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## Editorial

Dear Readers,

Welcome to Issue No. 2/2011 of the DCI Juvenile Justice Newsletter. Amazingly, we are almost half-way through the year, and we extend wholehearted wishes to our friends and partners as we all continue working in the fields of children's rights and juvenile justice.

In this issue, you will read about "the essentials" of juvenile justice: an overview of the concepts and structures inherent to any juvenile justice system; of its requirements and fundamental premises; of the other legal systems that affect and are affected by it; and of its central challenges.

We also invite you to learn about the juvenile justice activities of DCI-

Costa Rica, which is conducting a campaign against a national law that seeks to try adolescents as adults when they are as young as 15 years old, and of DCI-Canada, which has submitted a paper to a parliamentary committee about the punitive amendments proposed to Canada's Youth Criminal Justice Act - amendments that would undermine a rehabilitative approach toward young offenders in favour of harmful "tough on crime" tactics.

You will also read about Alternative Report on the Implementation of the CRC in the Czech Republic, and, specifically, its juvenile justice component. DCI-Czechia (Czech Republic) contributed to this report in collaboration with other Czech NGOs.

## Juvenile Justice: the essentials by Bruce Abramson

### Introduction

The juvenile justice system is a hybrid of the criminal law system and the child-protection system. This paper discusses the essential elements of a juvenile justice system, and it compares and contrasts the three systems.

### 1. Juvenile justice compared to the criminal law and to child-protection

States use the criminal law system for young people over a specified age, typically 18 years. The age for entry into the criminal system is the "minimum age of criminal responsibility."

Below this age, the juvenile justice system has to deal with the offender. The idea behind the juvenile justice system is "diminished criminal responsibility" (or relative, or qualified, or limited criminal responsibility). Children and adolescents can be held responsible for property damage, stealing, assaults, murder, and other crimes under the penal law. But, in light of their immaturity, minors are not subject to the full force of the

criminal law. The emphasis is on rehabilitation instead of punishment and deterrence.

Finally, there is an age when children cannot be held responsible for crimes under the juvenile justice system in any circumstance. Under this age, the child-protection system deals with the children who do criminal acts. This lower age limit is the "minimum age of juvenile justice responsibility" (or "minimum age of penal responsibility" under Article 40(3)(a) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child). States have a wide range of minimum ages of diminished criminal responsibility, with 12 years being the age recommended by the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

In other words, most countries have three systems for responding to social disorder and wrong-doing involving minors. Two of these - the criminal system and the juvenile justice system - are parts of the penal law, while the third - child protective services - is in the civil branch of the law. The chart below illustrates the divisions:



## *Juvenile Justice: the essentials (continued from page 1)*

PENAL LAW		CIVIL LAW
Criminal Law	Juvenile Justice Law	Child protective services
subject of concern: crime	juvenile offenses	children in need of protection
ways of addressing concern: punishment/ rehabilitation/ protect the public	rehabilitation/ protect the public	protect and care for the child/ help the parents/ reunite with the family
institutions: jails and prisons	juvenile detention facilities, group homes, foster homes and probation	foster homes and group homes

### **2. The child-protection system**

The child-protection system intervenes when parents are abusing or neglecting their children, or a child has run away from home or is otherwise not under the control of the parents. Social workers help the child and the parents by such things as giving advice, mediating conflicts, mobilizing relatives and others in the community to help, and assisting in getting social services. The services can include individual and family counseling, diagnostic testing, drug treatment, and material assistance.

When the abuse or neglect puts the child in danger, the state can remove the child from the parents. The child can be placed with relatives, or in a foster family or in group home. The social workers continue to help the parents and child overcome their problems, and to reunite as a family, if this is realistic possibility.

### **3. The juvenile justice system**

The idea of a juvenile justice system was invented about a hundred years ago in one city in the United States. It then spread throughout the country, and is now found in all corners of the world. In international law, the "Beijing Rules," which were adopted by the UN General Assembly in the mid-1980s, sets out the basics of the juvenile justice system, and the es-

sence of the Rules were incorporated into the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In fact, the Convention requires States to have a juvenile justice system.

The juvenile justice system is a cross between the criminal system and child-protection. On the one hand, it is like the criminal system because it is based on holding a person responsible for breaking the law; it uses police and prosecutors; and it can use imprisonment or detention.

On the other hand, the juvenile justice system is like the child-protection system because of the focus on helping the youngster, rather than on punishment. It uses social-worker principles, and it does a number of things to "soften" the harshness of the criminal system so as to prevent harming the young person, and to promote rehabilitation. For instance: it uses softer language -- instead of speaking of "crimes" and "criminals," the terms are changed to "offense" and "juvenile offender" --; the public is kept out of the court room, and the youngster's name is usually not given to the media; the offender cannot be put into detention for long periods as in criminal cases; the minor must be kept separate from adult offenders; and the records of the juvenile offending are "sealed" upon becoming an adult in order to give the person a chance



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## *Juvenile Justice: the essentials (continued from page 2)*

for a fresh start in life.

The international law on juvenile justice -- the Beijing Rules and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, in particular -- is flexible. There are a few rules that are strict -- like keeping minors separate from adults in detention, and no capital punishment. But most provisions give the state a great deal of leeway, or discretion, in how the provisions are applied. (Such as setting the minimum age of juvenile justice responsibility, and allowing several different minimum ages for criminal responsibility, in accordance with the seriousness of the crime.)

### **4. The basic premises of juvenile justice**

To oversimplify, the juvenile justice system is based on three facts about child and adolescent development.

#### **(1) Immaturity**

Children and adolescents are in a process of rapid development - physically, intellectually, morally and socially. And because of their immaturity, they cannot be judged by the same moral yardstick. They can be held accountable for their wrong-doing, but not to same extent or in the same ways that society will hold an adult accountable.

#### **(2) The greater potential for rehabilitation**

Being in a process of development also means that rehabilitation is often much easier for children and adolescents than it is for adults.

#### **(3) Children and adolescents are vulnerable**

Finally, being in a process of development makes young people vulnerable to abuses and to harmful influences.

For one thing, they are vulnerable to physical and emotional harm in detention facilities, and to being influenced by older, "harden criminals." The need to protect them from harm lies behind a number of juvenile justice practices, like keeping minors separate from adults in detention, and the emphasis on diversion programs (which are discussed below).

For another, they are vulnerable to stigma. Being labeled a "criminal," and being exposed to publicity, can cause long-term damage. Thus the change in terminology, and the safeguards for privacy.

These three aspects of the development of young people - the process of moral development, the greater potential for rehabilitation, and the risks of being abused - are the main reasons why states all over the world have juvenile justice systems. Many of the details of the systems are different, but they are all based on a universally recognized principle: minors deserve different treatment from adults because of differences related to their developmental needs.

#### **(4) Rehabilitation is the best way to protect the public**

The fourth premise is based on social-science research, and the experiences of professionals in the field of juvenile justice: rehabilitating juvenile offenders is the best way to protect the public. Rehabilitation is the most effective and cost-efficient way to spare people from being victimized, and thereby to reduce the economic burdens of crime on society, and promote feelings of public safety.

#### **5. Diversion**

One of the most important principles of juvenile justice is "diversion." To divert something is "to turn [it] aside or from a path or course." Without diversion programs, a juvenile delinquency case would be like a train making its way along the track. After the offense, then comes the arrest, the detention pending investigation, being officially charged with breaking the law, continued detention pending trial, conviction, and, finally, being sentenced to a detention facility. "Diversion" is any measure that turns a youngster from this path, at any point along the way, to some alternative means of addressing the offense and the needs of the offender.

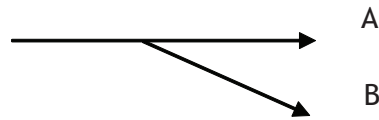
Diversion always involves two things: stopping the movement towards destination A, and redirecting to B. That is to say, one always diverts from A to B, as





## *Juvenile Justice: the essentials (continued from page 3)*

shown in the figure below:



Divert from A to B

Figure 2

Some examples of diversion: (i) Instead of arresting the minor, the child's case is transferred to social workers in the child-protection system: the young person is diverted from the penal law system to the civil law system. (ii) Instead of being put into detention after the trial, the offender is placed on probation, or is sent to a treatment program, or to a group home, or to a foster family. And (iii), instead of prosecution, the offender goes into a mediation, or "restorative justice" program, which will help reconcile the juvenile offender with the victim, and repair the social and material damage.

But one cannot divert from A to B unless a B actually exists. The Convention on the Rights of the Child requires the state to have a variety of Bs that offenders can be diverted to. When a state has a range of Bs in place, then it has a diversion system, and it is meeting its international duties.

### **6. The child-protection system is crucial to the juvenile justice system**

The child-protection system complements the juvenile justice system. In fact, it is crucial to the operation of the juvenile justice system in four ways.

#### **(1) Prevention**

The child-protection system is a primary means for preventing juvenile offending. Physical and mental abuse in the home, and the failure of parents to provide supervision and guidance, are two of the biggest risk factors for juvenile delinquency. And the central purpose of the child-protection system is to work with families to prevent abuse and neglect.

#### **(2) Diversion**

Diversion from the juvenile justice

system is usually diversion to the child-protection system. Generally speaking, most juvenile offenses are minor crimes, or things that would not be a crime if an adult did them (e.g., running away from home, not obeying curfews), and the youngsters' problems are not serious enough to justify using the more expensive, and harsher, juvenile justice (or criminal justice) system.

The child-protection system provides, or helps arrange, such things as counseling, close supervision, a stable living environment, education and vocational training, treatment programs, and services to help the family to overcome its problems. These interventions are usually enough for the youngster to regain a normal life, which includes not committing criminal offenses.

#### **(3) Overlap**

The two systems also overlap. For example: In many countries, young people from the two systems live in the same residential facilities, and go to the same treatment programs. Also, in some countries, the social workers and the probation officers are in the same government department, and may even be the same person, wearing two hats.

#### **(4) The child-protection system is the only intervention route below the minimum age**

Different States have different minimum ages of penal responsibility; it might be 10 or 12, or it could be 15 or 16 years of age. Above that age, a child or adolescent can be held accountable under the juvenile justice system for breaking the law. Under the minimum age, the youngster cannot be charged with a penal offense under any circumstance. Whether



## *Juvenile Justice: the essentials (continued from page 4)*

the act is a minor one, like shoplifting a package of gum, or an extremely serious one like murder, the State cannot use either the juvenile justice or the criminal justice system.

Under the minimum age of penal responsibility, the State can only use the child-protection system to forcibly intervene for the purpose of helping the child, and for safeguarding the community from further anti-social acts. It is therefore essential that the State have a good child-protection system, with social workers, alternative care placements, and counseling and other services to help these children.

### **Conclusion**

The juvenile justice system is one of three systems that complement and overlap with each other: the criminal system, the juvenile justice system, and the child-protection system.

To oversimplify the global picture, there are three basic problems in living up to international law. (i) Some states do not have a juvenile justice system; they only

make a few modifications to the criminal law to accommodate minors. (For example, the law cuts in half the maximum sentence when the offender is a minor.) (ii) Some states have adopted a few of the elements of a juvenile justice law, but not enough to qualify as a specialized system to handle under-aged offenders. These states have not fully adopted, or understood, the philosophy that lies behind a juvenile justice system. And (iii), some states have all, or most all, of the standard elements of a system of juvenile justice, but they have not built up their institutional capacities.

A juvenile system that functions well, and that is coordinated with a well-functioning child-protection system, reduces crime, saves money, and helps countless numbers of adolescents and children to live normal, productive lives. A state needs a juvenile justice law that contains the standards features. But it also must make investments in capacity building in the here-and-now in order to achieve these long-range benefits.

## **Alert: an adolescent in conflict with the law is not the same as an adult criminal, by DCI Costa Rica**



**D**CI Costa Rica has launched a campaign in response to a draft bill that wants adolescent to be tried as adults from the age of 15.

- Draft Bill 17.615 seeks to ensure that adolescents as young as 15 years old are treated as adults.
- DCI-Costa Rica raises an Alert: “An adolescent in conflict with the law is not the same as an adult criminal”; “If they are different, the penal response must also be different.”

The 18 ≠ + 18 Campaign led by DCI-

Costa Rica seeks to raise awareness and spread information about the negative implications caused by the passing of Draft Bill 17.615 for adolescents in conflict with the law and for the juvenile justice system itself. This campaign also seeks to carry out acts of social mobilisation such as collecting signatures for a definitive STOP to the passing of the bill that is found in the Commission of Security and Drug Trafficking.

Sectors of the congress are endeavouring for it to be passed and then presented



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## *Alert: an adolescent in conflict with the law... (continued from page 5)*

to the legislative plenary.

### **They are not adults**

DCI-Costa Rica wants to make the parliamentary members of the Legislative Assembly of Costa Rica, and in particular those who form the Commission of Security and Drug Trafficking, fully understand that “an adolescent in conflict with the law is not the same as an adult criminal” and that “if they are different, the penal response must also be different.” Therefore, they should not vote in favour of the Draft Bill 17.615, which seeks to ensure that adolescents as young as 15 years old are tried as adults.

DCI-Costa Rica’s 18 ≠ + 18 Campaign is born from the concern that emerges from observing Costa Rican society’s tendency to single out adolescents as the causes of increasing violence and crime. Accordingly, this tendency seeks to justify “tough on crime” policies and amendments, like the Draft Bill 17.615, in order to lower the maximum age of criminal responsibility for adolescents from 18 to 15 years, impose longer sentences, and impede benefits and alternative measures.

### **DCI-Costa Rica’s vision: It’s a violation of human rights**

The first reason DCI-Costa Rica proposes why the draft bill should not be passed is that, more than 20 years ago, Costa Rica ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which obliges States to establish laws, proceedings and specific institutions for minors in conflict with the law; that is, a system specialised in juvenile justice in which prison is used as a last resort and for the shortest period possible, and which offers the necessary guarantees for the condition of adolescents in the process of growing and formation.

The second reason is that, if one takes into account the fact that, of the total number of crimes committed by minors, about 95% correspond to adolescents older than 15, this new law would dismantle the country’s specialised system in juvenile justice - since it deals solely with adolescents between 12 and 15 years old, a group with minimal criminal participation.

As for the third reason, we point out that the Juvenile Justice Law in Costa Rica, despite its social-educational approach, is not a weak law; it is, rather, at the level of Latin America, the law that considers the highest custodial sanctions. As such, increasing the use of prisons is not reasonable.

For the fourth reason, it is important to take into account that, despite the fact that violence and crime have indeed increased, this growth has not been the result of adolescents, but rather the product of an increase in social inequality that augments violence in a generalized way; one in which adolescents maintain the same proportion in relation to adults, which means they continue representing less than 4% of the people who have committed crimes.

The fifth reason why DCI-Costa Rica proposes not to support a law such as Draft Bill 17.615 is that we in Costa Rica have already lived a similar experience that did not work. In 1994, there was an amendment to a law in which the prison limit was doubled to 50 years; this was described as a solution to crime. Today, nearly two decades later, the prison population has tripled and violence and crime continue to increase.

### **Alert: Awareness-raising campaign**

Based on the previous arguments, during the next two months DCI-Costa Rica will be making an ALERT call by means of the 18 ≠ + 18 Campaign and carrying out various actions and activities to inform and raise awareness among the public about the effects of passing of the draft bill, with the goal of having people to demonstrate solidarity with the campaign’s objective; to mobilise; and to put pressure on parliamentary members in order to definitively remove the bill from the legislative current.

The collection of signatures will be done through the website. If you are interested in learning more, please visit [www.dnicostarica.org](http://www.dnicostarica.org) and click on DCI-Costa Rica’s 18 ≠ + 18 Campaign icon, through which you can sign the petition online as well as locate various documents about what Draft Bill 17.615 pro-





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*Alert: an adolescent in conflict with the law... (continued from page 6)*

poses and about the objectives to be reached in opposition to it.

We invite you to BE PART OF THE 18 + 18 CAMPAIGN led by DCI-Costa Rica. Add your signature here:

<http://www.dnicostarica.org/?p=509>  
or here: [http://www.facebook.com/pages/No-al-Proyecto-de-Ley-](http://www.facebook.com/pages/No-al-Proyecto-de-Ley-17615/199083366793246)

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Defence for Children International (DCI) Costa Rica is a non-governmental organisation that works to promote and defend the rights of children and adolescents. For more information, you can contact us by calling 2236-9134 or 2297-2885 or by writing us at [info@dnicostarica.org](mailto:info@dnicostarica.org).

## Czech section of DCI contributes to alternative report on the implementation of the CRC in the Czech Republic, by Robin Myers

In conjunction with seven other NGOs, as well as with numerous other organisations from the Alliance of NGOs for the Rights of the Child, the Czech section of DCI (DCI-Czechia) contributed to an alternative report on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in the Czech Republic. Spanning a period from 2000 to 2010, the report examined the extent to which the CRC has been put into effect in these areas: its general principles; civil rights and freedoms; family environment and alternative care; basic health and welfare; education, leisure time and cultural activities; and special protection measures.

This snapshot article will focus only on the part of the report devoted to juvenile justice. However, we encourage you to read the entire report here: [http://www.crin.org/docs/CzechRep\\_NCCRCC\\_NGO\\_Report\\_EN.doc](http://www.crin.org/docs/CzechRep_NCCRCC_NGO_Report_EN.doc).

The alternative report discusses the implementation of Article 40 of the CRC, which refers to the matter of juvenile courts. The NGOs responsible for the report highlight Czech Republic's Juvenile Justice Act as an irrefutably important development. However, despite the existence of this Act, calls and campaigns for lowering the age limit of juvenile criminal responsibility - whether initiated by politicians, petitions, or the media - have continued. The report cites the example of the new Criminal Code, through which, in 2008, the Czech Parliament lowered the age limit to 14 years - not just for criminal

responsibility itself, but also as the legal limit for the protection of children from sexual abuse and exploitation.

This move clearly violated Article 3 of the CRC, and DCI-Czechia advocated against the legislation. Fortunately, parliamentarians also took the initiative to oppose it, and the decision was reversed before the Criminal Code took effect. That said, as the alternative report warns, many politicians and media professionals aren't adequately informed about the CRC, don't know how and why its provisions are articulated as they are, and thus continue to wage campaigns that would be harmful to the effectiveness of juvenile justice in the Czech Republic.

The alternative report also mentions the fact that hearings in the juvenile courts are often unbearably prolonged; disregarding the ways in which children experience time distinctly from adults, judicial proceedings can be excessively protracted and don't conform to the child's best interest. Further ignoring the provisions of the CRC, minors in the Czech Republic are often questioned repetitively and redundantly; non-repetitive methods are not adequately utilised.

To read more about the general children's rights in the Czech Republic - as well as about DCI-Czechia's important contributions to many fields, particularly that of education - we hope you will seek out the alternative report in its entirety!



## DCI-Canada advocates against harmful amendments to Canada's Youth Criminal Justice Act

by Robin Myers

DCI-Canada has submitted a paper to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights of the Canadian House of Commons, which is reviewing proposed amendments to the nation's Youth Criminal Justice Act (YCJA). The amendments, collected and published as Bill C-4, take a "tough on crime" approach to juvenile justice in Canada, seeking to render the YCJA more punitive in its dealings with children and adolescents in conflict with the law. DCI-Canada's submission on Bill C-4 criticises several specific amendments and the damage they will cause to the rehabilitative potential and practice of an effective juvenile justice system - as well as to the overall state of children's rights in Canada.

As DCI-Canada describes in its submission on Bill C-4, the YCJA - in its original form - has already consistently enacted numerous positive changes in the Canadian juvenile justice system. Implemented in 2003, the YCJA incorporated the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) into its preamble and emphasised rehabilitation and reintegration as both goals and practices. Prior to its instatement, the rates of youth custody in Canada were higher than in the majority of the industrialised world. Within five years of the YCJA's implementation, however, its rehabilitative approach resulted in a greater number of cases diverted from youth courts, a lesser number of youths detained before trial, a dramatically lesser number of youth offenders in custody, and no increase at all in the overall youth crime rate. Thus, it is clear that the YCJA has not only represented an important philosophical shift in the field of children's rights, but also that it has brought about concrete and consistent improvements in the same.

Yet, much to the dismay of DCI-Canada and other child rights actors, this progress is being undermined by the current government's insistence on "cracking down"

on youth crime - a move that, as DCI-Canada writes, "seems to be based on ideology and politics rather than on the well-developed body of evidence which exists in Canada and internationally." Young offenders continue to be sent into harsh, enormous institutions, despite the existing proof that such tactics are both costly and ineffective.

Bill C-4 is essentially a codification of this counterproductive approach, revealing an ideological drive toward a more punitive juvenile justice system by "amending" - which is to say, undoing - the rehabilitative precedents set and encouraged by the YCJA. In their submission to the Standing Committee, DCI-Canada (which, incidentally, does not presently support the idea of amending the YCJA at all) highlights several of the most troubling among these amendments proposed by Bill C-4.

For example, while Section 3(1) of the YCJA defines the objective of the juvenile justice system as "to prevent crime by addressing the circumstances underlying a young person's offending behaviour; rehabilitate young persons who commit offenses and reintegrate them into society and ensure that a young person is subject to meaningful consequences for his or her offence" - all of which ultimately serve "to promote the long-term protection of the public" - the proposed amendment first defines the juvenile justice system as existing to "protect the public," "holding young people accountable through measures that are proportionate to the seriousness of the offence and the degree of responsibility of the young person." DCI-Canada emphasises that this distinction is not simply a question of semantics; rather, it indicates a profound shift in intentionality. While the original Act focuses on the young person, his/her circumstances, rehabilitation, and meaningful consequences, all of which are the means by which the public is rendered safer over time, Bill C-4 focuses instead on punitive measures





## *DCI-Canada advocates against harmful amendments... (continued from page 8)*

as the first option. In turn, this approach assigns secondary status to rehabilitation and reintegration and distances itself from the “long-term” need for a sustained examination of a young person’s social circumstances.

In a continuation of this punitive approach, Bill C-4 changes the YCJA to define “violent offence” as “a substantial likelihood of causing bodily harm”; includes “denunciation” and “deterrence” as new sentencing principles; and increases the likelihood that a juvenile offender’s name will be publicised (which, as stated by the CRC, plainly violates a child’s right to privacy at all stages of judicial proceedings). All of these proposals seek to more broadly criminalise young people and will succeed only in increasing the number of youths in custody. As DCI-Canada emphasises, “there is no evidence that deterrence and denunciation work with respect to young people and significant evidence that they do not work.”

What follows is the list (summarised) of DCI-Canada’s recommendations to the parliamentary committee reviewing amendments to the YCJA.

1. When new legislation (or their amendments) affecting children are being considered, the proposals should be addressed by groups of children, particularly the children most directly affected.
2. Any changes to legislation affecting youth in conflict with the law should be made in a manner consistent with the CRC and other documents that represent Canada’s national and international commitments in the area of juvenile justice.
3. Legislation, policy, and practices related to young people in conflict with the law should be developed through an evidence-based decision-making approach.
4. The federal government should take responsibility to ensure that meaningful, complete and accurate data on youth involvement in the justice system is made readily available to the public.
5. The government should direct more resources toward social policies demon-

strated to significantly affect youth crime, e.g. mental health, education, recreation, culture, etc.

6. A comprehensive plan should be developed with specific goals and timelines in order to move away from the current traditional correctional model in favour of relationship models, which have demonstrated success; young people should play a key role in the development of such a plan.

7. The original wording of the principles of the YCJA should be retained.

8. The definition of violent offence that includes the phrase “a substantial likelihood of causing bodily harm” should be deleted from the proposed list of definitions.

9. The concepts of “denunciation” and “deterrence” should be excluded as principles for sentencing and the original purpose of the YCJA should be kept as it is.

10. The proposed amendment on the publication of young offenders’ names should be deleted and replaced with wording to reinforce the protection of their privacy as stated in Canada’s commitments under international treaties.

The DCI-IS commends DCI-Canada’s advocacy on behalf of rehabilitation, reintegration, and relational methods of justice when it comes to young people in conflict with the law. The aggressively punitive approach adopted by Bill C-4 - as well as many other legislations adopted and enforced by governments around the world - is not only ineffective but also deeply harmful, both to young offenders and to their local and national communities. DCI-Canada’s paper articulates an important commitment for all child rights actors: that any legislation or policy related to juvenile offenders must be conceptualised “in conjunction with a comprehensive plan to revitalise our youth justice system, creating a new approach that is consistent with the philosophy and articles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and that reflects our knowledge about youth and how to engage them in positive behaviour.”



## Two DCI-Supported campaigns

by Robin Myers

1. DCI supports OMCT's (the World Organisation Against Torture) International Campaign for the Absolute Prohibition of Torture and Ill-Treatment. This campaign, endorsed by nine recipients of the Nobel Peace Prize, appeals to political leaders, decision-makers and public opinion to be active in the defence and promotion of the human rights that are violated when torture is committed. The OMCT Manifesto, found here, <http://www.omct.org/international-campaigns/campaign-prohibition-torture/manifesto/>, states unequivocally that respect for human dignity demands for torture to be forbidden under all circumstances.

2. DCI is a co-sponsor of a national campaign led by SPARC (DCI's associated member in Pakistan) against inhuman sentencing of children. This campaign urges the Pakistani government and judiciary to stop charging children and adolescents with inhuman sentences such as life imprisonment, rigorous imprisonment, torture, and even the death penalty; to intervene in the

worsening situation of juvenile offenders; and to review the juvenile justice laws and practices at work in Pakistan.

SPARC, along with DCI-IS, the Child Rights Information Network (CRIN), and the National Juvenile Justice Network (NJJN), has launched a postcard campaign against inhuman and degrading sentences for children. Each postcard includes a joint letter addressed to the Prime Minister of Pakistan by the co-sponsors. 5000 copies have been sent to various organisations, media sources, and child rights committees in 52 districts of Pakistan; the campaign seeks to gather the greatest possible number of signatures before sending it to the Prime Minister.

For more information about the inhuman sentencing campaign, please visit

<http://www.crin.org/resources/infodetail.asp?id=24961> or <http://www.crin.org/violence/search/closeup.asp?infold=24908>. You can download the campaign postcard via the latter address.

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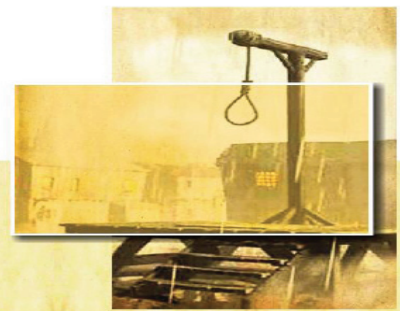
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### Campaign against INHUMAN AND DEGRADING Sentences for Child Offenders



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