

## **Let the boys decide on circumcision**

### **Joint statement from the Nordic Ombudsmen for Children and pediatric experts**

Circumcision, performed without a medical indication, on a person who is incapable of giving consent, violates fundamental medical-ethical principles, not least because the procedure is irreversible, painful and may cause serious complications. There are no health-related reasons for circumcising young boys in the Nordic countries. Circumstances that may make circumcision advantageous for adult men are of little relevance to young boys in the Nordic countries, and on these matters the boys will have the opportunity to decide for themselves when they reach the age and maturity required to give consent.

As Ombudsmen for Children and pediatric experts we are of the opinion that circumcision without medical indication is in conflict with Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which addresses the child's right to express his/her own views in all matters concerning him/her, and Article 24, point 3, which states that children must be protected against traditional practices that may be prejudicial to their health.

In 2013, The UN Human Rights Council also encouraged all countries to ban harmful practices that compromise the integrity and dignity of the child and are prejudicial to the health of boys and girls.

We see it as fundamental that parents' rights in this context do not prevail over children's right to bodily integrity. The best interests of the child must always be a primary consideration, even if this can reduce the rights of adults to perform religious or traditional practices.

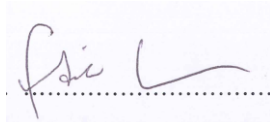
The Nordic Ombudsmen for Children in conjunction with pediatric experts therefore wish to work towards a situation where circumcision without medical indication may only be carried out if a boy, who has reached the age and maturity required in order to understand the necessary medical information, chooses to consent to the procedure.

We would like to see a respectful dialogue between all involved parties on how to best ensure that boys will be able to exert their influence on the issue of circumcision. We also encourage our national governments to inform about the rights of the child and the health-related consequences of the procedure. We request our governments to take necessary measures to ensure that boys are given the opportunity to decide for themselves whether or not they want to be circumcised.

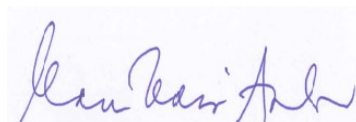
Oslo, September 30<sup>th</sup> 2013



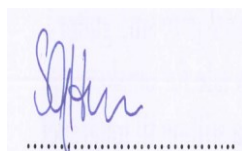
Anne Lindboe  
Ombudsman for Children  
Norway



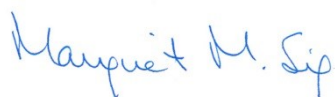
Fredrik Malmberg  
Ombudsman for Children  
Sweden



Maria Kaisa Aula  
Ombudsman for Children  
Finland



For Per Larsen  
Chairman  
National Council for Children  
Denmark

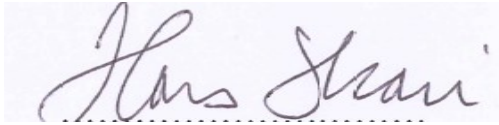


Margrét María Sigurðardóttir  
Ombudsman for Children  
Iceland



Aaja Chemnitz Larsen  
Children's Spokesperson  
Greenland





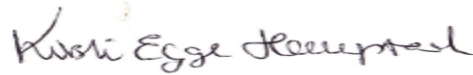
Hans Skari  
Leader  
Norwegian Pediatric  
Surgical Association



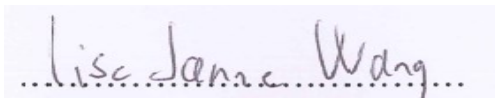
Trond Markestad  
professor, Leader  
Medical Ethical Council of Norway



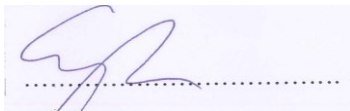
Jan Petter Odden  
Leader  
Norwegian Pediatric Association



Kirsti Egge Haugstad  
Norwegian Association of Pediatric Nurses  
Nurses NNO



Lise Janne Wang  
Professional Interest Group of Public Health Nurses NNO  
Norway



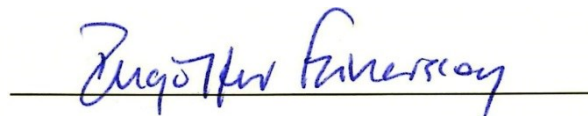
Olle Söder  
Professor pediatrics, Karolinska Hospital  
Leader of Swedish Pediatric Society



Gunnar Gøthberg  
docent,  
Swedish Association of Pediatric  
Surgeons

....sign.....


Ingrid Svensson  
Chapter of Community Health Nurses



Ingólfur Einarsson  
President of the Icelandic Pediatric Society  
Iceland



Þráinn Rósmundsson  
Chief Doctor  
Division for Children's Surgery  
Landspítalinn University Hospital  
Iceland



Ragnar Bjarnason  
Professor, Chief Doctor  
Pediatrics Division  
Landspítalinn University Hospital  
Iceland