

UN Human Rights Council
24th session
Agenda item 3: Panel 11 September 2013

Joint oral Statement of Friends World Committee for Consultation (Quakers) and [final list of NGOs to be added]...

Panel on Children of Parents Sentenced to the Death Penalty or Executed

The [Child Rights Connect (formerly NGO Group for the CRC) Working Group on Children of Incarcerated Parents] [following NGOs ...] welcome the holding of this important Panel.

In our experience, from the point of arrest to decades after the execution or release of a parent accused of a capital crime, the children's mental health and well-being, living situation and relationships with others can all be affected, often in a devastating manner. The inherent trauma of knowing that a loved one is going to be executed can be exacerbated by public indifference or hostility, and by authorities who either fail to recognise or deliberately refuse to consider the situation of these children. Their particular plight requires greater attention in order both to understand more fully the impact that sentencing a parent to death has on children and to ensure that their rights, needs and welfare are met in a situation where a parent has been sentenced to death, executed, exonerated, or has a death sentence commuted.

We have a new publication *Children of parents sentenced to death or executed. How are they affected? How can they be supported?*¹ which builds on the earlier publications of the Quaker UN Office.²

We would like to address the following questions to the Panellists:

Ms Flavia Panseri: What are the particular needs and problems when the parent is sentenced to death or executed in another country? How can children be best supported in these circumstances?

Mr. Jorge Candona Llorens (Committee on the Rights of the Child): How can the best interests of these children be safeguarded? What are the State obligations towards them?

Dr. Sandra Jones (Associate Professor, Rowan University, USA): How are children affected psychologically by the imposition of a death sentence on their parent? How does the process of having a parent on death row affect the children? What is different when the parent is actually executed?

Ms. Nisreen Zerikat (National Centre for Human Rights, Jordan): How can National Human Rights Institutions create better awareness and understanding of the impact on children of the imposition of the death penalty on a parent? When they function as National Preventive Mechanisms under the Protocol to the Torture Convention, can they improve the situation for those on death row and their children?

1 Child Rights Connect Working Group on Children of Incarcerated Parents: *Children of parents sentenced to death or executed. How are they affected? How can they be supported?* (August 2013) available in all Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish from www.quno.org or in hard copy from the Quaker UN Office (QUNO), Geneva. See also joint written statement A/HRC/24/NGO/

2 Oliver Robertson & Rachel Brett: *Lightening the Load of the Parental Death Penalty on Children* (QUNO, June 2013); Helen F Kearney: *Children of parents sentenced to death* (QUNO, February 2012), both available in Arabic, English, French and Spanish from www.quno.org or in hard copy from QUNO Geneva.

Mr. Francis Ssubi (Executive Director, Wells for Hope, Uganda): From a practical point of view, even when executions are not taking place, how does the imposition of death sentence impact on the children? What are the greatest needs such children have in your experience?

Finally, we believe that the important first step that this Panel represents should be supplemented by a meeting of human rights experts to explore the issues in more depth, including a full examination of the applicable human rights framework, to enable all relevant international human rights treaty bodies and special procedures to engage with the issues, as well as to provide guidance to States and other bodies.