



United Nations Human Rights Council
37th session (26 February - 23 March 2018)

Item 3: Interactive Dialogue with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Violence and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict.

Statement delivered by the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT)

Mr. President,

The OMCT welcomes the reports to the Council by the Special Representatives Marta Santos Pais and Virginia Gamba.

As highlighted in both reports there is indeed an urgent need to protect children from violence, and one form of violence that is in general not sufficiently addressed in this Council is torture and ill-treatment of children.

The OMCT commends the engagement of both SRSGs in the Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty, and encourages them to include in their advocacy efforts the universal ratification of the Convention Against Torture and its comprehensive application to crimes committed against children. We recall the Council that the elimination of torture of children is present in the Sustainable Development Goals, under target 16.2 and should be made a priority by member states.

The OMCT is particularly concerned by the torture and killings of children under State custody.

In Brazil, for example, just in the state of Pernambuco, in the past 5 years at least 40 children deprived of liberty died in juvenile detention centres. In the Philippines, the OMCT continues to document arbitrary detention and extra-judicial killings of children during the so called “War on Drugs” policy without any or with little accountability. In Benin children often lack food and safe water while detained in civil prisons.

Finally, the OMCT is alarmed by the killings of young human rights defenders around the World, such as 16-year old **Luis Fernando Ayala** in Honduras, a young advocate against the presence of mines in indigenous lands that was brutally tortured and killed in February this year. To this date we are not aware of the steps taken by the State to ensure an independent and effective investigation for his death.

Lastly, the OMCT would like to hear more from the SRSGs on their advocacy for independent investigations and accountability for torture of children within their mandates, and how they see the role of civil society organizations in assisting them in the fight against torture of children.

Thank you Mr. President.