

Svetla Baeva
Bulgarian Helsinki Committee
Str. Varbitsa 7
Sofia 1504
BULGARIA

22.05.2015

Global Campaign Coordinator
C/O Hub Melbourne
Level 3, 673 Bourke St
Melbourne, Australia 3000

**[The Bulgarian Helsinki Committee supports the Global Campaign to
End Immigration Detention of Children]**

Dear Global Campaign Coordinator,

The [Bulgarian Helsinki Committee](#) was established on 14 July 1992 as an independent non-governmental organisation for the protection of human rights. The objectives of the committee are to promote respect for the human rights of every individual, to stimulate legislative reform to bring Bulgarian legislation in line with international human rights standards, to trigger public debate on human rights issues, to carry out advocacy for the protection of human rights, and to popularise and make widely available human rights instruments.

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.

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 through our continued collaboration.

Sincerely,

Svetla Baeva
Campaigns and Communications Director
Bulgarian Helsinki Committee