



14th session of the Human Rights Council

Item 2 and 3 – SG and HC Thematic Reports

Joint oral statement on behalf of the World Alliance of YMCAs and Defence for Children International, international non-governmental organisations with Special Consultative Status

Mr President,

We thank the Secretary General and the High Commissioner for their report on Human rights in the administration of justice, including juvenile justice¹ as requested in Resolution 10/2.

We speak on behalf of the YMCA and Defence for Children International, as a group of young advocates from a number of countries in Europe, Africa and Latin America, who come to advocate on juvenile justice based not just on reports and statistics but on our own personal experience. We have been prisoners and have been in conflict with the law.

We regret that only 8 countries responded to the High Commissioner's note verbale. As young advocates, we have been conducting our own research into how well our countries are abiding by resolution 10/2.

In all our countries, detention and prison is used as a routine response rather than as a last resort. We welcome the Secretary-General for highlighting this in his conclusions.

We suffer from arbitrary detention and long periods of pre-trial detention. At the age of 10, my colleague David was held without trial, in an adult prison and was subject to abuse and torture, something not uncommon in some of our countries. My colleague Ibata was held in arbitrary detention without trial at the age of 16. He shared a cell big enough for 2 with 8 other children. Neither of them were ever tried.

For us another particularly challenging key area of Resolution 10/2 is paragraph 10. This stresses the importance of rehabilitation and reintegration strategies for former offenders. Only through this are they able to assume a constructive role in society.

Paragraph 6 is an excellent addition to international standards. It invites states to provide training to people working in juvenile justice systems. By understanding our rights more, perhaps they will be better upheld.

We call on all states to ensure that their justice systems are compliant with Resolution 10/2. Its full implementation will go a long way to making justice a reality for children and young people in conflict with the law.

We thank you.

¹ A/HRC/14/34 and A/HRC/14/35