

B. I.

POS SMV

[home](#) > [resources](#)

ASSOCIATION OF GENITAL INTEGRITY

Central Union for Child Welfare

Helsinki, Finland

Current Issues

Male Circumcision

30 September 2003

Submission to the Task Force convened by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health to inquire into the regulation of male circumcision.

The Central Union for Child Welfare in Finland opposes the circumcision of boys except when necessary to treat a disease. Circumcision violates a boy's sexual integrity and alters his body, having physical and behavioural effects. Female circumcision is rightly viewed as inhumane sexual mutilation and is punished as an assault. Boys are guaranteed the same legal protection.

The Central Union for Child Welfare considers that the bodily integrity of minors should not be violated by circumcision except when medically necessary to treat a disease. The actions of society should be based on unconditional respect for the physical integrity of minors.

That is why the Central Union for Child Welfare considers that no one has the right to consent to this invasive operation on a child's behalf, except in relation to treatment of a disease. The Central Union for Child Welfare believes children have a right to special protection. The Child Custody and Right of Access Act prohibits the subjection of children to exploitation and humiliating treatment.

The Constitution guarantees physical integrity. The Constitution's preparatory work explicitly establishes that religious freedom does not extend to violating the integrity of another person. Thus a child should be treated as an individual who is completely protected from birth until the age of majority. Deliberately causing pain and injury is defined in the Penal Code as maltreatment and is subject to prosecution. The Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by Finland, demands that states parties undertake to abolish traditions harmful to children.

The Council of Europe Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine, to which Finland is a signatory and which Finland is preparing to ratify, prohibits giving consent to an intervention on behalf of an incapable person, unless it is for the direct benefit of that person.

The position of the Central Union for Child Welfare is that boyhood circumcision should not be permitted. The Union hopes that the task force of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health will discuss methods

to bring about cultural changes that protect children's physical integrity and lead to an end to circumcision.

Circumcision should be permitted only on individuals who are of age, regardless of whether they are male or female, and only after determining they have consented freely, without coercion.

Heikki Sariola

Original document in Finnish: [Poikien ympärileikkaus](#)
Translated by Dennis Harrison

[^Top](#)