



Parliamentary Assembly Assemblée parlementaire

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COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons
Commission des migrations, des réfugiés et des personnes déplacées

The Chairperson

Strasbourg, 02 February 2015

Subject: The Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe supports the Global Campaign to End Immigration Detention of Children

Dear Global Campaign Coordinator,

The Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe is dealing with all relevant matters relating to migration, asylum and displacement, in Europe and in other relevant parts of the world, focusing in particular on the persons affected and their rights. It proposes legal and political solutions and actions for closer European co-operation in these fields, as well as, when relevant, with non-European countries, in keeping with the human rights and humanitarian values of the Council of Europe.

This letter acknowledges our support for the Global Campaign to End Immigration Detention of Children, which aims to raise awareness of the harms of detention to migrant children and families and urges Governments to “expeditiously and completely” end the practice of child immigration detention consistent with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

Regardless of the conditions in which children are held, a number of studies have shown that detention has a profound and negative impact on child health and development. Even very short periods of detention can undermine child psychological and physical well-being and compromise their cognitive development. Given the known harms of immigration detention to children, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child has stated:

“Children should not be criminalized or subject to punitive measures because of their or their parents’ migration status. The detention of a child because of their or their parent’s migration status constitutes a child rights violation and always contravenes the principle of the best interests of the child. In this light, States should expeditiously and completely cease the detention of children on the basis of their immigration status.”
(Committee on the Rights of the Child, Report of the 2012 Day of General Discussion on the Rights of All Children in the Context of International Migration, para. 78)

We are concerned, however, that around the globe, children are being detained illegally, arbitrarily, and unnecessarily, in violation of their rights to liberty and family life. Furthermore, immigration detention exposes children to increased risks of other fundamental human rights violations.

Ms Leeanne Torpey
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By this letter of support, we join the Global Campaign in urging Governments to undertake changes to law, policy and practice to ensure that children are never detained on the basis of their or their parents' immigration status. We call upon Governments to "expeditiously and completely" cease the detention of children and families, and to adopt non-custodial, community-based alternatives to detention (ATD) that fulfil the best interests of the child.

This letter is a symbol of our commitment to supporting the Global Campaign though our continued collaboration.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Thierry Mariani".

Thierry Mariani