



DEFENCE FOR CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL DCI  
DÉFENSE DES ENFANTS INTERNATIONALE DEI  
DEFENSA DE NIÑAS Y NIÑOS INTERNACIONAL DNI  
*the worldwide movement for children's rights*



## JUSTICE FOR CHILDREN AWARD

Organisation Mondiale Contre la Torture & Defence for Children International

### Concept note

#### 1. Who we are

**Defence for Children International (DCI)** is an independent grassroots and human rights-based non-governmental organization that has been promoting and protecting the human rights of children on a global, regional, national and local level for **over 35 years**. With national sections in 47 countries and an International Secretariat based in Geneva, DCI is involved in a vast array of child rights issues such as **children on the move, child labor, child trafficking, children in armed conflicts, child participation, violence against children and justice for children**. Yet, **justice for children remains the overarching priority of the global DCI movement**.

Created in 1985, the **World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT)** is today the main coalition of international non-governmental organisations fighting against **torture, summary executions, enforced disappearances and all other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment**. With around 300 affiliated organisations in its SOS-Torture Network and many tens of thousands correspondents in every country, OMCT is the most important network of non-governmental organisations working for the protection and the promotion of human rights in the world. Based in Geneva, OMCT's International Secretariat provides personalised medical, legal and/or social assistance to hundreds of torture victims and ensures the daily dissemination of urgent interventions across the world, in order to protect individuals and to fight against impunity.

#### 2. 1<sup>st</sup> edition of the Justice for Children Award

##### 2.1. Theme

##### Violence against children in justice systems

- Monitoring of children's rights from arrest to detention and release.
- Including:
  - o Physical, psychological and emotional violence, in particular Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
  - o Detention conditions (overcrowded cells, solitary confinement, separation from adults)
  - o Institutionalized violence: legal mechanisms, lack of or inappropriate access to justice, inhuman and inappropriate sentencing, lack of alternatives to judicial proceedings.

##### 2.2. Background:

Every day, in every country, girls and boys suffer and witness violence. Violence against children cuts across boundaries of culture, class, education, income and ethnic origin, and occurs in many different settings. **Children involved with justice systems are particularly vulnerable and exposed to various forms of violence**, whether direct or indirect. In most settings, the protection of their rights and dignity, and the measures that should be taken in their best interests, are simply unmet.

While the Convention on the Rights of the Child obliges States parties to use deprivation of children's liberty only as a measure of last resort, and only for the shortest appropriate period of time (Article 37(b)), **thousands of**

**children around the globe are currently detained illegally, arbitrarily, and unnecessarily.** Children and adolescents continue to spend an extraordinary amount of time in appalling conditions, with the vast majority of them having not even been convicted of a crime and having yet to be brought to trial. Pre-trial detainees are often subjected to the **worst conditions of confinement** in overcrowded, unsanitary and unsuited environments. In such environments, the occurrence of incidents with other inmates and detention personnel is particularly high. In detention, it is not rare that children are subjected to physical and mental punishment, ranging from beatings, solitary confinement or having their meals withheld. It is also well documented that in many countries police forces routinely use violence to extract information and confessions from children. Hence, whether it is in custody of the police at the time of arrest or in detention facilities, **children are exposed to direct forms of violence, including torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatments.** Such environments and practices have a clear negative impact on the human rights and development of children, especially by putting their dignity and physical and psychological integrity at risk.

### **2.3. Objective:**

The objective of the Justice for Children Award competition is to encourage academic research within Swiss Universities on the obstacles and challenges that compromise the realization of children's rights in justice systems, with a specific focus on **violence against children**. Thus, through this competition, DCI and OMCT aim to give the opportunity to students to engage in the field of children's rights and more specifically to galvanize their reflections on issues concerning juvenile justice and torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatments.

### **2.4. Target group:**

Students or former students enrolled in the higher education system in Switzerland:

- Undergraduate/Bachelor students in their last year of studies
- Graduate/Master students
- Students that have graduated no more than 12 months prior to the deadline for submission (31.12.2015)

### **2.5. Conditions:**

See rules and regulations document