



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

Ending Corporal Punishment of Children: Africa E-Newsletter

FRENCH VERSION ALSO AVAILABLE

Issue 17: December 2014

In this issue

As we release our last issue for 2014, we are pleased to announce that during this year, ten countries worldwide have been added to the list of those achieving full prohibition – including one in Africa (Cabo Verde). This is so far the highest number of prohibiting states recorded in a year. We hope that next year will record yet more countries achieving prohibition in all settings and we wish you all a happy festive season.

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1. Who we are

The Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children 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 (www.endcorporalpunishment.org). 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** at: www.endcorporalpunishment.org.

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2. Recent developments in Africa

Positive moves

Zambia: The final draft of the new Constitution, released in October 2014, includes clear prohibition of corporal punishment in all settings including in the home.

Opportunities for prohibiting corporal punishment – appeal for information

There are currently draft laws under discussion in a number of African countries which provide key opportunities for enacting prohibition of corporal punishment. In Benin, Burkina Faso, Niger, South Africa, Uganda and Zambia the draft laws/bills being considered include prohibition of corporal punishment. In the following countries, prohibition is reportedly included in draft child laws but we have yet to verify that they would achieve full prohibition: Central African Republic, Comoros, Gabon, Guinea-Bissau and Mauritius. And in the following states we know that draft child/family legislation is under discussion but we have no information as to whether or not this includes prohibition of corporal punishment: Algeria, Angola, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, Djibouti, DR Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gambia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Sao Tome and Principe and Senegal. If you can provide us with further information on the current state of law reform in any of these states we would love to hear from you. Email vohito@endcorporalpunishment.org.

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3. Campaigns and other moves towards prohibition

National campaigns

Malawi: On 20 November 2014, during the National Day of Prayer and Action for Child Protection, representatives from different faith groups including the Malawi Interfaith AIDS Association (MIAA), children's NGOs and government came together to pledge action to end violence against children. During the event, children spoke out against issues affecting them including corporal punishment in schools and sexual abuse. Children attending the event encouraged parents and traditional leaders to end harmful cultural practices and to raise them with love, without abuse. Faith leaders were encouraged to further oppose all forms of child abuse in their community. To support them in this task, MIAA and UNICEF produced a Religious Leaders' Manual, which is expected to be used to help mainstream child protection in worship services, workshops in churches and mosques, and in training centres for religious leaders. The Day of Prayer for Child Protection followed the launch of a programme in October, promoting child protection through religious

teachings. UNICEF, in partnership with MIAA introduced this programme under the theme: “Practice your faith, Protect Children”. (http://www.unicef.org/esaro/5440_mlw2014_day-of-prayer.html)

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4. Human rights monitoring

Key decisions and recommendations, etc

The **Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women** and the **Committee on the Rights of the Child** have issued a new joint general recommendation/general comment on harmful practices, which states that corporal punishment has been recognised as a harmful practice. [The general recommendation/general comment](#) identifies harmful practices as those which constitute a denial of the dignity and/or integrity of the individual and a violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms; constitute discrimination against women or children and result in negative consequences for them; are prescribed and/or kept in place by social norms that perpetuate male dominance and inequality of women and children; and are imposed on women and children by family, community members or society at large. The Committees call on states to explicitly prohibit harmful practices by law and state that the general recommendation/comment should be read in conjunction with the Committee on the Rights of the Child’s General Comment No. 8 (2006) on the right of the child to protection from corporal punishment and other cruel or degrading forms of punishment.

At its 112th session (7-31 October 2014), the **Human Rights Committee** raised the issue of corporal punishment of children with the Government of Burundi. The Committee made recommendations to prohibit and eliminate corporal punishment in all settings to Burundi.

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.

The following deadlines for briefing the treaty bodies are based on information available at the time of writing: please note that information is subject to change at short notice. 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 71 Pre-Sessional Working Group (8-12 Jun 2015). The PSWG will adopt Lists of Issues for **Benin, Gabon, Kenya, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Zambia and Zimbabwe**: the deadline for submitting briefings is **1 March 2015**.

Committee Against Torture:

(1) Session 54 (20 Apr – 15 May 2015). The Committee will examine **Congo**: the deadline for submitting briefings is **6 April 2015**.

Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights:

- (1) Session 54 (23 Feb – 6 Mar 2015). The Committee will examine **The Gambia**: the deadline for submitting briefings is **6 weeks before the session** (exact date to be confirmed).
- (2) Session 55 Pre-Sessional Working Group (9-13 Mar 2015). The PSWG will adopt Lists of Issues for **Burundi** and **Morocco**: the deadline for submitting briefings is **two months before the session** (exact date to be confirmed).

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women:

- (1) Session 60 (16 Feb to 6 Mar 2015). The Committee will examine **Eritrea** and **Gabon**: briefings should be submitted by **2 weeks before the session** (exact date to be confirmed).
- (2) Session 62 Pre-Sessional Working Group (9-13 Mar 2015). The PSWG will adopt Lists of Issues for **Liberia, Madagascar** and **Malawi**: briefings should be submitted by **2 Feb 2015** (date to be confirmed).

Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities:

- (1) Session 3 Pre-Sessional Working Group (20-24 Apr 2015). The PSWG will adopt Lists of Issues for, **Gabon, Kenya** and **Mauritius**: briefings should be submitted by **4 March 2015**.

Human Rights Committee:

- (1) Session 113 (16 Mar to 9 Apr 2015). The Committee will examine **Cote d'Ivoire**: the deadline for submitting briefings is **20 February 2015**. At the same session, the List of Issues will be adopted for **Benin**: the deadline for submitting briefings is **23 December 2014**.

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 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 info@endcorporalpunishment.org).

The 20th session of the Universal Periodic Review was held in October/November 2014. Recommendations to prohibit corporal punishment were made to Angola (accepted).

States that were reviewed in the 19th session of the Universal Periodic Review, held in April/May 2014, responded formally to recommendations on corporal punishment during the 27th session of the Human Rights Council, 8-26 September. In the 19th UPR session, recommendations on corporal punishment were made to African states including Equatorial Guinea and Ethiopia. Recommendations to prohibit corporal punishment received a mixed or unclear response from Ethiopia, and Equatorial Guinea accepted recommendations to eradicate the practice of corporal punishment.

The deadline for submitting briefings for the 24th session (Jan/Feb 2016) is provisionally **22 June 2015**: **Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Seychelles, Sierra Leone** and **Somalia**.

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5. Resources: Research/Reports/Publications

NEW PUBLICATIONS FROM GLOBAL INITIATIVE TO SUPPORT CAMPAIGNING

West and Central Africa is home to nearly 237 million children. Of these, 96.5% live in states where they are not legally protected from corporal punishment in the family home and other settings. The Global Initiative's new report – ***Prohibiting corporal punishment of children in West and Central Africa: Progress Report 2014*** – published jointly with Plan International and Save the Children, reviews progress towards prohibition of corporal punishment of children across the region. The urgent message of the report is that almost all West and Central African states have current opportunities to fulfil their human rights obligations to prohibit all corporal punishment of children in all settings of their lives. Aiming to promote immediate action on these many opportunities for prohibition, the report documents the legal status of corporal punishment and the reforms needed to achieve prohibition in all West and Central African states and provides guidance on the process of law reform. The report is available in [English](#) and [French](#). Hard copies are available from info@endcorporalpunishment.org.

The latest Global Report from the Global Initiative and Save the Children – ***Ending legalised violence against children: Global Progress to December 2014*** – charts the growth in the list of states prohibiting, and making a commitment to prohibiting, all corporal punishment. It describes growing faith-based advocacy for reform and ever more systematic and rigorous research making visible this form of violence which children face on a daily basis. Packed with facts and figures – the good and the bad – as well as setting out the relevant international human rights standards and what the obligation to protect children from corporal punishment means in terms of law reform, it is intended to provoke and support continued advocacy on the issue.

New editions of the ***Africa Progress and Delay leaflet*** (in [English](#) and [French](#)) and the ***global Progress and Delay leaflet*** (in [English](#)) are now available. They aim to support advocacy for law reform to prohibit corporal punishment, graphically providing key information about current progress towards prohibition, identifying states which are making progress and states where there appears to be little or no progress, outcomes from the UPR and other useful information. Hard copies are available: email vohito@endcorporalpunishment.org.

National resources

South Africa: *The South African Child Gauge 2014* published by the University of Cape Town's Children's Institute found that children in the 0 – 5-year age group are particularly at risk of physical punishment and abuse in the home, and are the most vulnerable to long-term negative consequences. The report revealed that exposure to physical abuse and corporal punishment occurs in all socio-economic levels and family types, even though the majority of children at risk in South Africa are likely to be living in vulnerable families. The report recommends the improvement of protection of infants and toddlers as well as the provision of non-violent parenting programmes. (Mathews S, Jamieson L, Lake L & Smith C (eds) (2014) *South African Child Gauge 2014*. Cape Town: Children's Institute, University of Cape Town)

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6. Media watch

Algeria: The Ministry of Justice announced that it would open an investigation following the dissemination of a video online showing an Algerian parent administering physical punishment to a child. The video, which was widely shared on social networks, sparked outraged reactions. (*TSA*, 1st December 2014)

Ghana: During a workshop on Positive Discipline supported by the NGO Network of Communities in Development (NOCID) in Kadjebi, Ms Dorothy Konadu, Programme Manager of ActionAid noted that school children in Ghana continued to be victims of corporal punishment despite international and regional human rights treaties, as well as constitutional protection. Ms Konadu called for the use of positive discipline as an effective method of teaching and instilling self-discipline in children, as opposed to corporal punishment, which inflicts pain, creates fear and kills creativity. ActionAid and NOCID have launched a one-year project which aims to introduce alternatives to corporal punishment and which would be piloted in different districts of Ghana. (*GNA*, 20 November 2014)

South Africa: In a newspaper column, a student expressed her feelings and determination after being administered 21 lashes by her teacher for missing school and not doing her homework. In the context of a school-based campaign organised by the NGO Equal Education, the student and her peers realised that despite the legal prohibition of corporal punishment in schools, corporal punishment is widespread in township schools in Western Cape. The student and her peers have mobilised fellow learners and community members to join them in their call to eliminate corporal punishment in schools. (*Mail & Guardian*, 4 December 2014)

Uganda: A Ugandan nanny who was caught on video kicking and stomping on a 18-month-old when the little girl was sick while eating dinner has been sentenced to four years in jail for assaulting a toddler. The nanny who pleaded guilty to torture told a court in Kampala that the attack was revenge after the child's mother beat her. (*Mail Online*, 24 November 2014), (<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-30476200>)

After a teacher was arrested for beating a girl into a coma, a newspaper editorial lamented the continuous use of corporal punishment by teachers in schools. The editorial called for harsh sanctions against teachers, as well as positive non-violent approaches to child discipline in homes, schools, and institutions. It also urged parents, school inspectors and the Ministry of Education and Sports to better monitor, protect, and promote the wellbeing of children. (*The Monitor*, 10 November 2014) *Note:* In Uganda, corporal punishment is unlawful in the penal system but it is not prohibited by law in the home, alternative care settings, day care and schools.

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7. Events in the region

Ending Corporal Punishment: Sweden and South Africa Perspectives: 20 November 2014, Pretoria, South Africa

In order to mark the 25th Anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child on 20 November 2014, [Save the Children South Africa](#) and the Embassy of Sweden in South Africa co-hosted a seminar on ending corporal punishment in South Africa. The event raised issues including the impact of corporal punishment on children's physiological and cognitive development; lessons to be learnt from Sweden since the banning of corporal punishment 30 years ago; responses of international and regional treaty bodies (UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child); experience of campaigns to prohibit in Africa; as well as developments and way forward relating to elimination and prohibition of corporal punishment in South Africa. Participants included H.E. Mr Anders Hagelberg, Ambassador of Sweden in South Africa, Prof Benyam Mezmur, Chairperson of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and Vice-Chairperson of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, academics as well as child rights civil society organisations.

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8. 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 elinor@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.

We hope you find this newsletter informative and useful and welcome your comments: please email vohito@endcorporalpunishment.org. We are sending the newsletter to supporters of the aims of the Global Initiative and others who we think will be interested. If you do not want to receive future editions, please tell us at info@endcorporalpunishment.org. If your organisation is not listed as supporting the aims of the Initiative, please consider signing up (online at www.endcorporalpunishment.org or email info@endcorporalpunishment.org).

“Creating an Africa fit for children cannot be achieved in an environment where some of our laws and practices condone violence against children.”

(Benyam Dawit Mezmur, Chairperson, African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child; Vice-Chairperson, UN Committee on the Rights of the Child)

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