



PRESS RELEASE

UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY HIGH-LEVEL SUMMIT TO ADDRESS LARGE MOVEMENTS OF REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

Geneva/New York - 19 September 2016. As non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working around the globe to advance the human rights of children¹, we welcome the commitments made by States today to work towards ending the practice of child immigration detention, and recognizing the importance of improved data collection related to international migration².

The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) has made clear that children should never be criminalized or subject to punitive measures because of their or their parent's migration status and that the detention of a child for these reasons constitutes a child rights violation³.

A now overwhelming number of international and regional experts have come out in support of the CRC's position, and have called upon States to expeditiously and completely cease the immigration detention of children, and to adopt alternatives to detention that fulfill the best interests of the child and allow children to remain with their family members or guardians in non-custodial, community-based contexts while their immigration status is being resolved⁴.

Migrant children—regardless of their immigration status—are first and foremost children. **Immigration detention of children is a clear violation of child rights and is never in the best interests of the child.** We therefore urge member States to:

- ✓ Fulfil their international obligations by expeditiously and completely ending the immigration detention of children;
- ✓ Make clear in domestic legislation, policies and practices that the principle of the best interests of the child takes priority in migration policy over other administrative considerations such as border control or enforcement;
- ✓ Support the Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty⁵, which will collect quantitative and qualitative disaggregated data on the situation of children deprived of liberty in all settings (migration, criminal, military detention and institutionalization), and formulate recommendations and good practices to implement international standards, as well as reduce the number of children deprived of their liberty.

¹ Defence for Children International (DCI); International Catholic Child Bureau (BICE); Child Rights Information Network (CRIN); Terre des Hommes International Federation; International Detention Coalition (IDC); World Organization against Torture (OMCT); International Juvenile Justice Observatory (IJJO).

² Outcome Document for High-Level Meeting to Address Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants, para.2

³ Report of the 2012 Day of General Discussion on 'The Rights of All Children in the Context of International Migration', 28 September 2012, recommendation 78

⁴ Summary of normative standards and recommendations on ending child immigration detention, Interagency Working Group on Ending Child Immigration Detention (IAWG), 2016

⁵ UNGA/69/157 para.51.d