



Oral Statement at the 49th Session of the Human Rights Council

Item 3: ID with SRSB on violence against children

Date: 15 March, 2022

Delivered by:

Mr. President,

The SA government is failing to promote and support the best interest of the child¹. Most efforts are reactive in nature and inadequate to address the epidemic of child abuse in SA. Despite the SA government taking a pledge to increase child safety² and abolish all forms of corporal punishment in 2019³, the homicide rate for children is 5.5 per 100,000⁴, twice the global average.

Violence perpetuated against children is exacerbated by poverty, high exposure to violence, Covid-19 and widespread malnutrition which can stunt cognitive development, reasoning and result in violent responses⁵. Exposure to and experience of violence is resulting in high levels of trauma, mental health concerns and cycles of abuse.

The Justice Desk and Edmund Rice International, therefore, recommend:

1. Increased funding allocated for the non-profit sector to address the issue of violence against children.
2. The implementation of widespread compulsory preventative caregiver education.
3. Regular compulsory trainings for all teachers to effectively identify and report abuse.
4. Increased efforts to guarantee the first 1000 days of nutrition for all SA children.
5. To increase public campaigns to raise awareness on all forms of abuse.
6. The appointment of a child commissioner in every SA province.
7. The compulsory appointment of a child protection officer in all child-focused sectors.
8. Finally, to allocate a budget for access to mental health support for children, adolescents and caregivers.

Thank you.

¹ UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, 20 November 1989, United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 1577, p. 3, available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b38f0.html> [accessed 4 March 2022]

²<https://www.end-violence.org/impact/countries/south-africa>

³<https://endcorporalpunishment.org/south-africa-prohibits-all-corporal-punishment/>

⁴<https://gh.bmj.com/content/bmjgh/3/1/e000573.full.pdf>

⁵https://www.researchgate.net/publication/338178286_The_Cognitive_Effects_of_Malnutrition