

2021 WORLD CONGRESS ON JUSTICE WITH CHILDREN

15-20 November 2021

“Ensuring access to justice for all children: towards non-discriminatory and inclusive child justice systems”

Workshop programme

Promoting Alternative Solutions to Deprivation of Liberty

Date	Monday, 15th November 2021
Timing	18:00 - 19:30 CET
Organiser(s)	Alex Kamarotos
Institution	DCI
Type of Workshop	Panel Discussion
Topics	Tackling violence within child justice systems and ensuring child friendly approaches for child victims, offenders, and witnesses.
Region	International
Language	English

Abstract

The UN Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty conducted by the independent expert, Professor Manfred Nowak, in coordination with UNICEF, OHCHR, UNODC and other UN entities under the coordination of the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children (SRSG VAC), academic institutions and other civil society actors (NGO Panel composed of 170 CSOs). The NGO Panel for the Global Study, encompassing 170 NGOs worldwide, played a crucial role during the process, from advocacy for the initial UNGA resolution (2014) up to the finalisation of the Study in 2019. The NGO Panel is now focussing on the promotion, dissemination and implementation of the recommendations of the Study, as well as conducting advocacy in support of the follow-up of the Study presented to the General Assembly in October 2019.

Three key takeaways of the session

- Better understanding of deprivation of liberty and of the recommendations of the study
- Promising practices are shared and processes for the implementation of the study’s recommendations are clear.
- Concrete ideas on how to further cooperate in the future at all levels (national, regional, international) to prevent and end deprivation of liberty of children.

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Objectives

- Provide guidance on new developments in the field, disseminate recommendations of the Global Study and other tools on Justice for Children
- Exchange promising practices with ‘champion countries’ from different continents and contexts, such as investment on non-custodial measures to ensure children's safe reintegration into families and communities
- Advocate for the follow up of data collection on children deprived of liberty and the launch of national action plans to promote alternatives to detention
- Highlight good and innovative practices that enable children’s and youth effective and meaningful participation in these objectives
- Promote enhanced and coordinated cooperation at national, regional, and international levels to end child migration detention and provide adequate integral protection and access to justice for children
- Elaborate the roles of relevant stakeholders in assisting Member States in their implementation of their international legal obligations and political commitments

Expected outcomes

- Better understanding of deprivation of liberty and of the recommendations of the study

Speakers

- **Moderator**

- **Mr. Alex Kamarotos**

- Executive Director of Defence for Children International (DCI)’s International Secretariat in Geneva since November 2016. He has been co-chairing the NGO Panel on children deprived of liberty together with Jo Becker (HRW), since the designation of the Independent Expert and lead author of the Study (2016), Prof. Manfred Nowak, up to now. He has a wide experience in international organisations, including 25 years in humanitarian affairs, human rights and the rights of the child, both at the United Nations as well in NGOs.

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- **Chat Moderator**

Ms Sasha Richards, Advocacy officer, Defence for Children International

- **Panelists**

1. **Ms. Mikiko Otani**

An international human rights lawyer based in Tokyo where she practices family law with a focus on women’s and children’s rights. She is Chairperson of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, Council Member of the International Bar Association’s Human Rights Institute and former Chair of the Committee on International Human Rights of the Japan Federation of Bar Associations. She is also the country representative of Japan for the Family Law and Family Rights Section of LAWASIA (The Law Association for Asia and the Pacific). Her areas of focus include Child Justice, human rights education, early childhood development, child participation, girl child, child marriage, human trafficking and migrant children. As a leading woman lawyer representing civil society in Japan, Ms. Otani was an Alternate Representative of the Delegation of Japan to the 60th and the 61st UN General Assembly (Third Committee) (2005-2006) and an Advisor (NGO Representative) of the Delegation of Japan to the 53rd UN Commission on the Status of Women (2009).

2. **Ms. Jo Becker**

Jo Becker is the Advocacy Director of the children’s rights division at Human Rights Watch and since 2014, she has co-chaired the NGO Panel on Children Deprived of Liberty. As the founding chairperson of the international Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, she helped campaign successfully for an international treaty banning the forced recruitment of children under age 18 or their use in armed conflict. She has conducted field investigations on children’s rights in Burma, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Morocco, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Uganda, and the United States. Based on her expertise on the issue of child soldiers, she has addressed the United Nations Security Council, testified before the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee, conducted training for US and African military officers, and testified as an expert in a Dutch war crimes trial. She has written several Human Rights Watch reports and her op-eds have appeared in the Washington Post, International Herald Tribune, The Guardian, and other major papers. She is also the author of two books,

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Campaigning for Justice: Human Rights Advocacy in Practice and Campaigning for Children: Strategies for Advancing Children’s Rights.

3. Mr. Mohamed Bangura

Mohamed Bangura is a youth leader in Sierra Leone who has worked on several children and youth advocacy projects across the country since 2011. His interest in advocating against violence for children and youth emanated from his experience with the justice system of Sierra Leone. Mohamed advocates for a safer justice environment for juveniles which should prioritize all possible alternatives to detention. He hopes to amplify his work through the DCI Youth Ambassador programme. Mohamed is currently a graduate student at Carnegie Mellon University Africa with a focus on Energy Systems. He plans to use his academic expertise to reduce energy poverty in rural communities in West Africa thereby creating employment opportunities for young people and preventing community-level crimes.

4. Mr. Vassiliy Yuzhanin

Head of the International Migration Law Unit, IOM. He has over 22 years of experience in migration, specializing on the International Migration Law, with a particular focus on human rights law, international labour law and migrants’ rights, transnational criminal law, business and migrants’ rights, immigration law, border and other areas. Vassiliy has been working nationally and regionally providing expert support and implementing projects on the above-mentioned thematic areas on several positions in IOM in Central Asia, Azerbaijan, Regional Office for South-East, Eastern Europe and Central Asia and IOM Headquarters. He took part in, led or contributed to many initiatives supporting governments in migration policy and legislation development.

5. Ms Virginia Gamba

Professor Virginia Gamba was appointed Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict at the Under-Secretary-General level in April 2017. Ms. Gamba has a long career in peace and security, human security, and disarmament issues. She served most recently as Assistant Secretary General, Head of the Joint Investigative Mechanism Syria. She previously served as Deputy to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and Director of the Office for Disarmament Affairs.

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Past engagements with the United Nations include serving as Director to the Disarmament and Conflict Resolution Programme at the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research in Geneva (1992-1996).