

The victimising term Child Pornography should be replaced in domestic laws

The Organisations of Hotlines working against Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation in the Nordic Region are calling for the governments and professionals to act on terminology that respects and protects child victims of sexual abuse and exploitation.

Current terminology in penal codes in many states do not represent the rights of the child victim of sexual abuse and exploitation. Thus, there's an urgent need to review this terminology in order to have a common and broad understanding of the evolving, complex and dynamic nature of sexual abuse and exploitation of children. This will also send a clear message to perpetrators and victims of abuse that the law is indeed reviewed and changed accordingly.

The term 'child pornography' requires utmost attention because it is offensive and misleading. The term refers to an image or a video depicting the sexual abuse and/or exploitation of a child. Using the same language as for legal adult pornography diminishes the seriousness of the abuse. This removes responsibility from the perpetrator and implies consent from the child. The term 'child pornography' normalises and trivialises sexual violence against children.

In fact, the so-called 'child pornography' is evidence of the sexual abuse of a child, which is circulated online over and over again. The child is victimised every time the images or videos are disseminated or viewed. The victim him/herself is powerless to act and stop the circulation of the images. This increases and prolongs the trauma they experience.

The Terminology Guidelines, known as the *Luxembourg Guidelines, for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse*, offer states guidance on how to navigate the complex lexicon of terms referring to the sexual abuse and exploitation of children.

Changes in terminology will advance state commitment to end sexual abuse and exploitation, and will mark significant change towards implementing all key human rights instruments more fully, as well as Sustainable Development Goal 16.2 to: "end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children" in accordance with Agenda2030.

We as Non-Governmental Organisations, having years of experience studying and addressing all forms of sexual abuse and exploitation of children, urge the governments of Finland, Norway and Sweden to commit to:

- replacing the term 'child pornography' with the term Child Sexual Abuse Material in domestic legislation, policies, programmes and guidelines for professionals.

- providing tools for professionals working in e.g. the justice system, social and health care, education and media to use correct language and terminology.
- using the Luxembourg Guidelines to review and amend the domestic penal codes.
- engaging in broad international, national and cross-sectoral cooperation to change and to apply the correct terminology.



Save the Children Finland



ECPAT Norway



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