



Uganda's Compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child: Children of Women in Detention

Submitted by The Advocates for Human Rights
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Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI)
and
The World Coalition Against the Death Penalty

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The Advocates for Human Rights (The Advocates) is a volunteer-based non-governmental organization committed to the impartial promotion and protection of international human rights standards and the rule of law since its founding in 1983. The Advocates conducts a range of programs to promote human rights in the United States and around the world, including monitoring and fact finding, direct legal representation, education and training, and publication. The Advocates is the primary provider of legal services to low-income asylum seekers in the Upper Midwest region of the United States. The Advocates is committed to ensuring human rights protection for women around the world. The Advocates has published more than 25 reports on violence against women as a human rights issue, provided consultation and commentary of draft laws on domestic violence, and trained lawyers, police, prosecutors, judges, and other law enforcement personnel to effectively implement new and existing laws on domestic violence. In 1991, The Advocates adopted a formal commitment to oppose the death penalty worldwide and organized a death penalty project to provide pro bono assistance on post-conviction appeals, as well as education and advocacy to end capital punishment. The Advocates currently holds a seat on the Steering Committee of the World Coalition against the Death Penalty.

The World Coalition Against the Death Penalty is a membership-based global network committed to strengthening the international dimension of the fight against the death penalty. Established in 2002, its ultimate objective is to obtain the universal abolition of the death penalty. To achieve its goal, the World Coalition advocates for a definitive end to death sentences and executions in those countries where the death penalty is in force. In some countries, it is seeking to obtain a reduction in the use of capital punishment as a first step towards abolition.

The Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI) is an independent, non-governmental, non-partisan and not-for-profit human rights advocacy organization, registered in Uganda under the Non-Governmental Organizations Act, 2016. FHRI's vision is a society based on human rights and civic culture as a foundation for peace, stability, democracy, social justice and sustainable development. FHRI's Mission is to promote respect and observance of human rights practices and civic values, enhance best practices through training, education, research, advocacy, ICTs, and

strategic partnership. The organization has Observer Status with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, is a member of the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty (Paris) and is affiliated to the International Federation of Human Rights Defenders, (FIDH) in Paris, France. It is a membership organization with a total of 1,515 members. FHRI commands a 30-year experience and expertise in human rights activism in Uganda. FHRI has been at the forefront in monitoring and documenting human rights violations, publication of periodic human rights reports, legal aid service provision to victims of human rights abuse; reporting before regional human rights treaty bodies, the Judiciary, parliament, police and actively campaigns for the abolition of the death penalty including carrying out programs that promote citizen participation and state accountability. Currently, it is spearheading five campaigns namely, *My Rights, My Power, Access to Justice, Rights and Rule of Law, Freedom from Pre-trial detention, and the Campaign against the death penalty in Uganda*. FHRI is located at the Human Rights House, Plot 1853, John Kiyingi Road, Nsambya, Kampala Uganda.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report discusses Uganda’s compliance with its international human rights obligations regarding children of people under sentence of death in Uganda and other children whose parents live in Uganda’s prisons. Although there are currently no women on death row who have their minor children in prison with them, there are from time to time. Uganda does not fulfil the rights of children whose parents are sentenced to death or otherwise incarcerated, and authorities violate those children’s rights to health, nutrition, education, and an adequate standard of living, as well as their right to be free from violence. Moreover, the death penalty is not in the best interests of children of people sentenced to death.
2. Much of this report is based on information that coauthor the Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI) has gathered over the last several years when undertaking prison visits, particularly to prisons where women are under sentence of death. A report from FHRI found that “children who live in prison with their mother/caregiver are particularly vulnerable to violations of their rights to development, healthcare, education and recreation.”¹

Uganda fails to uphold its obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child

I. Uganda’s death penalty is not in the best interests of children of people sentenced to death (List of Issues para. 3(b)).

3. The Committee in its List of Issues requested information about measures taken “[t]o ensure that the right of children to have their best interests taken as a primary consideration is integrated into and consistently interpreted and applied in all legislative, administrative, and judicial proceedings and decisions.”²
4. Approximately 200,000 children in Uganda have a parent in prison at any given time.³ According to Amnesty International, Ugandan courts handed down at least two death sentences in 2024, and by the end of 2024 at least 104 people were known to have been under sentence of death,⁴ including two women.⁵ The coauthors are not aware of any published data disclosing how many of the people under sentence of death have minor children or how many children have a parent under sentence of death. Uganda authorizes the death penalty for more than 25 offenses, and recently expanded the scope of the death penalty to include “aggravated homosexuality.”⁶

¹ Penal Reform International and Foundation for Human Rights Initiative, *A report on the implementation of General Comment No. 1, A shared sentence: children of imprisoned parents in Uganda (2015)*, accessed July 29, 2025, https://cdn.penalreform.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/PRI_FHRI-Report_-Implementation-of-GC-No1-WEB.pdf.

² Committee on the Rights of the Child, *List of issues in relation to the combined third to fifth periodic reports of Uganda*, (5 Mar. 2025), U.N. Doc. CRC/C/UGA/Q/3-5, ¶ 3(b).

³ Conversations with representatives from Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), June 23, 2025, and July 22, 2025.

⁴ Amnesty International, *Death sentences and executions 2024 (2025)* at 34, available at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/act50/8976/2025/en/>.

⁵ Email communication with Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), 11 Dec. 2025.

⁶ The Advocates for Human Rights, Foundation for Human Rights Initiative, and the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty, *Uganda’s Compliance with the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or*

5. On a global scale, States that sentence parents to death or execute them impose serious short- and long-term harm on these parents' children.⁷ Children of parents facing the death penalty often struggle with anger and constant uncertainty. The legal process can create anxiety, stress, sleep problems, loss of focus at school, and withdrawal from normal activities. Some children feel pushed into work when a parent can no longer provide for the family. Some children develop mental disorders or self-harming behaviors. The execution of a parent irreversibly prevents the child from maintain a relationship with the parent, and also creates intense confusion, fear, and trauma for children, far beyond the grief of a natural death. Such trauma can carry into adulthood, creating long-term intergenerational harm.⁸ Social stigma and exclusion surrounding a parent's death sentence can intensify the suffering children experience.

II. Uganda fails to provide adequate access to education, including preschool education, to children in prison with their mothers (List of Issues paras. 2(d), 10(e)).

6. The Prisons Act of 2006 allows children to stay in prison with their mother until they are 18 or 24 months old.⁹ In practice, children often stay until they are older, as mothers say that there is no family member or friend willing to take care of the child.¹⁰ As of the date of this report, 35 children ages newborn through 4 years live in prison with their mothers.¹¹ The two women currently on death row do not have young children.¹²
7. There is a minimal budget for the welfare of children, but it is inadequate and therefore Uganda Prisons partners with the private sector and individuals to provide support in various areas.¹³ As one lawyer observed, care for children in detention with their mothers has inadequate

Degrading Treatment or Punishment: Suggested List of Issues Prior to Reporting Relating to: The Death Penalty, 22 Aug. 2025, ¶¶ 6-51,

<https://www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org/Res/Uganda%20CAT%20DP%20TAHR%20FHRI%20WCADP.pdf>.

⁷ Human Rights Council, *Summary of the panel discussion on the human rights of children of parents sentenced to the death penalty or executed - Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights*, (Dec. 18, 2013), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/25/33, ¶ 6; The World Coalition Against the Death Penalty, *The Rights of Children Whose Parents Have Been Sentenced to Death or Executed*, (France: The World Coalition Against the Death Penalty, Oct. 2019), 7, https://www.acat.ch/app/uploads/2024/04/EN_Fact-sheet.pdf.

⁸ Martra Santos Pais, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence Against Children, *The rights of the child when a parent is sentenced to the death penalty or executed*, United Nations, Oct. 11, 2017, <https://violenceagainstchildren.un.org/en/article/rights-child-when-parent-sentenced-death-penalty-or-executed>.

⁹ Penal Reform International and Foundation for Human Rights Initiative, *A report on the implementation of General Comment No. 1, A shared sentence: children of imprisoned parents in Uganda (2015)*, accessed July 29, 2025, https://cdn.penalreform.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/PRI_FHRI-Report_-Implementation-of-GC-No1-WEB.pdf; email communication with Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), 11 Dec. 2025.

¹⁰ Penal Reform International and Foundation for Human Rights Initiative, *A report on the implementation of General Comment No. 1, A shared sentence: children of imprisoned parents in Uganda (2015)*, accessed July 29, 2025, https://cdn.penalreform.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/PRI_FHRI-Report_-Implementation-of-GC-No1-WEB.pdf.

¹¹ Conversations with representatives from Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), June 23, 2025, and July 22, 2025; email communication with Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), 11 Dec. 2025.

¹² Email communication with Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), 11 Dec. 2025.

¹³ Email communication with Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), 11 Dec. 2025.

funding, and “[i]t is the good will of the civil society, well-wishers and also the innovativeness of the prison’s officers” that together see to their care.¹⁴

8. The Committee in its List of Issues requested information about measures taken “[t]o increase budgetary allocations for the social sectors, in particular education, . . . aimed specifically at children in marginalized and disadvantaged situations.”¹⁵ The Committee also requested information about measures taken “[t]o provide access to preschool education for all children, . . . and to supervise the quality of services provided in such institutions.”¹⁶
9. Some prisons where women are under sentence of death, such as Luzira Prison, have daycare facilities for the children of the women who live there.¹⁷ During the week, children over the age of two typically live at the daycare facility under the care of a caretaker/teacher.¹⁸ They stay with their mothers on the weekends.¹⁹ The daycare for children at Luzira Prison is outside the prison walls.²⁰
10. A spokesperson for the Uganda Prisons Service (UPS) confirms that 7 of 21 women’s prisons in the country have daycare centers to “ease the conditions of children who live with their mothers.”²¹ These centers, however, are insufficient to meet the needs of the children who live with their mothers in prison. And the situation is worse in prisons that do not have a daycare facility.²²
11. At Luzira Prison, one adult serves as a caretaker and teacher, despite the age range of the ten or more children who attend.²³ This task is overwhelming for just one person, who receives occasional volunteer assistance.²⁴ The caretaker has limited training, and due to staffing limitations, combined with the number of children and the range of their ages, the daycare does

¹⁴ Penal Reform International and Foundation for Human Rights Initiative, *A report on the implementation of General Comment No. 1, A shared sentence: children of imprisoned parents in Uganda (2015)*, accessed July 29, 2025, https://cdn.penalreform.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/PRI_FHRI-Report_-_Implementation-of-GC-No1-WEB.pdf.

¹⁵ Committee on the Rights of the Child, *List of issues in relation to the combined third to fifth periodic reports of Uganda*, (5 Mar. 2025), U.N. Doc. CRC/C/UGA/Q/3-5, ¶ 2(d).

¹⁶ Committee on the Rights of the Child, *List of issues in relation to the combined third to fifth periodic reports of Uganda*, (5 Mar. 2025), U.N. Doc. CRC/C/UGA/Q/3-5, ¶ 2(d).

¹⁷ Conversations with representatives from Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), June 23, 2025, and July 22, 2025.

¹⁸ Conversations with representatives from Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), June 23, 2025, and July 22, 2025.

¹⁹ Conversations with representatives from Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), June 23, 2025, and July 22, 2025.

²⁰ Conversations with representatives from Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), June 23, 2025, and July 22, 2025.

²¹ Monitor, *24 children in prison with their mothers* (Jan. 15, 2021),

<https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/news/national/24-children-in-prison-with-their-mothers-1704694>.

²² Conversations with representatives from Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), June 23, 2025, and July 22, 2025.

²³ Conversations with representatives from Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), June 23, 2025, and July 22, 2025.

²⁴ Conversations with representatives from Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), June 23, 2025, and July 22, 2025.

not provide children with adequate, tailored attention.²⁵ Daycare facilities at prisons other than Luzira are not as good or nonexistent.²⁶

12. Luzira Prison provides limited additional education to the children on the weekend, when volunteers hold a weekly session about Bible verses and try to teach elements of emotional health and conflict management.²⁷ This education, however, fails to account for the needs of the children. Many of the children have witnessed or experienced some kind of violence and need emotional support and care in order to heal from their trauma.²⁸
13. Some children who live in prison may face additional psycho-social challenges due to their living environment, and inadequate education fails to address these challenges. For example, one child, aged three, reportedly trusted only people in yellow because that is the color of the clothes that people in prison wear.²⁹ The girl had difficulty relating to others because she grew up in an environment surrounded by women in detention.³⁰

III. Uganda fails to provide children in detention, including children with disabilities and children at risk of contracting HIV, with the highest attainable standard of healthcare (List of Issues paras. 2(d), 7(b), 8(b)).

14. The Committee in its List of Issues requested information about measures taken to “increase budgetary allocations for the social sectors, in particular . . . health . . . , aimed specifically at children in marginalized and disadvantaged situations.”³¹
15. Children in prisons have limited access to health care.³² The children rely on government healthcare services, which do not include adequate access to medications.³³ Healthcare

²⁵ Conversations with representatives from Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), June 23, 2025, and July 22, 2025.

²⁶ Conversations with representatives from Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), June 23, 2025, and July 22, 2025.

²⁷ Conversations with representatives from Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), June 23, 2025, and July 22, 2025.

²⁸ Conversations with representatives from Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), June 23, 2025, and July 22, 2025.

²⁹ Monitor, *24 children in prison with their mothers* (Jan. 15, 2021), <https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/news/national/24-children-in-prison-with-their-mothers-1704694>.

³⁰ Monitor, *24 children in prison with their mothers* (Jan. 15, 2021), <https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/news/national/24-children-in-prison-with-their-mothers-1704694>.

³¹ Committee on the Rights of the Child, *List of issues in relation to the combined third to fifth periodic reports of Uganda*, (5 Mar. 2025), U.N. Doc. CRC/C/UGA/Q/3-5, ¶ 2(d).

³² Ojok David Stephen, *Refugee family in prison: Challenges faced by children of incarcerated mothers*, REFUGEE L. PROJECT (Oct. 30, 2019), https://www.refugeelawproject.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=158:refugee-family-in-prison-challenges-faced-by-children-of-incarcerated-mothers-2&catid=26&Itemid=101.

³³ Ojok David Stephen, *Refugee family in prison: Challenges faced by children of incarcerated mothers*, REFUGEE L. PROJECT (Oct. 30, 2019), https://www.refugeelawproject.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=158:refugee-family-in-prison-challenges-faced-by-children-of-incarcerated-mothers-2&catid=26&Itemid=101.

providers typically tell mothers to purchase medicine for their children, yet the drugs are often unaffordable.³⁴

16. Unlike many other Ugandan prisons, Luzira Prison has medical facilities nearby, and nuns from those facilities visit the prison and provide treatment to women and their children.³⁵ The children also receive recommended vaccinations.³⁶ Even the hospital near the prison, however, cannot provide care for complex medical issues.³⁷ And if one child at the daycare gets measles, all the other children get it as there is no space in the daycare housing for quarantine.³⁸
17. Other prisons have limited access to medical facilities.³⁹ Doctors and nurses assess people in detention and their children. UPS provides an ambulance to transport sick people and children if needed. The male side of the prison typically has a hospital that prison staff, people who are detained, and communities around the prison can access. The in-prison hospital refers complicated conditions to other hospitals. But even when the prison doctor refers a person to another hospital, that person may not be able to access the other hospital due to the costs involved with arranging prison staff to accompany the patient.⁴⁰
18. The Committee also requested information about measures taken “[t]o adopt updated policies and plans regarding the rights of children with disabilities and to ensure that all rights of children with disabilities and their access to all services are guaranteed throughout [Uganda].”⁴¹ Access to healthcare is particularly important for children with disabilities. One three-year-old child in Luzira Prison has a disability affecting his ability to walk and talk.⁴² The nearby hospital is not equipped to provide medical care for him.⁴³ FHRI is optimistic that he can receive appropriate treatment once he is outside the prison, but until then, the complex medical care he needs is out of reach.⁴⁴

³⁴ Ojok David Stephen, *Refugee family in prison: Challenges faced by children of incarcerated mothers*, REFUGEE L. PROJECT (Oct. 30, 2019),

https://www.refugeelawproject.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=158:refugee-family-in-prison-challenges-faced-by-children-of-incarcerated-mothers-2&catid=26&Itemid=101.

³⁵ Conversation with representatives from Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), June 23, 2025, and July 22, 2025.

³⁶ Conversation with representatives from Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), June 23, 2025, and July 22, 2025.

³⁷ Conversation with representatives from Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), June 23, 2025, and July 22, 2025.

³⁸ Conversations with representatives from Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), June 23, 2025, and July 22, 2025.

³⁹ Conversation with representatives from Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), June 23, 2025, and July 22, 2025.

⁴⁰ Email communication with Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), 11 Dec. 2025.

⁴¹ Committee on the Rights of the Child, *List of issues in relation to the combined third to fifth periodic reports of Uganda*, (5 Mar. 2025), U.N. Doc. CRC/C/UGA/Q/3-5, ¶ 7(b).

⁴² Conversation with representatives from Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), June 23, 2025, and July 22, 2025.

⁴³ Conversation with representatives from Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), June 23, 2025, and July 22, 2025.

⁴⁴ Conversation with representatives from Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), June 23, 2025, and July 22, 2025.

19. The Committee also requested information about measures taken “[t]o address vertical transmission of HIV and to eliminate paediatric HIV/AIDS.”⁴⁵ 13% of women in Ugandan prisons are HIV positive,⁴⁶ and some of the mothers that FHRI has visited have confirmed that they are HIV positive.⁴⁷ Many of these women are illiterate and authorities do not provide them with adequate health education regarding the transmission of HIV.⁴⁸ It is unknown if any children living with their mothers in prison are HIV positive.⁴⁹ The coauthors’ research has uncovered no evidence that children in prison receive their own antiretrovirals or other HIV-specific healthcare and education.

IV. Uganda fails to ensure adequate nutrition, water, and sanitation for children in prison with their mothers (List of Issues para. 8(c)).

20. The Committee in its List of Issues requested information about measures taken “[t]o address malnutrition and stunting, by increasing funding for [Uganda]’s nutrition programmes and policies, and to improve access to water and sanitation services for all children.”⁵⁰

21. UPS provides separate meals for mothers and their children. Prison authorities provide special meals to nursing mothers, children, and people who are sick, but provision of these special meals is not consistent. Children do not have daily access to fruits and vegetables. They sometimes rely on visitor donations to supplement the food they receive from the prison authorities.⁵¹

22. Food available for purchase inside the prison is expensive,⁵² and not all mothers have money to make such purchases.⁵³ Due to their childcare responsibilities, many mothers lack the free time to make beads or engage in other income-generating activities.⁵⁴

⁴⁵ Committee on the Rights of the Child, *List of issues in relation to the combined third to fifth periodic reports of Uganda*, (5 Mar. 2025), U.N. Doc. CRC/C/UGA/Q/3-5, ¶ 8(b).

⁴⁶ Jacqueline Asiimwe, *More Women Living with HIV in Ugandan Prisons*, THE INDEP. (UGANDA) (Aug. 5, 2024), <https://www.independent.co.ug/more-women-living-with-hiv-in-ugandan-prisons/>.

⁴⁷ Conversation with representatives from Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), June 23, 2025, and July 22, 2025.

⁴⁸ Jacqueline Asiimwe, *More Women Living with HIV in Ugandan Prisons*, THE INDEP. (UGANDA) (Aug. 5, 2024), <https://www.independent.co.ug/more-women-living-with-hiv-in-ugandan-prisons/>.

⁴⁹ Conversation with representatives from Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), June 23, 2025, and July 22, 2025.

⁵⁰ Committee on the Rights of the Child, *List of issues in relation to the combined third to fifth periodic reports of Uganda*, (5 Mar. 2025), U.N. Doc. CRC/C/UGA/Q/3-5, ¶ 8(c).

⁵¹ Email communication with Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), 11 Dec. 2025.

⁵² Conversations with representatives from Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), June 23, 2025, and July 22, 2025.

⁵³ Conversations with representatives from Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), June 23, 2025, and July 22, 2025.

⁵⁴ Conversations with representatives from Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), June 23, 2025, and July 22, 2025.

23. Children in prisons typically eat only beans and *posho* (corn flour).⁵⁵ Some prisons have gardens, but the food they provide is not consistent.⁵⁶ Prisons may also have cows that provide milk for the babies, but the cows do not provide milk every day.⁵⁷
24. Prisons housing women and children also have unreliable access to clean water.⁵⁸
25. Prisons also have inadequate sanitary facilities, which can lead to the spread of disease.⁵⁹

V. Uganda fails to guarantee an adequate standard of living for children in prison with their mothers (List of Issues para. 9(a)).

26. The Committee requested information about measures taken “[t]o address the high levels of poverty among children, and to guarantee an adequate and sustainable standard of living for all children . . . , with a particular focus on targeted social protection schemes for children in marginalized and disadvantaged situations.”⁶⁰
27. Ugandan authorities do not provide clothing for children in prison.⁶¹ Children therefore must rely on donations.⁶² Further, due to lack of storage, there are limits to the amount of clothing and other items that mothers can receive.⁶³
28. Even if a prison has a daycare, children spend weekends in prison cells with their mothers.⁶⁴ The daycare at Luzira Prison was constructed under a partnership between the UPS and a religious leader, who came up with the project to care for the children whose parents are in the prison. A non-governmental institution called Family of Africa oversees the project. UPS provided the land while Family of Africa constructed the daycare. Pursuant to a memorandum of understanding, Family of Africa pays the caretaker and provides food for the children in the daycare. UPS, in turn, provides maintenance and supervision and is responsible for the

⁵⁵ Conversations with representatives from Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), June 23, 2025, and July 22, 2025.

⁵⁶ Conversations with representatives from Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), June 23, 2025, and July 22, 2025.

⁵⁷ Conversations with representatives from Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), June 23, 2025, and July 22, 2025.

⁵⁸ Juliet Nabirye, Joan Nabunya & Jane Namatovu, *Experiences and Challenges Faced by Incarcerated Women at the Luzira Prison*, BMC WOMEN’S HEALTH (2023),

<https://bmcmwomenshealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12905-023-02462-5>.

⁵⁹ Juliet Nabirye, Joan Nabunya & Jane Namatovu, *Experiences and Challenges Faced by Incarcerated Women at the Luzira Prison*, BMC WOMEN’S HEALTH (2023),

<https://bmcmwomenshealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12905-023-02462-5>.

⁶⁰ Committee on the Rights of the Child, *List of issues in relation to the combined third to fifth periodic reports of Uganda*, (5 Mar. 2025), U.N. Doc. CRC/C/UGA/Q/3-5, ¶ 9(a).

⁶¹ Conversations with representatives from Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), June 23, 2025, and July 22, 2025.

⁶² Conversations with representatives from Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), June 23, 2025, and July 22, 2025.

⁶³ Conversations with representatives from Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), June 23, 2025, and July 22, 2025.

⁶⁴ Conversation with representatives from Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), June 23, 2025, and July 22, 2025.

children's health. When the children stay in the prison's maternity ward to be with their mothers, UPS is responsible for them.⁶⁵

29. According to Hon. Justice Lameck Mukasa, the conditions for children living in rural and upcountry prisons are much more dire than at Luzira and are "in need of urgent intervention."⁶⁶

VI. Uganda fails to protect children in prison with their mothers from violence (List of Issues para. 5(a)-(c)).

30. The Committee requested information about measures taken "[t]o address the high levels of violence against children," to "address and prevent all forms of violence against children," and to "eradicate the practice of corporal punishment."⁶⁷

31. Children in prison with their mothers experience violence. On a routine detention center visit, Refugee Law Project documented an instance of a woman detainee who, under the guise of caring for another woman's three-year-old son, "took advantage to play with his (boy's) genitals to fulfil her sexual gratification, thereby raising serious concerns about the child's safety."⁶⁸

32. Children experience other forms of physical abuse, although it is not usually severe.⁶⁹ Recently in Luzira Prison, a mother was found to be beating her own child, so the prison removed that child from its mother.⁷⁰ According to FHRI, one reason that Luzira Prison established a daycare where children stay Sunday through Friday was to try to prevent instances of abuse.⁷¹ It is unclear, however, whether authorities established new policies to prevent child abuse across the prison system, or whether the daycare setup was an *ad hoc* response at Luzira Prison.

33. Regardless of the availability of daycare outside the prison walls, children in prison are exposed to violent language, violence between prisoners, and other conduct that is inappropriate for children.⁷² Such exposure has caused the children to be violent with each other, as they mimic behaviors they see around them.⁷³

⁶⁵ Email communication with Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), 11 Dec. 2025.

⁶⁶ Penal Reform International and Foundation for Human Rights Initiative, *A report on the implementation of General Comment No. 1, A shared sentence: children of imprisoned parents in Uganda (2015)*, accessed July 29, 2025, https://cdn.penalreform.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/PRI_FHRI-Report_-Implementation-of-GC-No1-WEB.pdf.

⁶⁷ Committee on the Rights of the Child, *List of issues in relation to the combined third to fifth periodic reports of Uganda*, (5 Mar. 2025), U.N. Doc. CRC/C/UGA/Q/3-5, ¶ 5(a)-(c).

⁶⁸ Ojok David Stephen, *Refugee family in prison: Challenges faced by children of incarcerated mothers*, REFUGEE L. PROJECT (Oct. 30, 2019),

https://www.refugeelawproject.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=158:refugee-family-in-prison-challenges-faced-by-children-of-incarcerated-mothers-2&catid=26&Itemid=101.

⁶⁹ Conversations with representatives from Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), June 23, 2025, and July 22, 2025.

⁷⁰ Conversations with representatives from Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), June 23, 2025, and July 22, 2025.

⁷¹ Conversations with representatives from Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), June 23, 2025, and July 22, 2025.

⁷² Conversations with representatives from Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), June 23, 2025, and July 22, 2025.

⁷³ Conversations with representatives from Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), June 23, 2025, and July 22, 2025.

VII. Women in prison fear that “host families” or placement organizations will traffic their children (List of Issues para. 6(c)).

34. The Committee requested information on measures taken to “establish clear regulations on alternative care for children.”⁷⁴ FHRI has documented that some organizations try to place children of women who live in prison with “host families”—often in foreign countries—while their mothers are incarcerated.⁷⁵ Many mothers prefer to keep their children with them in prison instead of participating in these programs for fear that the organizations or the host families will abuse or sell their children.⁷⁶

VIII. Suggested recommendations for the Government of Uganda

35. The coauthors suggest that the Committee recommend that the government of Uganda:

- Abolish the death penalty and replace it with penalties that are fair, proportionate, and consistent with international human rights standards;
- In the interim, ensure that every court responsible for sentencing a person who is charged with a capital crime and who is the parent of a minor child receives and considers expert testimony about the best interests of the child before determining an appropriate sentence;
- Step up support for children to maintain relationships with parents who are incarcerated, including by funding and providing technical support for regular in-person visits, telephone calls, and other forms of communication, so long as such contacts are in the best interests of the child;
- Increase the budget under child welfare to ensure that detention facilities can ably cater to the basic necessities of children incarcerated with their mothers;
- Ensure that all prisons that house women and their children have adequately staffed daycare centers;
- Create clear educational plans and benchmarks for children living in prisons, including an adequate teacher-to-child ratio and clearly defined educational objectives;
- Carry out regular monitoring visits led by headquarters and medical staff to ensure the health and well-being of children imprisoned with their mothers throughout the country;
- Ensure each prison provides children in its care with timely and adequate healthcare;

⁷⁴ Committee on the Rights of the Child, *List of issues in relation to the combined third to fifth periodic reports of Uganda*, (5 Mar. 2025), U.N. Doc. CRC/C/UGA/Q/3-5, ¶ 6(c).

⁷⁵ Conversations with representatives from Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), June 23, 2025, and July 22, 2025.

⁷⁶ Conversations with representatives from Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), June 23, 2025, and July 22, 2025.

- Ensure that all children who live in prison with their mothers have age-appropriate psycho-social support and mental health care;
- Ensure access to pre-natal, post-natal, and prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV (PMTCT) services and address the specific nutritional needs of pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers in detention facilities;
- Prioritize health care access for children with disabilities who live in prison;
- Develop and implement a meal system designed specifically to promote the healthy growth and development of children who reside in detention facilities;
- Ensure that all children in detention have access to clean water and sanitary facilities;
- Expand violence-prevention programming for women in prison;
- Undertake vetting of any organizations providing “host families” for children of women who are in prison and ensure adequate oversight of any such placements, and prohibit the placement of Ugandan children with foster families located outside of Uganda absent an independent assessment that such a placement would be in the best interests of the child.