination against certain groups – most often sexual minorities – but that such blocks also serve to deny children age-appropriate information about issues such as sex education, sexuality and drug use. The ability to access information is particularly critical for children's development as it is the means by which children form views about the world, participate actively in society, function as responsible citizens, and potentially stand up for their rights and those of others later in life.

By guiding children to ask questions and think critically – rather than suppressing their capacity and desire to exercise their freedom of expression – States can both recognise children's capacity to play a role in their own protection and respect their civil and political rights. Protecting children's right to information is not only fundamental to ensuring all other civil and political rights for children; it is the foundation of the rule of law and democracy for all.

## Restrictions on the work of children's rights defenders

In response to the growing movement for human rights, protesters, journalists, activists, and human rights defenders around the world are facing increasing reprisals for daring to speak out against rights violations. In the past year, they have continued to be subjected to intimidation, threats, physical attacks, arbitrary detention, and even killed. Laws were also enacted to ban protests, with protesters in some countries now facing heavy fines or the threat of imprisonment for exercising their right to freedom of expression, while the work of civil society has been reined in through funding restrictions and physical threats and attacks against advocates.

In response to this situation, and as part of our Transparency Campaign, in 2011 CRIN began to monitor restrictions on the work of children's rights defenders. The role of children's rights defenders depends on the freedom to speak out. But this freedom is all too often curtailed by governments clutching at threats to national security as a pretext for closing in on civil society. The monitoring page spotlights how legal standards in some countries have become increasingly restrictive for human and children's rights defenders.

For instance, lawmakers in Israel introduced an NGO bill which would legitimise the suppression of information on alleged war crimes, particularly in relation to accountability issues in the Occupied

Palestinian Territories. In Bahrain, pro-democracy protesters are being put on trial in military courts and face lengthy prison sentences for speaking out against the country's monarchy. Civil society groups in Egypt are facing charges of treason, harming national security and carrying out foreign agendas, while NGO offices have been raided by the military. In Mexico, all sectors of civil society are routine targets of violent, and sometimes deadly, attacks because of their human rights work, including environmentalists, indigenous leaders, journalists, students and university professors. And in Uganda, the government has threatened to ban 38 foreign-funded organisations from functioning for allegedly "promoting" the rights of sexual minorities, which is criminalised in the country.

## Children and international justice

National courts bear the primary responsibility for prosecuting international crimes, however in many States affected by armed conflict the judicial system is too weak or suffers from fundamental flaws, such as a lack of independence, to be able to deal with such tasks.

To address this situation, a number of international courts and tribunals have been set up over the last two decades to combat impunity and restore justice and accountability. The State still bears the primary responsibility for ensuring access to justice for children whose rights have been violated; international courts are only competent when the State is unwilling or unable to investigate or prosecute international crimes.

**The International Criminal Court.** Over five years after the arrest of former Congolese warlord Thomas Lubanga Dyilo and two and a half years after the commencement of his trial in The Hague, the International Criminal Court (ICC) reached a significant milestone when on August 26 2011, the Chamber officially closed the trial phase of the ICC's first case. Lubanga was found guilty of enlisting and conscripting children under the age of 15 and using them to participate actively in hostilities. On 10 July of the same year, he was sentenced to 14 years imprisonment.

Children as young as 11 in the DRC were recruited from their homes and schools to take part in brutal ethnic fighting in 2002-03. They were taken to military training camps and beaten and drugged; girls were used as sex slaves. Although the Court did not order material or symbolic reparations, it stressed the right of victims of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide to receive reparations, and it spelled out principles to guide the process of issuing reparations to victims in the DRC.

**The Special Court for Sierra Leone.** In April 2012, the Special Court for Sierra Leone found guilty former Liberian President Charles Taylor for aiding and abetting war crimes committed by the Revolutionary United Front during Sierra Leone's 1991 – 2002 civil war.

While serving as President in Liberia, he backed the rebels of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in neighbouring Sierra Leone. He was found guilty of aiding and abetting them to kill tens of thousands during the war, notoriously use child soldiers, commit rape and sexual slavery as well as cruel treatment. Children were used to amputate limbs, guard diamond mines and hunt for food. Some were involved in fighting.

The Special Court for Sierra Leone has been at the forefront of the fight against impunity for violations against children. It was the first international court to decide that the recruitment and use of children under 15 constitutes a war crime under customary international law. The Court also took a clear decision not to prosecute child soldiers, but to bring to justice those who bear the greatest responsibility - political leaders and military commanders.

CRIN has continued to provide up-to-date information about these cases, in particular through its Children and Armed Conflict email list. We have also begun writing briefing papers on specific countries that provide a background on the conflict and its impact on children. For more information, read the following briefing papers for: The [Democratic Republic of the Congo \(DRC\)](#) and [Sudan and South Sudan](#).

## Children, drug use, and the pharmaceutical industry

CRIN has been increasingly concerned with children's rights in the corporate world. In the past few years, we closely monitored the drafting of the Children's Rights and Business Principles, which have cemented the corporate world's responsibility to respect children's rights, and set new standards for child-friendly business ethics across the globe. In the same year in which the Principles were adopted, CRIN sought to reflect particularly on how the pharmaceutical industry affects children's rights through two briefing papers.

The first looked broadly at "Children's rights and the pharmaceutical industry", noting that medicine and prescription drugs unquestionably play a huge role in securing children's rights, as they are an important component of health care. But over the past few years, lawsuits and investigations have cropped up around the world that raise concerns about testing drugs on children, in some cases these being unnecessary or even unlicensed. In view of this, we asked: what happens when the

very same companies that provide life-saving drugs violate some children's rights to improve health care for others, or simply to increase the bottom line?

The second briefing paper looked specifically at "Children's rights and the treatment of behavioural difficulties", in which we noted that medical professionals have long called into question the safety of, and need for powerful cocktails of prescription drugs given to children of an increasingly young age to treat Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Despite it being unclear what long and short-term effects these drugs will have on children whose brains are still developing, more children are being diagnosed with ADHD than adults, and drug companies appear to be taking little notice of health concerns, instead focusing on children as a new profitable market.

## Chapter 2: How we responded to global challenges

As an international advocacy organisation, we recognise the importance of CRIN's role in bringing attention to the full range of children's rights. One of CRIN's core objectives is to break new ground in child rights advocacy by addressing new and emerging or neglected issues with the aim of raising their profile. This includes identifying gaps in international advocacy and areas of children's rights that lack coordination or are deemed too controversial and consequently taken up less by organisations. We aim to educate and inform about issues about which little research exists, on which few organisations work, and articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child that have not yet been interpreted. We do this in two ways. First, we monitor how all human rights bodies around the world address children's rights and highlight gaps and opportunities for partners to contribute. Second, where we see a gap or an emerging opportunity not yet addressed, we may, alone or in partnership, launch a campaign.

### Children's Rights at the United Nations

While exclusive attention to children's rights within the United Nations is provided by the Committee on the Rights of the Child, children's rights issues also permeate the work of other UN human rights bodies. Consequently, CRIN monitors activities across the UN in an effort to mainstream children's rights and to provide a broader picture of how and to what extent they are addressed within the UN. The following sections describe how we go about this. (Further information about our work on and with the Committee on the Rights of the Child is described in the next chapter).

### Human Rights Council (HRC)

CRIN has been monitoring the work of the UN Human Rights Council since it was the Commission on Human Rights. Activities have included covering the sessions, both the child rights specific ones and also the general ones, with the aim being to highlight all human rights issues where children's rights may be addressed, or where opportunities exist for NGOs and others to participate.

Much of this work has been done in partnership with other organisations (see Chapter 4), in particular, the Working Group of the NGO Group for the Human Rights Council, which seeks to encourage the mainstreaming of children's rights at the Human Rights Council. This has included undertaking communications activities, research and analysis and joint lobbying.

The March session of the HRC was particularly relevant for CRIN's work as the theme of the debate on the rights of the child was on "Children and the Administration of Justice". CRIN participated - and influenced - the preparation and content of the panels, resulting in one of them being on "inhuman sentencing of children." In addition to writing a report about the debate, we provided daily coverage of key children's rights hearings in other meetings.

## Universal Periodic Review (UPR)

CRIN continued its efforts in the past year to monitor how children's rights are addressed by the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) – a mechanism under which the Human Rights Council examines the human rights record of each UN Member State once every four and a half years.

In October 2011, to coincide with the completion of the UPR's first review cycle, CRIN produced an updated second edition of its report, "The Status of Children's Rights", which offers up-to-date findings and figures, as well as offering some general recommendations for NGOs and others who wish to make use of the UPR. Key findings of the study are that approximately one fifth of all points made across the UPR process are children's rights focused, States are avoiding more controversial issues such as corporal punishment or juvenile justice, and NGOs are lagging behind UN bodies and UN Member States in the extent to which they address children's rights in the UPR.

The second review cycle of the UPR is currently under way and CRIN will continue to compile reports on references made to children's rights. Read more here:

<http://www.crin.org/HRC/UPR.asp>

## UN Special Procedures

CRIN continues to compile all extracts on children's rights from all mandates, including those that are not exclusively child rights-focused, in order to assess the extent to which children's rights – and which rights – are addressed, or neglected. This should, hopefully, support organisations in their research and advocacy.

We also continue to advertise calls for input and upcoming visits of the UN Special Procedures in cooperation with the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), in order to encourage organisations to submit information or get involved in other ways at the national level.

We have also begun examining some of the thematic mandates in more detail to see what sort of advocacy could be undertaken. We started with the work of the UN Special Rapporteur (SR) on freedom of opinion and expression, as part of our resolve to determine the extent to which children's rights – and which children's rights in particular – are addressed in UN bodies that are not specifically child-focused. And in 2011, we presented our findings related to children's freedom of opinion and expression in a [report](#).

According to our research, the SR has mainly addressed children's rights under the following four key themes: child participation, importance of expression in early childhood, protect children from “bad” information, and freedom of expression important in combating child abuse and domestic violence.

## UN Security Council

We continue to monitor and report on the work of the Security Council in relation to children. In June 2012, the United Nations Secretary-General (SG) issued his 11th annual report on children and armed conflict to the Security Council which gives an overview of the situation of children in conflict zones and measures taken for their protection. The annexed “list of shame” is growing rapidly and has doubled since the SG’s ninth report. It now contains 52 names, 32 of which are so-called “persistent perpetrators” - parties to conflict whose names have featured on the “list of shame” for five years or more.

The SG’s report is discussed once a year during an annual open debate. This year, it adopted a resolution strongly condemning violations of international law against children in armed conflict, calling on States to bring persistent perpetrators of violations to justice, including those who recruit and use children, kill and maim, commit sexual violence or attack schools and hospitals, and reiterating its readiness to take targeted and graduated measures against such perpetrators.

The resolution was adopted by a vote of 11 in favour and none opposed with four abstaining - China, Russia, Azerbaijan and Pakistan. This is the first time a country has ever abstained from a resolution of the Security Council protecting children and armed conflict.

## Children's Rights and Business Principles Initiative

While corporations are readily recognised as full legal persons in jurisdictions around the world, children almost universally are not. Unlike corporations, children cannot bring lawsuits, sign contracts, or even make simple financial transactions on their own, making them particularly and

uniquely vulnerable to human rights abuses. A process was launched in 2010 to develop a set of Principles for businesses to respect and support children's rights. After a series of consultations with representatives from civil society, businesses and beyond, the Children's Rights and Business Principles were adopted, which cement the corporate world's responsibility to respect children's rights, and set new standards for child-friendly business ethics across the globe.

In 2011, CRIN released a summary report on the Children's Rights and Business Principles Initiative, its objectives and developments to date. In the report we highlighted that a child rights perspective has rarely played a part in the business and human rights agenda, and the final Guiding Principles are no exception. Children remained virtually invisible in them, despite comprising almost half of the world's population, making it difficult to imagine that they could provide any practical guidance for States and business enterprises seeking to "protect, respect and remedy" the human rights of children. Accordingly, CRIN proposed a series of recommendations and amendments to the draft Guiding Principles to address this omission, urging that they should overall provide clearer obligations and instructions for State and companies to respect children, their rights, and acknowledge their special vulnerability as children.

## Regional human rights systems

Regional human rights mechanisms represent a major tool for advocates to hold States to account for violating or failing to protect children's rights. Regional human rights mechanisms have so far been established for Europe, the Americas, Africa and Southeast Asia. CRIN aims to encourage the use of these mechanisms and monitors developments in each system, sharing updates with our users. Below are some of the main developments in these regional systems from 2011.

The Council of **Europe's** "One in Five" campaign, which signals an important step towards recognising that child abuse is largely perpetrated at the hands of family members and relatives and people in positions of trust, continued to gather official support in 2011. The campaign seeks to get Member States to ratify the Lanzarote Convention on the protection of children from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. As of 2012, 43 out of 47 member States have signed the Convention, while 19 have ratified it.

Meanwhile in the **Americas**, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights held a number of hearings on children's rights issues, among which featured the proposal by a number of States to lower the minimum age of criminal responsibility from 18 to 16; sexual violence faced by women and girls in camps for internally displaced persons in Haiti since the 2009 earthquake; and the use

of disproportionate force and arbitrary detention against students during demonstrations in Chile. In addition, the Commission also created a Unit on the Rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex (LGBTI) Persons, in order to strengthen its capacity to protect their rights.

In 2011, work of the **African** Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child gathered pace, as it published its first ever decision on a complaint received, which found Kenya in violation of the rights of Nubian children to non-discrimination, nationality and protection against statelessness. During its sessions, the Committee issued Concluding Observations to Togo, Cameroon, Niger and Senegal.

In **Southeast Asia**, criticism over secrecy and lack of transparency in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) continued in 2011. Look out for our coverage in 2012 of the region's first human rights document, the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration.

## Children's Rights Wiki

Bringing together all child rights-related information from national, regional and international human rights mechanisms is our new advocacy tool: the "Children's Rights Wiki".

It is a multilingual project, with each country having its own homepage containing, among other features, a country introduction, a compilation of persistent violations of children's rights, information on children's rights recommendations issued by international and regional human rights mechanisms, as well as coverage of national laws and institutions on children's rights.

Much of the information in the Wiki is already available on the CRIN website, but might not be easily retrievable. Therefore the aim of the project is to make the large volume of information that exists on children's rights more accessible, to highlight persistent violations and inspire collective action. This helps to build a clearer picture of the violations of children's rights that persist in a given country, as well as gaps in advocacy that show which issues are not being raised. This all feeds into the ultimate goal of matching these abuses with available mechanisms as possible avenues of redress.

We launched the Wiki in September 2011 with an initial batch of 41 country pages. To-date, we have completed Wiki country pages for more than 100 countries, including the monitoring of all UN Treaty Bodies, UN Special Procedures, the UPR, regional human rights mechanisms and analysis of persistent violations in those countries. In addition reports have been produced for 118 countries

on the way children's rights have been addressed in national law, and our case law resources have been incorporated into the Wiki to connect our legal resources. We rely on the information contained in the Wiki to complete several on-going projects, and every week in our e-newsletter we highlight details of a new country page, including children's rights violations that persist in that given country.

The interactive nature of the Wiki means that many contributors around the world have played their part in the project's development by translating pages into their countries' respective official languages, reviewing or commenting on existing content, submitting information on national campaigns and details on how to lobby for children's rights at the national level.

See: <http://wiki.crin.org/mediawiki>

## Guide to Children's Rights at the United Nations

Additionally, to inform advocates of the different UN and regional human rights mechanisms at their disposal, CRIN produced an updated edition of its "Guide to Child Rights Mechanisms". It provides a briefing on all UN bodies and how they address children's rights, including existing complaints procedures available to seek redress for violations of children's rights. This guide will be updated regularly.

## CRINMAIL on Children's Rights at the UN

Bringing together all child rights-related activities across the UN, and our work in relation to it, is our e-newsletter (CRINMAIL) on 'Child Rights at the UN'. The CRINMAIL aims to: inform readers about ongoing discussions and developments taking place at the Human Rights Council, the Security Council, Treaty Bodies, with a focus on the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the General Assembly, and other UN bodies and mechanisms; alert readers to events, debates, deadlines for participation; identify new opportunities where children's rights can be raised; connect readers with other active organisations for collective lobbying; compile lists of relevant resources and give readers an opportunity to share their experiences with others.

This was the result of a merge of two previous e-newsletters: CRC CRINMAIL and HRC CRINMAIL. It now makes it easier to combine information about children's rights in all human rights bodies of the UN, including the UN General Assembly and the Security Council.

# Campaigns and advocacy

## Transparency campaign: The future of children's rights – in whose hands?

The aim of CRIN's transparency campaign is to stimulate open and transparent appointments to the top jobs in children's rights. It pushes for a process that identifies leaders with the appropriate commitment, skills and experience to work effectively for children's rights. We also closely monitor, and report on, elections to the Committee on the Rights of the Child. As part of its campaign, CRIN encourages civil society to play a role in influencing which individuals get elected to key positions by, among other things, recommending qualified and effective candidates to their respective governments and officials.

CRIN's work on the campaign in 2011-12 comprised coverage of:

**The election of nine members of the Committee on the Rights of the Child.** In 2012, lobbying got underway to replace nine members of the Committee whose terms are due to expire on 28 February 2013. As part of the Transparency Campaign, CRIN contacted all the candidates to take part in an interview in which we asked them about their experience in children's rights, what they think they can contribute to the Committee, what they think about key issues, their vision for the Committee and, importantly, how they see the role of NGOs. Read some of the successful candidates' interviews [here](#).

**The appointment of the new Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General (SRSG) for children and armed conflict.** The term of the previous SRSG, Ms Radhika Coomaraswamy, expired in July 2012. The General Assembly has since extended this mandate four times and most recently by its resolution A/RES/63/241 of 13 March 2009. The resolution does not explain the procedure for such an appointment, nor the necessary criteria. In 2012, CRIN co-signed, with a group of NGOs, a joint letter to the Secretary General to urge him to conduct a transparent selection process. The new SRSG, Leila Zerrougui, took up her new functions on 4 September 2012, following four years as the deputy head of the United Nations Stabilisation Mission in the Congo, MONUSCO.

**The election of the Council of Europe's (CoE) new Commissioner for Human Rights.** In January 2012, the CoE's Parliamentary Assembly elected Mr Nils Muižnieks from Latvia as the new Commissioner for Human Rights. He took over from former Commissioner, Thomas Hammarberg from Sweden, who had vehemently championed human and children's rights

throughout his mandate. CRIN interviewed Mr Muižnieks to find out about how he plans to follow up on Thomas Hammarberg's work and tackle some of the more controversial areas of children's rights. Read the interview [here](#).

**The appointment of the new Rapporteur on Child Rights at the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR).** In June 2011, children's rights in the Americas received a huge boost as the General Assembly of the Organisation of American States elected Rosa Maria Ortiz, a former member of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child from Paraguay, as a Commissioner of the IACHR. In addition, for the first time in its history, women now form a majority among the IACHR Commissioners.

**The election of members of the new UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights.** In September 2011, the UN Human Rights Council appointed five people as members of the new Working Group. CRIN closely monitored the election process, and looked at the list of candidates to identify those with a focus on children's rights. But the findings of the research were discouraging, with few candidates displaying an expertise or notable interest in children's rights. Although there were a handful of candidates with some background in child rights, none of these were eventually appointed as members. Read more about the elected members [here](#).

To read more about the Transparency Campaign, visit:

<http://www.crin.org/resources/infodetail.asp?id=20623>

Details on the campaign are also available in [French](#), [Portuguese](#), [Russian](#), [Spanish](#) and [Arabic](#).

## Violence against children

As follow-up to the UN Study on Violence Against Children in 2006, CRIN re-launched its thematic website on violence against children, which includes dedicated pages on the UN Study, relevant campaigns and petitions, news and reports and coverage of the work of the UN Special Representative on Violence Against Children. It has its own monthly e-newsletter, which monitors developments since the Study was published among other features, as well as reflects on the challenges ahead. Visit the website here: <http://www.crin.org/violence/>

## Campaign to end the inhuman sentencing of children

As a follow up to the UN Study, in 2010 we launched a campaign to end the inhuman sentencing of children. Research suggests that in at least seven States, child offenders can lawfully be

sentenced to death by lethal injection, hanging, shooting or stoning. In some countries, children as young as 10 can be sentenced to life imprisonment and in at least 40 States, children can still be sentenced to whipping, flogging, caning or amputation.

The aim of CRIN's inhuman sentencing campaign is to achieve legal reform: to get States to repeal all provisions authorising corporal punishment, life imprisonment and the death penalty as criminal sentences for persons under the age of 18 at the time of the offence, and get the law to explicitly prohibit these forms of punishment.

## Focus on Life imprisonment

A focus on the worst forms of sentencing, including the death penalty and life imprisonment without parole (LWOP), has disguised the widespread practice of less severe or covert forms of life imprisonment. CRIN is concerned that States are handing out lengthy sentences to children, yet international condemnation is limited to life imprisonment without parole and the death penalty. Our ongoing research shows that of 85 countries examined, 45 still allow for some form of life imprisonment.

When the Convention on the Rights of the Child was drafted more than two decades ago, NGOs pressed for the prohibition of life imprisonment outright, and were forced to settle for a prohibition on LWOP in the name of consensus. CRIN does not believe, however, that the focus should be on eliminating the worst of the worst practices, or establishing average practices in juvenile justice, but on establishing a system of justice that fully respects the rights of children. It is essential - indeed long overdue - to widen the focus and challenge any sentence under which, at the time it is passed, a child is liable to be detained for the rest of his or her natural life.

Also of concern is how the growth of indeterminate sentences – which allow for the indefinite lawful detention of a person without the certainty that can come with a traditional life sentence – has blurred the borders between life sentences and other terms of imprisonment.

CRIN believes that sentencing a child to any form of imprisonment, including imprisonment for long periods of time, is contrary to the CRC and our own principles. We believe that deprivation of a child's liberty should only be used as a measure of last resort, for reasons of public safety, and for the shortest possible period of time, with the focus exclusively on rehabilitation.

Read the report here: [http://www.crin.org/docs/Life\\_Imprisonment\\_Final.pdf](http://www.crin.org/docs/Life_Imprisonment_Final.pdf)

## Supporting national campaigns

CRIN believes, however, that international campaigning alone is unlikely to force governments to move quickly enough to prohibit inhuman sentencing. But we believe that coordination and solidarity – achieving linked campaigns internationally, across regions and nationally – can accelerate change. Ending inhuman sentencing requires law reform by parliaments in many States.

As a first step towards strengthening coordination and solidarity for this cause, CRIN has dedicated pages on its website to national campaigns that are gaining momentum in countries where it is still legal to sentence children to inhuman forms of criminal punishment. These pages include details on specific advocacy initiatives, programmes or campaigns taking place, coverage of any developments, key contacts working in the area of inhuman sentencing of children, and useful background materials. So far, we have pages for Pakistan, United States and Yemen. Also look out for upcoming pages for Nigeria, the Maldives and Argentina.

However, our main challenge continues to be the lack of human rights activists or NGOs in our target countries. This is due to a number of reasons, including the lack of any form of independent civil society, and the lack of NGOs able - or willing - to work on juvenile justice. This has prompted us to think of different approaches and partners, including most recently working with law firms that are undertaking research to identify what the practice of the law is in the countries where we have little or no local contacts.

Internationally, some small good news reached us at the end of 2012. While the Human Rights Council failed to condemn all forms of life imprisonment for children, we were pleased to hear that the UN General Assembly's Resolution on the Administration of Justice [A/C.3/67/L.34] urges States to "ensure that, under their legislation and practice, neither capital punishment nor life imprisonment without the possibility of release, not corporal punishment is imposed for offences committed by persons under 18 years of age". It further "invites States to consider repealing all other forms of life imprisonment for offences committed by persons under 18."

To read more about the campaign, visit: <http://www.crin.org/violence/campaigns/sentencing/>

## Legal reform project on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography

Also part of our follow-up work to the UN Study is our legal reform project which examines the implementation of the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (OPSC) in national law around the globe. Looking at how the OPSC has influenced legal reform in individual countries across different regions, we hope to inspire advocates in these and other jurisdictions to promote national legislation and policies that better respect the rights of children under the OPSC. Through this, we also seek to encourage positive legal change in the ways that our justice systems address child victims of exploitation and violence in general.

Our individual country reports review the national laws, policies and programmes that have been designed to implement the rights contained in the OPSC. The report's aim is to uncover legal reforms undertaken by national governments following their ratification of the OPSC and to assess how and whether these laws have brought that country into compliance with its international obligations under the Protocol. We have also reached out to children's rights NGOs working in the countries selected to gain a better sense of the current legal landscape and ascertain the existence of any relevant contemplated or pending legislation.

Read the country reports for: Japan (reviewed by Akihiko Morita, Professor/SHOKEI Gakuin University, Senior Adviser/ Save the Children Japan), Morocco (supplemental information provided by Bayti), Poland (reviewed by and published jointly with Nobody's Children Foundation), United States (reviewed by Samantha Vardaman, Shared Hope International) and Uganda.

Eventually, we plan to publish an advocacy-focused guide to legal reform with helpful hints and information for those pushing for greater implementation and enforcement of the OPSC on the ground. In the meantime, we have published our research path on the website to enable others to undertake similar research. Visit: <http://www.crin.org/resources/infodetail.asp?id=25084>

## Children's access to justice

Access to justice for children requires that all children, however they come into contact with the law, be able to fully participate in legal proceedings. Broadly speaking, it is the idea that children must be able to use and trust the legal system to protect their rights, an idea which is regularly frustrated by the failure of justice systems to account for children's unique vulnerability.

Indeed, legal proceedings all too often serve more as a source of fear and additional trauma for children rather than offering positive solutions to already complicated and distressing situations. Following the ideals of child-friendly justice, CRIN believes that legal systems must take special care to respect the rights of all children they encounter.

Legal systems can be immensely confusing and difficult if not impossible to navigate for children, especially without the help of a legal professional. Legal assistance provides children the means to understand legal proceedings, to defend their rights, and to make their voices heard. It is a necessary component of access to justice for children, and without it, it is difficult to see how children's rights can be truly respected and fulfilled.

With this in mind, legal assistance for children must not be viewed as a luxury or a privilege; rather, it must be recognised as a human right. Despite this, given the often high costs of legal services, finding legal assistance can be a complicated and challenging endeavour.

In reaction to an increasing demand for information on how to access legal assistance, CRIN produced a toolkit designed to explain the ways that legal assistance can be obtained free of charge for children and children's rights organisations, to review the international standards that underlie children's right to legal assistance, and to clarify the different types of legal assistance that may be appropriate across the various contexts in which children interact with the legal system.

To download the report, visit: <http://www.crin.org/resources/infodetail.asp?id=28579>

This complements our previous toolkits on strategic litigation, on child-friendly justice and on using regional and international human rights mechanisms for children's rights (see chapter 5 for details).

## Children's rights in Court

CRIN believes that for children to enjoy the full benefits of their rights under the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), they must be able to enforce them directly in court. But it has only been in recent years that the CRC has begun to be used more regularly in the courtroom, despite coming into force more than two decades ago.

To encourage children and their advocates to think about bringing violations of the CRC to the

justice system, CRIN has continued to develop its CRC in Court: Case Law Database, which provides plain language summaries of judgements from high-level national and international courts around the world that address children's rights.

The database comprises a collection of case law where courts have used the CRC in their decision-making process. Case summaries includes details on the background of a case, the significance of the ruling, and lessons to be learned for children's rights, as well as a CRIN commentary in which we reflect on whether we think the court ruling is consistent with the CRC. Case summaries also include excerpts from relevant judicial discussions of the CRC and, where possible, links to full text decisions.

Visit the CRC in Court database here: [http://www.crin.org/Law/CRC\\_in\\_Court/index.asp](http://www.crin.org/Law/CRC_in_Court/index.asp)

## A complaints mechanism to the CRC

Until last year, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child was the only international human rights treaty with a mandatory reporting procedure which did not have, in addition, an existing or draft communications procedure. But CRIN is glad to announce that in December 2011 the UN General Assembly adopted the text of the Optional Protocol on a complaints mechanism, which effectively grants children a path towards justice against rights violations, and an equal access to it at the international level.

Once the CRC complaints mechanism comes into force, it will allow children and their advocates who claim that their rights have been violated by a State that is a party to the CRC, to bring a complaint before the relevant committee, provided that the State has recognised the competence of the committee to receive such complaints. It will allow for appeals to be made when domestic or regional remedies fail or simply do not exist.

The end of February 2013 will mark the one year anniversary of the signing ceremony of the third Optional Protocol to the CRC establishing a complaints mechanism for children or their representatives - yet we are still seven ratifications away from its entry into force.

Thailand and Gabon were the first two countries to ratify the new treaty in September. Germany will be third once its Upper House confirms ratification and the president signs the Act. Another 32 countries have signed but actual ratification could be some way away.

NGOs continue to campaign globally, hoping that the treaty will enter into force on the first anniversary of its opening for signature. A new coalition of organisations was set up after the treaty was adopted, which succeeds to the previous Working Group of the NGO Group for the Communications Procedure. Its website can be accessed at: <http://www.ratifyop3crc.org/>

CRIN has also prepared a comparative table that looks in detail at all other existing complaints mechanisms, including issues of admissibility, confidentiality, who can bring a case, and more.

For more information, visit: [http://www.crin.org/law/CRC\\_complaints/](http://www.crin.org/law/CRC_complaints/)

## Stop making children criminals

While monitoring children's rights globally, we started to notice in the past several years a new trend in States lowering (or proposing to lower) the age of criminal responsibility – some to as low as 12 or 10 years of age, including Panama, Argentina, Brazil, France, Hungary and Russia. The suggestion that States should define an arbitrary age, within the Convention's definition of childhood (any person under the age of 18), at which children can be criminalised, is inevitably discriminatory. It is in conflict with the Convention's requirement that the child's best interests must be a primary consideration, as should the child's right to maximum possible development. It moreover inhibits the logical development of fully rights-compliant systems to respond to offending by children in a way which is in line with the Convention's standards, not to mention the danger it poses for children because it means exposing them to the criminal justice system, including harsh legal punishments such as sentences of corporal punishment, life imprisonment and the death penalty.

In order to challenge this trend, and to coincide with the UN Human Rights Council's 2012 annual day on the rights of the child under the theme of "Children and the Administration of Justice", CRIN published a paper to provoke a new debate on juvenile justice that moves beyond proposals to raise or lower the minimum ages of criminal responsibility by a year or two, to assert that the way forward is to separate the concept of responsibility from that of criminalisation.

We recognise that children are responsible for many actions defined by criminal law as crimes - insofar as they did it. And many are also responsible in the sense that they did know what they were doing was wrong, in one way or another, when they did it. Indeed, it does not serve our purpose as advocates of children's human rights to deny their immediate responsibility, to belittle their evolving capacities. But we must also recognise, as the Convention does, that their

developmental status requires a special approach.

We wish to encourage States to design systems which keep children out of the criminal justice system altogether, systems which renounce retribution and focus exclusively on children's rehabilitation, but always with necessary attention to public safety and security. It is important to note that keeping all under-18s out of the criminal justice system does not mean that young people who commit offences avoid "justice" or that nothing is done about their offending. But responsive action to child offenders must aim to rehabilitate and prevent future offending, for all our sakes, rather than simply punish offenders, which causes persisting harm not only to the overall development of many children but also of human societies. It encourages a spiral downwards by children into further offending and increasingly violent offending which often extends into adulthood. It prevents societies moving on by upholding lingering beliefs in original sin and the need to beat the devil out of children. Because of this, CRIN believes that upholding children's rights is a matter of practical concern in all regions and all legal systems. Read CRIN's paper entitled "Stop Making Children Criminals":

[http://www.crin.org/docs/Stop\\_Making\\_Children\\_Criminals.pdf](http://www.crin.org/docs/Stop_Making_Children_Criminals.pdf)

## Next stage of advocacy

CRIN's campaigns and advocacy efforts seek to respond to gaps precisely in children's rights advocacy, as it is often up to civil society to ensure all children's rights issues are visible within international, regional and national human rights mechanisms. Indeed, the full spectrum of children's rights is – as highlighted earlier – not consistently raised by, for example, UN mechanisms, particularly aspects of children's civil and political rights. This contributes to the continuation of rights violations. In targeting these omissions, therefore, we not only aim to encourage civil society to also take up "less popular" or neglected issues in their work, but additionally promote the use of stronger forms of advocacy to this end. The premise for this lies in the fact that traditional and softer forms of advocacy – such as situation analysis, report writing, lobbying governments and parliaments, use of the media, briefing of human rights mechanisms, etc. – are not having sufficient impact in preventing further rights violations. In addition, successive concluding observations issued to states by the Committee on the Rights of the Child are failing to provoke necessary law reforms and other action.

## Legal advocacy workshop

Following on from our ongoing work on the Children's Rights Wiki and our advocacy efforts, CRIN staged in October 2011 the first of a series of workshops to encourage stronger, including legal,

forms of advocacy to challenge violations of children's rights, and to identify how CRIN might best support this work globally. We held the pilot legal advocacy workshop with the International Children's Center (ICC) in Turkey, not only because it is clear that serious violations persist in the country (as in many others) or because there is a strong national children's rights community present, but also because organisations in Turkey have already made use of the European Court of Human Rights – regarded as one of the strongest available mechanisms – as an avenue of redress for violations of children's rights.

Within the workshop, we looked at developing an agreed upon selection of serious rights violations, affecting different groups of children in a wide range of settings (i.e. child protection, education, juvenile justice, nationality etc.) as the focus of advocacy efforts. With these chosen, we worked with participants to “match” them with appropriate forms of legal or quasi-legal advocacy - including identifying opportunities for positive legal action or invocation of appropriate human rights mechanisms to remedy the violations, such as through use of complaints mechanisms attached to international instruments or complaints to constitutional courts.

Our emphasis throughout this process was on the practicalities and necessities for action on these issues, so for each remedy we also sought to identify the necessary resources, expertise and conditions for their use - would, for example, a particular form of advocacy require the identification of child victims, the assistance of trained and experienced lawyers or resources not readily available to human rights campaigning groups? Finally, we worked with participants to identify how CRIN could support and encourage these forms of advocacy - both directly by providing specific research and information to human rights defenders but also more generally by reviewing and writing up reports on these workshops to create a best-practice model for use by other campaigning groups around the world.

CRIN will conduct similar workshops in the near future, on both national and regional levels. We believe that every country needs to go through a similar sort of discussion or process in order to continue to address what more can be done to force governments to take the CRC seriously as a legal instrument, as well as make sure that children have effective, accessible remedies when their rights have been violated. To this end, in the coming year CRIN will build on the Children's Rights Wiki to develop a new online tool that we hope will facilitate this process and encourage the use of stronger forms of advocacy, including legal advocacy.

## Chapter 3: Working with Others

CRIN's ongoing efforts to build a movement for children's rights and support advocates around the world requires identifying key partners (both existing and potential) in many States with whom to raise the profile of all child rights issues at national and regional levels, including law funds, media agencies, academics and academic institutions and UN bodies.

In 2011/12, CRIN's website continued to be used as a platform for facilitating global, regional and national advocacy by identifying new threats to children's rights as well as new opportunities to challenge them, and providing national perspectives on global and regional campaigns to help maximise their reach. The following are the partners we continued to work with in 2011, as well as the ways in which we assisted them in seeking to raise the profile of children's rights in all regions.

### Children's rights directory - who and where are the CRIN users



### International Council on Violence against Children

CRIN is a member of the International NGO Council on Violence Against Children, which was set up to support strong and effective follow-up to the 2006 UN Study on Violence Against Children. The NGO Council plays a central role in identifying key priorities and follow-up activities in collaboration with the SRSG on Violence against Children; in ensuring civil society participation in such activities; in monitoring the implementation of the study's recommendations by member states; and in making effective use of information channels and networks, such as CRIN, to keep

the child rights community informed of all the above.

Read more about the International NGO Council here: <http://www.crin.org/violence/NGOs/>

## Global update: Five Years On

In 2011, the NGO Council produced a follow-up report to the UN Study entitled 'Five Years On: a global update on violence against children', which exposes ongoing and new trends of violence affecting millions of children, which are often perpetrated in environments where it is socially condoned and in many cases a lawful practice either as a form of discipline or judicial sentence.

Among its findings, the report shows that the known number of juvenile offenders executed worldwide rose by more than 50 per cent in the last five years, that 78 countries still authorise corporal punishment by teachers, that children with disabilities are four to five times more likely to experience violence and sexual abuse than non-disabled children, and that violent crimes against children are three times less likely to be reported than those against adults.

To download the Five Years On report, visit: [http://www.crin.org/docs/Five\\_Years\\_On.pdf](http://www.crin.org/docs/Five_Years_On.pdf)

A second report was published in 2012 entitled: 'Violating Children's Rights: Harmful practices based on tradition, culture, religion or superstition'. This short report is designed to complement other current activities in the UN system that are focusing on harmful practices and children and will hopefully lead to more effective action. The International NGO Council believes that the continuing legal and social acceptance of these violations and the slow progress in identifying and effectively addressing them are symptomatic of children's low status, as possessions rather than individuals and rights-holders, in societies across all regions.

The report first looks at the definition and scope of harmful traditional, cultural and religious practices violating children's rights, the human rights context for their prohibition and elimination, and includes a list of practices identified through a call for evidence issued by the International NGO Council earlier in 2012 and additional desk research. It also provides some examples of legal and other measures already taken to challenge and eliminate the harmful practices identified. The final section provides recommendations for action by states, UN and UN-related agencies, INGOs, NGOs, national human rights institutions and others. Download the report here:

[http://www.crin.org/docs/InCo\\_Report\\_15Oct.pdf](http://www.crin.org/docs/InCo_Report_15Oct.pdf)

## NGO Group for the CRC and the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child

CRIN continued its cooperation with the NGO Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child, in which we occupy a seat on the Executive Committee. Together with the NGO Group, we provide coverage of the work of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, report on the sessions of the Committee and make alternative reports and Concluding Observations in English available on the CRIN website. CRIN also posts submissions for the Committee's annual Day of General Discussion on its website and reports on the discussions of the day and its outcomes.

CRIN and the NGO Group also work together to encourage NGOs and others to lobby their governments to propose new members to the Committee on the Rights of the Child. CRIN interviewed candidates for the recent elections. Read our interviews with some of the successful candidates at <http://www.crin.org/resources/infodetail.asp?id=30027>.

### Mainstreaming children's rights

CRIN also participates in several working groups of the NGO Group, in particular the Working Group (WG) for the Human Rights Council, recently renamed the Working Group on Mainstreaming Children's Rights.

The aim of this WG is to develop and coordinate an overall strategy on mainstreaming children's rights. Many organisations, including members of the NGO Group, may already be doing this within their areas of focus, but this has not yet been done in a coordinated and collective way. An initial mapping exercise is underway and it is hoped it may highlight some neglected areas and/or new opportunities for children's rights organisations.

### Ombudspersons

CRIN continues to work with existing children's ombudspersons around the world. We have worked in partnership with the European Network of Ombudspersons for Children (ENOC) for over seven years, providing web hosting services, information and encouraging its members to participate in international children's rights advocacy. The ENOC site can be found at [www.crin.org/enoc](http://www.crin.org/enoc).

As part of our transparency campaign, CRIN also continues to monitor restrictions, or threats, to children's ombudspersons across regions. CRIN supports those campaigning for the development and establishment of ombudspersons in countries where there are none or where their mandates

are not in line with the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child or the Paris Principles relating to the status of national institutions.

## Council of Europe

The Council of Europe (CoE) is one of the leading regional bodies working in defence of children's rights. CRIN supports the institution's activities, including by advertising CoE events and campaign materials on our website, such as the One in Five campaign to promote legal, educational and other measures needed to combat all forms of sexual violence against children. In the past year, CRIN issued a special edition of our thematic CRINMAIL on Violence Against Children, in which we provided updates on national campaign partners and the ratification status of the Lanzarote Convention.

## Interagency Panel on Juvenile Justice

CRIN became a member of the United Nations Interagency Panel on Juvenile Justice (IPJJ), a coordination panel on technical advice and assistance in juvenile justice composed of 13 United Nations agencies and non-governmental organisations actively involved in juvenile justice. It was established following the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Resolution 1997/30.

The Panel functions as a platform for the exchange of information and expertise at the national, regional and international level. Together, IPJJ members are present in over 180 countries. They reach better coordination and efficiency by collaborating and carrying out joint actions in the areas of advocacy, policy development, capacity-building, legal reform, research and publications, monitoring, data-collection and evaluation. Visit their website: [www.ipjj.org/](http://www.ipjj.org/)

## Supporting national actors

In our outreach efforts, CRIN endeavours to support the work of national organisations and advocates who work in children's rights. One such way is by providing useful advice in the form of toolkits, with which we support others to take up campaigns at a national level and supply them with examples of what has and has not worked elsewhere. Last year, we produced a Legal Assistance Toolkit for Children and Children Rights Organisations, which is currently available in English, Arabic, Spanish and Russian.

As part of CRIN's work on our campaign to end the inhuman sentencing of children, we have

dedicated pages to national campaigns that are gaining momentum in countries where forms of punishment are still legal. So far, we have these pages for Pakistan, United States and Yemen, which can be accessed through <http://www.crin.org/violence/campaigns/sentencing/#NC>.

## Supporting international campaigns

CRIN takes advantage of its website as an online advocacy platform, supporting international campaigns by hosting them or offering exposure and publicity. On our campaigns page, we have hosted or given coverage to the following campaigns for:

- online action to urge ratification of the Domestic Workers Convention;
- the universal ratification of the two Optional Protocols to the CRC;
- the Council of Europe's One in Five campaign against the sexual abuse of children; and
- a citizen campaign to get the world's biggest bookseller, Amazon, to stop selling "parenting manuals" that promote the corporal punishment of children.

To view our campaigns page, visit: <http://crin.org/violence/campaigns/index.asp>

## Collaborating with legal professionals

A number of law firms have played an important role in CRIN's campaign activities, including by contributing research based on their experience of legal practice within the countries in which they operate. Latham and Watkins LLP, White and Case LLP and Steptoe and Johnson LLP all conducted research on the practice and prevalence of inhuman sentencing in the countries involved in our inhuman sentencing campaign, as well as as part of our global review of the life imprisonment of children.

As part of the ongoing CRC in Court database, law firms and pro-bono lawyers continued to research cases in which the Convention on the Rights of the Child has been cited, and produced summaries for inclusion in the database. Allen and Overy; Reed Smith LLP; Shearman and Sterling LLP; Dewey LeBoeuf LLP; Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher and Flom LLP; White and Case LLP; all contributed to this database, as did legally trained interns, who largely applied to work with CRIN through BPP law school. The CRC in Court database produced through these collaborations can be found at [http://www.crin.org/Law/CRC\\_in\\_Court/index.asp](http://www.crin.org/Law/CRC_in_Court/index.asp).

# Chapter 4: CRIN resources

## CRINMAIL

CRINMAIL is the flagship publication of our work on children's rights. It is a regular email news and information list, produced in English, French, Spanish, Arabic and Russian, that covers both general child rights issues as well as the five thematic areas of our work (see below).

Issues offer a selection of news items, events, reports, calls for participation and employment announcements. Since 2010, the CRINMAIL has provided a more analytical take on the week's news.

In addition to supplying information and support, the CRINMAIL launches advocacy campaigns, highlights neglected or emerging issues, and promotes the work of child rights advocates and organisations around the world. Across the nine different lists of CRINMAIL, there are well over 10,000 subscribers. Subscriptions to CRINMAIL have historically increased by almost 20 per cent each year, depending on the edition, and this trend continued in 2011. Anyone can subscribe to the list free of charge and submit information for inclusion.

CRIN offers nine different lists of CRINMAIL:

- CRINMAIL English: This is CRIN's original list. Distributed once a week.
- CRINMAIL Arabic: Distributed every two weeks.
- CRINMAIL French: Distributed monthly, plus special editions.
- CRINMAIL Spanish: Distributed monthly, plus special editions.
- CRINMAIL Russian: Distributed monthly.
- CRINMAIL Children and Armed Conflict: Distributed monthly.
- CRINMAIL Violence against Children: Distributed monthly.
- CRINMAIL Child Rights at the United Nations: Distributed monthly
- CRINMAIL Children in Court: Covers updates on global developments in strategic litigation for children's rights, including court cases, legal advocacy campaigns, and news and publications. Distributed monthly.

## Email information service

CRIN receives about 100 email enquiries per week, mostly involving questions about children's rights and the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and questions about CRIN itself. Our target is to always respond to emails within three days of receipt. The enquiry desk also moderates and approves submissions of resources and feedback posted on the website by our users. About 20 to 30 resources are submitted to CRIN for publication each week, varying from press releases and calls for information to new reports and job adverts.

## Working languages

Ensuring key resources are available in as many languages as possible is central to the work of CRIN. As an information hub, it would be discriminatory and contrary to our core values to publish information in just one language. We are therefore always looking to broaden our dedicated team of volunteer translators.

CRIN's working languages are English, Arabic, French, Russian and Spanish, with additional materials available in Chinese, Farsi, Japanese and Portuguese.

Russian became CRIN's fifth working language in 2010, with the launch of a microsite in Russian. The site now includes its own CRINMAIL, which is distributed once a month, and covers the latest news and reports in the Eurasia region, and contains resources on the full range of children's rights, including details about global campaigns, and explanations of how to use international human rights mechanisms to challenge breaches of children's rights. Visit our Russian microsite here: <http://www.crin.org/russian/>

## Events

CRIN continued its coverage of events related to children's rights across the globe in 2011 and 2012. This included conferences, workshops, academic courses, treaty body sessions at the UN, all of which are listed in our Events page, and advertised in the English CRINMAIL. Visit our Events page: <http://www.crin.org/resources/events/>

## Toolkits, reports & factsheets

CRIN continued to develop our growing list of information/advocacy guides. Surveys and website traffic reports have demonstrated that such tools are the most read of all CRIN's resources. The following are some of the most popular with our users:

- Legal Assistance Toolkit for Children and Children Rights Organisations  
[[English](#) / [Arabic](#) / [Russian](#) / [Spanish](#)]
- Child-Friendly Justice and Children's Rights  
[[English](#) / [French](#) / [Russian](#) / [Spanish](#)]
- Guide to Strategic Litigation  
[[English](#) / [Turkish](#) / [French](#) / [Spanish](#) / [Arabic](#) / [Russian](#)]
- Guide to Child Rights Mechanisms - 2nd Edition  
[[English](#)]
- Guide to Child Rights Mechanisms - 1st edition  
[[Arabic](#) / [Spanish](#) ]
- Guide to Non-discrimination and the CRC  
[[English](#)]
- Guide to Using Mechanisms of the UN to Submit Complaints Alleging Violations of Children's Rights  
[[English](#)]
- Updated Advocacy Toolkit on Ending the Inhuman Sentencing of Children  
[[English](#)]
- The Status of Children's Rights in the UN Universal Periodic Review  
[[English](#) / [French](#) / [Spanish](#)]
- Global Report on Status Offences  
[[English](#) / [Spanish](#)]
- Updated Media Toolkit for organisations with media activities  
[[Arabic](#) / [English](#) / [French](#) / [Russian](#) / [Spanish](#)]

## Special features

**CRIN quiz** – In the past year, we continued with our CRIN Quiz feature, which aims to both entertain and inform. The quiz occasionally features in the English CRINMAIL and reflects on the latest news and events on children's rights, as well as international thematic days. Our quizzes can be found at: <http://www.crin.org/quiz/quiz.asp>.

**Jargon of the Week** – In 2011, CRIN continued developing its A to Z of Child Rights Jargon, which seeks to promote the use of clear language among child rights advocates. It consists in identifying examples of NGO-speak, for which we suggest plain English alternatives. Our aim with it is to make children's rights more accessible through the use of clear language that is widely understood. New additions to the list appear in the Jargon of the Week feature in the English CRINMAIL. Our A to Z of Child Rights Jargon guide can be found at: <http://www.crin.org/resources/infoDetail.asp?ID=22942>

**Leak of the Week** – Another occasional feature of the English CRINMAIL is the Leak of the Week, in which we reflect on the latest absurd news, proposals and allegations by States around the world in a tongue-in-cheek way.

**Social networking** – CRIN continues to engage with social networks to help spread the word about children's rights and expand the reach of our work and advocacy in general. On our Facebook page, we post leading news stories on child rights issues, which regularly host comments and produce debate between our 1,243 Facebook friends. Our Twitter account is also updated regularly with news stories, publications and statements, and currently has 2,558 followers.

Connect to CRIN through Facebook on:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Child-Rights-International-Network/263654037040618>

Our twitter page can be found at: [www.twitter.com/crinwire](http://www.twitter.com/crinwire) and you can follow us @crinwire.

# Chapter 5: Ethical work practices

CRIN aims to promote children's rights through information sharing and networking in a manner consistent with our stated ethical values and principles. We believe we have a responsibility to act in an ethical way and be mindful of our environmental impact.

We recognise that our operations have an effect on the local, regional and global environment. As the aim of our work is to bring about change in society, in communities, in groups and in individuals, this should be linked to any impact we may have on the environment.

We therefore identified the following main interlinked guiding principles which are informed by our core values. CRIN is committed to practice that is transparent, accountable, honest, non-discriminatory and conducive to open communication with partners.

## 1. Ethical Financial Management

CRIN is committed to work with financial companies that are ethically driven. We accordingly work with the following:

**Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) Bank:** The Charities Aid Foundation is a registered charity that works to create greater value for charities and social enterprise. They do this by transforming the way donations are made and the way charitable funds are managed. CAF Bank focuses exclusively on delivering charity banking services.

**The Pension Trust:** The Pensions Trust is an occupational pension scheme providing pension arrangements solely for employees of organisations involved in social, educational, charitable, voluntary and not-for-profit sectors. The Pensions Trust is a not-for-profit organisation and is not an insurance company.

**CaSE Insurance:** CaSE Insurance returns 40 per cent of its profits to the charity sector through Charities Aid Foundation Bank.

## 2. Information Technology

CRIN strives to identify the most environmentally friendly technologies and whenever possible to adopt them.

**Solar Powered Website:** CRIN has opted for environmentally focused IT solutions to reduce the environmental impact of its IT services and reduce its energy requirements. The Green IT Company has supported CRIN to move to a solar powered Virtual Server.

Solar Energy Host is the conscious solution for green web hosting in an age of global warming and climate change. CRIN website is hosted by AISO (Affordable Internet Services Online) using solar energy that means the energy powering the CRIN website comes directly from the sun!

AISO is a green web hosting company committed to help fight pollution and preserve our natural resources by owning and operating their own green data centre and network that is powered by solar panels, not energy credits. In 2011, we moved our office server into the Cloud, also 100 per cent solar powered.

**Open Source:** CRIN decided to opt for using Open Source and an operational system called Ubuntu, instead of the mainstream Windows. The term “open source” refers to software that can be freely redistributed, analysed and modified by anyone. Its fundamental features are to be free, open and collaborative. As CRIN believes information should be made freely available in a variety of formats, using Open Source is entirely in line with CRIN’s values.

## 3. Publications

CRIN’s activities are based on the belief that information is a powerful tool for realising children’s rights. As information is CRIN’s main tool to achieve its objectives, it is important that the ethos of copyrights adopted by CRIN reflects the organisation’s overarching principles.

**Copyrights:** In line with the Open Source principles, CRIN has adopted the Creative Commons licensing. The non profit organisation Creative Commons was influenced by the Open Source software movement, and released a set of free copyright licenses in 2002. These tools enable creators, or authors, to publish their content more easily, to have their creative works found by others more readily, and most importantly, to have their creative works used on more flexible terms

than the traditional “all rights reserved” approach of default copyrights protection.

Creative Commons licensing provides CRIN with the dual function of keeping its copyrights and ensuring that CRIN’s work is credited but also allowing free access to CRIN information materials and publications.

## 4. Green Policy

CRIN endeavours to contract services that have a green policy or that are eco-friendly. Wherever possible and appropriate, for instance by purchasing recycled goods. These include:

**Green Stationery Supplies:** CRIN strives to purchase recycled stationery supplies. One of CRIN’s suppliers is The Green Stationery Company.

**Local Council Recycling Scheme:** CRIN subscribes to the Southwark Council Recycling scheme that includes the collection of plastic bottles and cans, paper and car.

**Printing:** CRIN encourages staff to minimise printing, use recycled paper, double sided printing, re-use paper and envelopes, etc. We are also reducing the amount of publications we print and limit them to those who do not have regular internet access.

**Energy:** CRIN attempts to minimise energy consumption as much as possible, by for instance, ensuring computers are switched off and not using air conditioning. And as mentioned earlier, the CRIN website is solar powered.

# Chapter 6: Who we are

## CRIN Staff

Veronica Yates – Director

Jenny Thomas – Senior Child Rights Officer

Edward Parsons – Operations Coordinator

Sabine Saliba Boutruche – Child Rights Officer

Ed Renshaw – Child Rights Officer

Nasser (Alissa) Atallah – MENA Regional Coordinator

Larisa Abrickaja – Eurasia Regional Coordinator

Patrick Geary – Legal Coordinator

Leo Ratledge – Researcher

Vanessa Stevens-Downie - News & Content Editor

Victor Sande-Aneiros – Writer & Web Editor

Theresa O'Neill – Administrative and Finance Officer

## CRIN Globally

The extent of CRIN's reach would not be possible without the help of dedicated volunteers – whether as office interns or home-based translators around the world. In particular, we would like to thank: Olivier Gazzera, Denitsa Maldenova, Anna Bilous, Shaker Jamal, Laura Robbins-Wright, Sara Khan, Ladi Eguche, Raneem Baassiri, Layla Zamanpour, Vaida Majauskaite, Nedjma Ouerdane, Emma Wadsworth-Jones, Kelsey Stratton and Danielle Alperin.

Our Arabic translators: Mervat Chahine and Hivin Kako. Our French translators: Nedjma Ouerdane and Stéphanie Miroux. Our Russian translators: Katya Bullock, Alexandra Anuchina, Natalia Kashirina, Alexandra Mitskyavichene, Darya Anuchina, Olga Vlasova, Dina Kudinova and Liubov Lobanova. Our Spanish translators: Aida Mateos, Ara Yoo, Ana Bravo, Ana Rodriguez Gomez, Ana Rodriguez Diaz, Nina Moyano Cymberkewitch, Carmen Lirio and Lorena Sanz Gonzalo.

A special debt of gratitude is due to Graham Miles, Webimperative for his work on our website; Encription Ltd for kindly helping us to improve website security; Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP, Latham & Watkins LP, White & Case LLP, and Reed Smith for their continued pro bono legal services; Nadine Fakhry, at Space Oddity for design work, and Simon Flacks and Sharon

Owen for assisting us in developing CRIN's resources.

## CRIN Trustees

CRIN is supported in its work by a Board of Trustees composed of representatives of international children's rights organisations and other experts within the field of children's rights. The role of the Board is to oversee the financial and strategic management of CRIN's work. Current members are:

Peter Newell, Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children – **Chair**

Mike Annison, Christian Aid – **Treasurer**

Gema Vicente, Independent Consultant – **Secretary**

Elda Moreno, Council of Europe

Sebastian Kohn, Open Society Justice Initiative

Knut Haanes, Deputy Ombudsman, Norway

Eva Geidenmark, Save the Children Sweden

Bill Bell, Save the Children UK

Andres Guerrero, UNICEF (until July 2012)

## Donors

CRIN's work is funded by: The Sigrid Rausing Trust, The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Swedish International Development and Cooperation Agency (Sida), the Oak Foundation, a Private Donor and Save the Children Sweden.