

Progress towards prohibiting all corporal punishment in the Middle East and North Africa



Global Initiative to
End All Corporal Punishment
of Children

Prepared by the Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children (www.endcorporalpunishment.org), January 2017

The following table summarises the legal status of corporal punishment of children – and progress towards achieving prohibition – in all settings in all states in the Middle East and North Africa. Governments are increasingly enacting laws to prohibit this form of violence against children. As at January 2017, three states have achieved prohibition in all settings, including the home; governments of three others have expressed a commitment to enacting full prohibition. Three states have prohibited corporal punishment in all alternative care settings and day care, 12 in all schools, 12 in penal institutions and 16 as a sentence for crime.

States with full prohibition in legislation

The following three states have prohibited corporal punishment in all settings, including the home.

State	Prohibited in the home	Prohibited in alternative care settings	Prohibited in day care	Prohibited in schools	Prohibited in penal institutions	Prohibited as sentence for crime
Israel	YES ¹	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
South Sudan	YES ²	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Tunisia	YES ³	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

States expressing commitment to law reform in UPR and other contexts

Governments in the following three states have expressed a commitment to prohibition of all corporal punishment of children through unequivocally accepting recommendations to prohibit made during the Universal Periodic Review (UPR).

<i>States committed to law reform ...</i>						
State	Prohibited in the home	Prohibited in alternative care settings	Prohibited in day care	Prohibited in schools	Prohibited in penal institutions	Prohibited as sentence for crime
Algeria ⁴	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO	YES
Morocco ⁵	NO	NO	NO	NO ⁶	YES	YES
Oman ⁷	NO	NO	[SOME] ⁸	YES	NO	[YES]

¹ 2000 Supreme Court judgment ruled against all violence in childrearing; “reasonable chastisement” defence repealed same year

² Prohibited in Transitional Constitution 2011, confirming pre-independence prohibition in Interim Constitution 2005 and Child Act 2008

³ Prohibited in 2010 amendment to Penal Code

⁴ Government accepted UPR recommendation to prohibit in all settings (2012)

⁵ Government accepted UPR recommendation to prohibit in all settings (2012)

⁶ Ministerial direction advises against corporal punishment but no prohibition in law

⁷ Government accepted UPR recommendation to prohibit in all settings (2015)

States without a clear commitment to law reform

The following 17 states have yet to make a clear commitment to prohibiting all corporal punishment. Some of these states have accepted UPR recommendations to prohibit but have also indicated that they consider existing legislation adequately protects children from corporal punishment, in conflict with information collected by the Global Initiative. Some states have accepted some UPR recommendations to prohibit corporal punishment but rejected other similar recommendations.

<i>States without a clear commitment to law reform ...</i>						
State	Prohibited in the home	Prohibited in alternative care settings	Prohibited in day care	Prohibited in schools	Prohibited in penal institutions	Prohibited as sentence for crime
Bahrain	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO	YES
Djibouti	NO	NO	NO	[YES]	NO	YES
Egypt	NO	NO	NO	[NO] ⁹	[YES] ¹⁰	YES
Iran	NO	NO	SOME ¹¹	NO ¹²	YES	NO
Iraq	NO ¹³	NO	NO	NO	SOME ¹⁴	YES
Jordan ¹⁵	NO	[SOME] ¹⁶	[NO]	YES	[YES]	YES
Kuwait ¹⁷	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO	[YES]
Lebanon	NO	NO	NO	NO ¹⁸	[YES]	YES
Libya	NO	NO	SOME ¹⁹	YES	NO	NO
Qatar ²⁰	NO	NO	NO	NO ²¹	YES	NO
Saudi Arabia ²²	NO	NO	NO	NO ²³	NO	NO
State of Palestine	NO	NO	NO	SOME ²⁴	[SOME] ²⁵	[SOME] ²⁶
Sudan	NO	NO	NO	SOME ²⁷	NO	[YES] ²⁸
Syrian Arab Republic	NO	NO	NO	NO ²⁹	NO	YES
United Arab Emirates	NO	NO	NO	YES	[YES]	NO
Western Sahara	NO	[NO]	[NO]	[NO]	[YES]	[YES]

⁸ Possibly prohibited in preschool provision

⁹ Ministerial directive states corporal punishment should not be used but possibly no prohibition in law

¹⁰ Possibly lawful in social welfare institutions

¹¹ Prohibited in day care centres (kindergartens)

¹² Government directive states corporal punishment should not be used but no prohibition in law

¹³ But possibly prohibited in Kurdistan

¹⁴ Prohibited in prisons and detention centres

¹⁵ Government accepted UPR recommendation to prohibit in all settings (2009) but stated current laws do not prescribe corporal punishment and subsequently limited but did not repeal right to discipline according to “general custom”

¹⁶ Possibly prohibited in institutions

¹⁷ Government accepted 2010 UPR recommendation to prohibit but subsequently stated existing law adequate; Government accepted 2015 recommendation to prohibit but appeared to defend “simple discipline”

¹⁸ Ministerial directive states corporal punishment should not be used but no prohibition in law

¹⁹ Unlawful in preschool provision

²⁰ Government accepted some UPR recommendations to prohibit but rejected another similar one, stating corporal punishment already prohibited (2010)

²¹ Code of Conduct for schools states corporal punishment should not be used but no prohibition in law

²² Government accepted UPR recommendations to prohibit corporal punishment in schools and penal system but stated already prohibited in schools and care settings (2009); recommendations to prohibit in 2013 UPR rejected

²³ Ministerial circulars advise against corporal punishment but no prohibition in law

²⁴ Prohibited in UNRWA schools and in East Jerusalem; elsewhere Ministerial direction advises against corporal punishment but no prohibition in law

²⁵ Possibly unlawful in East Jerusalem

²⁶ Possibly unlawful in Gaza

²⁷ Prohibited in Khartoum State

²⁸ Possibly lawful under Shari'a law

²⁹ Ministry of Education advises against corporal punishment but no prohibition in law

<i>States without a clear commitment to law reform ...</i>						
State	Prohibited in the home	Prohibited in alternative care settings	Prohibited in day care	Prohibited in schools	Prohibited in penal institutions	Prohibited as sentence for crime
Yemen	NO	NO	[SOME] ³⁰	YES	YES	NO

Note

The above information is based wherever possible on examination of national legislation; additional information is gathered from many sources, including reports to and by the United Nations human rights treaty bodies.

Information in square brackets is unconfirmed. We are very grateful to government officials, UNICEF and other UN agencies, NGOs and human rights institutions, and many individuals who have assisted us in our research. We welcome corrections and updates: email info@endcorporalpunishment.org. For further details on all states see the individual state reports at www.endcorporalpunishment.org.

Analysis prepared by the Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children
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 January 2017

³⁰ Possibly prohibited in preschool provision