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**THE CHILD RIGHTS LAW OF AKWA IBOM STATE: IS THE END TO TORTURE IN SIGHT?**

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**ABSTRACT**

*“Child abuse casts a shadow the length of a lifetime”. Ward 2013).  
In Nigeria and other Sub-Saharan African Countries, children are still being  
tortured on accusation of witchcraft activities or being witches. This a gross  
violation of United Nation charter on child rights to which these countries are  
signatories. Against this backdrop, this article examines the implication of the  
torture and the efforts of various government agencies in the country to  
protect child rights through the efforts of various government agencies in the  
country to protect child right through the promulgation of the child right law.*

**INTRODUCTION**

Human rights have always been in peril in Africa, Ward (2013) including the prohibition of torture. The UN Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhumane or Degrading Treatment and Punishment defines torture as any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing him or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity. The Child Rights Law (CRL) of Akwa Ibom State (2008) defines a child as a person who has not attained the age of sixteen years. The UN Convention on the Rights of a Child defines a child as someone below the age of 18 years. This paper will adopt the definition of a child in the CRL afore defined. Children’s rights are the perceived human rights of children with particular attention to the rights of special protection and care afforded to the young, human identity as well as the basic needs for food, universal state-paid education, health care and criminal laws appropriate for the age and development of the child.

As minors by law, children do not have autonomy or the right to make decisions on their own for themselves in any known jurisdiction of the world. Instead their adult caregivers, including parents, social workers, teachers, youth workers and others, are vested with that authority, depending on the circumstances Lansdown, (2005). Some believe that this state of affairs gives children insufficient control over their own lives and causes them to be vulnerable. Louis Althusser describes this legal machinery, as it applies to children, as “repressive state

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apparatuses" (Jenks1996). Structures such as government policies have been held by some commentators to mask the ways adults' abuse and exploit children, resulting in child poverty, lack of educational opportunities, and child labor. On this view, children are to be regarded as a minority group towards whom society needs to reconsider the way it behaves, Thorne (1987).

**Classification of Children Rights**

Children's rights are defined in numerous ways, including a wide spectrum of civil, cultural, economic, social and political rights, Mangold, (2002). Amnesty International openly advocates these four classes of children's rights and calls for an end to juvenile incarceration without parole, to the recruitment of military use of children, to death penalty (for people under 21), and raising awareness of human rights in the classroom, Mangold (2002). Human Rights Watch, on its part, includes child labor, juvenile justice, orphans and abandoned children, refugees, street children and corporal punishment Mangold (2002). Scholarly study generally focuses children's rights by identifying individual rights, Calkins(1972), likewise major international instruments on rights of the child.

The history of the rights of a child commenced globally with the Geneva Declaration on the Rights of the Child in 1924 and 1959 respectively. The General Assembly adopted the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1989. Nigeria is a party to that Convention. The CRC is seen as a basis for all international legal standards for children's rights today. Nigeria is also a signatory to the African Union Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, which was also domesticated in 2000. The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (also called the ACRWC or Children's Charter) was adopted by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and was entered into force in 1999. Like the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Children's Charter is a comprehensive instrument that sets out rights and defines universal principles and norms for the status of children. The ACRWC and the CRC are the only international and regional human rights treaties that cover the whole spectrum of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.

For several years Nigeria has been criticized for the human (including children's) rights violations perpetrated on its territory OMCT (2002). In 1996, Nigeria submitted its first Report on the Implementation of the CRC to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child ("the Committee"). One of the major recommendations of the Committee was to finally ensure the domestication of the CRC, as this is necessary for its full implementation under Nigerian law CRC, (1996). A first Bill on Children's rights had already been elaborated in 1993, but could not be passed into law by the military government because of opposition from religious groups and traditionalists. "The main objection targeted a provision setting 18 years as the minimum age for marriage. This was [said to be] incompatible with religious and cultural traditions in various parts of the country, where girls are given in marriage at a younger age". Many national and international NGOs, as well as other sectors of the civil society in Nigeria, criticized this decision and forced the legislators to reconsider their opposition to the Child Rights Bill. The Bill was finally passed into law in September 2003 [http://www.unicri.it/notice\\_board.html](http://www.unicri.it/notice_board.html) (2003).

The Child Rights Act incorporates the principles and provisions of the CRC and the OAU Child Charter. The rights guaranteed under these instruments could be subsumed under four broad principles, namely survival, development, participation and protection. Before the Child's Right Act was promulgated, there were several existing laws, national and sub-national, on children and young persons, but the new Act is more significant in several respects. Most of the previous laws were made for juvenile delinquents, dealing, *inter alia*, with procedures for arrest, detention and trial. The Child Rights Act deals with both delinquent and non-delinquent children and takes care of their welfare. However there are still some problematic aspects of the CRL and this includes the fact that the right to remain silent is not stipulated therein, the right to be protected from retroactive legislation, the right of the detainee to challenge his/her detention before an independent judge, the right to be compensated for miscarriages of justice amongst other lapses, Berezina (2013).

Twenty-one of the thirty-six States in Nigeria have so far passed their Child Rights Laws. The Governor of Akwa Ibom State, Obong Godswill Akpabio, on 5th December, 2008 signed the Child Rights Act into law. The focus of this paper is the child's right to dignity, especially, the prohibition of torture, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment as contained in Section 11b of the CRL. The emphasis herein will be in analyzing the precarious conditions of children in situations where they are tortured.

### **Children and Torture**

Torture is covered by several instruments applicable in Nigeria. The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria states in its Art.34 (1) that: "Every individual is entitled to respect for the dignity of his person, and accordingly (a) no person shall be subject to torture or to inhuman degrading treatment." Art. 17 (2)(b) further says that "[...] human dignity shall be maintained and enhanced". Torture is also prohibited under the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (Ratification and Enforcement) Act59: While Art.4 recognizes the inviolability of human life and the right of everyone to respect for his life and person, Art.5 states that "[...] all forms of exploitation and degradation of man particularly slavery, slave trade, torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment and treatment shall be prohibited." Nigeria signed the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, and Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT) on July 28, 1988.

For most people, the word "torture" conjures up an image of medieval times, an antiquated and horrific practice left behind long ago in favor of progress and civility, and any such practice today exists only in the acts of sadists, terrorists, and psychopaths Berezina (2013). It is easier to ignore or avoid the issue altogether, because it is too difficult or unsettling to imagine that torture still exists even in this century. It is even more disturbing to visualize that children are deliberately subjected to pain and suffering in Akwa Ibom State and elsewhere. Torture also is generally used alongside other methods of control, as a facet of a broader mechanism of power and domination Berezina (2013).

Sadly, in every society where the threat of torture and violence is real, children become the easiest and most vulnerable targets. Tragically, children are less capable of protecting themselves, and their torturers are less likely to be prosecuted because most incidents of child torture remain unreported as children fear repercussions for reporting the practice to the authorities. When reported, children are often not believed or are ignored by authorities.



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Torture and violence are often perpetrated against children in both private and public settings - their families, communities, detention centers, schools and other institutions - by parents, educators, employers, peers, armed groups and state officials of all kinds OMCT (2002)."

Torture of children manifests itself in different circumstances, some of which are examined below.

**a. Torture of Children through Accusations of Witchcraft**

Child witchcraft is the belief that children can be witches and wizards or that infants can or do magically turn themselves into evil objects, birds, insects, *etcetera*, to suck blood or mysteriously inflict harm. It is the belief that children have evil powers which they use or can use to destroy people, particularly, their family or neighbors Abati (2013). The effects of accusations of witchcraft on children take three forms. The first is accusation, in which children are accused of being witches and wizards and blamed for whatever goes wrong in their families. This could be death, disease, business failure, accidents or childbirth difficulties. The second is confession, where children are forced to confess to being witches and wizards or to having taken part in witchcraft activities by family members or by mobs, in most cases through physical and mental torture. The third is persecution, in which children alleged to be witches and wizards are tortured or given inhuman and degrading treatment. Such children are starved, chained, beaten, matcheted, lynched and even killed. In Akwa Ibom State, the belief about child witchcraft is common and widespread. This has caused most people to endorse the persecution of children accused of witchcraft, or at least to be indifferent to child rights abuses that are committed in the name of witchcraft. Witchdoctors also force such children to drink potions (poison) or concoctions which could kill them or damage their health. Some of the child victims rescued by public-spirited individuals have found refuge at the Child Rights and Rehabilitation Network (CRAN) in Eket, among other places.

Sadly, many churches and their pastors subject alleged children witches and wizards to torture in the name of exorcism. Pastors have been accused of worsening the problem by claiming to have powers to recognize and exorcise "child witches and encouraging the torture and deadly treatment of children accused to be witches". The recent broadcast on United Kingdom (UK) Channel 4 of a Documentary, titled "Saving Africa's Witch Children", gives a detailed account of the sheer cruelty meted to children by one Bishop Sunday Ulup-Aya, who claimed to have killed 110 child witches. Upon his arrest by the Police, following sustained public outrage, he modified this to mean that he did not kill the children physically, but the demonic spirit in them, (Ikpe-Itauma 2009). The ugly situation in Akwa Ibom has attracted both local and international outrage and put the State in a bad light. It was probably in response to this embarrassing situation that the Akwa Ibom State Government signed into law the Child Rights Law in December 2008, Igwe 2009. Statistics have it that the states of Akwa Ibom and Cross River have about 15,000 children branded as witches, and most of them end up being abandoned on the streets and abused. The phenomenon is growing worldwide. About 1,000 people accused of being witches in Gambia were locked in detention centers in March 2009 and forced to drink a dangerous hallucinogenic potion, according to Amnesty International. In 2005, relatives of an 8-year-old Angolan girl living in England were convicted of torturing her for being a witch.

**b. Torture of Children Due to Defects in the Criminal Justice System**

African states still relish and cherish the use of torture as instruments of state police and no age is left out, Udombana (2010). Children are arrested for petty crimes (often on little or no evidence) such as vagrancy or labor law violations. They are often held in adult jails and detention centers, and victimized by police and adult inmates Ebbe (2013). This is contrary to Section 213 of the CRL which states that detention should be used as a last resort, on the order of a Court, where placement in a remand home or better alternative confinement is unavailable. In Akwa Ibom State (and in Nigeria in general), it is common practice that children often get arrested and tortured in place of their parents, who may not be readily arrested for crimes committed and also to lure such parents out of hiding. In many instances, children are tortured because of their political beliefs or those of their parents, guardians and relations, Berezina (2009). This constitutes a defect in the Nigerian criminal system. A culture of impunity has protected the perpetrators. When victims and others attempt to secure justice, they are harassed, intimidated and obstructed by the police. The absence of independent mechanisms to investigate police abuses and make referrals to the prosecutor creates a serious accountability vacuum and allows perpetrators to evade justice.

The situation is so grim that Takirambudde (2013) reportedly stated that: "The United States and Britain have invested millions in police reform initiatives in Nigeria, but police practices have changed little since the end of military rule ... Diplomatic relations have taken precedence over concern for human rights for too long. It's time the British and the U.S. governments conditioned further aid to the police to measurable improvements in police conduct". There are no questions about accountability of perpetrators because there are no functioning complaint mechanisms which exist to receive allegations, and to report and seek effective redress for acts of torture. Most victims cannot afford lawyers, and have no practical means of communicating allegations to NGOs. Moreover, attempts to register complaints may be met with intimidation. Investigations lack independence as they may be conducted by the police themselves, or are dealt with internally. Forensic medical examinations which could sustain complaints are non-existent even in cases of death in police custody. Children are worst affected by these actions as often times even the police are nonchalant on the age of their suspects.

It is also the case that in most police stations, women, children, and adults were held together in extremely overcrowded conditions Tomassini-Shi, (2013). At times, medical care is non-existent and seriously ill detainees are left to languish until they die. Children are held awaiting-trial (in pre-trial detention) or held without charge for lengthy period, held in overcrowded cells, lacking appropriate hygiene facilities, with insufficient places to sleep, inadequate and/or insufficient food, water, and medical care, let alone any opportunities for educational, leisure, or vocational training Idorenyin Eyo (2010). Children on remand are often held with adult males. The prisons in Akwa Ibom State and indeed Nigeria operate under these conditions despite the fact that government is making efforts to further decongest these prisons. Furthermore, there are no correctional homes for these children; and, despite the establishment of family courts by the Akwa Ibom State Government, these courts are yet to be optimally utilized.

**c. Torture of Children through Corporal Punishment**

Corporal punishment deals with the infliction of physical pain or injury on the child. The children are put in precarious situations more so as corporal punishment is acceptable in the family, schools, churches, *etcetera*. It is the personal observation of the author that many parents, teachers, caregivers, masters/ mistresses are guilty of this. It is more prevalent when the child is sent out to live with persons as housemaids\boys as has been so easily obtainable in Akwa Ibom State. The most common form of this is subjecting a child to a severe beating or extreme punishment for minor offences. It is opined herein that any chastisement of a child should take into consideration the child's age and should never include anything that might do real physical harm to the child. It should also be not a regular occurrence. Any unnecessary form of corporal punishment is contrary to the prohibition of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Under international law, corporal punishment violates several international human rights treaties that Nigeria is a signatory to, particularly the Convention against Torture, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, as well as the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and of course the Child Rights Law. While it is accepted that the use of physical punishment is a matter for individual parents to decide and that they are expected to distinguish between smacking and torture\criminal violence, it is intended that the CRL strives to ensure that children are effectively protected from violence, without unnecessarily interfering with parents' discretion as to the upbringing of their children", and that, in the government's view, neither Article 37 nor Article 19 does not oblige a state to criminalize responsible and loving parents or guardians for disciplinary acts that have positive effects on the child's personality. However, the writer is of the opinion that such cases of torture through corporal punishment should be reported and promptly dealt with and offenders brought to face the full weight of the law.

**d. Torture of Children in Communal Clashes/Conflict**

War violates every right of a child—the rights to life, to be with family and community, to health, to development of personality, and to be nurtured and protected GraçaMachel (2002). War, communal clashes and armed conflicts are realities to children. Some have never known any other life; they have grown up in the midst of civil wars, guerrilla insurgency, militancy etc. This may not be the case with Akwa Ibom State, but we are constantly bedeviled by communal clashes, militant insurrection, high crime rates *etcetera*. Untold numbers of children have been killed, disabled or orphaned. Many more have died or suffered from starvation or malnutrition, or lack of clean water, sanitation and medical care. Many are traumatized by witnessing brutal deaths and being surrounded by violence, fear and hardship. These constitute physical, mental and psychological torture.

Many children are killed and tortured because of where they live, or because of the politics, religion or ethnic origin of their family. In these crisis situations, casualty rates among children are generally high, because of their inexperience, fearlessness and lack of training, and because they are often targeted, used for hazardous assignments and generally put in deadly situations. Reintegration is difficult with children haunted psychologically and facing an



immense struggle to rebuild shattered lives. The medical and social consequences are particularly bad for girls, almost all of whom are suffering from sexually transmitted diseases, and face the social stigma of having been raped. Concern for child soldiers is now becoming higher on the international agenda. Also, children have to flee their homes in search of refuge. Sometimes, they go with their families, sometimes alone; many get separated on the way. Their route to safety is often dangerous. It is also quite saddening that with the militant uprising in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, the sectarian crisis in Jos, Bauchi, Maiduguri and in Nigeria, children are not spared from torture, inhumane treatment and other vices associated with the crisis (such as kidnappings, loss of lives and properties, maiming, etc.)

**e. Torture of Children through Harmful Cultural Practices**

**i. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

FGM, the surgical removal of all or part of the genital organ, is generally performed by a traditional practitioner with crude instruments and without anesthetic: it is painful, terrifying and traumatic. Most of the victims are young girls, usually between the ages of four and ten, although in some cultures, FGM is carried out in infancy or on newly-married women. The long-term physical effects include permanent damage to the genital organs and mild to severe impairment of normal body functions, including sex and birth. The psychological trauma is impossible to quantify. FGM is predominant in the southern and eastern zones of Nigeria, including Akwa Ibom State. This problem is however not only prevalent in Nigeria alone but is widely practiced all over Africa as some two million African girls are believed to undergo FGM each year. There is a complex web of interrelated cultural factors behind FGM. It is seen by its practitioners as a necessary rite for initiation into womanhood and integration into the culture, without which a woman cannot marry. But it is increasingly opposed by women and men in Africa and elsewhere as a systematic form of violence against women and girls and a denial of their fundamental rights.

Section 25(v) of the CRL prohibits this practice and imposes a fine of not less than One Hundred Thousand Naira or imprisonment for a term of one year or both. Nonetheless, the practice remains widespread in Nigeria and the proportion of those that have undergone FGM is high. Many girls face several health risks through this, including of HIV infection due to unhygienic methods that accompany the practice which in itself is a public health issue. These girls have the right to non-discrimination, the right to physical and mental security and the right to health and States are obliged to respect and to ensure the protection and promotion of these rights. It is the belief of the author that government failure to take appropriate action to ensure the eradication of FGM violates these rights and the international obligations which these States owe. Indeed, Article 24 of the CRC requires governments to take appropriate actions to abolish traditional practices prejudicial to the health of children.

**ii. Gender Discrimination:**

The CRL, in Section 10, recognizes the right of a child to freedom from discrimination merely by reason of his belonging to a particular community, sex, ethnic group, religion or circumstances of birth. Although the Constitution provides for gender equality, cases of violations of women's rights and gender discrimination are alarming, Ezeilo (2002). Women and girls are subject to violence at domestic and public levels. Sometimes, they do not have equal



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opportunities to go to school together with their male counterparts. Females are discriminated against even in the family circles as the birth of a male child is heralded while more often than not that of a female child is more often than not hoped that the sex should have been the other way round. There is the need for a change in the attitude more so as we know that torture can also be psychological and mental.

**iv. Early Marriages**

A lot of children are subjected to early marriages in Akwa Ibom State and all over the country and these early marriages are detrimental to girl's physical, mental and emotional health Ololade (2013). Apart from the fact that it deprives girls from their right to have control over their body and reproductive health, it puts them in a position of complete dependency on their husbands. Severe consequences erupt from these early marriages such as a large number of cases of vesico-vaginal fistula (VVF), a condition caused by giving birth when the cervix is not well developed. The prevalence of this has led to the establishment of a hospital in Mbribilitam Akwa Ibom State to treat VVF cases. Corrective operations often require the consent of the spouse, and more often than not sufferers are abandoned or divorced by their husbands and ostracized by their communities. Early marriages also affect the educational pursuit of the children, negative incidences also occur such as torture and infringement on the rights of these children. This is due to the fact that young girls who are married often stop school in order to give birth and take care of their husbands and children. Incidences of domestic violence often occur wherein these young girls are subjected to torture, beatings, verbal abuse etc. by both their spouse and in-laws, Akpan (2013).

The writer appreciates Section 21 of the CRL which prohibits the marriage of children before the age of 18 and declares such marriages as void with the facilitators of same liable, upon conviction, to a fine of not less than N500,000.00 or five years imprisonment or both. However, this provision of the law is still disobeyed in not only our state but all over Nigeria as girls are given out in marriage especially in the rural areas, Akpan (2013). It is the case that the above circumstances of torture on children are not exhaustive and the writer challenges all persons or institutions involved in the torture or ill treatment of children to desist henceforth from doing so or face the full wrath of the law. The place of children as the future leaders of tomorrow should not be jeopardized.

**CONCLUSION**

While the discourse of human rights has increasingly been spoken by governments of African states over the past several decades, these rights rhetoric, with few exceptions, has not been translated into rights reality, Udombana (2003). In spite of the existence of these laws, Akwa Ibom children are still more than ever being maltreated, neglected, sexually exploited, and physically abused more than any other group in the country as more than 45 percent were humiliated as house helps in far away cities without basic education. These children have missed the flowers of their age and hasten to become adults by default. In view of the Akwa Ibom experience, and the likelihood of more bizarre situations in other parts of the country, there is need for urgent proactive measures against child abuse at national and state levels. But more important is the need to apprehend and sanction violators of the law.

Children who have been exposed to torture may experience numerous post-traumatic effects, including anxiety, recurring nightmares, restlessness, and irritability. They often suffer severe depression, chronic fatigue, paranoia, and other forms of mental and physical disorders. Most tragically, these children lose their ability to trust; they often become anti-social and hostile, sometimes violent, resorting to the torture of smaller children or animals, as a means of revenge for their own past suffering. The impact of torture on children is generally much greater than on adults, as children have a lower threshold for pain and less understanding of why others use torture. Suffering physical and emotional trauma at an important developmental stage in their life when their personality is being formed, child victims are likely to carry the effects for a lifetime. For an adult, such an experience may be horrific, but it is not likely to change their personality, their sense of who they are and this can transcend generations.

The international community has officially condemned torture, especially child torture, as the most dreadful violation of human rights and has listed torture as a war crime. But despite the pledge of numerous countries to eradicate torture, this barbaric practice continues behind closed doors of many government institutions; and, the perpetrators are the same individuals that are responsible for the safety and well-being of children: school personnel, police officers, care givers, and those in the military service. As future leaders, children must be protected from acts capable of eroding their confidence and self-esteem. It is noteworthy that the Akwa Ibom Child Rights Law has come into existence. No effort should be spared to ensure conformity with the law. The long-term solution is in the province of purposeful leadership and developing Nigeria and its people. The Akwa Ibom State Government must resist the temptation to dismiss the Channel 4 UK Documentary as Western propaganda or a spoiler's effort organized by NGOs seeking foreign funding.

Furthermore, there is the need for a government-private sector partnership, to launch a widespread and relentless campaign to educate and enlighten the general public, including religious groups on the provisions of the CRL. According to Governor Godswill Akpabio, the Child Rights Act was passed "to protect children and posterity." According to him it would be "futile to make the gains we have made in terms of development and progress without preparing the next generation for sustaining our legacy" Igwe (2013). The necessary resources for the support, comfort and enjoyment of all categories of children is greatly encouraged.

On the punishment of offenders, Sections 274 and 275 of the CRL clearly states that anyone involved in any form of torture, trial by ordeal or inhuman treatment of a child, purportedly to cure, purge or exorcise such a child of witchcraft will be liable to a term of imprisonment of not less than ten years or five hundred Thousand Naira fine (where fine is permissible) whether by individuals or corporate bodies. The writer emphasizes that there is the urgent need for all hands to be on deck to ensure that children are not tortured on the accusation of being witches. Prompt report of such offenders should be made to the appropriate authorities and the full implementation of the above provisions of the CRL against torture should be facilitated both by government and individuals. The establishment of full legislative machinery against the labeling of children as witches and advanced high powered investigation into every allegation against persons involved in stigmatizing of children as witches is very necessary.



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The society and Government should recognize that girls are particularly vulnerable to rape and sexual abuse and take appropriate measures to protect them. Such measures will include extensive public enlightenment on the rights of the child, ensuring that whether in private or public places, children are kept in safe environments devoid of persons or circumstances that will lead to their abuse, effective prosecution of offenders involved in the torture and abuse of these girls, amongst other measures.

It is further recommended that Government should undertake a concerted effort to fight impunity by establishing an independent and powerful a criminal investigation mechanism against perpetrators of acts which infringe on children's rights, undertake a nation-wide awareness campaign on the absolute prohibition of torture and ill treatment, introduce effective complaints mechanisms within the places where children and people are detained. The National Human Rights Commission (and other relevant institutions) should be further strengthened with the machineries to follow up torture and bad treatment incidents on children. These could be either by direct active involvement in such cases or in conjunction with governmental bodies, non governmental bodies, professionals, individuals etc. Such institutions will include the Nigerian Bar Association, The University of Uyo Law Clinic, The Legal Aid Council etc.

As it concerns the juvenile justice system, the writer recommends that effective measures aimed at preventing torture should be introduced and these include medical documentation of torture allegations, access to lawyers by expanding free legal aid, and monitoring of interrogation methods, expedite the release of pre-trial detainees, beginning especially with the most vulnerable groups, such as children, women, and ensure the separation of children from adults as well as women from men in detention facilities, establish effective mechanisms to enforce the prohibition of violence against children including traditional practices such as FGM, and continue awareness-raising campaigns to eradicate such practices, ensure that all children who come into contact with the justice system are subject to special procedures based upon the fundamental principles for juvenile justice set out in the CRL amongst other measures. The implementation of the CRL will create a conducive atmosphere for the development of the child. It will bring to an end child abuse by criminalizing and penalizing abusers. The law guarantees comprehensive government protection for Akwa Ibom State children. It strengthens the mechanisms for the defense and protection of child. The government needs the cooperation of the people and all the citizens of Akwa Ibom to succeed in fully implementing the Child Rights Act. The government needs the people's help in identifying and prosecuting offenders. The people of Akwa Ibom and indeed, the world, should rise up to the challenge of helping the government implement this important legislation. It is submitted that best interests of the child must be the guiding principle behind all procedures and justice systems affecting children. Their overriding aim must be to protect and promote children's fundamental rights and to give young offenders the greatest possible chance of reintegrating into society. There is therefore, an urgent call for the full operation of the necessary institutions without which the Child Rights Law will remain a statute confine to the books. Let all hands therefore be on deck.

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- Berezina E. (2009).** "The Hidden Practice of Systematic Violence Children and Torture" accessed on [www.yapi.org](http://www.yapi.org) accessed on 2<sup>nd</sup> July. According to Amnesty International reports, in Afghanistan the Islamic extremist Taliban regime had hundreds of children detained in the place of their fathers or older relatives, who had escaped from custody. In the famous Manisa trial in Turkey, school children were arrested for participation in an illegal political group, and detained for several days without seeing their families. While they were detained, confessions were extracted from them by use of sexual abuse and other forms of torture.
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