



## **Press Statement**

**26 June 2025**

### **Advocacy Forum-Nepal (AF) Releases an Infographic on Analysis of Law, Practice, and Challenges in Implementing the Juvenile Justice System in Nepal**

Marking the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture (26 June) Advocacy Forum-Nepal (AF) is releasing an infographic titled “Analysis of Law, Practice, and Challenges in Implementing Juvenile Justice System in Nepal” on Thursday, 26 June 2025.

The infographics shed light on persistent and widespread violations within Nepal’s juvenile justice system, particularly focusing on the treatment of children held in Child Reform Homes (CRHs) across the country. AF highlights that children continue to face torture, ill-treatment, overcrowding, and systemic neglect in CRHs. Despite Nepal’s progressive legal framework governing its juvenile justice system and clear international obligations, key data from all nine CRHs in the country, as presented in the infographics, serve as a visual tool to support urgent calls for systemic reform of Nepal’s juvenile justice system.

The infographics are based on evidence gathered from interviews with 1,370 juveniles and field assessments of all nine CRHs. It documents serious issues such as overcrowded living conditions, limited access to education, inadequate health care, and alarming levels of physical and psychological abuse. Notably, 24% of children reported being subjected to torture or ill-treatment during arrest or while in detention facilities. 91% of juveniles stated they were not given a reason for their arrest, with over 30% were not presented before a Court within the 24-hour legal timeframe.

AF also expresses concern that diversion measures, as mandated by law, are rarely implemented in practice. The lack of social reports and the absence of guardians during legal proceedings further undermine the rights of juveniles in conflict with the law. Despite progressive policies of key frameworks towards juvenile justice, such as provisions under the Act Relating to Children (2018) and international instruments such as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), these safeguards remain largely unenforced.

The infographic also draws attention to underlying structural inequalities within the juvenile justice system. It notes that female juveniles are not provided with adequate vocational training, and their reproductive health needs are largely ignored. This can be further seen through the fact that there is only one CRH that has the facilities to hold female juveniles (Bhaktapur CRH),

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highlighting a severe lack of gender-responsive infrastructure and support services within the juvenile justice system.

Of the total juveniles surveyed, 36% belong to indigenous communities, underscoring the disproportionate representation of marginalized groups within the juvenile justice system and raising concerns about systemic bias and unequal access to justice. The data found in the infographic further reveals that of the juveniles currently in detention, 22% were over the age of 20, housed in the same homes as those as young as 12. This raises serious concerns regarding the adequacy of legal safeguards and the need for child-sensitive procedures throughout the justice process.

Within the nine CRHs, overcrowding has become a common issue for juveniles, with some CRHs housing way too many juveniles per room because of underfunding and lack of space. This can be seen in the case of CRH Banke, accommodating an average of 53 juveniles per room. The infographic shows overcrowding and its impact on living conditions, safety, and the overall effectiveness of rehabilitation efforts. While Nepal has taken steps such as establishing a specialized juvenile court in Bhaktapur and implementing new procedural guidelines, the infographic finds these reforms have yet to translate into tangible improvements for children on the ground. AF calls on the Government of Nepal to take immediate and concrete steps to reform the juvenile justice system so that it operates in the best interests of the child and aligns with both domestic and international obligations.

***Key recommendations in the Infographic include:***

**Recommendations to the Police**

- Provide comprehensive training for law enforcement personnel on juvenile justice laws and child protection standards.
- Ensure that the investigation process involving children prioritizes their best interests at all stages.
- Adopt child-sensitive practices from the first point of contact to ensure dignity, confidentiality, and procedural fairness.

**Recommendations to the Prosecution (Government Attorneys)**

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- Strengthen the role of government attorneys in advocating for child-friendly prosecution practices and supporting juvenile courts.
- Prioritize rehabilitative and restorative justice approaches in cases involving children in conflict with the law.
- Facilitate regular training programs to enhance prosecutors' understanding of national and international juvenile justice standards.
- Enforce laws and procedures related to the juvenile justice system during investigation, prosecution, and adjudication

## **Recommendations to the Judiciary**

- Ensure the consistent and effective application of juvenile justice laws and child protection provisions during judicial proceedings.
- Establish juvenile benches and courts with trained judicial officers for handling juvenile cases.
- Encourage jurisprudence that reflects a child-sensitive, rehabilitative, and rights-based approach, in line with international obligations.
- Implement diversion programs to shift juveniles from court processes to rehabilitation.
- Use mediation and restorative justice for minor offenses.

## **Recommendations to the Government / Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens and CRHs**

- Increase training for all CRH staff, including judges, lawyers, social workers, and counsellors.
- Conduct regular sharing workshops on best practices in the juvenile justice system
- Establish in-house schools in CRHs with adequate teaching staff and a number of students to create a good working environment.
- Create separate facilities for juveniles turning 18 while in CRHs.
- Provide age-appropriate rehabilitation distinct from adult systems.
- Ensure gender-sensitive facilities and services for female juveniles, including access to female staff, healthcare, and privacy protections.
- Improve the physical facilities, nutritious food, education, health and mental care and skill development, and reintegration system



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**Recommendations to Civil Society Organizations**

- Support the Ministry and CRHs in improving health, education, and rehabilitation services.
- Provide legal aid and case updates through an online case tracking system.
- Conduct awareness sessions with police, courts, and stakeholders.
- Promote a coordinated, rights-based approach to juvenile justice.
- Monitor CRH conditions and provide evidence-based assessments to inform policy changes and reforms.

Finally, AF urges all concerned actors, government agencies, parliamentarians, the judiciary, and civil society to commit to juvenile justice reform, not just in law, but in practice, and ensure that children are no longer subjected to practices that violate their dignity and rights.

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