

# About CRIN

Children have human rights too, not because they are “the future” or “the adults of tomorrow”, but because they are human beings today

CRIN is a global children’s rights advocacy network. Established in 1995, we press for rights - not charity - and campaign for a genuine shift in how governments and societies view and treat children. We link to nearly 3,000 organisations that between them work on children’s rights in every country in the world and rely on our publications, research and information sharing.

## OUR VISION

CRIN envisions a world in which every child enjoys all their human rights guaranteed by the United Nations, regional organisations and national governments.

## FIVE CORE 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 and that we are most effective and influential when we work together. We believe in freely sharing information and expertise to promote and protect children’s rights.
- We believe in transparency when it comes to making decisions that affect people’s human rights and lives, and with that belief in mind we strive to be as open as possible.
- We believe in the idea of open societies where everyone, including NGOs and other civil society organisations, can exist and speak freely.

We work to put children’s rights firmly on the international stage and at the top of national agendas. We campaign on specific issues, and also advocate for long term change and legal reform. We work in partnership with international, regional and national coalitiwons, and strive to provide accessible information and knowledge on children’s right to people and organisations around the world. [Click here](#) for more on what we do.

## CONTACT US

Write:  
Child Rights International Network (CRIN)  
East Studio  
2, Pontypool Place  
London, SE1 8QF

Email: [info@crin.org](mailto:info@crin.org)  
Telephone: +44 20 7401 2257

CRIN is a company registered in London (no. 665 3398) and limited by guarantee. Registered charity no. 1125925

# Contents

Introduction	4
Chapter 1: Monitoring and Research	7
Chapter 2: Policy	21
Chapter 3: Campaigns	25
Chapter 4: Connect - Working collectively	31
Chapter 5: Share - CRIN resources	39
Chapter 6: Ethical work practices	43
Chapter 7: Who we are	47
Chapter 8: Next season	51

## Introduction

In over 40 countries, children can be sentenced to death, life imprisonment or corporal punishment (including whipping, caning, flogging and amputation). In the majority of countries, children can be hit as a form of 'discipline' - an act that would in most cases be treated as a criminal offence if committed against an adult. Children everywhere are excluded from public life and their rights to protest and free expression are ignored. These are just some of the facts we wish we didn't have to repeat year after year. The names of the countries in the news and details of the abuse may change, but the violations continue like a broken record.

CRIN believes this is the result of a collective failure to interrogate the reasons why the full range of children's rights is not being fulfilled and to challenge them in the strongest way possible - just like we would if they were happening to any other human being. That is why CRIN - together with committed activists around the world - monitors patterns of children's rights violations and gaps in how these are being addressed. The aim is to provoke debate and inspire advocacy - including legal action. We do not claim to have all the answers, but believe in asking the difficult questions. And we believe this approach among children's rights advocates is gaining traction. This year, for the first time, the UN General Assembly urged States to outlaw all forms of inhuman sentencing for children (death penalty, imprisonment, corporal punishment); in another first, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child questioned the long-term implications of male circumcision; and a number of States - despite resistance - granted greater recognition to children's autonomy in health and voting rights.

But much work remains to be done. Politics is all too often prioritised over children's rights. This is true not only of the lack of transparency in how candidates are appointed to bodies that monitor children's rights; it is also true of the justifications politicians give for laws and policies which damage children. Politicians are playing to popular fears over public safety by intensifying their retribution against children in the justice system, instead of addressing the roots of offending - usually found in poor policy and adult abuse. Conversely, a trend of new laws against 'gay propaganda' - with Russia at the helm - uses the notion of 'child protection' to discriminate against sexual minorities, divert attention from political and economic ailments and deny children information they need to make informed choices.

While children are the target of much political jousting, their views are excluded from the political decisions which shape their lives. In the context of global financial woes, children have been disproportionately affected by government decisions about who has access to social security and how this is delivered, just as they suffer disproportionately from the effects of poverty. But they cannot vote where adults can, and are not members of powerful lobby groups such as trade unions or corporate interest groups and therefore have little influence on economic and social policy. This means we know very little about children's lives and the specific ways they are affected by decisions made by adults.

The common denominator of many of these violations is a refusal to acknowledge that children have rights of their own, and are not simply an appendage of their parents or the State. Nowhere is this illustrated more vividly than by the fact that in most countries children are not seen as capable of legally enforcing their own rights - they are rarely allowed to bring a court case themselves, access legal aid, and may even be barred from presenting

evidence.

CRIN is responding to this injustice with a new project to examine and boost the status of children's legal rights in every country. The aim is to empower children everywhere to claim their rights. Because, while children's rights to be heard and free expression may be ignored, their presence in protest movements across the world in recent years testifies to their desire to have their voices heard, and their rights respected, on matters from who governs them to respect for and control over their own bodies. And these voices are not going away. This project is part of a wider strategy to strengthen children's access to justice through stronger forms of advocacy. It marks a new era in children's rights advocacy which has, for too long, been left in the play pen while advocacy for the human rights of other people is played out in the courtroom.

All CRIN's work is built on the belief that we are stronger when we work together. With this in mind, we share everything we do and are thankful to all the committed activists across the world who provide us with information, insight and inspiration and who - together - make up the collective identity of CRIN.

The CRIN Team





## Chapter 1: Monitoring and research

*Information is a powerful - and necessary - tool for children's rights advocacy. However, the wealth of information from so many different sources can make it hard to sift through crucial developments. CRIN provides daily monitoring and analysis of all children's rights news in every country to make advocates' job easier. These are some of the main events of 2012-13.*

### CHILDREN'S RIGHTS IN THE NEWS

#### Armed conflict: one rule for some...

This year brought mixed fortunes for children in conflict.

The international community continued to stand inert as the conflict in Syria raged on. In August, some 3,690 people were admitted to hospital in the Damascus governorate following the alleged use of chemical weapons by security forces. Patients showed symptoms of blurred vision, breathing difficulties and convulsions, says Medecins Sans Frontieres. Of those hospitalised, [355 died](#), including many children. The Committee on the Rights of the Child [described](#) the attack as an atrocity.

More than 100,000 people have been killed since the start of the conflict in Syria two years ago, including 7,000 children. The violence has also caused the world's worst refugee [crisis](#) in 20 years, with approximately two million people forced to flee the country, half of them children. A further two million children have been internally displaced.

Meanwhile in Mali, children as young as 13 previously recruited by armed groups are now being [detained](#) by Malian forces alongside adults, according to Amnesty International. Some say they have been tortured.

Both countries' armed forces featured in the UN Secretary General's [annual list](#) of parties that violate international standards on children and armed conflict. This year - for the first time - the list included parties that conduct attacks on schools and hospitals in addition to those who recruit, kill and maim or commit sexual violence against children.

The list has yet to include those who kill more insidiously, however. Since 2004 the US has launched 415 strikes by unmanned aircraft or 'drones' in Pakistan, Yemen and Somalia, killing more than 3,000 people - including many children. Read a [special CRINMAIL](#) on drones guest edited by Reprieve.

Nepal and Sri Lanka were removed from the SG's list after completing action plans to end the recruitment and use of children as soldiers. Several other countries embarked on similar plans. But in a new [global report](#), Child Soldiers International (CSI) says that more should be done to prevent the recruitment and use of children in the first place. It says a global minimum age of 18 for involvement in the armed forces must be at the heart of prevention strategies but must be backed up by enforcement measures. In a separate [report](#) by CSI and ForcesWatch on the UK, reveals that soldiers serving in Afghanistan who joined the army at 16 are twice as likely to die as those who joined at 18 or above. (children can enlist



in the British army at 16 but cannot be deployed until they are 18). This is attributed to the fact that these soldiers go on more tours of duty and predominantly serve in the Infantry instead of in less risky technical roles because they have fewer qualifications.

Global leaders who could play a role in preventing abuses tend to prioritise trade and foreign policy over children's rights. In a first step to counter this trend, the UN General Assembly this year approved a new [treaty](#) regulating conventional arms including all firearms and explosive weapons. The treaty prohibits the export of arms in violation of arms embargoes and weapons that could be used for acts of terrorism, genocide, war crimes or crimes against humanity. It also sets reporting HB up to aid transparency and accountability.

A shooting at a primary school in the US [reignited debate](#) on arms controls in that country. Twenty-six people including 20 children were killed at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Connecticut. The perpetrator, an ex-student, used a semiautomatic rifle and was carrying two handguns and hundreds of rounds of ammunition. Three thousand children are killed by gun violence every year in the country, with 15,000 more injured. Nevertheless, the firearms industry spends millions of dollars a year in a campaign to [encourage children](#) to use guns as adult participation in shooting sports declines. Its methods include giving guns to youth groups, endorsing handgun competitions and using children who already use guns to introduce them to their peers.

For more on children and armed conflict, read special CRINmails on the situation in, [Colombia](#), [Democratic Republic of Congo](#), [Somalia](#), [Sri Lanka](#), [Sudan](#) and [South Sudan](#) and [Thailand](#).

### Juvenile justice: in need of rehabilitation

The justice system is another training ground for violence. The sole aim of a juvenile justice system should be to rehabilitate and reintegrate children. But this message has not got through to politicians proposing ever lower minimum ages of criminal responsibility - egged on by the media. Proposed amendments to [Philippines'](#) new Criminal Code aim to lower the minimum age of criminal responsibility from 15 to 13. [Brazil's](#) National Congress is considering a reduction from 18 to 16, amid panic about public safety.

The types of sentences handed down also make for bleak reading. [Saudi Arabia](#) continued to reign by terror, executing seven young men convicted of armed robbery - all of whom were reported to be under 18 at the time of the offence. One of the men, who was 15 at the time, said he was tortured and threatened into confessing. Also in Saudi Arabia, a Sri Lankan [domestic worker](#), Rizana Nafeek, was beheaded for allegedly killing a baby in her care in 2005 when she was 17. Nafeek had claimed she too was pressured to confess, and reports indicate she had no access to lawyers. In a separate case, a Saudi court sentenced a man to [paralysis](#) from the waist down for inflicting paralysis on his friend as a 14-year-old. The Saudi Justice Minister [denied](#) the report, saying the presiding judge had dismissed the sentence which entails surgically cutting the spinal cord. Executions of people for offences committed as juveniles were also reported in [Iran](#) and [Yemen](#).

CRIN's [research](#) shows that many countries require doctors to examine victims before they are whipped or flogged to ensure they are 'fit' to receive such treatment and to monitor them during and after the sentence has been administered. The participation of doctors is also required in some States to perform amputation and the death penalty.

There is plenty of good news though! Read more in the campaigns section [here](#).

### When traditions are harmful

The role of medical professionals in perpetrating violations against children in the context of medically unnecessary procedures is coming under increased scrutiny. A [2012 report](#) by the International NGO Council on Violence against Children draws attention to harmful practices 'based on tradition, culture, religion or superstition and are perpetrated against very young children or infants, who are clearly lacking the capacity to consent or refuse consent themselves.'

The Council includes non-therapeutic male circumcision in its report. There are growing calls to regulate the practice, which is sometimes performed in unhygienic conditions by non-medically trained people, leading to botched cases. In [South Africa](#), for example, 23 boys between aged 13 to 21 died in coming of age rituals involving circumcision this year. The deaths are not isolated incidents and are among several hundred reported in recent years among the Xhosa, Sotho and Ndebele ethnic groups.

But while regulating the practice would indeed make the procedure safer, this alone would not legitimise surgery for non-medical reasons on non-consenting individuals. In this connection, last year in Germany, in district court in the city of Cologne set an [important precedent](#) when it ruled that children's rights should take precedence over their parents' religious freedoms following complaints about a boy from a Muslim family who suffered bleeding after he was circumcised. The case triggered debate about children's civil rights and health and psychological implications that forced circumcision can have for boys into adulthood.

The NGO Council's [report](#) also draws attention to the denial of medical care on the basis of religious beliefs as a harmful practice which violates children's right to health and - in extreme cases - their right to life. A number of children died in separate incidents in the [United States](#) last year when their parents, from various religious backgrounds, rejected life-saving medical interventions on the grounds that they are forbidden by their faith, choosing to pray instead. The Canadian Medical Association [indicated](#) that 19 US states have faith-healing exemptions to child abuse and neglect laws felonies. Criticism of faith-healing seems to be on the rise, however. In a recent case, the Wisconsin Supreme Court [upheld](#) the reckless homicide of a faith-healing couple who prayed while their daughter died of undiagnosed diabetes instead of taking her to hospital.

Corporal punishment is one of the most long-standing and widespread harmful practices affecting children. The majority of countries authorise adults to hit children as a form of discipline - an act that would in most cases be treated as a criminal offence if applied to adults. This year, for example, in [China](#), a teacher who abused children for fun while a colleague posted pictures online was accused of 'picking quarrels and promoting trouble'

instead of facing abuse charges. Abuse laws in the country apply only to family members. One picture showed a child being dumped headfirst into a bin.

The Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children released a [paper](#) ahead of the Day of the African Child, held in June, which focused on harmful traditional and social practices, emphasising how corporal punishment is now recognised as a ‘social and cultural practice which seriously breaches children’s rights to physical integrity and respect for their human dignity. [Namibia’s](#) Windhoek Magistrates’ Court reflected this view, convicting four teachers who used corporal punishment on a 14-year-old of assault. The ruling was based on Namibia’s Supreme Court decision in April 1991 that the use of corporal punishment would be in conflict with the Constitution’s prohibition of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. In addition, the Association for the Protection of all Children has filed [collective complaints](#) against seven States for violating the European Social Charter by failing to ban corporal punishment in the home, schools and alternative care settings.

Read more on harmful traditional practices in a [special edition CRINmail](#).

### Right to health - growing pains

In health issues more broadly, the Human Rights Council dedicated its annual day on the rights of the child, celebrated in March, to children’s right to the ‘highest attainable standard of health’. The day focused on universal health care and the post-Millennium Development Goals process. However, comments by States on the day highlighted hostility to children’s rights undiluted by those of their parents in making decisions about health care. Read CRIN’s coverage of the day [here](#).

This tension was reflected in law reform and court rulings around the world throughout the year - some bringing greater recognition of children’s autonomy, others tighter restrictions. [Spain’s](#) ruling centre-right Popular party announced its intention to reform the abortion law. It proposes to restrict abortion to cases of rape and where there is a risk to the mother’s health. Girls between 16 and 18 would have to seek parental consent. The current 2010 law allows women and girls aged 16 and over to abort up to 14 weeks for any reason, and up to 22 weeks where there is a risk. Conversely, [Chile’s](#) Health Ministry declared that the ‘morning after pill’ should be freely available, lamenting the lack of compliance with the 2010 law that grants free access to the pill, including for girls over 14. The Ministry warned that measures will be taken against medical professionals who refuse to comply on personal grounds. The new law emphasises respect for the right to privacy and confidentiality.

Meanwhile, [Uruguay](#) became the third country in Latin America to pass a bill allowing abortion beyond cases of rape, incest and health risk. The region is notorious for its restrictive abortion laws - El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras, Dominican Republic and Chile all have a no-exceptions ban on abortion, even in cases of rape. Nevertheless, Latin America has one of the world’s highest abortion rates, with four million women and girls undergoing dangerous backstreet operations each year, according to the World Health Organization.

This issue is not confined to the southern hemisphere, however. The European Court of Human Rights ruled against [Poland’s](#) treatment of a 14-year-old girl who fell pregnant as a

result of rape and sought an abortion. The girl initially faced charges of unlawful intercourse, and was separated from her parents who allegedly encouraged her to seek an abortion. She was then forced to speak to a priest. In one last violation, the hospital where she was admitted released details of her identity to the media. The court awarded her monetary compensation from the government of Poland.

Finally, in a world first, the [Belgian](#) Federal Parliament extended the right to die to terminally ill children. Belgium became the second country to legalise euthanasia for adults in 2007 after the Netherlands. Children aged 15 and over who are legally emancipated from their parents can also request euthanasia. Doctors decide on a case-by-case basis according to the child’s maturity and whether the case is serious enough.

### Freedom of expression: road to revolution

In countries across the world, children are claiming their right to be heard beyond matters affecting their immediate lives to express their views on society and politics. Children’s civil and political rights received a boost in [Argentina](#), as lawmakers approved a bill to grant 16 and 17-year-olds the right to vote. The country is the fourth in Latin America to grant over-16s this right, alongside Brazil, Ecuador and Nicaragua. Similarly, in [Scotland](#) 16 and 17 year olds will head to the polls in 2014 to cast their vote on whether they want to part ways with the United Kingdom.

Elsewhere, children and their advocates continue to come under attack. This year’s most televised story was that of Malala Yousafzai, a 14-year-old Pakistani girl known for her activism on girls’ education. Malala was deliberately shot by Taliban gunmen on her way home from school in the Swat Valley. She had previously won a civic prize in the country for her activism. After recovering in Britain, Malala is back campaigning in Pakistan, and has since spoken out at the UN.

Meanwhile, the voices of lesser known activists continue to be suppressed. In [Bahrain](#), after two years of unrest, a 16-year-old boy was shot dead during a protest at a village west of the capital Manama. Campaigners say the country’s rulers are more concerned with building their international reputation than keeping promises of democratic reform. In [Egypt](#), children as young as nine have been detained and tortured by police following protests marking the second anniversary of the 2011 uprising, according to lawyers and activists. Since 25 January, 400 children are believed to have been rounded up and imprisoned. Children have given accounts of beatings, electrocutions, sexual abuse and psychological torture after being caught up in arbitrary arrests. In this context, Egypt’s Shura Council is reviewing a [draft law](#) which seeks to ban civil society organisations from obtaining funds from abroad without prior permission and to limit the work of foreign NGOs. Several organisations have been raided and closed.

[Brazil](#) is also seeking to reign in activists, calling for a Parliamentary enquiry into the international funding of organisations promoting women’s reproductive rights, according to freedom of expression group Article 19. Opponents have argued that these organisations promote foreign interests.

In March, [Russia](#) began conducting unannounced checks on dozens of NGO offices following a new law requiring NGOs that receive foreign funding to register as foreign agents. At the end of 2012 UNICEF and USAID were [ordered to leave](#) the country with the justification that Russia no longer needs help from the UN as it is now a donor not a recipient country.

### Information wars: rights v ‘protection’

Russia also made regressive moves on gay rights. The lower house of parliament passed a law imposing heavy fines of 5,000 roubles (£100) for the distribution of information ‘[promoting homosexuality to children](#)’. The penalty for schools is 100 times this amount. The law will come into force when it has been approved by the upper house and signed by President Putin. Meanwhile, an anti-gay law in [Nigeria’s](#) House of Representatives bans same-sex relationships and criminalises lobbying against the law itself, according to the International Service for Human Rights. The dark consequences of discrimination were made clear when a teenager was stoned to death in [Somalia](#) for ‘committing a homosexual act’. Al-Shabab claimed responsibility, according to the Associated Press.

On a positive note, the US Boy Scouts has [reversed its ban](#) on the participation of openly gay youths. Several of the group’s corporate donors had already pulled funding over its homophobic policies. The new policy will take effect from January 2014.

In another sign of acceptance, California became the first US state to ban ‘[conversion therapy](#)’ for children. The ‘therapy’, which consists of psychotherapy or counselling to change the sexual orientation of gay children, is based on the belief that homosexuality is a disorder or illness.

Elsewhere, great strides are being made to promote equality early. In [Latvia](#), a children’s book that breaks gender stereotypes is making its way into kindergartens. The main girl and boy characters swap bodies and question stereotypes in play. The Latvian children’s ombudsperson says the book ‘defends children’s right to individuality and provides children with the opportunity to develop their abilities regardless of gender’. In the US, the Colorado Civil Rights Division also gave [gender cubbyholes](#) the boot, ruling that a primary school discriminated against a transgender teenager who identifies as a girl by prohibiting her from using the toilet.

### No redemption for sexual violence

After years of silence, court cases and national enquiries around the world are giving victims of abuse by the Catholic Church and other institutions the chance to speak out. A national enquiry has begun in [Australia](#), with 5,000 people expected to give evidence of sexual abuse perpetrated by employees of institutions, especially those run by the Catholic Church. In the state of Victoria, 600 children have reportedly been abused by priests since the 1930s. In [Spain](#), in the first case of its kind, a priest was defrocked by the Catholic Church in Mallorca, accused of abusing three women when they were children. Irish Prime Minister (Taoiseach) Enda Kenny, has publicly apologised for the State’s role in the [Magdalene Laundries](#) - Catholic-run laundries to which 10,000 “fallen women and girls” - including victims of abuse - were sent to undertake forced labour between 1922-96. On a global scale,

the [International Criminal Court](#) rejected a request to investigate Pope Benedict XVI, who handled the abuse crisis under Jean Paul II, and Vatican officers for possible crimes against humanity, reasoning that the violations do not fall within its jurisdiction. Petitioners argue that the long-standing and pervasive system of sexual violence, rape and torture constitute crimes against humanity under the Rome Statute.

Survivors of abuse have also won court cases against [Jehovah’s Witnesses](#), whose US national leaders have allegedly covered up child sex abuse accusations as a matter of policy since 1986. In another case, a member of the [Orthodox Jewish](#) community in New York was convicted of 59 counts of abuse and seven others charged with bribery and intimidation of victims. Meanwhile, in many Muslim countries, child marriage and other harmful practices based on religion that amount to abuse under international law are legal or widely accepted. The Committee on the Rights of the Child has [stated](#) that child sex abuse in faith based organisations and religious institutions constitute “sexual slavery or servitude of children”.

[Daily updates](#) on children’s rights are available on the CRIN website by country and theme. This is part of our online library which contains nearly 30,000 resources including news, events, reports, laws and information on advocacy and campaigns.

## CHILDREN’S RIGHTS AT THE UN

*Behind the headlines, there are people making important decisions that shape children’s rights every day at the UN, and in regional and national bodies and courts. These voices are quieter - and often muffled by jargon - but their impact is huge. CRIN keeps track of their debates and publishes plain English summaries and analysis to highlight gaps and bolster advocacy efforts.*

### News and analysis

Children have their own treaty setting out rights tailored to their unique situation in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Children’s rights advocacy is therefore, quite rightly, centred around the CRC. But, as human beings, children also enjoy all the rights enshrined in other human rights treaties across the UN. This means they should be considered in the work of UN treaty bodies, Special Procedures as well as in the wider work of UN bodies like the Human Rights Council, General Assembly and Security Council. This is a fact often overlooked by children’s rights advocates and the bodies that monitor these other treaties.

In this spirit, in 2012 we merged our information services on different parts of the UN system to form one single UN CRINmail. The aim is to help advocates better understand how all parts of the UN are relevant to children’s rights, how they link together, what each body is saying about children’s rights, and learn about opportunities for advocacy. In turn, we hope it will draw attention of those elected to monitor other human rights treaties to issues affecting children’s rights and angles on those issues they may not have considered, and in this way bring children’s rights out of segregation!



## Headlines from the UN

This is a snapshot of some of the news that featured in the revamped UN CRINmail.

The Committee Against Torture linked abuse of children's rights in justice systems to torture, criticising the [UK](#) and [Mauritania](#) for their low minimum ages of criminal responsibility (ten and seven respectively). The UK also came under fire for the high numbers of children in prison and reported increase in the use of restraints on children in detention.

The Committee on the Rights of the Child this year passed [general comments](#) setting out in detail States' obligations on article 3 (best interests), article 24 (right to health), article 31 (right to play) and children's rights and business. In its session with Israel, the Committee for the first time [expressed](#) concern about the short and long-term impact of male circumcision, recommending a study into its implications.

Israel also became the first country to [boycott](#) its UPR in January. In addition, Russia tried to remove two recommendations from Georgia by adding them as a footnote - a practice decried by NGOs. The HRC did, however, pass a record number of resolutions to protect human rights defenders at its June session. And LGBTI organisations gained ECOSOC status for the first time. This will give them access to the UN and a platform to speak and submit information.

In a new [study](#), the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples highlighted the overrepresentation of indigenous children in criminal justice systems. It also points to discrimination in the rates of detention of indigenous children and their treatment within the system. The Mechanism reiterates the CRC's recommendation to develop juvenile justice systems in consultation with indigenous people and the need for access to appropriate services in juvenile justice.

In a taste of what is on the cards for next year, in July the Committee on the Rights of the Child [requested](#) the Holy See to provide details of every case of child sexual abuse by members of the clergy, brothers and nuns brought to the Vatican's attention. The Holy See's record on children's rights will be reviewed at the Committee's January 2014 session. Given the sexual abuse that has come to light around the world and alleged cover-up by the Vatican, the review is expected to attract significant media attention.

## Children's Rights Wiki

As part of our efforts to draw more attention to other parts of the UN system, as well as regional and national human rights systems, in 2011 we launched the [Children's Rights Wiki](#) - an online tool which brings together all information about children's rights country by country. The Wiki is an evolving project that everyone can add to. We encourage national advocates to take ownership of their own country pages, with information and resources on children's rights. The aim is to build a clear picture of persistent violations of children's rights in a given country, with the eventual goal of matching them with avenues of redress. This year we continued developing country pages and at this pace hope to complete all countries by the end of 2013!

The next step will be to analyse the content across regions and violations to produce a set of user-friendly tools for advocates to get involved and start using this on the ground.

## What's in the Wiki?

Each country has its own homepage with the following sections:

- Persistent violations: a snapshot of issues raised by more than one international human rights mechanism.
- International information: extracts of children's rights recommendations issued by international human rights mechanisms (e.g. UN Treaty Bodies, UN Special Procedures).
- Regional information: extracts of children's rights recommendations issued by regional human rights mechanisms.
- National information: a guide to national laws on children's rights, information on the children's ombudsperson at (if one exists).
- Case law
- Action: a space for national organisations to share information about new campaigns, on who and how to lobby at the national level, and to alert us to draft laws concerning children's rights.
- Organisations: a list of organisations contributing information to the Wiki.
- Resources: CRIN campaign reports, other reports, news and events relevant to the country.

## LEGAL RESEARCH

*In addition to UN debates, CRIN tracks developments in children's rights law across countries and international bodies. We aim to use this work to equip children and their advocates with the knowledge to challenge abuse. Where there is silence on an issue, we take on original research.*

## The CRC in Court

While children's rights advocacy in other UN bodies is catching up, the CRC is advancing to the next stage of its development, with the advent of the new [complaints mechanism](#). This will mean children will be able to bring violations of their rights directly to the CRC once they have exhausted domestic remedies.

Legal claims involving children's rights are, however, already being heard in national legal systems around the world in which the CRC has been cited or referenced. With this in mind and in preparation for the new complaints mechanism, CRIN launched a [CRC caselaw database](#) in 2009 to publish and review these cases. The database highlights decisions which reference the CRC in individual cases and the role children have played in bringing cases themselves. It contains plain language summaries of the cases and 'CRIN comments' which indicate whether the decision is in line with the CRC or not.



In February 2013 we published an [analysis](#) of the first 132 cases (an additional 36 cases have since been posted). The analysis contains cases from national courts (102), as well as regional (24) and international (6) complaints. These are drawn from all regions: Europe (38), the Americas (35), Africa (21), Asia 20), Oceania (20).

In terms of [CRC articles](#) addressed, the best interests of the child (article 3) emerges as the most cited provision (45 cases), followed by article 37 - torture and deprivation of liberty (25), then article 19 - protection from abuse and neglect (18). Nine articles are not referenced at all and civil and political rights are cited significantly less frequently than those relating to child protection, care and custody. Some of the variations in articles cited may reflect different levels of openness of the courts to addressing individual rights or types of rights within the CRC. In addition, given the often conservative nature of the judicial system, it is possible that lawyers are more inclined to raise and judges more inclined to discuss traditionally less controversial rights.

### Helping children enforce their own rights

In spite of progress in advancing children's rights through the courts, children are still not deemed capable of legally enforcing their own rights. This means that children's rights continue to be viewed as an extension of their parents', or only worthy of attention when something goes 'wrong' (e.g. children in conflict with the law, in detention or experiencing mental health problems, drug use or disability etc).

In an effort to remedy this, CRIN has launched a new project to establish what the "[legal status of the child](#)" is in every country in the world.

This project will ascertain firstly whether the Convention on the Rights of the Child has been ratified and incorporated into national law and whether it can be used in court. But it also aims to get a fuller picture of children's legal rights. The research will determine how the law treats children involved in legal proceedings, the legal means to challenge violations of children's rights and the important practical considerations of doing so. For instance can children bring a court case themselves? Can they get legal aid? Can they present evidence in court and are there practices in place that recognise their unique vulnerability (e.g. giving evidence via video link rather than in the courtroom, particularly if a child is a victim and their alleged rights abuser is in court)?

This research is crucial groundwork for the entry into force of the CRC's new complaints mechanism. While individuals and groups of individuals will soon be able to seek justice from the [Committee on the Rights of the Child](#), as with all other international complaints procedures, it is of no use unless all domestic remedies have been exhausted, which requires knowledge of national laws and procedures.

CRIN is working with an international law firm to publish reports on the legal status of the child for 200 countries by 2014. We are also interested in collaborating with local lawyers and NGOs who are always the best source of this information to help us to review this work.

We hope to use this research to help children, their families and local NGOs engage with

their national legal systems to challenge children's rights violations.

All country reports will be published on our website, as well as on the [Children's Rights Wiki](#) in editable form. We already have completed reports for:

- [Model report based on international norms](#)
- [Bangladesh](#)
- [England \(UK\) \(Children's Rights Wiki version\)](#)
- [Kenya \(Children's Rights Wiki version\)](#)

CRIN will also produce guides on how to conduct legal research (i.e. how to find out what the law is on a particular issue). These will include information on how to locate up-to-date legislation and case law, as well as where to find other useful legal resources on children's rights in each country. For example:

- [Bangladesh legal research guide](#)
- [England \(UK\) legal research guide](#)
- [Kenya legal research guide](#)

Other related resources can be found in CRIN's guide section, where you can find [toolkits](#) on children, the law and legal systems. These guides explain, in plain language, how to use [the law](#) to fight for change and get children's rights enforced. It also includes advice on how to ensure the legal system does not cause violations of children's rights.

### Legal research on specific issues

CRIN undertakes original research on the following issues in response to gaps revealed in our work to track law reform concerning children. This research is a precursor to our policy and advocacy work.

#### Inhuman sentencing

Research suggests the death penalty is still on the statute books for children in 15 countries (although we have just received unconfirmed reports that it has just been removed in one of these places - we will keep our readers updated). Four of these States are reported to have carried out these sentences in the last five years. Methods include lethal injection, hanging, shooting, stoning or beheading. In some States children as young as seven can be sentenced to life imprisonment. And in at least 40 States, children can be sentenced to corporal punishment including whipping, flogging, caning or amputation.

As part of our campaign to end inhuman sentencing, CRIN conducts detailed legal research into States that continue to authorise such sentences or keep it on the statute books.

This year, CRIN sent questionnaires to three law firms, including White & Case LLP, to find out more about inhuman sentencing practices in 30 countries. The idea is to add information about the prevalence, process, sentencing and attempts to challenge these practices

to our existing country reports.

Coming up: CRIN will shortly publish a report on life imprisonment in Council of Europe countries, including details of how many children are affected, maximum sentences where life imprisonment has been abolished and analysis of the case law of the European Court of Human Rights on life imprisonment.

### **Minimum age of criminal responsibility**

CRIN has collected worrying evidence that a growing number of States in all regions, are failing in their obligations to respect the rights of all children, and moving backwards in their approach to juvenile justice and criminalising more children - at ever younger ages. Some countries' minimum ages of criminal responsibility are as low as seven or eight, and some places don't even have a minimum age. CRIN tracks laws in States that have lowered - or are proposing to lower - the age at which they criminalise children.

Read more on both issues in the following chapters on Policy and Campaigns.



## Chapter 2: Policy

*CRIN's monitoring of and research into children's rights issues enables us to spot trends - both progressive and regressive - in how children's rights are addressed - or not. When we recognise a pattern of violations or a gap in children's rights advocacy, we develop policy and discussion papers to provoke debate and challenge existing thinking.*

### Children's civil and political rights

CRIN's policy work has a sustained focus on civil and political rights - issues that people don't often associate with children. But if children do not have the right to information, express themselves freely, respect for their privacy, confidentiality and beliefs, how can they be expected to describe the ways in which their rights are respected or infringed and learn to respect the rights of others?

#### Protect children, end censorship

Increasing numbers of States are censoring children's access to information on the spurious grounds of protection - a plain violation of children's civil and political rights under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child ([CRC](#)).

CRIN has become aware of seven States that have passed or drafted laws 'protecting children from information deemed harmful to their health and development'. In particular, a pattern of laws is emerging which prohibit the 'promotion of homosexuality to children'.

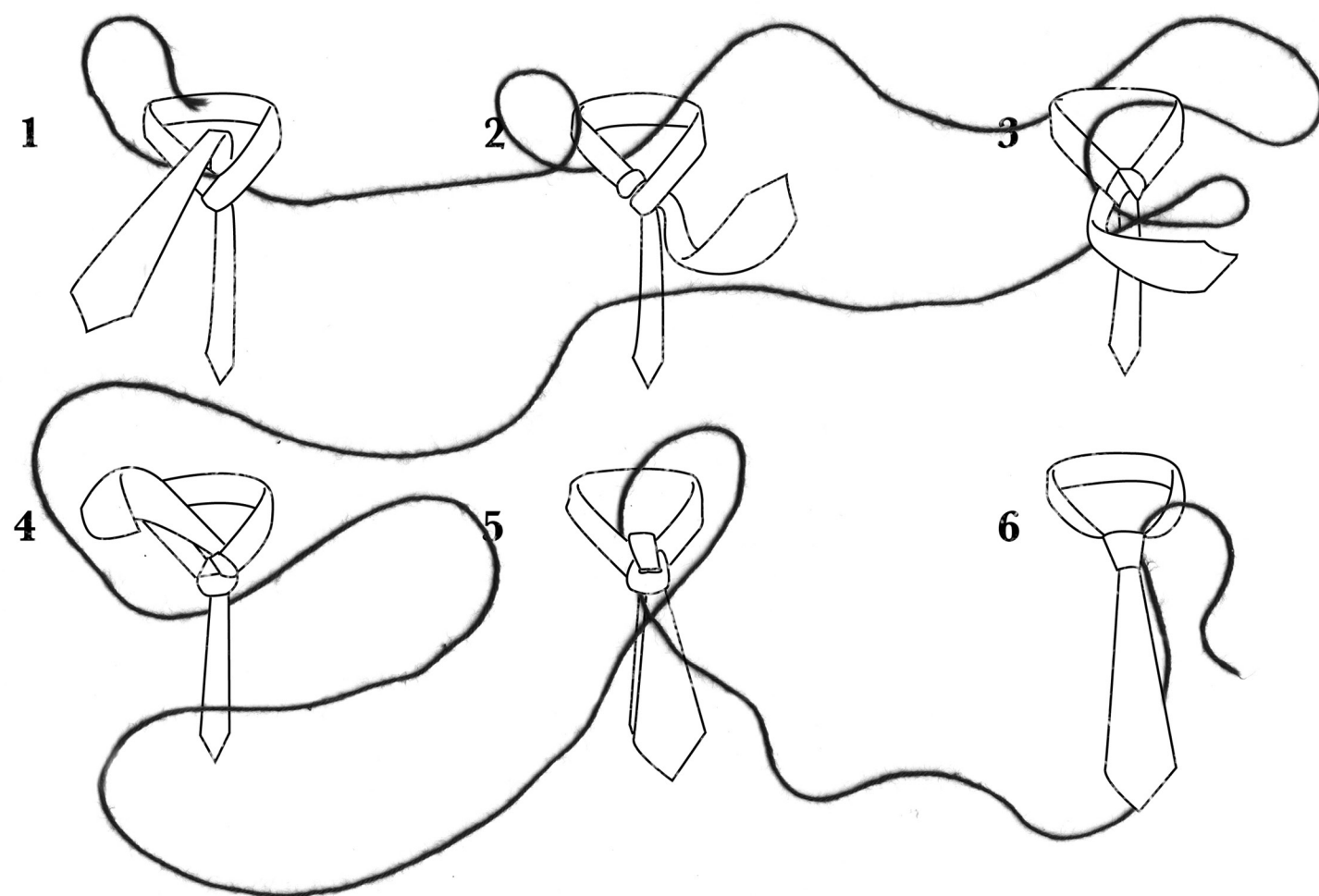
Broad restrictions on children's access to information not only contribute to discrimination, but serve to deny children age-appropriate information which can help them to make informed choices and play a role in their own protection.

Arguments against providing children with sensitive or controversial information feed into the notion of children as helpless human beings, incapable of making sound decisions, and present a misleading view of protection.

CRIN monitors laws - proposed and in force - that restrict children's access to information. The aim is to spark action to stop their passage or secure their repeal.

CRIN believes the ability to access information is critical for children's development. It is the means by which they form views about the world, participate actively in society and potentially stand up for their rights and those of others later in life. If they are to function as responsible citizens, it is therefore critical that children have access to honest and objective information.

Failure to promote tolerance through information from a variety of sources fosters exactly the sort of biased, harmful thinking the CRC aims to avoid. 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.



## Children's right to health

In 2013, the [UN Human Rights Council's annual day on the rights of the child](#) focused on children's right to the highest attainable standard of health. CRIN used the day to highlight lesser-known aspects of this right - those that relate to children's civil and political rights.

Some violations of children's right to health have understandably received sustained international attention. Infant mortality in particular - often as a result of preventable diseases - is considered by UNICEF to be the most important indicator in determining the state of a country's children. However, the right to health extends to all children and encompasses more than their survival. Health is defined as a 'state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity' ([WHO Constitution](#)).

Age discrimination - both direct and indirect - is a major reason why children's health rights remain unfulfilled. Many violations take place in everyday interactions with health care services. Dealing with health conditions or facing the prospect of medical treatment can be difficult for anyone, but children's anxiety is heightened because they are denied information about and involvement in what is happening to them, and their right to confidentiality is not respected. These violations are rooted in adults' presumption that children are unable to understand and make sound decisions. But the CRC asserts that children have the right to privacy and respect for confidentiality in seeking medical advice, access to medical records and a say in who else has access to those records. This is particularly important where children's safety and well-being are at stake. However, violations continue and in many countries children cannot access confidential medical counselling without parental consent; in others, children have had their HIV status revealed at school; in still others, children are subjected to unnecessary medical procedures - such as circumcision without their consent which can leave permanent physical and psychological scars. Read more about neglected aspects of children's right to health in CRIN's [submission](#) to the annual day.

## Stop making children criminals!

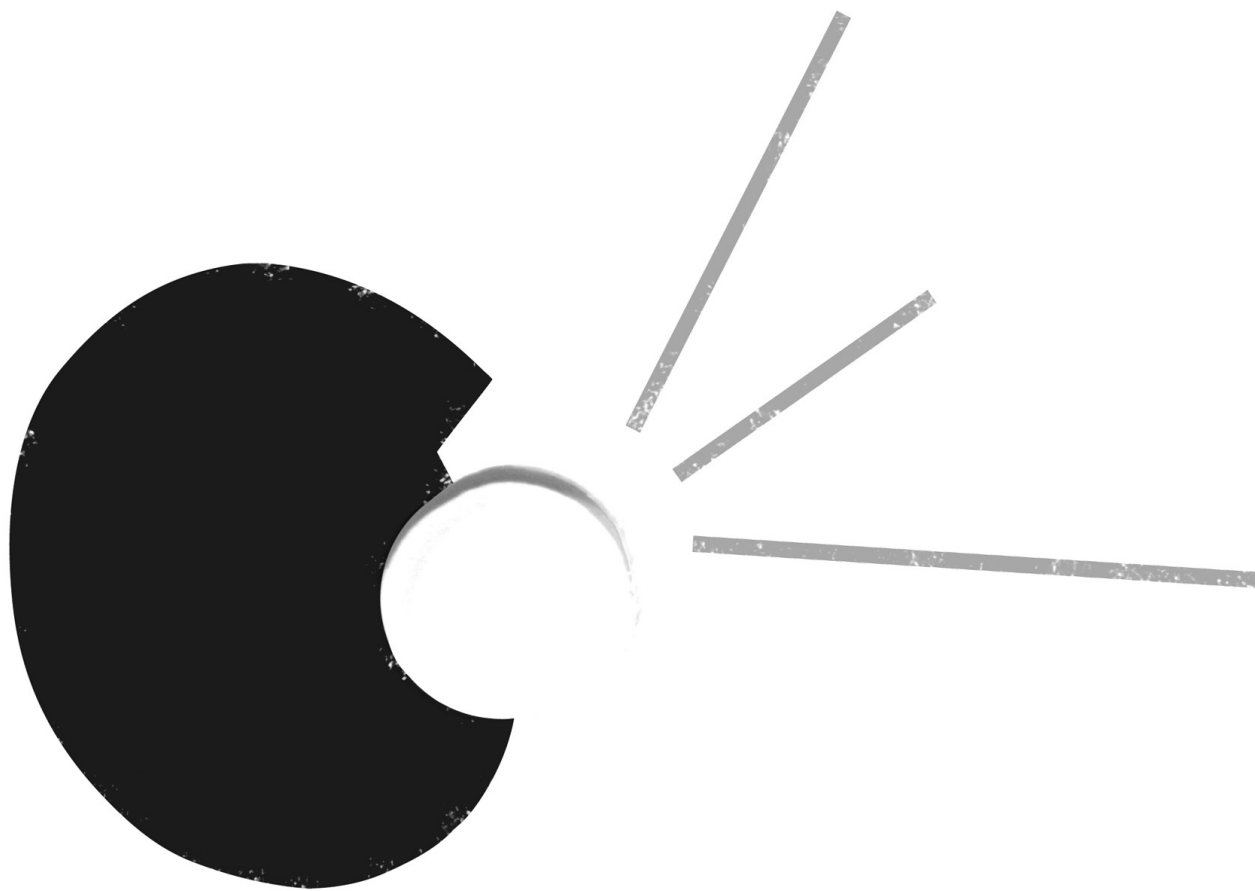
While States are quick to say children should be 'protected' from expressing themselves, there is no such rush to protect them from violence meted out by the State. States around the world are lowering - or proposing to lower - their [minimum age of criminal responsibility](#) - from Panama to Hungary to France. In part, this is a diversion technique by governments to shift attention from deeply rooted problems of economic and social exclusion, and blame social unrest on those they have failed. It is also an unfortunate response to a [General Comment](#) by the UN Committee on Rights of the Child which states that 'a minimum age of criminal responsibility below the age of 12 years is considered by the Committee not to be internationally acceptable. States parties are encouraged to increase their lower minimum age of criminal responsibility to the age of 12 years as the absolute minimum age and to continue to increase it to a higher age level.' This statement has been widely misinterpreted to condone lowering the age to 12.

CRIN believes that defining an arbitrary age within the CRC at which children no longer enjoy protection is discriminatory. It also conflicts with the CRC's principle that children's best interests must be a primary consideration in any decision or treatment they receive,

which should always be geared to their maximum possible development. Instead, it pushes them into a downward spiral of violence which continues into adulthood. And, in some cases, it exposes children to a criminal justice system of harsh legal punishments such as corporal punishment, life imprisonment and the death penalty.

That is why in 2012, CRIN launched a [paper](#) at the Human Rights Council's annual day on the rights of the child which focused on juvenile justice. The paper aims to stimulate support for the idea of separating criminalisation from responsibility. It does not absolve children of responsibility - many children know that an offence they have committed is wrong, and denying this does little to promote respect for their evolving capacities. However, children's developmental status requires a special approach. We want to encourage States to design systems which focus entirely on rehabilitation and prevent future offending, always with necessary attention to public safety and security.





## Chapter 3: Campaigns

*The ultimate goal of all CRIN's work is to encourage stronger and more ambitious advocacy to secure the rights of children everywhere. We launch [campaigns](#) in response to persistent violations of children's rights worldwide or to fill a gap where there is no coordinated global campaign. The goal is to make sure all children's rights are covered - and eventually fulfilled. Some of our campaigns tackle the conditions needed to fulfil children's rights, others address specific issues. We always aim to work collectively and also support other campaigns around the world.*

### Transparency campaign: the future of children's rights - in whose hands?

A huge volume of international standards now exists to protect children's rights, but before these can be fulfilled, they must be overseen by competent, passionate people with appropriate experience.

As part of our work to promote democracy, transparency and the rule of law as the foundation for guaranteeing children's rights, in 2009 CRIN [launched a campaign](#) to achieve open and transparent processes in how candidates for the top jobs in children's rights are selected. We encourage civil society to play a role in influencing these processes, and identify and recommend qualified and effective candidates to their government officials. So far, we have launched actions for the Executive Director of UNICEF, members of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and African Committee on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, among others.

### Campaign news

In 2012-13, nine candidates were elected onto the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. In the run-up to the election, CRIN [interviewed](#) all candidates about their experience and views on children's rights issues as a public record for all governments and civil society to see. The newly appointed candidates took up their positions on the 28 February 2013.

In other news, the term of the former [Special Representative on Children and Armed Conflict](#) expired in July 2012. The General Assembly has extended this mandate four times - most recently by [Resolution A/RES/63/241](#) of 13 March 2009. The resolution does not explain the procedure nor criteria for the appointment process. In 2012 CRIN [co-signed](#) a joint letter with a group of NGOs addressed to the UN Secretary General to urge him to conduct a transparent process. The new Special Representative, Leila Zerrougui, took up her post on 4 September 2012, following four years as Deputy Director of the UN Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO).

Look out for more actions next year, including 20 UN [Special Procedures](#) coming up for election/renewal.

## Inhuman sentencing

In 2010, CRIN - together with partners - launched a campaign for the prohibition and elimination of all forms of [inhuman sentencing](#) of children - defined to include sentences of death, life imprisonment and corporal punishment. This emerged as a widespread issue in the course of the [UN Study on Violence against Children](#), is arguably the most serious violation of children's rights and is carried out not as random acts of violence but as an act of States - those responsible for their care.

CRIN's campaign aims to achieve the prohibition of all forms of inhuman sentencing with international and national partners. This includes drawing the attention of relevant authorities to these practices. This year we submitted information on inhuman sentencing to the Universal Periodic Reviews of [Nigeria](#), [Saudi Arabia](#), [Malaysia](#) and [Yemen](#).

## Campaign news

In the last year the campaign has won some victories. More UN bodies have discussed the issue, in particular the General Assembly in a November 2012 [resolution](#) calling on States to abolish inhuman sentencing of children. We also [submitted](#) information to the UN Secretary General's report on the death penalty in March 2013, highlighting that countries that abolish the death penalty all too often replace it with other forms of inhuman sentencing, notably life imprisonment.

A child rape victim in the Maldives sentenced to 100 lashes for premarital sex propelled us to seek support from the [UN Special Representative on Violence](#) against children on her visit to the country. The government has since promised to outlaw all forms of inhuman sentencing of children. This sentence has now been [overturned](#) (August 2013).

Sentences of life imprisonment for children were eliminated from the laws of South America when the [Criminal Appeals Chamber of Argentina](#) - the last bastion of such sentences - ruled them unconstitutional in October.

Meanwhile, the [US Supreme Court](#) ruled that mandatory sentences of life imprisonment without parole for juveniles are unconstitutional. Legal reforms are underway throughout the US to reflect the judgement, though amendments to date still fall short of CRC standards.

In further good news, [Granada's](#) new Juvenile Justice Act prohibits sentences of life imprisonment and whipping or flogging of people under 18 at the time of committing an offence. The Act has received the Governor-General's approval, but will enter into force at a date set by the responsible Minister. The new Act does not, however, prohibit sentences of detention at her Majesty's pleasure - an indeterminate sentence which in practice allows for the possibility of life imprisonment.

## National campaigns

CRIN believes that international campaigning alone is unlikely to force governments to move quickly enough to prohibit inhuman sentencing. We believe that coordination and solidarity - achieving linked campaigns internationally, regionally and nationally - can accelerate change.

As a first step, 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 punishment. These pages include details on specific advocacy initiatives, programmes or campaigns, coverage of any developments, key contacts working on the issue, and useful background materials. So far, we have pages for [Pakistan](#), [United States](#) and [Yemen](#).

The main challenge continues to be the lack of human rights activists or NGOs in our target countries. This is mainly because of the lack of any independent civil society, and the lack of NGOs able - or willing - to work on juvenile justice in these places. This has prompted us to approach our work differently, including to work with law firms on research in the countries where we have few or no contacts.

## Legal advocacy - a new dawn

Stronger forms of advocacy, including legal action, are an important tool in children's rights advocacy, but have often been neglected by the children's rights community. However, where traditional and 'softer' advocacy methods - such as report writing, lobbying officials, etc - have failed to incite governments to act - legal advocacy can be an effective way of challenging abuses of rights based on absent or weak laws, or laws that represent an abuse of rights. [Legal advocacy](#) might include encouraging the government to create a law against a particular violation, asking for the issuing of guidelines on the enforcement of a particular law or calling for the abolition of legislation that protects the perpetrators of a violation.

## Complaints mechanism for the CRC

As part of our work on legal advocacy, CRIN has fought in coalition with others for a [complaints mechanism](#) for the CRC since 2006.

The [mechanism](#) is now established but has been a long time in the making. More than 20 years have passed since the Convention entered into force. The Committee on the Rights of the Child has always had the authority to review how countries meet their children's rights obligations. But unlike Committees monitoring other human rights conventions, it has been powerless to provide child victims with redress when governments breach their rights.

The mechanism will enter into force with the 10th ratification. No one knows when this will be achieved, but [ratifications](#) currently stand at six, with an additional 37 signatures - so hopefully by the end of 2013. The Committee has already finalised the Rules of Procedure that set out how communications can be filed.



In preparation for this new era in children's rights on the international stage, CRIN published a toolkit in April to give advocates a better sense of how the mechanism will work. The [toolkit](#) includes an annotated guide to the Optional Protocol and a comparative guide to other international communications procedures of the UN. It is divided into three sections based on the three ways communications can be filed: individual complaints, inquiries and inter-State communications. We hope this will prepare and inspire advocates everywhere to bring violations of children's rights to international attention.

The toolkit has been translated into [Arabic](#), [French](#) and [Russian](#), and will shortly be published in Spanish.

### **Legal advocacy workshops**

Since 2011, CRIN has been working on a series of workshops in different parts of the world to bring together campaigners, from both legal and non-legal backgrounds to explore possibilities of [legal advocacy](#) to advance children's rights.

The first of these workshops took place in Turkey in October 2011. In May 2013, CRIN co-hosted a second workshop in Nepal with Backward Society for Education Nepal (BASE). This workshop took a regional focus on South Asia. Thirty-six participants from five countries (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan) discussed persistent violations of children's rights in their country or region, using [CRIN's Wiki](#) as a tool. Participants examined opportunities to challenge these violations, identified the legal blockages to improving the situation and created plans of action for advancing legal advocacy, and discussed what more CRIN might do to support this strategy.

CRIN will be running more of these workshops in the coming months and will document this process to produce a guide to organising, running and following up on legal advocacy workshops.



## Chapter 4: Connect - working collectively

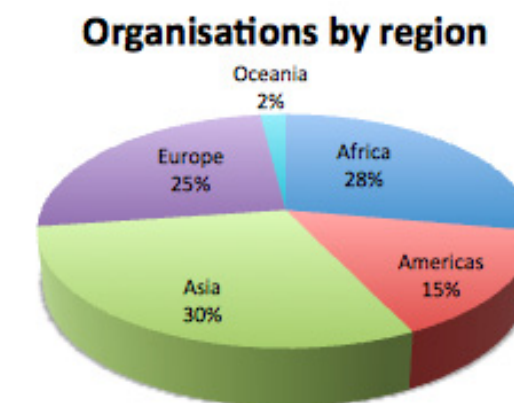
*Campaigning to change laws and perceptions of children is a mammoth task. All CRIN's work is based on the belief that we are most effective when we work together. There are many ways we work with others - from joint campaigning, to supporting national campaigns, organising and participating in workshops and sharing information. These are some of the ways we worked with partners in the last year.*

### Children's Rights Directory

Building a global movement for children's rights requires identifying key partners (existing and potential) with whom to raise the profile of children's rights nationally, regionally and globally. We work with NGOs, UN bodies, law firms, media outlets, academic institutions and all other organisations working on children's rights.

CRIN's website is our main platform for enabling interaction and advocacy. It is a tool for identifying threats to children's rights as well as new opportunities to challenge them. It also provides space for national perspectives on global and regional campaigns.

This is a breakdown of 2,276 organisations listed in our Children's Rights Directory by region.



### GLOBAL

#### 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 priorities and follow-up activities with the SRSG on Violence against Children; ensuring civil society participation in



these activities; monitoring the implementation of the study's recommendations by States; and making effective use of information channels and networks, such as CRIN, to keep the child rights community informed of progress. Read more about the International NGO Council here: <http://www.crin.org/violence/NGOs/>

### **Child Rights Connect (formerly the NGO Group for the CRC) and the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child**

CRIN continues to work with Child Rights Connect in which we occupy a seat on the Executive Committee. Together we provide coverage of the work of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, report on the Committee's sessions and make alternative reports, general comments and Concluding Observations available on the website. CRIN also hosts 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 Child Rights Connect also join forces 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 participates in several of Child Rights Connect's working groups, in particular the Working Group on Mainstreaming Children's Rights. The aim of this WG is to develop and coordinate an overall strategy to ensure children's rights issues are addressed throughout the UN. The WG in particular coordinates information and advocacy activities for the HRC's annual day on the rights of the child - this year on the right to health. Plans are now underway for next year's day on access to justice.

### **Coalition for the ratification of CRC Complaints mechanism**

Following the recent adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of the a new complaints mechanism under the UN CRC, organisations that campaigned for its establishment and adoption, including CRIN, have come together to campaign for the new mechanism's ratification.

The International Coalition for the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a Communications Procedure is composed of international, regional and national non-governmental organisations and networks, human rights institutions and other non-governmental bodies which are committed to achieve rapid ratification and entry into force of the OPCRC on a Communications Procedure (OP3CRC).

Read more at: <http://www.ratifyop3crc.org>

### **Interagency Panel on Juvenile Justice**

CRIN is a member of the Interagency Panel on Juvenile Justice (IPJJ), which coordinates technical advice and assistance in juvenile justice and is 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 international campaigns**

CRIN hosts 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>

## **REGIONAL**

### **In the Middle East and North Africa**

In early 2012, CRIN opened its first regional office for the Middle East and North Africa based in Palestine. In the absence of comprehensive information about all aspects of children's rights, our programme began life as a translation hothouse. The resources developed formed the basis of our Arabic website - CRIN's first full blown website in a language other than English. The office is now a fully fledged advocacy and information programme and works with partners throughout the region to promote a stronger collective voice for children's rights.

These are some highlights of the programme's activities this year.

*Working in partnership:* Much of our work in the region is conducted in partnership with others.

In an exciting pilot project, CRIN is working with a partner organisation, Shoruq, to establish

a legal clinic and legal services for children in contact with the law in refugee camps. A needs assessment is the first step and will take place shortly.

**Advocacy:** This year, at a workshop on juvenile justice in Jordan, we got advocates from 14 different organisations talking about a new angle on the issue - the idea of separating responsibility from criminalisation. In this connection, we also ran a one-day workshop with a rap group from Palestine planning to write a song about children in conflict with the law.

Later in the year, we attended talks in Egypt about participating in Manara - a fledgling Arab network for children's rights.

CRIN, together with Defence for Children International (DCI), has been busily corresponding with those that have the power to make decisions about children's rights. We sent letters to all Arab missions to the UN and foreign ministers of the Arab League to encourage them to sign and ratify the third optional protocol to the CRC (OP3). We sent more letters to NGOs in Arabic speaking countries, urging them to start national campaigns to encourage their State to ratify the OP3.

As part of our campaign to end the inhuman sentencing of children, we sent letters to partners in Yemen encouraging them to press the Yemeni government to halt the execution of the juvenile Mohammad Sumoom. We are happy to report that these joint efforts, supported by the UNICEF and OHCHR country offices, pulled off a stop to the execution!

Last but not least, we contacted an NGO in Egypt to support them to protect children's right to participation. This move was prompted by reports revealing that children had been denied the right to protest under the pretext of 'protection'; conversely, others had been used as human shields.

**Information and translations:** CRIN's Arabic language website continues to be updated daily. This hosts all the latest developments in children's rights including translations of toolkits and reports of international relevance, such as CRIN's toolkit on the third optional protocol to the CRC and a report by the International NGO Council on Violence against Children on harmful practices based on tradition, culture, religion or superstition. Our weekly CRINmail in Arabic delivers all the latest children's rights news, analysis, research events and advocacy opportunities to advocates' in boxes.

## **In Eurasia**

CRIN is now helping to develop a budding information and advocacy network in Eurasia. A few years ago, we set up a Russian web page with information about children's rights. These efforts have now flourished into a network that aims to unite fragmented regional communications, bolster advocacy capacity in the region and build a picture of persistent violations of children's rights in Eurasia. We will shortly publish a report with cross-country comparisons of developments on children's rights in the region.

In the meantime, this is a snapshot of some of the recent activities of CRIN Eurasia:

**Working with others:** CRIN has set up a Google Group for children's rights advocates in Russian speaking countries to help people communicate more easily and share experiences and good practices. To join the Google Group, contact [russian@crin.org](mailto:russian@crin.org).

Always seeking to expand our links with advocates on the ground, we attended a regional children's rights meeting in Lapland in December 2012, organised by Save the Children Norway in Russia. We met many more advocates at a meeting on juvenile justice reform in Brussels in June 2013. The meeting, which was organised by the European Commission and UNICEF, was attended by representatives of governments of Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia as well as NGOs.

**Advocacy:** In January 2013, CRIN sent letters to the permanent Geneva-based UN Missions of Moldova, Ukraine, Belarus, Russia, Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan urging their governments to ratify the third optional protocol to the CRC.

**Information and translations:** Our Russian language pages continue to expand, with many more information resources and translations including a guide to language about disability, toolkits on legal assistance and legal status of the child, a summary report on harmful practices based on tradition, culture, religion, superstition and pages on forms of violence against children. Our monthly CRINmail in Russian, launched last year, has also become a popular feature.

Read more about our work in other languages in chapter 5.

## **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.

## **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 eight 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 monitors 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.

## NATIONAL

In our outreach efforts, CRIN endeavours to support the work of national organisations and advocates who work on children's rights. As part of this work, we publish toolkits to 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 at <http://www.crin.org/violence/campaigns/sentencing/#NC>.

## GROUPS OF PROFESSIONALS

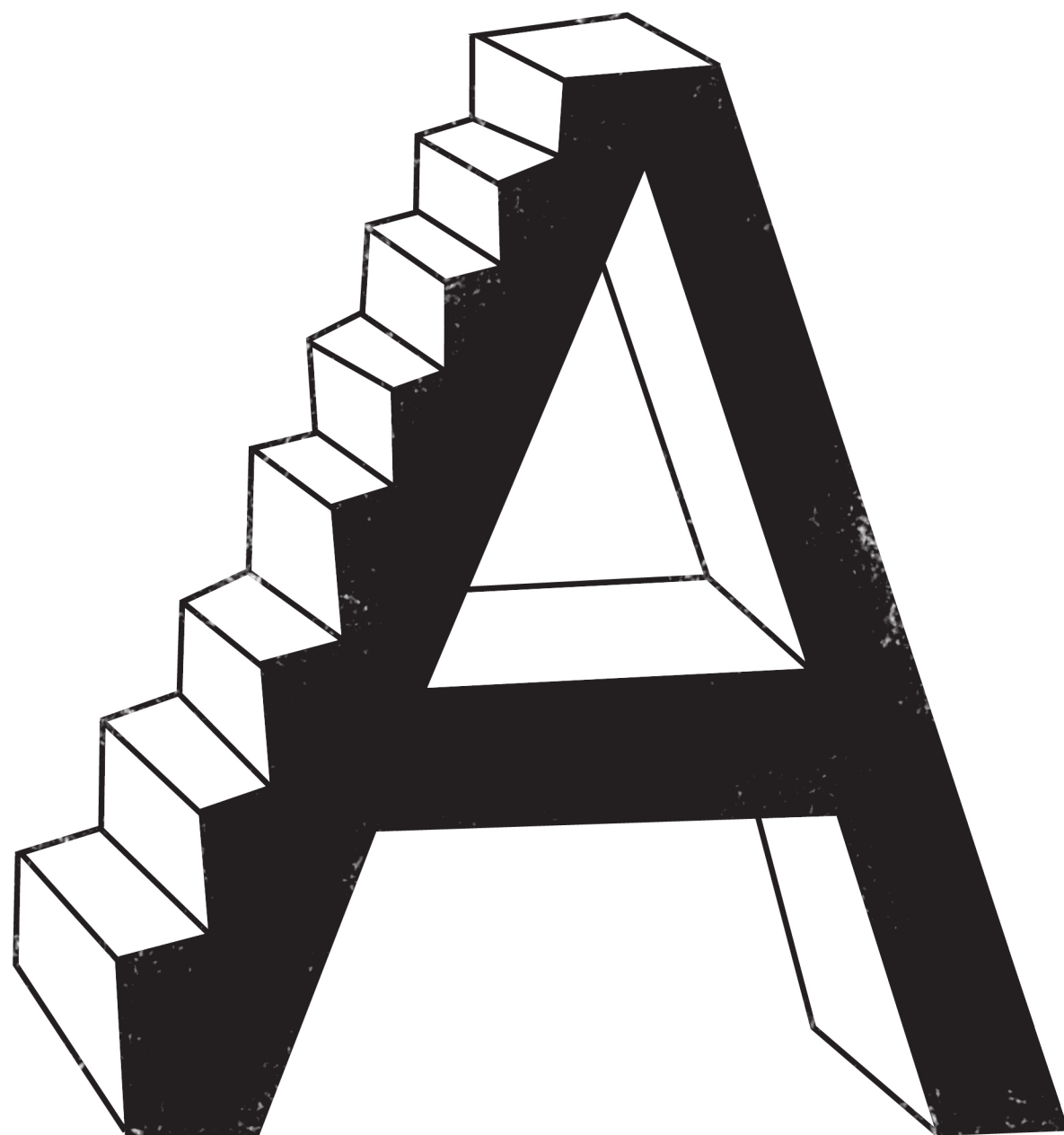
### **Legal professionals**

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 & Watkins LLP, White & Case LLP and Steptoe & 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. White & Case is now assisting us to develop guides to the legal status of the child worldwide.

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 & Overy; Reed Smith LLP; Shearman & Sterling LLP; Dewey LeBoeuf LLP; Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP; White & 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).

### **Teachers, journalists, health professionals, governments, judges...**

The majority of CRIN's users are NGOs, UN agencies and, increasingly, lawyers. But many more groups have a role to play in securing children's rights. For this reason we are working on a series of guides to explain what can be done by a range of professionals. Look out for more in the coming months.



## Chapter 5: Share - 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 and analysis, events, reports, case law, calls for participation and employment announcements.

In addition to supplying information and support, the CRINmail launches advocacy campaigns, highlights neglected or emerging issues, and promotes the work of children's rights advocates and organisations around the world. Across the nine different CRINmails, 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 continues. Anyone can subscribe to the list free of charge and submit information for inclusion.

CRINmail lists:

- 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 CRIN's work. 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, Japanese, Persian 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 2012 and 2013. This is intended primarily as an advocacy calendar and includes opportunities for participating in UN events, but also publicises conferences, workshops, academic courses, 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 its 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:

- Toolkit on the Complaints Mechanism to the CRC  
[[English](#) / [Arabic](#) / [French](#) / [Russian](#)]
- Legal Assistance Toolkit for Children and Children Rights Organisations  
[[English](#) / [Arabic](#) / [French](#) / [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

### Jargon of the Week

In 2012, 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 identifies examples of NGO, UN or other institutional jargon, 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

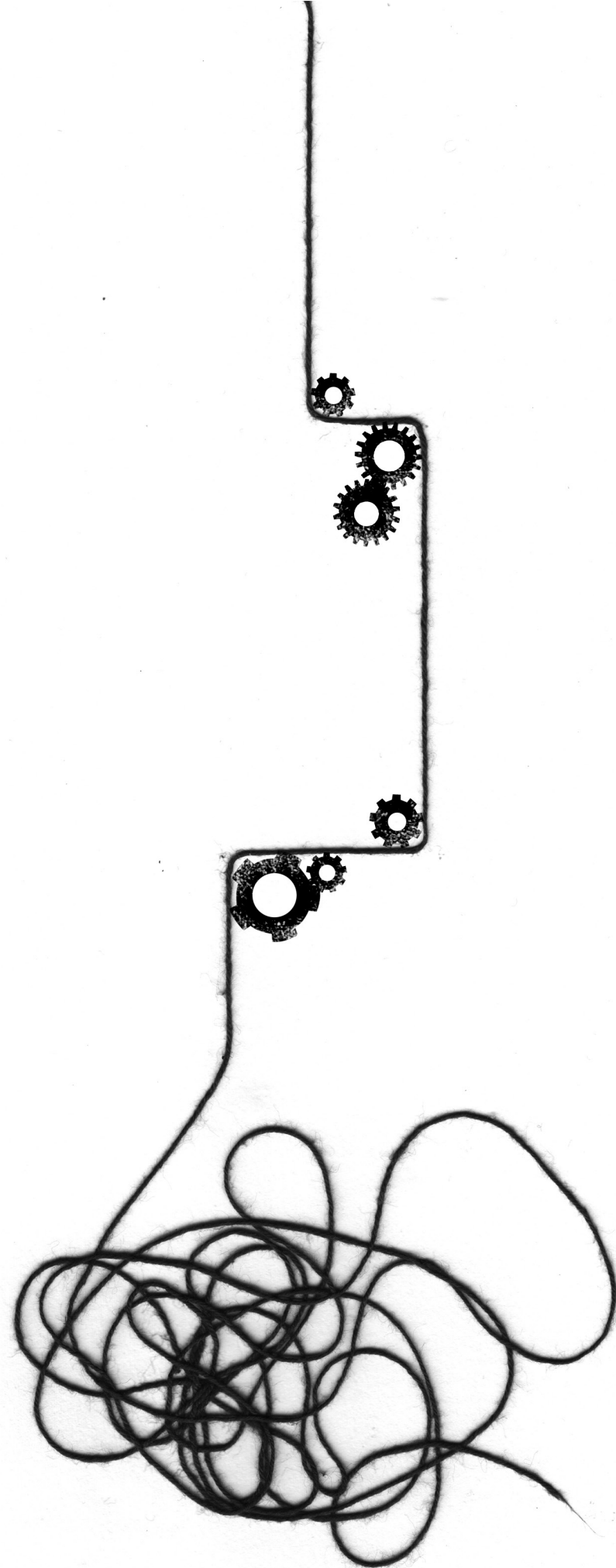
Another occasional feature of the English CRINmail is the Leak of the Week, in which we reflect on the latest absurd news, proposals and allegations by States around the world in a tongue-in-cheek way.

### 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 children's rights issues, which regularly host comments and sparks debates between our 1,243 Facebook friends. Our Twitter account is also updated regularly with news stories, publications and statements, and currently has 3,890 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 6: Ethical work practices

CRIN aims to promote children's rights through information and advocacy in a way that is consistent with our 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 have therefore identified the following main guiding principles for our operations which are informed by our core values. CRIN is committed to practice that is transparent, accountable, honest, nondiscriminatory and conducive to open communication with partners.

### 1. Ethical Financial Management

CRIN is committed to working 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.

**The Co-Operative Bank:** Part of the Co-Operative group, the UK's largest consumer co-operative, the Co-Operative Bank promotes ethical investment and business practices. The bank adheres to a strict code of conduct regarding which customers it will accept and which enterprises it will invest in, while promoting sustainability in the social, ethical and environmental aspects of its work.

### 2. Information Technology

CRIN strives to use environmentally friendly technologies in all our work.

**Solar Powered Web Services:** CRIN uses environmentally friendly IT solutions to reduce the environmental impact of our work. Our website and company file server are hosted in the AISO (Affordable Internet Services Online) data centre in California and managed by the Green IT Company. The AISO centre is entirely powered by solar panels, not energy credits or carbon offsetting, making this a genuinely renewable solution to our IT needs.

**Open Source:** CRIN operates an Open Source Office, with most of our computers running

Ubuntu OS instead of the more common Microsoft Windows. The term “open source” refers to software that can be freely redistributed, analysed and modified by anyone, and that is developed in an open and collaborative environment. Using Open Source software wherever possible is not only in line with our belief in making information freely available but also helps promote low cost alternatives to expensive and exclusionary proprietary software licences.

### 3. Publications

CRIN believes that information is a powerful tool for realising children’s rights and that this should not be impeded by restrictive or coercive copyright or licensing.

**Copyrights:** Alongside our support for Open Source software, CRIN has adopted Creative Commons licensing for all our publications. Creative Commons licenses enable authors to publish their content more easily, to have a greater level of control over their distribution and to give others the opportunity to use their works in more creative ways than the traditional “all rights reserved” approach to copyright protection. Creative Commons licensing allows CRIN to ensure that we are credited for the work we have done while guaranteeing free access to our information and encouraging others to build on and develop our materials in creative ways.

### 4. Green Policy

CRIN endeavours to contract services that have a green policy or that are eco-friendly.

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

**Local Council Recycling Scheme:** CRIN subscribes to the First Mile recycling scheme that includes the collection of plastic bottles and cans, paper and card.

**Printing:** CRIN encourages staff to minimise printing by using recycled paper, double sided printing, reusing old paper and envelopes. We do not produce mass print-runs of our publications - instead, we distribute hard copies selectively and usually only to those who would not be able to access them easily via the internet.

**Energy:** In addition to using Green web services, CRIN attempts to minimise unnecessary energy consumption as much as possible by, for instance, ensuring computers are switched off and not using air conditioning in our office.





## Chapter 7: Who we are

CRIN is fundamentally about children's rights, less about the individuals. But we need people to make this happen. CRIN has a core team of staff, some based in London, others elsewhere. We are governed by a Board called the CRIN Council. Importantly, much of our work would not happen without the many people who contribute their time and expertise for free.

### The Staff

Veronica Yates, Director  
Jenny Thomas, Senior Child Rights Officer  
Sabine Saliba, Child Rights Officer  
Leo Ratledge, Research and Policy Officer  
Meagan Lee, Legal Researcher  
Victor Sande-Aneiros, Policy Officer  
Ed Renshaw, UN Researcher  
Vanessa Stevens-Downie, News and Content Editor  
Alia Masood, Communications Officer  
Edward Parsons, Operations Coordinator  
Andrew Stylianou, Finance Officer

### Regional People

#### Middle East and North Africa

Nasser Atallah, Regional Coordinator  
Suha Ziyada, Translator

#### Eurasia

Larisa Abrickaja, Regional Coordinator

#### French Speaking Countries

Louise de Brisson, Communications Officer

#### Spanish Speaking Countries

Ara Yoo, Communications Officer  
Aida Mateos Fuentes, Ana Bravo, Ana Rodriguez Gomez, Volunteer Translators

#### China

Michael Zhang, Researcher

#### Artist

Miriam Sugranyes Coca

#### Consultants

Patrick Geary  
Simon Flacks  
Frida Dahlqvist

## **Interns**

Anna Bilous  
Zita Darguzyte  
Lucy Millgate  
Vaida Majauskaite  
Denitsa Mladenova  
Shirley van der Maarel  
Jesica Sotelo

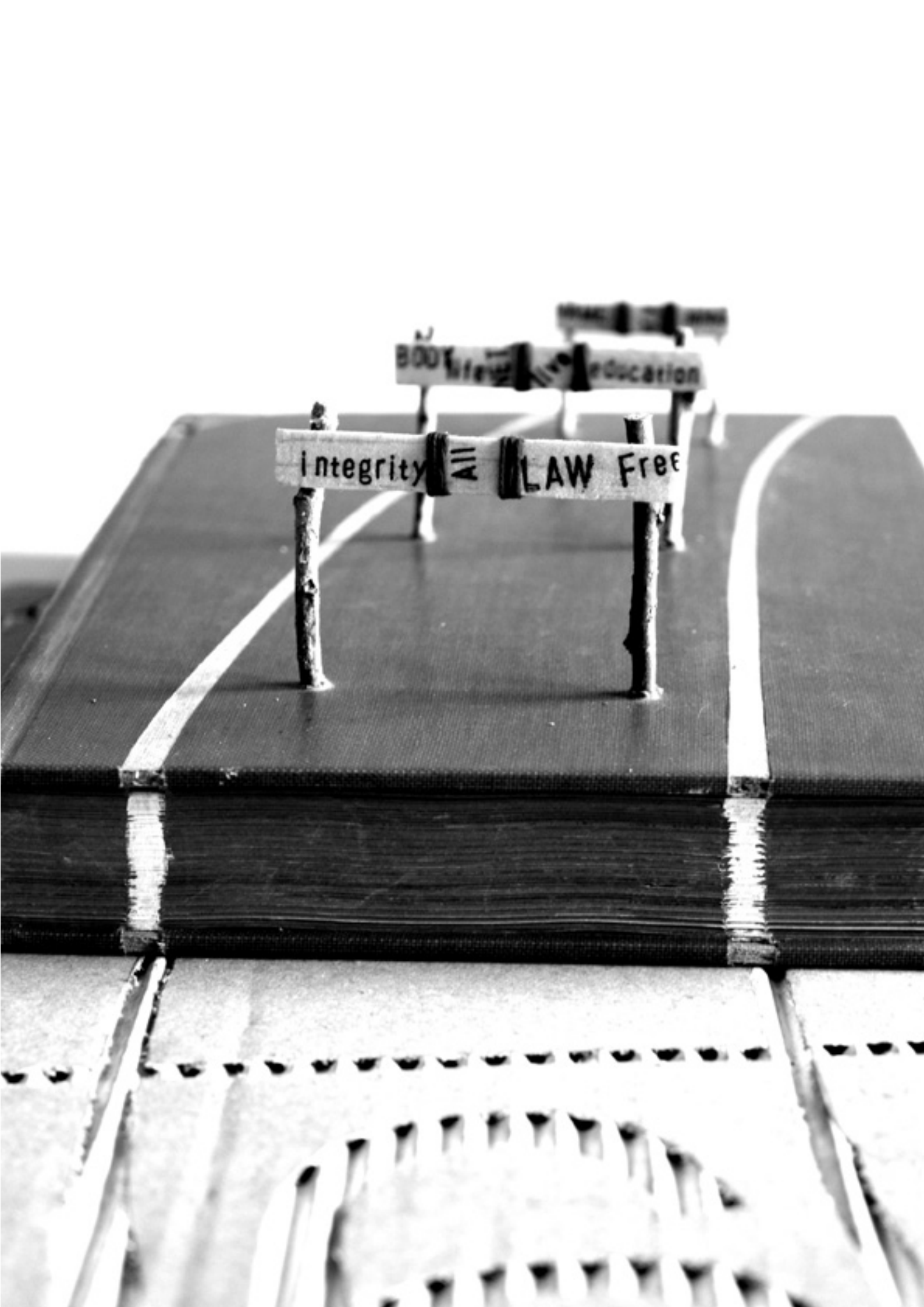
## **Board**

CRIN is governed by a board of trustees called the CRIN COUNCIL. Trustees serve in their personal capacity. They 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 Initiative  
Knut Haanes, Deputy Ombudsman, Norway  
Eva Geidenmark, Save the Children Sweden  
Bill Bell, Save the Children UK.

## **Donors**

CRIN's work would not happen without the generous financial support from 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.



## Chapter 8: Next season

This report wraps up another year of struggles for children's rights. But it also marks another year in which we have fallen short of our goal of eliminating the need for CRIN. Instead, we continue to grow stronger. In part, we hope, this shows that there really is a global movement out there that is serious about ending violations of children's rights. But it also testifies to the scale of the challenges to overcome.

To this end, as the action simmers down on the international stage in July and August, CRIN continues to work behind the scenes to invent new ways of propelling children's rights ahead - and CRIN out of existence!

This is a sample of what's in the works:

- A revamped, easily navigable website with a stronger campaigns focus, fresh-look country and regional pages, illustrations to bring children's rights to life, and much more.
- Groundbreaking legal research setting out the legal status of the child in every country in the world.
- A report examining the possibility of life imprisonment and lengthy sentences in Council of Europe countries will feed into our campaign against inhuman sentencing and for a rights focused juvenile justice system.
- More legal advocacy workshops, with events planned in Ireland and East Africa.
- A clear and accessible guide to the CRC and what to do with it, with every angle covered and illustrated with real life examples.
- Guides to children's rights for different groups of professionals including lawyers and judges, teachers, health professionals and journalists.
- New campaigns - kicking off with children's right to information and then a push against sexual violence in religious institutions.
- All the latest children's rights news and analysis as usual.
- And much more under wraps...

Stay up to date at [www.crin.org](http://www.crin.org)



