



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

Welcome to the new bi-monthly newsletter of the Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children. It is also available to download as a pdf the “Resources” section of our website ([www.endcorporalpunishment.org](http://www.endcorporalpunishment.org)).

We are sending this first issue to supporters of the aims of the Initiative (for the full list, click on “Supporters” on the [sitemap](#)) and others we have had contact with. If you DON’T want to receive future editions, please tell us at [info@endcorporalpunishment.org](mailto:info@endcorporalpunishment.org). If your organisation is not listed as supporting the aims of the Initiative, please consider signing up (email [info@endcorporalpunishment.org](mailto:info@endcorporalpunishment.org)).

## **GLOBAL INITIATIVE NEWSLETTER 1 (FEBRUARY 2008)**

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### **1. Global progress: facts and figures**

Last year (2007) saw seven states added to the list of states achieving **full prohibition of corporal punishment, including within the family home**, including the first English speaking state (New Zealand) and the first Latin American states (Chile, Uruguay and Venezuela).

There are now 23 states worldwide where all corporal punishment of children is prohibited in legislation: Austria, Bulgaria, Chile, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Israel, Latvia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine, Uruguay and Venezuela.

Prohibition in schools has been achieved by 103 states. In penal systems, 146 states have prohibited corporal punishment of children as a sentence of the courts and 106 as a disciplinary measure in penal institutions. Only 35 have prohibited corporal punishment in all alternative care settings.

For a snapshot of the situation worldwide, see the [“Countdown to universal prohibition”](#).

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## **2. Moves towards prohibition**

There are moves towards legal reform in many states, with 2008 set to see the list of states achieving full prohibition continue to grow.

Explicit prohibition, including in the home, is under consideration by the parliaments or parliamentary bodies in Brazil, Canada, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Peru, the Philippines, South Africa and Switzerland.

Many other governments have made a public commitment to full prohibition, including Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Czech Republic, Estonia, Ireland, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Maldives, Pakistan, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sri Lanka and Taiwan.

For further information on the legality of corporal punishment worldwide, see our online analysis (click on “Online global table” on the [sitemap](#)).

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## **3. Measures to support prohibition**

The **Council of Europe** has launched a Europe-wide initiative to support prohibition of all corporal punishment, including in the home, and the promotion of positive non-violent parenting in its 47 member states. A media pack will be available soon. Resources already available include:

- (i) a 50 page handbook, [Abolishing corporal punishment of children – Questions and answers](#), currently in available in English and French with plans for 12 other European languages
- (ii) A 6 page information leaflet, [Abolishing corporal punishment – the key points](#)
- (iii) A revised edition of the handbook originally published in 2006, [Eliminating corporal punishment – A human rights imperative for Europe’s children](#), which can be ordered [here](#).

For further information see [here](#).

January 2008 also saw the publication of an update of the issue paper on children and corporal punishment by the Commissioner for Human Rights in the Council of Europe, Thomas Hammarberg. *Children and corporal punishment: “The right not to be hit, also a children’s right”* explains the reasons why prohibition is necessary, details progress worldwide and in Europe, and outlines the steps taken by the European Court of Human Rights and other international and European human rights mechanisms to support prohibition.

In December 2007 **UNICEF** published *Progress for Children: A World Fit for Children – Statistical Review*. The report examines progress worldwide towards the Millennium Development Goals, and this edition includes statistical information on corporal punishment in the home (“[child discipline](#)”) in 29 countries. The figures are based on surveys in 2005-2006 and show that in the countries surveyed, 86% of children aged 2-14 experienced violent discipline.

In January 2008, the **Global Initiative** published a new guide to legal reform to support states in explicitly prohibiting all corporal punishment. [Prohibiting corporal punishment of children: A guide to legal reform and other measures](#) details the legislative measures necessary to ensure states meet their obligations to achieve prohibition under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. It also gives guidance on non-legislative measures to support prohibition. A new “Legal reform – online resources” section of the Global Initiative website was launched to accompany the handbook, providing further resources to support prohibition and links to useful publications available online. The handbook and online resources are available in the “Reform” section of the [website](#).

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#### **4. Media watch**

A selection of recent global media coverage on corporal punishment of children:

*Algeria* Research was reported which found that 70% of 1,700 Algerian families surveyed “whip their children and use violence against them for disciplinary reasons”. And a poll of parents, students and educators was reported as finding nearly two thirds (64%) in support of prohibition of corporal punishment in the home. (www.echoroukonline.com, 6 January 2008)

*Guyana* Debate continues on the use of corporal punishment in schools, with discussion of a bill which would prohibit it. (e.g. *Stabroek News*, 15 January 2008)

*India* Haryana State has banned all corporal punishment in its schools, following a Supreme Court decision on 1 December 2007. (*The Times of India*, 24 December 2007)

Idukki District in Kerala became the first district in the state to officially pledge to stamp out corporal punishment in schools. No new legislation has been passed but it is intended to use section 23 of the Juvenile Justice Act (cruelty to a juvenile or child) to punish perpetrators.

(*The Telegraph*, 14 January 2008)

In Balurghat town in West Bengal a 14 year old girl was hospitalised following a beating by her teacher, who reportedly said he had “only slapped the girl once”. (*The Statesman*, 6 January 2008)

*New Zealand* A police report three months after all corporal punishment, including by parents, was prohibited through repeal of section 59 of the Crimes Act showed that since the new law they have attended 15 cases and issued 9 warnings to parents who have smacked their children. But they haven't seen a greatly increased workload, and claims during the passage of the prohibition that it would result in parents being taken from the homes and prosecuted for “lightly” smacking their children have not materialised. (<http://tvnz.co.nz>, 20 December 2007)

*Norway* Church leaders have given their support to the proposal by the Norwegian Ombudsman for Children to update references to “chastisement” in new translations of the Bible with more appropriate language. The move came following concerns that some children believed violence may be authorised by the Bible. The Bishops' Conference of Norway issued a statement which said: “Today the word ‘chastisement’ has acquired a meaning that differs from its original intended meaning. In modern Norwegian usage, the word ‘chastisement’ is virtually synonymous with corporal punishment. Today this word is unsuitable for reflecting what is involved when the Bible speaks of parents' responsibility to raise and guide their children.” (*Ekklesia*, 24 January 2008)

*UK* The National Assembly in Wales has been prevented from introducing a ban on smacking of children because such legislation would impact on criminal justice, which is not a devolved issue. (<http://icwales.co.uk>, 18 January 2008)

*USA* In Ohio, a bill is under discussion which would ban corporal punishment (“paddling”) in schools. Under existing law, school districts with the appropriate policies and resolutions can lawfully administer corporal punishment – 17 do so. (*The Review*, 16 January 2008)

In Massachusetts, the Mental Health and Substance Abuse Committee is considering Bill S 1123, which would restrict the use of aversive therapy – including electric shock, corporal punishment, aromatic ammonia, and Tabasco sauce – on disabled students. The Committee is also considering Bill H 109 which would completely ban such “techniques”. (*Sharon Advocate*, 18 January 2008)

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## **5. Human rights treaty monitoring on children's right to protection from corporal punishment**

The Committee on the Rights of the Child held its 47<sup>th</sup> session in Jan/Feb 2008. In its concluding observations on the second report of the Dominican Republic and the initial report of Timor-Leste, the Committee recommended explicit prohibition of corporal punishment in all settings. The Committee referred to its General Comment No. 8 (2006) on the right of the child to protection from corporal punishment and other cruel or degrading forms of punishment (CRC/C/GC/8) and to the recommendations in the final report of the UN Study on Violence against Children (which set a target date of 2009 for universal prohibition of corporal punishment).

The Global Initiative regularly briefs human rights treaty monitoring bodies prior to examination of state parties (past briefings are available on the website – click on “Global Initiative briefings” on the [sitemap](#)). The treaty bodies are due to examine the following states in the first half of 2008:

*Committee on the Rights of the Child* (48th session, May/June 2008): Convention on the Rights of the Child – Bulgaria, Eritrea, Republic of Chad, Serbia, Sierra Leone; Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict – Philippines, Republic of Korea, US

*Committee Against Torture* (40th session, May 2008): Algeria, Australia, Costa Rica, Iceland, Indonesia, Sweden, TFYR Macedonia, Zambia

*Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (40th session, Apr/May 2008): Benin, Bolivia, France, India

*Human Rights Committee* (92nd session, Mar/Apr 2008): Botswana, Panama, TFYR Macedonia, Tunisia

*Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women* (41st session, Jun/Jul 2008): Finland, Iceland, Lithuania, Nigeria, Slovakia, UK, United Republic of Tanzania, Yemen

Plus ...

*Human Rights Council* (Universal Periodic Review, 1st session DATE 2008): Algeria, Argentina, Bahrain, Brazil, Czech Republic, Ecuador, Finland, India, Indonesia, Morocco, Netherlands, Philippines, Poland, South Africa, Tunisia, UK

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## **6. Can you help?**

If you can provide information relating to the legality of corporal punishment of children, research on prevalence and/or children's views and experiences, positive parenting resources, or initiatives and campaigns promoting prohibition, please email [info@endcorporalpunishment.org](mailto:info@endcorporalpunishment.org).

We are particularly trying to find out if corporal punishment of children has been explicitly prohibited in the following states and settings:

*Schools* – Cote d'Ivoire, Nauru, Niue

*Penal system (sentence of the courts)* – Bhutan, Central African Republic, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Mauritania, Oman

*Penal system (disciplinary measure in penal institutions)* – Bahrain, Central African Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Gabon, Guinea, Iraq, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Niue, Sao Tome & Principe, Syrian Arab Republic

*Alternative care settings* – Bahrain, Central African Republic, China, DPR Korea, Djibouti, El Salvador, Gabon, Guinea-Bissau, Iraq, Kuwait, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Nauru, Niue, Taiwan, Turkmenistan

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We hope you find this newsletter informative and useful and would welcome your comments: please email [info@endcorporalpunishment.org](mailto:info@endcorporalpunishment.org).

*How can we expect children to take human rights seriously and to help build a culture of human rights, while we adults not only persist in slapping, spanking, smacking and beating them, but actually defend doing so as being “for their own good”? Smacking children is not just a lesson in bad behaviour; it is a potent demonstration of contempt for the human rights of smaller, weaker people. (Thomas Hammarberg, Commissioner for Human Rights, Council of Europe, *Children and corporal punishment: “The right not to be hit, also a children’s right”*, Issue paper 1, updated January 2008)*