



## Progressive abolition of violence against children in detention in Central Asia

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### Project Factsheet



**Main donor:** European Commission

**Key partners:**  
*Child Rights Centre (CRC),*  
Tajikistan

*Youth Human Rights Groups (YHRG),*  
Kyrgyzstan

*Ombudsman Offices of*  
Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan  
and Tajikistan

*Credo, Kazakhstan*

**Duration:** 36 months

#### Project contact details

The Project will be managed by Penal Reform International's office in Central Asia (PRI CA).

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## Background

Violence against children deprived of their liberty is a severe violation of child rights. Children in care and justice institutions are at a higher risk of violence than virtually all other children.<sup>1</sup>

PRI's project addresses the issue of violence against children deprived of their liberty in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, by promoting an **end to the use of solitary confinement of children** and **effective separation of children from adults** at all times and in all detention facilities. At present in the three countries there are approximately 30,000 children deprived of their liberty<sup>2</sup> and legislation in the countries is not in full compliance with international standards.<sup>3</sup>

The UN Study on Violence found that in cases of isolation, or when children are detained in adult facilities, they are at a heightened risk of self-harm or suicidal behaviour. It is for these reasons that the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture stated in a 2011 report *'the imposition of solitary confinement, of any duration, on juveniles is cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment and violates article 7 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and article 16 of the Convention against Torture.'* Despite solitary confinement for children being prohibited under international law, its use as a disciplinary measure in closed institutions is common across all three of the project countries.

The effective separation of children from adults is also a vital measure to reduce the risk of violence against children. The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child's General Comment No.10 states that *'there is abundant evidence that the placement of children in adult prisons or jails compromises their basic safety, well-being and their future ability to remain free of crime and to reintegrate'*. However, there are still breaches in practice in all three of the project countries.

The importance of these two measures to address violence against children has been recently addressed in the 2012 Joint Report of the OHCHR, UNODC and SRSG on Violence against Children presented at the Human Rights Council, which clearly recommended *'States should ensure that when deprived of their liberty, children are separated from adults, and girls separated from boys...States should provide for a lawful disciplinary system...which prohibits the use of torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, including the use of isolation or solitary confinement'*.

Addressing these issues requires action at several levels including:

- Legislative and policy changes.
- Capacity building for personnel of facilities depriving children of liberty.
- Data gathering including recording the experiences of children deprived of their liberty.
- Raising public awareness.
- Providing appropriate services to child victims of violence within the justice system.

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<sup>1</sup> 2006 UN Study on Violence

<sup>2</sup> Deprivation of liberty in OPCAT Article 4(2). For the purposes of the present Protocol, deprivation of liberty means any form of detention or imprisonment or the placement of a person in a public or private custodial setting which that person is not permitted to leave at will by order of any judicial, administrative or other authority.

<sup>3</sup> UNICEF, *Juvenile Justice in Central Asia*, 2012

## Project Details

### Overall Objective

To contribute to a substantial reduction in incidents of violence against children in all closed institutions in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

### Specific Objectives

- 1) The elimination of use of solitary confinement in all places of detention of children
- 2) The separation of children from adults and girls from boys at all times and in all places of detention.

### Activities

- Policy dialogue with relevant ministries and other stakeholders as part of an advocacy campaign calling for legislative amendments to end violence against children in detention.
- Annual high-level round tables in each country with key stakeholders and a cross regional symposium on violence against children to discuss, develop and advocate for the implementation of new legislation and national action plans and corresponding guidelines and regulations for police, prisons and institutions caring for children, in particular to prohibit the use of solitary confinement of children and the separation of children from adults in detention in each country.
- Capacity building workshops to train all staff of facilities where children are deprived of liberty in the application of international standards and implementation of newly developed regulations
- Systematic monitoring and interviewing of children in detention facilities for annual baseline data, producing a “voice of the child” report to document instances of violence in all three countries, which can be used for advocacy and awareness raising purposes.
- Raising public awareness through a social media campaign including the use of blog posts, videos, Twitter and Facebook.
- Pilot counselling schemes for children who have been subjected to violence and their families established in each country.

### Expected Results

- National legislation, guidelines and regulations prohibiting the use of solitary confinement of children deprived of their liberty and requiring their separation (children from adults and boys from girls) at all times are established.
- Capacity of facility personnel to implement new regulations to prevent violence against children is increased.
- Annually updated baseline data prepared and disseminated.
- Public awareness of the issue of violence against children deprived of their liberty raised.
- Accessible and appropriate services (legal counsel, etc) for child victims of violence available.