

United Nations Study on Violence against Children

**Response to questionnaire received from the
Government of BELIZE**

QUESTIONNAIRE

I. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

This part of the questionnaire aims to determine how your country's legal framework addresses violence against children, including prevention of violence, protection of children from violence, redress for victims of violence, penalties for perpetrators and reintegration and rehabilitation of victims.

International human rights instruments

1. Describe any developments with respect to violence against children that have resulted from your country's acceptance of international human rights instruments, including, for example, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its optional protocols, the Palermo Protocol or regional human rights instruments. Provide information on cases concerning violence against children in which your country's courts or tribunals have referred to international or regional human rights standards.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child has been entrenched in the Families and Children Act, Cap. 173 of the Laws of Belize, and is therefore the foundation of the legal and social efforts toward the protection of children. In particular, the welfare, rights, feelings, and needs of the child are given paramount consideration under the Act aforementioned by the Courts.

Legal provisions on violence against children

2. Describe how forms of violence against children are addressed in your country's constitution, legislation and subsidiary legislation, and, where appropriate, customary law.

The Belize Constitution, Cap. 4 of the Laws of Belize, protects the following freedoms for the benefit of people in Belize: life, liberty, security of the person, and the protection of the law; freedom of conscience, of expression and of assembly and association; protection for his family life, his personal privacy, the privacy of his home and other property and recognition of his human dignity; and protection from arbitrary deprivation of property. The Constitution thus wields a broad net of protection to children and others by the use of wide rather than specific guarantees of protection.

Under the Families and Children's Act aforementioned, the child is protected against forms of violence by securing a broad gamut of rights, such as those acknowledged internationally and under the Constitution. These include the right to maintenance and the attendant duty of the parent or person with parental responsibility to maintain and protect a child.

Under the Domestic Violence Act, Cap. 178 of the Laws of Belize, protection is also offered to a child, whether or not it is a child of the marriage or union, who happens to live in the household where the abuse takes place.

The Criminal Code (Cap. 101), the Crime Control and Criminal Justice Act (Cap. 102), and the Summary Jurisdiction Acts (Caps. 98 and 99) also impose criminal penalties on and procedures for dealing with sex offenders.

3. Provide details of any specific legislative provisions on:
- Prevention of all forms of physical, sexual and mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, and sexual abuse;

Sections 3 and 23 of the Domestic Violence Act, aforementioned, which sections speak to Protection and Occupation Orders. Further, under sections 7, 8 and 9 of the Crime Control and Criminal Justice Act, Sex Offender Orders and Anti-social behaviour Orders may be made by a Magistrate and tailor-made with stipulated conditions which the person against whom the order is made must comply with.

Under section 100 of the Criminal Code, the persons with parental responsibility are mandated to provide a child with the necessities of life and to refrain from causing harm.

- Protection of children from all forms of violence;

Sections 3 and 23 of the Domestic Violence Act, and sections 7, 8, and 9 of the Crime Control and Criminal Justice Act aforementioned. Note in particular section 2, the Definition section, which explains the conduct or likely conduct which may constitute abuse or violence. If a protection order is breached, the offender shall also face criminal charges.

Under section 40 of the Domestic Violence Act, Police who intervene in a domestic violence matter are mandated to render assistance to the victims.

Also the International Child Abduction Act, Cap. 177, the protection and return of the abducted child is paramount.

Under section 62(4) of the Criminal Code, in cases of incest, the Court may divest the offending father or guardian of all authority over that female, and appoint another guardian.

Under section 17 of the Summary Jurisdiction (Offences) Act, a Police Officer or can obtain a warrant to search for and take into safe custody a girl or woman suspected of being detained for immoral purposes.

- Redress, including compensation, for child victims of violence;

Apart from protection orders mentioned above, the Government has a duty to mediate in any situation in which the rights of a child are infringed upon, especially with regard to the child's protection and health, etc. under section 46 of the Families and Children Act.

The duty to maintain a child is also enforced under the Families and Children Act. Hereunder, if the maintaining party defaults, the Court may order that his salary be attached for the purposes of deducting the amount due for maintenance of the child. Under section 69 hereof the sums due may also be recovered by way of distress.

- Penalties for perpetrators of violence against children;

The Domestic Violence Act does not affect criminal charges being imposed or action being taken against the victimiser in Court. Under the Criminal Code, the main penalty imposed for violence against children is imprisonment. Some of the relevant sections are sections 47 – 51, 54 - 70

- Reintegration and rehabilitation of child victims of violence.

We are unaware of any such provision within the Laws of Belize.

4. Indicate whether any specific legislative provisions address all forms of violence including physical, sexual and psychological violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment and sexual exploitation against children which take place in:

- The family/ home;
- Schools and pre-school care and education (both formal and non-formal, state and private);
- Military schools;
- Institutions including care, residential, health and mental health;
- The context of law and public order enforcement including in detention facilities or prisons;
- The neighbourhood, street and the community, including in rural areas;
- The workplace (informal and formal);
- Sports and sporting facilities.

Generally, three main pieces of legislation address the above issues in the following manner:

- physical, sexual and psychological violence, injury or abuse of children: the Domestic Violence Act;
- neglect or negligent treatment of children: the Families and Children Act;
- sexual exploitation of children: the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Act.

It is our view that the provisions which govern the protection of children are for the most part not specific to any one of the institutions named above. However, the Labour Act and the Families and Children Act alike protect a child from harmful employment, which is defined as any activity that may be detrimental to his health, education, or mental, physical or moral development (section 7).

Also, under section 39 of the Criminal Code a parent has the authority to correct or discipline a child and to delegate that authority to a schoolmaster or person acting as such. However, the force must be reasonable in degree, regard being had to the age and physical and mental condition of the child, and the child must be of age and maturity which makes him capable of understanding the purpose for which it is inflicted.

Note that the provisions the Criminal Code makes for the protection of children apply in general. Further, we must reiterate the general duty of the Government to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and to mediate in **any** situation where the rights of a child are infringed upon, especially with regard to the protection of a child, his health, and his education.

5. Indicate if corporal punishment of children, in any setting, including in the family, is explicitly prohibited in your legal system. Provide details of any legal defences available to those who administer corporal punishment to children, including in the family. Provide information on penalties applicable to those who administer corporal punishment to children, including in the family.

There is no prohibition of corporal punishment in Belizean Law for disciplinary purposes. In fact, a parent or person entrusted with parental responsibility has the authority to discipline a child using reasonable force, not extending to a wound (section 39, Criminal Code). Instances of child abuse are dealt with under the Domestic Violence Act or are treated criminally under the Criminal Code.

6. Provide information on whether the penal code permits corporal punishment and/or capital punishment as a sentence for crimes committed by under 18 year olds.

The Criminal Code does not permit corporal punishment and/or capital punishment as a sentence for crimes committed by persons under 18 years old.

7. Provide details on whether bullying/hazing and sexual harassment are explicitly addressed by legislation.

The Sexual Harassment Act, Cap. 107 of the Laws of Belize, deals specifically with sexual Harassment. Bullying of hazing may be dealt with under the Families and Children Act, Domestic Violence Act, and/or the Criminal Code.

8. Provide information on the way in which harmful or violent traditional practices, including but not limited to female genital mutilation, child marriage or honour crimes are addressed in your country.

We are not aware of any instances of female genital mutilation or honour crimes. On the issue of Child Marriage, a marriage involving a child under the age of 14 shall be void. Thus a child over age 14 may marry with the consent of his/her parents

9. Provide information on the applicability of specific provisions to address all forms of violence against children to non-citizens and stateless children, including asylum seekers and displaced children. If specific provisions do not apply to such children, provide details of protection offered to them.

The Belize Constitution speaks to "*persons in Belize*" and therefore it is not the case that children referred to must of necessity be Belizean. Similar general and all-encompassing terms are used under the Marriage Act, the Domestic Violence Act, the Criminal Code, and the Crime Control and Criminal Justice Act

10. Provide information on any difference in the definition of violence and the applicable legal framework according to:

- The sex or sexual orientation of the victim and/or of the perpetrator;

Particularly in relation to sexual offences, the definition of the crimes appears to imply that the victim is a female. There is in fact no direct reference to sodomy except as a ground for Divorce under the Supreme Court of Judicature Act (Cap. 91). The Criminal Code only speaks to “unnatural crime against a person or animal” under section 53. Thus in respect of sexual crimes it is not only that the definitions vary, but also that at present the Law seems to prioritise the protection of females.

- The age of the victim and /or of the perpetrator;

The same is true in respect of the age of a child victim in the case of incest and rape. These appear to be the only cases where the age of the victim distinguishes the charges. In the case of incest, a child over the age of 16 who consents to carnal knowledge by her grandfather, father, brother or son may be liable to imprisonment for seven years (section 63 of the Criminal Code). This is the same period of imprisonment to which the perpetrator would be liable (section 62).

In the case of rape, the penetration of a child is considered Carnal Knowledge since a child, based on the theory of *doli incapax* is deemed unable to consent to sexual intercourse. Thus unlike in rape, no investigation is necessary into whether consent was given. Also, the penalty for incest is standard except that if a child over age 16 gave consent, she also is liable to imprisonment for 7 years, the same term to which the perpetrator is liable. This is contrasted with carnal knowledge, where the penalty of 12 years minimum is harsher for children of age 14 and less.

- The relationship between the victim and the perpetrator, including, but not limited to infanticide, sexual violence in marriage, incest and sexual abuse within the family, and physical chastisement.

There appears to be no key difference in the *definition* of violence on the basis of the relationship of the victim and the perpetrator. In respect of the *legal framework* applicable thereto, a difference is noted in the treatment of carnal knowledge in general and incest. Incest is punishable by 7 years imprisonment. Carnal knowledge of a child under age 14 is punishable by a minimum of 12 years imprisonment. In respect of physical chastisement, which we take to mean correction or discipline by a person with parental responsibility, this is allowed under the Criminal Code as aforementioned once the force used is reasonable and the child understands the purpose of the intended discipline.

11. Provide information on any recent comprehensive review of the legal framework to address violence against children.

A review of the legal framework is currently being undertaken to address criminal justice in general. Nonetheless, the issue of violence against children, in particular sexual abuse, is receiving much focus. This initiative incorporates concerns of the National Committee for Families and Children and the Youth Enhancement Services (YES) based on the latter's recent Position Paper.

12. Provide information on any studies and surveys which have been undertaken to assess the impact of legal measures to address violence against children.

A first draft of a study on the impact of crime and violence on children and adolescents have been completed and its results shared with the major stakeholders. A working group have been developed to take the recommendations for further action and develop a three-year plan of action to address the concerns from the study.

Courts tasked with addressing violence against children

13. Identify those parts of the court structure in your country tasked with addressing violence against children. Indicate if your family or juvenile courts have specific responsibility for this issue.

Section 2 of the Domestic Violence Act, Chapter 178 of the Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2000, specifically grants jurisdiction to the Family Court established under the Family Courts Act (Chapter 93) for addressing issues related to violence against children. However, the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court on matters addressed in the Act is saved by section 37 thereof.

Minimum age for sexual activity

14. Provide information on any legislatively defined minimum age required for valid consent to sexual activity. Is this age different for girls and boys? Is this age different in respect of heterosexual and homosexual activities?

By virtue of section 47 of the Criminal Code, Chapter 101 of the Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2000, a female child under the age of sixteen (16) years cannot consent to sexual activity. However, where the female involved in sexual activity is the granddaughter, daughter, sister or mother, of the perpetrator, the law deems it incest and it is immaterial that the female consented (s. 62).

The Act is silent with regard to consent by boys.

With regard to heterosexual activities, section 53 of the Code provides that "Every person who has carnal intercourse against the order of nature with any person or animal shall be liable to imprisonment for ten years" and thereby criminalizes said heterosexual activities.

15. Provide information on the minimum age of marriage for women and men.

By virtue of section 2 of the Marriage Act, Chapter 174 of the Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2000, any person under the age of eighteen years is considered an "infant". Thus, no distinction is made between boys and girls.

A marriage solemnized between persons, any of whom is under the age of fourteen is void (s. 4 (1)). However, children over fourteen and under eighteen years can marry, but parental consent is required (s. 5).

Sexual exploitation of children

16. Provide information on legislation and other measures to prevent the commercial sexual exploitation of children, including through prostitution and other unlawful sexual activities. Provide details on means to ensure that child victims of such exploitation are not criminalized. Provide information on legislation or other measures to prohibit all forms of sale or trafficking in children, including by their parents.

Section 3 of the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Act, No. 18 of 2003, creates the offence of trafficking in persons, including children – who are by definition, any person below the age of eighteen years (s. 2). Trafficking in persons is broadly defined therein as the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a person through threats, use of force, coercion, abduction, fraud deception, abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or by giving or receiving payments or benefits to obtain the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation.

“Exploitation” is also broadly defined in the said Act and includes:

- “(d) keeping the person in a state of servitude, including sexual servitude;
- (e) exploiting another person by using such person, directly or indirectly, as a prostitute;
- (f) engaging in any other form of commercial sexual exploitation

Section 10 of the same Act makes victims of trafficking in persons immune from prosecution. It provides, “*A victim or trafficking in persons is not criminally liable for any immigration-related offence or any other criminal offence that is a direct result of being trafficked.*”

Pornography and harmful information

17. Provide information on legislation and other measures to prohibit the production, possession and dissemination of child pornography. In particular, please provide information on any controls on pornography produced and/or disseminated via the internet.

Section 4 and sections 20 – 24 of the Summary Jurisdiction (Offences) Act criminalise the trading, distribution, exhibition, possession, etc of obscene and indecent objects, publications and language. Under section 21 a Magistrate or Justice of the Peace may also issue a warrant to a Police Officer for the search, seizure and destruction of obscene objects in a business place, home or any other place

18. Provide information on any legislation or guidelines to protect children from injurious information and material transmitted through the media, Internet, videos, electronic games, etc.

Children are directly protected from exploitation, which includes, *inter alia*, “child pornography or strip tease dances where females or males dance nude or in a state of semi-nudity.

Reporting obligations relating to violence against children

19. Provide information on legislation, regulations or administrative directives requiring reporting of all forms of violence against and abuse of children in all settings to appropriate bodies. If reporting legislation, regulations or administrative directives exist, please indicate whether all citizens are required to report, or whether the obligation falls on certain professional groups only. Provide details of any sanctions for non-reporting.

Section 42 of the Domestic Violence Act requires that the Ministry responsible for social development acts in conjunction with the Belize Police Department for, *inter alia*, “(b) studying, investigating and publishing reports on the domestic violence problem in Belize, its manifestations and scope; the consequences and the options for confronting and eradicating it.”.

Where a police officer intervenes in an incident of domestic violence, he is required to prepare a written report which should contain the allegations of the persons involved and the witnesses, the type of investigation conducted and how the incident was resolved (s. 41 (1)). The police officer in charge of every police station shall ensure that all records of domestic violence cases are properly compiled to facilitate easy reference to the data and shall ensure that confidentiality is maintained with respect to the identity of persons involved in all cases of domestic violence.

Further, section 47 of the Families and Children Act, Chapter 173 of the Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2000, places a moral obligation on the community who has evidence that the rights of a child are being infringed, to report the matter to the Department of Human Development, or to the Family Court or to a magistrates court.

Complaints procedures

20. Provide information on any complaints procedures relating to all forms of violence against children perpetrated in:
- The family/ home
Complaints of any form of violence perpetrated in the home should be reported to the Police or the Department of Human Services in their area.
 - Schools and pre-school care and education (both formal and non-formal, state and private)
Complaints can be lodged at the principal of the school, the general manager of the school or the Ministry of Education.
 - Military schools;
 - Institutions, state and private, including care, residential, health and mental health;
The Inspector of Social Service Institutions within the Ministry of Human Development is responsible to act on all complaints regarding residential care facilities for children.
 - The context of law and public order enforcement including in detention facilities or prisons;
In relations to public order enforcement, detention facilities and prisons run by the Police Department the complaints is made to the Internal Affairs of the Police Department.

- The neighbourhood, street and the community, including in rural areas;

These reports are made to the police in the area. There are community police booths in most rural communities.

- The workplace (informal and formal);
Complaints can be made to the Labour Department and/or the Police.
- Sports and sporting facilities.
Complaints can be forwarded to the Department of Human Services and/or the Police.

21. Indicate whether children or persons acting on their behalf can access these procedures. Indicate whether legal aid is available to facilitate submission of complaints, and the circumstances in which legal aid will be available.

Parents or a social service practitioner can access the services on behalf of children. Legal aid is available through the Legal Aid Center.

22. Describe steps which have been taken to raise awareness of possibilities to submit complaints about violence against children.

COMPAR, The Community and parent Empowerment Program. Conduct sessions in schools communities and groups informing them of their rights and the procedures to address any infringement on their rights. NCFC, the national Committee for Families and Children runs two radio programs one by and for children and the other to address the needs of families in protecting their children. NCFC has also produced ads that are carried on the media informing children and caregivers of forms of violence of children and procedures to address any violation.

23. Provide information on any special procedural or evidentiary rules which may apply in proceedings with respect to violence against children.

In all matters relating to a child, the guiding principles under the Families and Children Act are that the welfare of the child shall be the paramount consideration and that any delay in determining the matter would be prejudicial to the welfare of the child.

Existing evidentiary rules include:

- the ability of a child of tender age to give testimony in court, *albeit* that such evidence is taken in camera and in the presence of *amicus curiae* who is, most of the times, a social worker;
- a child approaches a court by way of a next friend;
- a medical examination is always requested in sexual abuse cases;
** Note that a more comprehensive medico legal form is presently being developed with the objective of ensuring the admissibility of evidence in court.

24. Provide information on the usual outcome of complaints of violence against children (e.g. compensation, punishment of perpetrators, perpetrator rehabilitation, family therapy).

The prosecution and punishment of perpetrators is the more usual outcome of complaints.

25. Provide information on the usual outcome of legal proceedings in which children and juveniles are found guilty of perpetrating violence (e.g. imprisonment, corporal punishment, community service, perpetrator rehabilitation, family therapy).

Imprisonment of juvenile offenders is imposed only for serious offence for which any other form of punishment would be inadequate. However, such juveniles are not usually detained at the adult correctional facilities, but are rather sent to youth hostels.

Courts favour community service as punishment for juvenile offenders.

II. INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK AND RESOURCES TO ADDRESS VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

The aim of this section is to establish if your country has an institution coordinating multi-sectoral activities concerning violence against children, which include prevention, protection, redress, reintegration and rehabilitation.

26. Are there any Governmental authorities, structures and mechanisms, including at federal, state/provincial, municipal and local level which are currently responsible for addressing violence against children?

If YES, identify these authorities, structures and mechanisms and describe how coordination is ensured.

Authorities

The Police Department has three sections that are responsible for addressing violence against children. The Family Violence Unit address violence within families, and other statutory offences against children, the Criminal Investigation Branch addresses violence outside of the family unit. The Police Department also has a first offenders program that addresses young first time offenders.

Violence against children can be addressed at several levels of the Judiciary. The magistrate Court and Family Court address statutory offences while the Supreme Court address criminal offences.

The Ministry of Health and other health providers provide medical assistance to children that have been abused or neglected.

The Department of Human Services addresses the safety and offers support and protection to children who are victims of abuse or neglect.

The Community Rehabilitation Department offers community based rehabilitation counselling and manages a rehabilitation center for children and juveniles depicting deviant behaviors.

Colby has a correction and rehabilitation program for young juvenile in detention or serving a prison time.

Immigration Department address cross border issues as well as issues relating to immigration status, and trafficking of minors.

Youth for the Future is primarily responsible for the empowerment of young people to participate meaningfully in the present and future development of Belize at every level. They work in the areas of leadership and governance, productivity and volunteerism, job creation and enterprise, violence reduction and conflict resolution, and HIV/AIDS education and prevention

Coordination Mechanisms

NCFC, The National Committee of Families and Children is a statutory body charged with the coordinating the country's compliance with international conventions relating to children. This body also coordinates and monitors the National Plan of Action for Children and Adolescents.

Trafficking in Persons Taskforce is the body charged with the country's response to issues relating to trafficking in persons.

NCCS, The National Counsel on Community Service is the national body charged with developing alternative sentencing options for children in conflict with the law.

Crimes Commission is a multiagency taskforce chaired by the Minister of National Security to monitor and address the crime situation in Belize

Youth for the Future is primarily responsible for the empowerment of young people to participate meaningfully in the present and future development of Belize at every level

27. Is there a lead Government authority tasked with responsibility for addressing violence against children?

If YES, provide details.

There are two the Ministry of Human Development and the Police. Cases of violence against children can be reported to the Ministry of Human Development and/or the Police. The initial investigation is handled jointly by the Ministry and the Police. After which the duties are split the Police address the criminal aspect and the Ministry address the protection of the child. The mandatory reporting law also places duties on persons to report any suspicion or act of violence against children they may know about or suspect. Certain professions ie. educational, medical, are named as mandatory reporters.

28. Are specific financial and/or human resources allocated by your country to address violence generally?

If YES, indicate the extent of these allocations.

The financial and human resources allocated to address violence is encompassed in a wider umbrella of addressing issues and needs of vulnerable populations so it is difficult to disaggregate the dollar amount to address violence against children.

29. Does your country allocate specific financial and/or human resources to activities to address violence against children?

If YES, provide details.

These resources are again under the wide umbrella of supporting the promotion of the rights of the child and it is not disaggregated to identify resources allocated primarily to address violence against children.

30. Do international or bilateral donors provide resources to your country for activities to address violence against children?

If YES, indicate the extent of these resources and the way in which they are used.

UNICEF—The Government has signed a Master Plan of Operation 2002-2006 that highlight two projects and 5 sub-projects. The projects are: Child Supportive Environments with subprojects Safe and Healthy Environment and Early Childhood Development; and Support to Families with subprojects, Community Empowerment, Parent Education, and Legal and Institutional Reform.

PAHO—The support from PAHO is largely as it relates to the wholistic health of the population. Their specific programs include environmental health, adolescent health, family violence and HIV/AIDS.

OAS—The support comes in the form of institutional strengthening in the areas of drug rehabilitation and detention facilities for children

31. Does your country provide any assistance to other countries' efforts to respond to the problem of violence against children?

If YES, provide details.

Belize has signed the HAGUE Convention on International Abduction which allows for the return of children that have been wrongfully removed from the custodial parent or person having custody of the child.

Through INTERPOL the Police Department is made aware of persons wanted for crimes against children or children that have been reported missing.

The Ministry of Human Development has just signed an agreement with its Central American neighbours to share information on cases involving children. This network is in its preliminary stages

32. If your country has a national human rights institution, such as a human rights commission or ombudsman, or a child-specific human rights institution, does it have any role or competence in the area of violence against children, including receiving complaints?

If YES, provide details.

The Office of the Ombudsman is charged with investigating procedural infraction against anyone including children.

Belize also has the Human Rights Commission charged with the promotion of human rights of all persons.

33. Are there any particular parliamentary structures (for example special committees) to address violence against children?

Not that I am aware of.

If YES, provide details.

34. Have there been any recent parliamentary initiatives to address violence against children?

Not that I am aware of.

If YES, please give details.

III. ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN ADDRESSING VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

The aim of this section is to elicit information on civil society activities relating to violence against children.

35. Describe significant civil society initiatives addressing violence against children in your country, including the types of institutions involved (such as academic institutions, professional associations, women's associations, student associations, community-based groups, faith-based groups, child and youth-led groups, trade unions, employer's organizations, national non-governmental organizations, international non-governmental organizations) and the major activities engaged in (including advocacy, awareness raising, research, prevention, rehabilitation and treatment of children harmed by violence, provision of services, provision of resources).

Type of Institution	Major Activities
National NGO'S	Rehabilitation and treatment
NGO	Advocacy, awareness raising, care support
Rotary Club	Rehabilitation and treatment of children
Faith Based	Rehabilitation and treatment
ILO,UNICEF	Provision of resources

36. Describe the support provided by your Government for these activities and the efforts made to coordinate civil society and government initiatives.

Through the Non-governmental desk in the Ministry of Human Development non-government organizations can access support from the Government.

The National Plan of Action for Children and Adolescents provide the framework that guide the actions of government an civil society. Coordination between the two groups are made possible through standing committees that address several areas.

37. Describe the role played by the media in addressing violence against children.

Media guidelines for the reporting on issues relating to children were developed inconjunction with media houses. The media would also carry stories and also Media reporting guidelines-child victims

Airtime is allotted for the airing of public service announcement and informercials.

Two radio programs targeting children and caregivers address the issues of violence against children.

One television station, Channel 5, aired a Special feature on the impact of crime on children that was hosted by a child.
Young Artist Association produced a song, Sweet Belizean Child, in response to violent acts against children.

IV. CHILDREN AS ACTORS IN ADDRESSING VIOLENCE

This section is designed to extract information on children's activities to address violence.

38. Provide information on the involvement and consultation of children in designing activities, and in implementation and monitoring of programmes and policies to address violence against them. Provide details, including ages and other details of the children involved.

The Belize Study on the Impact of Crime and Violence on Children and Adolescents was designed to optimise the participation of children and adolescents and to examine the relationship between children and adolescents, and crime and violence from a number of perspectives. One of its principal features was the use of Youth Data Collectors (YDCs) for collecting data, coding it and entering it into computers. The tactic offered training to adolescents in aspects social science research. The YDCs were high school graduates with computer skills and strong social skills. Also, the YDCs gained practical work experience and research skills intended to increase their value to employers. For many, data collection throughout Belize offered them a first introduction to areas of the country outside Belize City, and to children and adolescents representing a number of ethnicities and languages.

39. Describe the involvement, if any, of children in designing special procedural or evidentiary rules applying in court proceedings with respect to hearings concerning violence against children. Provide details including ages and other details of the children involved.
40. Describe the amount and type of resources made available to support children's participation in activities to address violence against children.

V. POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES TO ADDRESS VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

A comprehensive policy for dealing with violence against children is one that addresses multiple forms of violence against children, that works across the different settings in which violence occurs, and which includes components for prevention, protection, victim medical, psychological, legal and social assistance, victim rehabilitation and reintegration, and perpetrator interventions. Such policy is distinguished from specific programmes that address selected sub-types of violence against children or its effects in specific populations and settings.

41. Does your Government have a comprehensive policy concerning violence against children?

If YES, provide details and describe any gender-specific provisions included in the policy.

No; The country has a National Plan of Action for Children and Adolescents with five major sections Education, Health, Child Protection, Culture and Family.

42. Does your Government deliver, or provide direct support for delivery by other agencies, of specific programmes aimed at preventing and responding to violence against children?

If YES, please provide available summary reports, or URLs, of these programmes, and indicate, using the table below, which settings and types of violence are addressed by these programmes:

	Physical	Sexual	Psychological	Neglect
Family/Home	x	X	x	x
Schools	x	X	x	x
Institutions	x	X	xx	x
Neighbourhood/ Community	x	X	x	x
Workplace				
Law enforcement	x	X	x	x
Other				

43. Does your Government monitor the impact of these policies and programmes directed towards violence against children?

If YES, describe the monitoring systems and provide a URL or other reference where the system and outcomes are described in greater details.

There is a monitoring and evaluation component of the National Plan of Action for Children and Adolescent. This monitoring and evaluation component is coordinated through a sub-committee of the National Committee for Families and Children and is chaired by the Central Statistics Office. The software being utilized is DEVINFO 4.0 technology.

44. Does your Government participate in any internationally coordinated activities concerning violence against children?

If YES, please provide details.

Belize has signed the HAGUE convention on the abduction of minors. Belize has also joined the other Central American countries in participating in a regional network— Instituto Inter-Americano del Nino. Belize is also a member of CICAD.

VI. DATA COLLECTION, ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH

This section aims to provide an overview of information systems and information about violence against children that may be used to inform, plan and monitor policy, legal and programmatic interventions concerning violence against children.

45. Over the past five years, has there been any victimization, epidemiological or other population-based surveys of any forms of violence against children in your country?

If YES, provide details or references, or attach.

The impact of Crime and Violence on Children and Adolescents The study was called for to provide a profile of the patterns of impact on the bases of gender, age, District of Belize, rural and urban residence and, for high school respondents, on the basis also of ethnicity. The purpose of the study is to enable organizations involved in the protection of children to generate recommendations which can ameliorate the impact of crime and violence.

The Situational Analysis of Children and Adolescents in Belize described the current status of children within Belize, and also – as a result – identified main areas where

their situation needs strengthening. In doing so it aims to be accessible to a wide audience committed to advancing the rights and interests of children in accordance with principal international instruments to which Belize is a voluntary states party. The structure of the report is based around the Millennium Development Goals agreed to by UN members states, including Belize, and thus represents an early attempt to raise wider awareness of those Goals and to consider the national situation for children according to those Goals.

46. Have there been any small-scale or representative interview studies with parents and children on violent victimisation of children?

If so, please give details.

The Vulnerability Analysis of the Child Protection System examined the child protection system and identified areas where the system needed strengthening and proposed concrete recommendations to address these areas.

47. Over the past five years, has your Government conducted or commissioned any scientific research projects on the problem of violence against children?

No

If YES, indicate the subject of this research and where the findings of these projects may be consulted in more detail.

48. Have studies or surveys been undertaken into the impact of legal measures to address violence against children?

There has been an analysis of the current laws and their compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Similarly there has been an analysis of the Families and children Act to determine its strengths and its weaknesses and recommendations made to strengthen the law.

A vulnerability analysis of the child protection system was also conducted to determine areas in the child protection system where children are made further vulnerable due to practice procedures or policy, legislation.

If YES, provide details or references, or attach.

49. Does your Government have a system for formal inquiries into all child deaths in which it is known or suspected that violence may have played any part?

No

Provide details.

50. Are regular (e.g. annual) reports published describing the statistical profile of the known or suspected violent deaths investigated by the system?

If YES, what proportion of all homicide deaths are under the age 18?

.....%

51. If reports on the national profile of known and suspected violent deaths are published by your Government, indicate how the data is broken down for the purpose of reporting (check all that apply):

Sex	
Age	

Ethnicity	
Manner of death (homicide, suicide, undetermined)	
External causes of death (firearm, strangulation, etc.)	
Geographical location of incident (address)	
Scene of occurrence (home, school, etc.)	
Time and date of incident	
Victim-perpetrator relationship	
Other:	

52. Provide the total number of reported cases of violence against children in 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2003.

Crime/Offence	Annual Total 2004
Unlawful carnal knowledge	130
Rape	21
Attempted Rape	8
Indecent assault	50
Incest	5
Unnatural Crime	3
Abetment to commit carnal knowledge	1
Abetment to commit unnatural crime	1
Harm	47
Wounding	20
Common Assault	34
Aggravated Assault	21
Theft	3
Child abandonment	2
Child abuse	3
Threatening words	1
Harassment	2
Insulting words	5
Child neglect	2
Grievous harm	5
Attempt murder	2
Damage to property	2
Abandonment	2
Threat of death	1
Human Trafficking	1

This information came from the Police Department. Information for prior years were not disaggregated in this manner.

Information is also available from the Department of Human Services. These numbers are probably contained in the police report; but can be use to assist in your analysis.

**Child Protection Services
STATISTICS**

REPORTED CASES BY ALLEGATION

Allegation	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Neglect	6	91	383	346	454
Wandering			15	11	11
Abandonment	9	35	105	89	208

Sexual Abuse	5	29	203	234	330
Physical Abuse	1	34	186	182	266
Emotional Abuse	0	2	55	21	55
Family Support	0	18	244	63	177
Custody	0	6	47	23	177
Foster Care/Adoption Inquiries	0	0	4	0	5
Foster Care/Adoption services	0	1	1	1	6
Uncontrolable Behavior	0	4	47	28	52
Runaway	0	3	16	14	38
International Casework	0	0	2	2	3
Domestic Violence	0	1	12	7	36
Maintenance	0	5	39	3	90
Disaster Relief	0		3	0	0
Relinquishment	0	2	7	3	12
Information & referral	0	12	16	5	12
Immigration Offence	0	0	0	0	52
Trafficking	0	0	0	0	3
Other	0	0	150	15	63
	21	243	1535	1047	2050

53. Provide the total number of convictions and reported cases for the various categories of crimes of violence recorded against children in 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2003. This information is disaggregated by offender and the data is not readily available by victim.

VII. AWARENESS, ADVOCACY AND TRAINING

This section is aimed at gathering information on any awareness-raising, advocacy and training activities relating to violence against children which may have been conducted by your Government.

54. Over the last five years has your Government conducted or commissioned any campaigns for raising awareness of and preventing violence against children?

If YES, please describe any recent campaigns, including the settings and types of violence that were the subjects of the campaigns and the target audience (general public, caregivers, teachers, etc.).

Campaigns	Setting and Types	Target Audience
Trafficking in Persons	Radio, television, print media	General Public
Child Abusers can be anyone.	Television	General public
Parenting Skills/Role of Fathers	Media; roundtable discussions; poster competition;	General Public
Alternatives to Discipline	Group discussion	Teachers; School Wardens; Truancy Officers

55. How were the campaign messages and information disseminated (check all that apply)?

Print media	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Radio	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Television	X
Theatre	
Schools	X
Others	

56. Over the last five years, has your Government provided, commissioned or sponsored training programmes in the area of violence against children?

If YES, indicate which of the following areas were addressed by the last such training programmes and which provider groups received training (check all that apply).

	Prevention	Protection	Redress	Rehabilitation	Penalties
Medical Professionals (including paediatricians, nurses, psychiatrists and dentists)					
Public health practitioners	x	X			
Social workers and Psychologists	x	x	x	x	x
Teachers and other educators	x	x			
Court officials (including judges)		x		x	x
Police	x	x		x	x
Prison officers					
Juvenile offenders personnel Institution personnel Parents/guardians	x	x	x	x	
Other Immigration	x	x		x	x

Please provide details.