

Crimes against the Child

Crimes against Humanity

**International Round Table organised by AMADE
Under the Patronage of UNESCO**

25-26 April 2003
Monaco

**Statement
by Mrs. Brigitte BOCCONE-PAGES,
Member of Parliament
National Council of Monaco**

Your Royal Highness,

Minister,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The National Council which was elected on 9 February 2003 and which I have the pleasure and honour of representing here together with Catherine FAUTRIER, Chair of the Parliamentary Commission for Women's Rights and the Family, Michèle DITTLOT, Chair of the Parliamentary Commission for Culture, and Bruno BLANCHY, Member of Parliament, pays a great deal of attention to all initiatives aimed at protecting the children.

In line with the contribution by Prince Albert the First in the area of humanitarian law, this stance echoes the work by Her Serene Highness Princess Grace of Monaco to help the children and, more recently, the statement by His Serene Highness Crown Prince Albert of Monaco at the United Nations General Assembly, in which He suggested that crimes committed against children, because of their heinous nature, should be given a specific legal treatment in order to ensure that their perpetrators cannot benefit from impunity.

Furthermore, His Serene Highness proposed that crimes against children be qualified as crimes against humanity.

Today's children are part of tomorrow's humanity. Yet, one cannot deny that there exists a criminality targeted at children, which is the product of an organisation as wicked as it is elaborate.

I would cite, with no attempt at being comprehensive: child trafficking, sexual exploitation of children, child pornography or the enrolment of children in armed conflicts.

In all instances, the children's vulnerability is exploited for commercial purposes, which brings us close to slavery and calls for a reaction by Governments that is commensurate with the gravity of the situation.

The qualification of crimes against children as crimes against humanity shall lead to raise the international public opinion's awareness of those extremely serious violations of international law that go against core values that are common to all human cultures.

It is anticipated that, along with increasing public awareness, this undertaking will also have more tangible effects:

- first, the United Nations Convention on the Non-Applicability of Statutory Limitations to War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity will be applicable to crimes committed against children;
- second, it will put an end to the impunity from which those responsible for such crimes still benefit in many countries as they escape from prosecution by national courts by using statutory limitations applicable to ordinary crimes.

In order for this impetus to translate into international law, it is necessary to bring together a large number of States and persuade them to activate the international processes of multilateral negotiation.

Indeed, without reaching a large consensus, any advance in law would remain solely theoretical.

Be assured that the National Council will be determined in working with all international bodies and within all 'institutional networks' of which it is a member in order to push forward the idea that crimes against children be qualified as crimes against humanity.

In consultation with the other members of the Council who are present here, we suggest we should rapidly set up a tripartite working group that would bring together representatives of the Government, the National Council and all NGOs based in Monaco, including AMADE, with the aim of drafting a domestic law that would subsequently be of assistance in discussing this issue within international parliamentary organisations.

There are tight bonds which can help unite all Monaco authorities.

In this, Monaco could serve as a model. The Sovereign Family have always defended those principles. In the future, they can rely on our complete support.

Thank you.

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