

Ending Corporal Punishment of Children: Africa E-newsletter

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FRENCH VERSION ALSO AVAILABLE



Global Initiative to
**End All Corporal Punishment
of Children**

In this issue:

We are pleased to announce the upcoming launch of a series of three booklets by the Global Initiative and Save the Children Sweden, which aim to provide answers to the most frequently asked questions and address common misconceptions about the reasons for prohibition of corporal punishment and its impact on families. Read on for further details about and the booklets, other resources and more.

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1. Who we are

The Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children (www.endcorporalpunishment.org) is a non-governmental organisation (NGO) which aims to act as a catalyst to encourage more action and progress towards ending all corporal punishment in all continents. We support national campaigns with relevant information and assistance.

The Africa project of the Global Initiative aims specifically to increase the number of states in Africa committed to and actively pursuing the prohibition and elimination of all corporal punishment of children, in the family, schools and all other settings. For more information, please contact Sonia Vohito

at: vohito@endcorporalpunishment.org.

Through this newsletter we aim to keep civil society organisations and other stakeholders informed and encourage networking around the issue of corporal punishment of children. We encourage readers to forward the newsletter to whoever might be interested and we encourage organisations to [sign up to the aims](#) of the Global Initiative.

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2. Recent developments in Africa

Positive moves

Zimbabwe: The Zimbabwe Teachers' Association (Zimta) has urged its members to comply with the recent High Court ruling, which declared corporal punishment unconstitutional. Zimta chief executive officer, Sifiso Ndlovu called for the use of non-violent methods of disciplining children both in schools and in the community (*News Day*, 27 April 2017). Note: Corporal punishment is currently lawful in the home, alternative care settings, day care, schools, penal institutions and as a sentence for a crime. On 28 February 2017, the High Court of Zimbabwe ruled that parents and teachers who inflict corporal punishment on children are in breach of the 2013 Constitution.

Prohibition to elimination

Benin: In March 2017, the [NGO RACINES](#) conducted a teachers' training against the use of corporal punishment in schools, which involved 19 schools from the districts of Doume and Gouka. The training aimed to inform teachers on the law prohibiting corporal punishment in all settings, its negative effects and the use of non-violent methods of discipline. Note: Under the Children's Code of 2015, corporal punishment is unlawful in all settings, including in the home.

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3. Campaigns and other moves towards prohibition

National campaigns

Plan International: With financial support from the French Ministry of Foreign

Affairs and International Development, Plan International is rolling out a [project against gender-based violence in schools](#) in three communities of Cameroon, Senegal and Togo. The 2-year project aims to promote community mobilisation on gender-based violence in schools. It will carry out school and community outreach activities involving teachers, parents and learners. Recognising that corporal punishment continues to be administered in schools, the project aims to establish child protection, reporting and prevention mechanisms for gender-based violence in schools and in the communities. **Note:** Corporal punishment is prohibited in all settings including the home in Togo, in all schools in Cameroon and some schools in Senegal.

The Gambia: In March 2017, ActionAid International-The Gambia held a child protection sensitisation forum with law enforcement agents. The forum aimed to train law enforcement agents in child rights issues, in accordance with international and regional human rights standards. The forum is part of a project rolled out in collaboration with the Child Protection Alliance and FAWEGAM. The project aims to empower child-focused organisations to promote children's rights in three regions of The Gambia. Among other forms of violence against children, corporal punishment was identified as a key challenge to child protection in the Gambia. (*The Point*, 17 March 2017)

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4. Human rights monitoring

Key decisions and recommendations, etc.

The **African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child** held its 29th ordinary session in May 2017. The Committee raised the issue of corporal punishment of children in its examination of reports from [Chad](#), [Côte d'Ivoire](#) and [Comoros](#); its concluding observations have not yet been published.

At its 74th session in January/February 2017, the **Committee on the Rights of the Child** expressed concern at the extremely high levels of violent “disciplining” of children in the [Central African Republic](#) and recommended that the draft Child Protection Code be aligned with the provisions of the Convention, notably through the amendment of existing legislation to explicitly prohibit corporal punishment in all settings. To the [Democratic Republic of Congo](#), the Committee recommended the enactment of clear legal prohibition of corporal punishment in all settings and the promotion of positive discipline. Similarly, the Committee recommended

to [Malawi](#) that legislation be reviewed to prohibit corporal punishment in all “non-State settings, including at home” and that awareness-raising programmes on positive discipline be strengthened.

At its 34th session in March 2017, the **Human Rights Council** adopted the final Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review of Uganda and Zimbabwe which took place in November 2016. Prior to the session, [Uganda](#) accepted a recommendation to “enact legislation prohibiting violence against children in all settings” but [Zimbabwe](#) stated it is unable to support the recommendation to abolish corporal punishment in all settings “as this matter is still pending before the Constitutional Court”.

At the 27th session of the **Universal Periodic Review** in May 2017, recommendations to prohibit corporal punishment of children in all settings were made to [Algeria](#), [Morocco](#) and [South Africa](#). All three states will examine their respective recommendations and formally respond before the 36th session of the Human Rights Council in September 2017.

Briefing the human rights bodies

The Global Initiative regularly briefs human rights treaty monitoring bodies prior to examination of state parties, and encourages national NGOs and human rights institutions to do likewise. We are particularly trying to identify “key” NGOs and human rights institutions in each state with whom we can work more closely in briefing the treaty bodies: if you/your organisation is interested please contact vohito@endcorporalpunishment.org.

Below is a list of African states coming up for examination by the treaty bodies. For deadlines for submitting briefings to the Committees, please see the individual country reports on the [Global Initiative website](#). We are always willing to advise NGOs and human rights institutions on the practical details of how to submit briefings (email vohito@endcorporalpunishment.org).

Committee on the Rights of the Child:

(1) Session 78 Pre-Sessional Working Group (Oct 2017). The PSWG will adopt Lists of Issues for [Angola](#) and [Lesotho](#)

Committee Against Torture:

(1) Session 62 (Nov/Dec 2017). The Committee will examine [Cameroon](#), [Mauritius](#) and [Rwanda](#) and adopt the List of Issues for [Mauritania](#) and Lists of Issues Prior to Reporting for [Malawi](#) and [Somalia](#)

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women:

- (1) Session 67 (Jul 2017). The Committee will examine [Niger](#) and [Nigeria](#)
- (2) Session 69 Pre-Sessional Working Group (Jul 2017). The PSWG will adopt the List of Issues Prior to Reporting for [Mauritius](#)
- (3) Session 68 (Oct/Nov 2017). The Committee will examine [Burkina Faso](#) and [Kenya](#)

Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities:

- (1) Session 18 (Aug 2017). The Committee will examine [Morocco](#) and adopt the List of Issues Prior to Reporting for [Tunisia](#)
- (2) Session 8 Pre-Sessional Working Group (Sep 2017). The PSWG will adopt Lists of Issues for [Seychelles](#) and [Sudan](#)

Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights:

- (1) Session 61 Pre-Sessional Working Group (Oct 2017). The PSWG will adopt the List of Issues for [South Africa](#)

Human Rights Committee:

- (1) Session 120 (Jul 2017). The Committee will examine [Madagascar](#) and [Swaziland](#); the Country Report Task Forces will adopt the List of Issues for [Liberia](#) and the List of Issues Prior to Reporting for [Chad](#)
- (2) Session 121 (Oct/Nov 2017). The Committee will examine [Cameroon](#), [DR Congo](#) and [Mauritius](#); the Country Report Task Forces will adopt the List of Issues for [Algeria](#)

The Universal Periodic Review

The obligation to prohibit and eliminate corporal punishment of children continues to be raised with states in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of their overall human rights records. The Global Initiative submits briefings on every state being reviewed, sharing advance draft briefings with relevant organisations to encourage submissions at national level. We also conduct a follow up programme, pursuing the issue with states that accept recommendations to prohibit corporal punishment by writing to key NGOs, NHRIs and Government ministers, and undertake ongoing analysis of coverage of the issue in all aspects of the UPR process (for further information email vohito@endcorporalpunishment.org).

The next African states to be reviewed under the UPR process are as follows:

- (1) Session 28 (Oct/Nov 2017) – [Benin](#), [Gabon](#), [Ghana](#), [Zambia](#)
- (2) Session 29 (Jan/Feb 2018) – [Botswana](#), [Burundi](#), [Mali](#)
- (3) Session 30 (Apr/May 2018) – [Burkina Faso](#), [Cabo Verde](#), [Cameroon](#), [Djibouti](#)

5. Resources: Research/Reports/Publications

NEW publications from the Global Initiative

Coming soon...

Marking the occasion of the Day of the African Child 2017, commemorated on the theme “The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development for Children in Africa: Accelerating protection, empowerment and equal opportunity”, the Global Initiative will launch a special briefing highlighting prohibition of all corporal punishment of children in Africa as an essential step towards fulfilling the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (target 16.2) and Africa’s Agenda for Children 2040: Fostering an Africa Fit for Children (aspiration 7). Outlining progress and delay towards prohibition in African countries, the briefing may be used by child rights organisations, including NGOs, CSOs and NHRIs, as an advocacy tool for the 2017 Day of the African Child and beyond.

The Global Initiative and Save the Children Sweden are also preparing to launch a series of three booklets, which provide answers to the most frequently asked questions and dispel common misperceptions about the reasons for prohibition of corporal punishment and its impact on families. The first booklet addresses the purpose of a legal ban and particularly what prohibition will mean for parents and family life; the second booklet answers questions in a way that is accessible to children and young people, while the third booklet addresses specific questions on prohibition in schools. Designed to increase understanding and support advocacy, the booklets are aimed at parents and carers, government officials, education professionals and others working towards prohibition of corporal punishment. The booklets will be launched in English, French, Russian and Spanish and will soon be available in Arabic, Armenian, Bengali, Chinese, Portuguese and Thai.

Global resource

[*Churches’ Commitments to Children: Churches uniting for children in the pilgrimage of justice and peace*](#): A joint publication of the World Council of Churches (WCC) and UNICEF, this document has been developed to support efforts by the WCC’s members and partners to prioritise children in their actions. Recognising the role of churches in ending violence against children and

adolescents in society at large, the publication highlights Christian responsibilities towards children and children's rights as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Referring to violent discipline, psychological punishment at home or in school and physical violence, amongst other forms of violence against children, the "Churches' Commitments to Children" calls on Christians to model the virtues of love, joy, peace and self-control to protect children from violence. It recommends the promotion of non-violent discipline of children and adolescents as a key strategy towards ending other forms of violence against children and adolescents.

Regional resource

[*How Governments are failing on the right to education: Findings from citizens' reports in Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania and Nepal, ActionAid International.*](#) This recent report features the findings of extensive research in schools in four developing countries – Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania and Nepal – to assess the extent to which children, especially girls, are accessing good quality primary education. The research and analysis involved various stakeholders including children, parents, teachers and community organisations who examined the performance of their local schools against core dimensions of the right to education. The project was conducted in 20 schools in four districts in Malawi, 14 schools in one district in Mozambique and 30 primary schools in two districts in Tanzania. Overall, the research found that both girls and boys are losing out in accessing a quality education, but that the situation is worse for girls in some areas. In Tanzania, for example, corporal punishment against girls was reported as taking place in all 30 schools. In Malawi, of the 17 schools that provided data, physical violence was reported in 10, affecting girls more than boys, and corporal punishment was reported in 7 schools, affecting boys more than girls. The report calls on Governments to take steps to prohibit corporal punishment in schools and ensure all schools have clear policies to prevent violence, with confidential reporting processes for children in relation to the police and courts.

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6. Can you help?

Promoting positive, non-violent discipline

We are collecting resources for the promotion of positive discipline in homes, schools and other settings in Africa for listing on the website.

Contact triona@endcorporalpunishment.org to suggest resources for inclusion. Resources which promote positive discipline as part of a campaign for law reform or which are clearly linked to prohibition that has already been achieved are especially welcome.

Research on corporal punishment of children

Evidence of the nature and prevalence of corporal punishment gathered through national studies is important to keep the issue visible and to assess the effectiveness of implementation of prohibiting laws and of measures to change attitudes and practice. Please send us any recent research findings relevant to corporal punishment of children in Africa at the following address: vohito@endcorporalpunishment.org.

And ...

Other ways to contribute to the work of the Global Initiative include:

- sending us information on laws prohibiting or authorising corporal punishment
- letting us know about opportunities for promoting law reform (e.g. if draft legislation is being considered) and when new laws are passed which prohibit corporal punishment
- providing contact details for organisations actively working to promote the prohibition and elimination of corporal punishment of children.

If you can help with any of the above, please email vohito@endcorporalpunishment.org.

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We hope you find this newsletter informative and useful and welcome your comments: please email vohito@endcorporalpunishment.org. If your organisation is not listed as supporting the aims of the Initiative, please consider signing up ([on our website](#) or email info@endcorporalpunishment.org).

