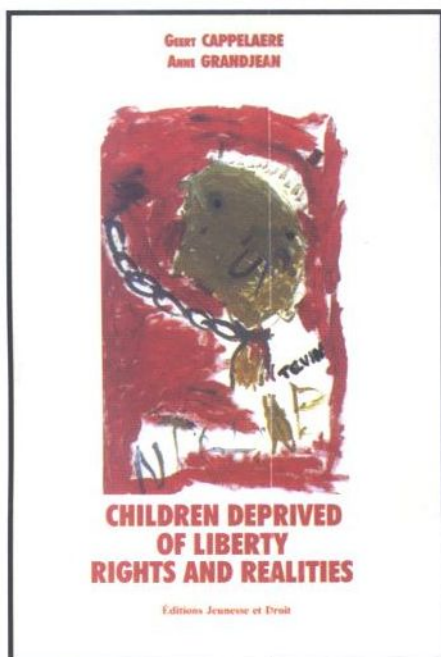


CHILDREN DEPRIVED OF LIBERTY RIGHTS AND REALITIES

In all parts of the world, excessive use is made of the deprivation of liberty of children by State authorities. There are an estimated one million children in closed establishments throughout the world. The lack of reliable statistics in many countries, coupled with research into the numerous situations in which children find themselves deprived of liberty, suggests that the number of children deprived of liberty by State authorities is probably even much higher.

Too often, children are deprived of their liberty for minor infractions or even without having broken the law. This is for example the case for street children or children



detained in the context of immigration laws. In several judicial systems, responses to children in conflict with the law other than confinement or detention do not exist or if they do, they are often not properly disseminated or are rarely put at the disposal of responsible authorities.

The almost universally ratified Convention on the Rights of the Child provides the fundamental rule that the arrest, detention or imprisonment of a child must be in conformity with the law, and only used as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time. This rule is based on the cardinal principle that the best interests of the child must be a primary concern in any action concerning children, including those taken within the system of juvenile justice.

Despite the commitment made by States by ratifying this instrument, the book shows

forcefully and in great detail that the reality of children deprived of liberty in most countries reveals a stark difference between theory and practice. Conditions of detention for most children fall far short of international standards. While the book carefully outlines the international legal framework governing the deprivation of liberty of children, the pervasive and consistent message is that the best way to guarantee children's rights is to find alternative responses to deal with children in conflict with the law which do not deprive them of their liberty.

For information about ordering the book, please visit:

<http://www.defenceforchildren.nl/ariadne/loader.php/dci/documenten/Bestellijst/>