



25 October 2025

Our reference: 2025/MoJ/03/PCAB/01

Hon Harashana Nanayakka  
Minister of Justice and National Integration  
No 19, Sri Sangaraja Mw  
Colombo 10

Hon Minister,

**Re. PENAL CODE AMENDMENT BILL – CHAPTER 19, GAZZETTE NO: L.D.O 041/2024**  
**Part 11 of July 04, 2025**

We wish to congratulate the Government of Sri Lanka for the bold action in introducing the above Bill for the 2<sup>nd</sup> reading in parliament on 24 September 2025 to protect and promote the rights of seven million young citizens without a vote or a voice.

The Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka (HRCSL) has also endorsed the Bill in its press statement No /i/E15/10/25 issued on 15 October 2025. The HRCSL recalls that at the centre of this issue is the principle of the best interest of the child.

On 20 August 2025 World Health Organization declared corporal punishment as a global public health concern as a new report found that across 49 low-and middle income countries, children exposed to corporal punishment defined as "any punishment in which physical force is used and intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, however light" were 24% less likely to be developmentally on track than children who were not.

However, we are deeply concerned of the objections raised by some members of the opposition in parliament and few public profiles, compelling the government to postpone the vote on the Bill. We are particularly appalled by the statement made by HE President at the National Teachers' Conference on 17 October 2025 suggesting the possible reversal of the Bill citing "public opposition". The opinions of the children whose voices were amplified in a survey conducted by UNICE were dismissed.

As you may appreciate, this Bill was drafted after decades of consultations with relevant stakeholders and finalized by a special committee appointed by National Child Protection Authority (NCPA) in 2022/2023. There were many rounds of discussions with Parliamentary Committees and UNICEF before the Cabinet approved the Bill for gazette publication in September 2024. It is extremely disappointing that the current government has failed to consult the NCPA Committee or Civil Society Organizations (CSO) that were active stakeholders of the process to help resolve the issues the government is experiencing in passing the Bill.



We wish to submit the following proposals to help salvage the Bill forthright:

- Call an emergency meeting of the NCPA Law Reform Committee and relevant CSO's to discuss and obtain expert advice.
- Consider the 'Proposed Edits to the Penal Code Amendment Bill' – Annexure A
- Consider the 'Summary Report of Countries that Banned Corporal Punishment' – Annexure B
- Follow the 'Proposed Strategic National Plan to Implement Law Reforms to Abolish Corporal Punishment in Sri Lanka', submitted to Hon Prime Minister on 15 April 2025 – Annexure C

We urge the government to seriously consider the above and accommodate a wider dialogue with the experts and stakeholders without further delay. Child Protection Alliance assures you of our commitment and support to ensure a new dawn free of violence for the true beneficiaries of the future, our children.

Yours faithfully,

Dr Tush Wickramanayaka  
Co-convener

Nayanthara Jayathilake  
Co-convener

### **Member organizations of Child Protection Alliance –**

- Alliance of Social Activist
- Avanka Lanka Foundation
- iProbono
- Kinder Republic
- LEADS
- Meraki Sri Lanka
- CERI Sri Lanka
- Parivarthan
- Promoters for Equal Participation in Leadership
- Right to Life Human Rights Centre
- Sri Lanka Unites
- Stop Child Cruelty Trust
- Youth for Tomorrow

### **Copy to:**

- HE President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka - FYIA
- Secretary to HE President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka - FYIA
- Hon Minister of Women and Child Affairs - FYIA
- Hon Minister of Education, Higher Education and Vocational Education - FYIA
- Hon Minister of Health and Mass Media - FYIA
- Chairperson, Parliamentary Sectoral Oversight Committee on Governance, Justice, and Civil Protection - FYIA
- Hon Leader of Opposition, Parliament of Sri Lanka - FYIA
- Chairperson, Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka - FYIA
- Chairperson, National Child Protection Authority - FYIA
- Emma Brigham, Country Representative, UNICEF Sri Lanka – FYI