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CRIN CHILD RIGHTS INTERNATIONAL NETWORK

CAMPAIGN REPORT

INHUMAN SENTENCING OF CHILDREN IN BANGLADESH

Summary

The Children's Act 2013 has substantially amended much of the relevant legislation on the criminal sentencing of children, explicitly prohibiting the death penalty and life imprisonment for children. However, children may still be sentenced to corporal punishment. People have also been sentenced to life imprisonment for offences committed while under the age of 18 since the Children Act came into force as a result of the application of legislation that was in force at the time of the alleged offence.

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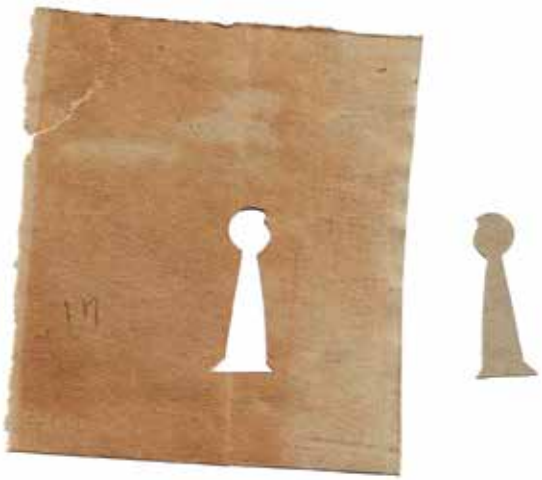

Introduction

The main laws governing juvenile justice are the Children Act 2013, the Children Rules 1976, the Code of Criminal Procedure 1898, the Penal Code 1860, the Special Powers Act 1974 and the Whipping Act 1909.

The minimum age of criminal responsibility is 9.[1] The Children Act defines a child as anyone up to the age of 18 years.[2] The Act also provides for the creation of "children's courts" in every district headquarters[3] and every metropolitan area empowered with exclusive jurisdiction over the case of a child in conflict with the law.[4]

Legality of inhuman sentencing

Death penalty

The Children's Act 2013 explicitly prohibits the death penalty as a sentence for children.[5] However, it is not clear that this reform guarantees that no child will be subject to the death penalty.

In May 2015, the Supreme Court of Bangladesh ruled that mandatory death sentences are unconstitutional.[6] The case centred on various appeals for people sentenced to death where the court had no discretion to impose another sentence, including the case of Sukur Ali who was sentenced to death for a rape and murder committed when he was 14. The offence was committed before the Children Act 2013 came into force and the court did not consider the prohibition on the death penalty under that Act in reaching its decision. The court did not consider whether the death penalty for child offenders is unconstitutional and so it is possible that

1 Penal Code, Sections 82 and 83.

2 Children Act 2013, Section 4.

3 Children Act 2013, Section 16.

4 Children Act 2013, Section 17.

5 Children Act 2013, Section 33(1).

6 Civil Appeal No. 116 of 2010. Available at: http://www.supremecourt.gov.bd/resources/documents/808470_CivilAppealNo.116of2010.pdf.

the death penalty could still be carried out for an offence committed prior to the entry into force of the Children Act 2013.

Before the Children Act 2013 came into force, the death penalty was prohibited for children under 16 convicted of a capital offence. Section 51 of the Children Act 1974 stated: "(1) Notwithstanding anything to the contrary contained in any law, no child shall be sentenced to death, transportation or imprisonment... " There was no prohibition of the death penalty for young persons aged 16 and over or for adults convicted of capital offences committed when they were children.

Children aged 16 and 17 were not subject to the provisions of the Children Act 1974 but were punished according to the Penal Code and other criminal legislation. The Penal Code provides for the death penalty, which may be commuted to any other sentenced provided by the Code.[7] Capital offences include those relating to war, mutiny, murder, abetting suicide, causing grievous hurt, kidnapping and banditry.[8] Execution is by hanging.[9]

The Special Powers Act states that it overrides all other laws,[10] although this has been challenged through the courts. In 2006, the Supreme Court ruled that where an offender is a child (under 16) he or she must be tried under the provisions of the Children Act.[11] The Special Powers Act provides for the death penalty for offences relating to sabotage, dealing in the black market, counterfeit, smuggling and contamination of food, drink, drugs or cosmetics.[12] The Act applies to all persons, including those under 16.

Life imprisonment

The Children Act 2013 explicitly prohibits life imprisonment for children.[13] However, in August 2015, the Supreme Court commuted the death sentence of a man who was 14 when his trial for rape and murder began in 1999 to life imprisonment.[14] As the offence was committed prior to the entry into force of the new Children Act, the court applied the law that was in force at the time of the offence, allowing the application of a life sentence.[15]

Before the Children Act 2013 came into force, the Children Act 1972 prohibited imprisonment for children under 16. Section 51 stated that: "(1) [n]otwithstanding anything to the contrary contained in any law, no child shall be sentenced to death, transportation or imprisonment..." However, the Act allowed imprisonment of children in certain cases "when a child is found to have committed an offence of so serious a nature that the Court is of the opinion that no punishment, which under the provisions of the Act it is authorised to inflict, is sufficient or when the Court is satisfied that the child is of so unruly or of so depraved character that he cannot be committed to a certified institute and that none of hte other methods in which the case may legally be dealt with is suitable". The section stated that the period of detention must not exceed the maximum period of punishment to which the child could have been sentenced for the offence committed".

As already noted, children aged 16 and 17 were not tried under the Children Act 1972. The Penal Code provides for life imprisonment, which is always with hard labour.[16] It may be commuted to a sentence of imprisonment not exceeding 20 years, with or without hard labour.[17] A wide range of offences are punishable by imprisonment for life under the Penal Code.

Children younger than 16 could be lawfully sentenced to life imprisonment under the Special Powers Act, which overrode all laws inconsistent with it (but see Mondal as noted above). As amended in 1987, the Special Powers Act punished a number of offences with imprisonment for life, including sabotage, dealing in the black market, counterfeit, smuggling and contamination of food, drink, drugs or cosmetics.[18]

Corporal punishment

The Children Act does not provide for judicial corporal punishment, but it does not explicitly prohibit the practice, nor does it repeal the provisions in other legislation that permits the practice.

Criminal law allows for males to be sentenced to whipping. Under the Code of Criminal Procedure, boys under the age of 16 may be whipped "with a light rattan not less than half an inch in diameter" up to 15 "stripes", older males up to

7 Penal Code, Sections 53 and 54. Available at: http://bdlaws.minlaw.gov.bd/print_sections_all.php?id=11. See also Code of Criminal Procedure Section 402. Available at: http://bdlaws.minlaw.gov.bd/pdf_part.php?id=75

8 Penal Code, Sections 121, 132, 302, 303, 305, 307, 326A, 364A and 396.

9 Code of Criminal Procedure, Section 368.

10 Special Powers Act, Section 34B.

11 State v. Mondal [2006] 26 BLD (HCD) 549; ILDC 886(BD 2006). Summary available at: https://www.crin.org/en/library/legal-database/state-v-mondal.

12 Special Powers Act, Sections 15, 25, 25A, 25B, 25C.

13 Children Act 2013, Section 33(1).

14 BD News 24, "Appellate Division reviews death penalty for Sukur Ali, lowers it to life in prison" 3 AUgust 2015. Available at:

15 For more information, see Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust, Press release: Appellate Division commutes juvenile offender Sukur Ali's death sentence to life imprisonment till natural death, 3 August 2015.

16 Penal Code, Section 53.

17 Penal Code, Section 55.

18 Special Powers Act, Sections 15, 25, 25A, 25B, 25C.

30 stripes.[19] Whipping must not be inflicted in instalments and may not be inflicted on females or on males sentenced to death or more than five years' imprisonment.[20] Whipping can be ordered in addition to imprisonment only if the term of imprisonment exceeds three months.[21] The whipping must not be carried out until at least 15 days after sentencing and must be inflicted in the presence of the officer in charge of the jail or of the Judge or Magistrate.[22] The person to be whipped must be considered fit to receive the punishment by a medical officer, the Magistrate or the officer present.[23]

The Penal Code does not provide for whipping as a sentence, but under the Whipping Act whipping may be given in lieu of or in addition to the punishments specified in the Penal Code for specific offences committed by persons over 16.[24] The Act provides for juvenile offenders (under 16) to be whipped in lieu of other punishments for a wide range of crimes under the Penal Code and other laws.[25] Whipping is a sentence for offences under the Cantonments Pure Food Act 1966,[26] the Suppression of Immoral Traffic Act 1933[27] and, for boys under the age of 12, the Railways Act 1890.[28] It is also a common form of punishment ordered by traditional village mediation councils (shalish).[29]

The Constitution protects persons who have been arrested or detained from torture, cruel, degrading and inhuman treatment but states that this provision "shall not affect the operation of any existing law which prescribes any punishment of procedure for trial".[30]

Inhuman sentencing in practice

CRIN has been unable to locate statistical information on the sentencing of children to death, life imprisonment or corporal punishment, though prior to the entry into force of the Children Act 2013, it appears that death sentences awarded to young offenders were normally commuted to imprisonment for life.[31]

During the years 2004 to 2008, 31 executions were carried out[32] and Amnesty International and Hands Off Cain agreed that 17 executions were carried out between 2009 and 2011.[33] We were unable to ascertain whether these included child offenders. In 1990, a 12 year-old boy convicted of murder was sentenced to imprisonment for 33 years.[34] The Government report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child in 2007 stated that life imprisonment and capital punishment are "rarely" imposed on children under 18.[35] In January 2000, there were four children under 15 serving life sentences in Tongi Child Development Centre, and in August 2007 there was one child under 15 serving a life sentence in Jessore Child Development Centre.[36]

In August 2015, the Supreme Court commuted the death sentence of a man convicted of rape and murder to life imprisonment. The man was 14 years old at the time of the offence and 16 years old at the time of the trial in 1999.[37]

Progress towards prohibition and elimination

Law reform needed

Corporal punishment should be explicitly prohibited for child offenders, defined as persons under the age of 18 at the time of the offence. Provisions specifically authorising corporal punishment for children should be repealed including those in the Code of Criminal Procedure, the Whipping Act and the Railways Act. The Special Powers Act should be made inapplicable to persons under 18. The prohibition on the death penalty and life imprisonment for child offenders should be applied retroactively to ensure that no person is subject to either punishment for an offence committed while under the age of 18.

19 Code of Criminal Procedure, Section 392.

20 Code of Criminal Procedure, Section 393.

21 Code of Criminal Procedure, Section 391.

22 Code of Criminal Procedure, Section 391.

23 Code of Criminal Procedure, Section 394.

24 Whipping Act, Sections 3 and 4.

25 Whipping Act, Section 5.

26 Cantonments Pure Food Act 1966, Section 23.

27 Suppression of Immoral Traffic Act 1933, Sections 9, 10 and 12.

28 The Railways Act 1890, Section 130.

29 For more information on shalish and corporal punishment, see Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, Country report for Bangladesh, October 2015. Available at: http://www.endcorporalpunishment.org/progress/country-reports/bangladesh.html.

30 Constitution of Bangladesh, Article 35. Available at: https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Bangladesh_2014?lang=en.

31 See State Tasiruddin, 13 DLR 203 (information provided to CRIN in correspondence with Justice M Imman Ali, Supreme Court of Bangladesh, 23 December 2010). See also Justice M Imman Ali (2010), Towards a Justice Delivery System for Children in Bangladesh: A Guide and Case Law on Children in Conflict with the Law, Dhaka: UNICEF Bangladesh.

32 E/2010/10, 18 December 2009, Capital punishment and implementation of the safeguards guaranteeing protection of the rights of those facing the death penalty, Table 2 (cf Table 3, which indicates that 29 executions were carried out)

33 See Amnesty International Annual Reports, www.amnesty.org/en/library and Hands Off Cain Statistics, www.handsoffcain.info, 7 November 2012.

34 Sattar, N. and Balagopal, G. (undated), Traditional Means of Dealing with Children in Conflict with the Law with Specific Reference to Bangladesh: Bringing Juvenile Justice into Focus, UNICEF Case Study.

35 Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (2007), Third and fourth periodic report of the Government of Bangladesh under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, p.65.

36 ibid.

37 For details of the facts as recorded by the court, see Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust and Shukur Ali v. Secretary Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of the Republic of Bangladesh et al [2010].

Law reforms under way

The Children Act 2013 introduced extensive reforms to the juvenile justice system in Bangladesh, including prohibiting life imprisonment and the death penalty.

National campaigns

The Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust has consistently litigated against inhuman sentencing of children in Bangladesh.[38]

When launching the original campaign report, CRIN contacted the government of Bangladesh for their response to the information contained in the report. The State did not respond.

National and international law conflicting with inhuman sentencing

The Constitution

A number of provisions in the Constitution (1971) potentially protect children from inhuman sentencing, but there are also clauses which would seem to allow it.

Article 32 (Protection of right to life and personal liberty):
"No person shall be deprived of life or personal liberty save in accordance with law."
Article 35 (Protection in respect of trial and punishment):
"... (5) No person shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman, or degrading punishment or treatment.
(6) Nothing in clause ... (5) shall affect the operation of any existing law which prescribes any punishment or procedure for trial."

Article 47 (Saving for certain laws):
"... (3) Notwithstanding anything contained in this Constitution, no law or any provision thereof providing for detention, prosecution or punishment of any person, who is a member of any armed or defence or auxiliary forces or who is a prisoner of war, for genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes and other crimes under international law shall be deemed void or unlawful, on the ground that such law or provision of any such law is inconsistent with, or repugnant to, any of the provisions of this Constitution."
Article 47A (Inapplicability of certain articles):
"(1) The rights guaranteed under ... article 35 ... shall not apply to any person to whom a law specified in clause (3) of article 47 applies...."

International human rights treaties

Bangladesh has ratified or acceded to a number of international human rights treaties:

- Convention on the Rights of the Child (in 1990)
  Reservations: "[The Government of Bangladesh] ratifies the Convention with a reservation to article 14, paragraph 1" and "article 21 would apply subject to the existing laws and practices in Bangladesh."
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict (in 2000)
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children child prostitution and child pornography (2000)
- Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (in 1998)
  Declaration: "The Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh will apply article 14 para 1 in consonance with the existing laws and legislation in the country."
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (in 2000)
  Reservations: at the time of ratification, Bangladesh entered a reservation to Article 14 and made declarations with regards to Articles 10, 11 and 14.
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (in 1998)
  Declarations: upon accession, Bangladesh made declarations with regards to Articles 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 10 and 13.
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (in 1984)
  Reservation: "The Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh does not consider as binding upon itself the provisions of article 2, [...and...] 16(1)(c) as they conflict with Sharia law based on Holy QUran and Sunna."
- International Covenant on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (in 1979)
- International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Their Families (in 2011)
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (in 2007)

38 Find out more about the organisation and its work at www.blast.org.bd.

Treaty Bodies communications and complaints procedures

Bangladesh has ratified or acceded to the following complaints mechanisms:

- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in 2000
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2008.

The State has also accepted the inquiry procedures under both treaties and the inquiry procedure under the Convention against Torture.

Status of treaties

The Constitution of Bangladesh does not explicitly address the place of treaties in national law. However, domestic courts have made use of international treaties in a number of cases. in 2001, Justice Chowdhury stated: "National courts should draw upon the principles incorporated in the international instruments if the domestic laws are ambiguous or absent. Where the domestic laws are clear, but inconsistent with the international obligations of the state concerned, the national courts will be obliged to respect national law."[39] For more information on the role of international treaties in domestic courts, see CRIN's report, Access to Justice in Bangladesh.[40]

Recommendations from human rights treaty monitoring bodies

Committee on the Rights of the Child
(26 June 2009, CRC/C/BGD/CO/4, Concluding observations on third/fourth report, paras. 46, 47, 92 and 93)

"The Committee reiterates its concern regarding capital punishment for children and its retroactive application for persons who had committed offenses when they were children between the ages of 16 to 18 years old which contradicts article 37 (a) of the Convention.
"The Committee recommends that the State party take immediate steps to halt the imposition of death penalty for crimes committed by persons under 18 and abolish the death penalty.

"The Committee appreciates the efforts of the State party to address the previous concluding observations, including the removal of some children from adult jails, the establishment of juvenile development centres and the increased training for judges, magistrates and law enforcement officers concerned with juvenile justice. However, the Committee expresses great concern over information indicating that children younger than 15 years old had been condemned to life sentences and children younger than 18 years old to the death penalty. The Committee also notes with concern that the legal age of criminal responsibility has been raised to only 9 years old....

"The Committee reiterates its previous recommendation that the State party bring the system of juvenile justice fully in line with the Convention, in particular articles 37, 39 and 40, and with other relevant standards including the Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (the Beijing Rules), the Guidelines for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency (the Riyadh Guidelines), the Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty (the Havana Rules), the Vienna Guidelines for Action on Children in the Criminal Justice System; and the Committee's General Comment No. 10 (2007) on the rights of the child in juvenile justice. In this regard, the Committee recommends that the State party inter alia:

a) ensure with immediate effect that neither the death penalty nor life sentence are imposed for offenses committed by persons under 18 years of age;
b) raise the minimum age of criminal responsibility to at least 12 with a view to raising it further as recommended in the Committee's general comment No. 10 (2007) on the rights of the child in juvenile justice....

(27 October 2003, CRC/C/15/Add.221, Concluding observations on second report, paras. 33, 34, 41, 42, 77 and 78)

"Despite the information that the death penalty has never been carried out against juvenile offenders in the State party, the Committee remains seriously concerned that capital punishment may be imposed for offences committed by persons from the age of 16 years and over, contrary to article 37 (a) of the Convention.

"The Committee strongly recommends that the State party take immediate steps to ensure that the imposition of the death penalty for crimes committed by persons while under 18 is explicitly prohibited by law.

"While taking note of the efforts by the State party to raise public awareness of the ill-treatment of children, the Committee is concerned at reports of ill-treatment and violence against children in State institutions such as orphanages and rehabilitation centres, including by law enforcement agents, as well as at the solitary confinement of juvenile and child prisoners. The Committee is also concerned at reports of violence against street children. Furthermore,

39 Appeal, 21 BLD (AD) 2001, 69; ILDC 476 (BD 2000), 16 August 2000.
40 Available at: www.crin.org/node/31971.

the Committee expresses its deep concern at the reported inhuman and degrading punishment carried out by order of traditional village councils ("shalishes") as well as at the increasing incidents of acid attacks on women and girls.

"The Committee strongly recommends that the State party:

a) review its legislation (inter alia, Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898) with the aim of prohibiting the use of all forms of physical and mental violence, also within educational and other institutions;
b) conduct a study to assess the nature and extent of torture, ill-treatment, neglect and abuse of children, to assess the inhuman and degrading treatment of children attributable to "shalishes", and effectively to implement policies and programmes as well as to amend and adopt laws to address these issues....

"The Committee acknowledges the efforts made by the State party to improve the juvenile justice system. However, the Committee remains concerned at the limited progress achieved in establishing a functioning juvenile justice system throughout the country. In particular, the Committee is concerned at:

a) the minimum age of criminal responsibility (7 years), which remains far too low;
b) the sentencing to life imprisonment of children from the age of 7 years and to the death penalty of children from the age of 16 years; ...
e) the use of caning and whipping as a sentence for juvenile offenders....

"The Committee recommends that the State party ensure the full implementation of juvenile justice standards, in particular articles 37, 39 and 40 of the Convention, and other United Nations standards in the field of juvenile justice, including the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (the Beijing Rules) and the United Nations Guidelines for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency (the Riyadh Guidelines), the United Nations Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of Their Liberty, the Vienna Guidelines for Action on Children in the Criminal Justice System, in the light of the Committee's day of general discussion on the administration of juvenile justice, held in 1995.

In particular, the Committee recommends that the State party:

a) raise the minimum age of criminal responsibility to an internationally acceptable level;
b) ensure that the imposition of the death penalty, of life imprisonment without possibility of release, and of caning and whipping as sanctions for crimes committed by persons while under 18 is explicitly prohibited by law...."

(18 June 1997, CRC/C/15/Add.74, Concluding observations on initial report, paras. 12, 26 and 46)

"The Committee is concerned about the unclear status of the Convention in the domestic legal framework and the insufficient steps taken to bring existing legislation into full conformity with the Convention, including in light of the general principles of non-discrimination (art. 2), the best interests of the child (art. 3), the right to life, survival and development (art. 6) and respect for the views of the child (art. 12). It is deeply concerned at the lack of conformity between existing legislative provisions and the Convention with respect to the various age limits set by law, the lack of a definition of the child, the age of criminal responsibility, which is set at too young an age, the possibility of imposing the death penalty, and/or imprisonment of children 16-18 in ordinary prisons. The Committee also notes that, as recognized in the State party's supplementary report, many laws are inadequately enforced and that most children's lives are governed by family customs and religious law rather than by State law.

"The situation in relation to the administration of juvenile justice, and its incompatibility with articles 37, 39 and 40 of the Convention and other relevant international standards, is a matter of concern to the Committee. Specifically, the Committee is concerned about the very young age of criminal responsibility (7 years), the lack of adequate protection for children aged 16-18, grounds for arrest and detention of children that can include prostitution, "vagrancy" or "uncontrollable behaviour", the possibility of imposing heavy sentences on children and the solitary confinement and ill treatment of children by the police.
"With regard to the administration of juvenile justice, the Committee recommends that legal reform be pursued in connection with the very young age of criminal responsibility (7 years), the lack of adequate protection for children aged 16-18, grounds for arrest and detention of children that can include prostitution, "vagrancy" or "uncontrollable behaviour", the possibility of imposing heavy sentences on children, and the solitary confinement and ill-treatment of children by the police. In this reform the State party should take fully into account the provisions of the Convention, in particular articles 37, 39 and 40, as well as other relevant international standards in this area, such as the Beijing Rules, the Riyadh Guidelines and the United Nations Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty.
The Committee also recommends that the State party avail itself of the technical assistance programmes of the High Commissioner/Centre for Human Rights and the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Division of the Secretariat."

Universal Periodic Review

Second cycle

During the second cycle of the Universal Periodic Review in 2013, Bangladesh noted recommendations from 13 States[41] that recommended the abolition or institution of a moratorium on the death penalty and noted one recommendation from Uruguay that called for the prohibition of the death penalty and life imprisonment for offences committed by people under the age of 18. Bangladesh accepted a recommendation from Hungary "to ratify OP-CAT, the ICERD and the Optional Protocols of the ICCPR", which would include the Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR on the abolition of the death penalty. Bangladesh also noted a recommendation from Hungary to "[e]xplicitly prohibit corporal punishment in all settings, including the home".[42]

First cycle

Bangladesh was examined under the Universal Periodic Review process in 2009. A recommendation was made to prohibit all corporal punishment of children.[43] The Government accepted the recommendation.[44] Recommendations were also made to abolish the death penalty.[45] The Government rejected these recommendations.[46]

41 Montenegro, Burundi, Spain, SLovakia, Bolivia, ROmania, Turkey, Holy See, Switzerland, AUstria, France, Italy, Australia.

42 For full references, see A/HRC/24/12, 8 July 2013, Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Bangladesh, paras. 129, 130 and 131 and AHRC/24/12/Add.1, 23 July 2013, Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Bangladesh (Addendum).

43 A/HRC/11/18, 5 October 2009, Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Bangladesh, para. 94(16)

44 A/HRC/11/18/Add.1, 9 June 2009, Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Bangladesh, Addendum: Views on conclusions and/or recommendations, voluntary commitments and replies presented by the State under review, page 3

45 A/HRC/11/18, 5 October 2009, op cit., para. 94(19)

46 A/HRC/11/18/Add.1, 9 June 2009, op cit., page 4

CRIN CHILD RIGHTS INTERNATIONAL NETWORK

About CRIN (www.crin.org)

Our goal: A world where children's rights are recognised, respected and enforced, and where every rights violation has a remedy.

Our organisation: CRIN is a global research, policy and advocacy organisation. Our work is grounded in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Our work is based on five core values:

- We believe in rights, not charity
- We are stronger when we work together
- Information is power and it should be free and accessible
- Societies, organisations and institutions should be open, transparent and accountable
- We believe in promoting children's rights, not ourselves.

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