

International plea to protect battered
children & mothers in Denmark.

Abused mothers lose custody of their
children by a devastating rate.

April 2019

This is an appeal for international help and intervention of the child system in Denmark. We make this appeal on behalf of thousands of protective parents and their children whom have been terrorised for years by the inhumane practice of Danish authorities in child cases. Human Rights and the Child Convention is violated on a daily basis by the Danish authorities and the best interest of the child is ignored with prolonged and grave consequences for the children of Denmark.

In Denmark children and mothers are not protected against domestic violence and abuse. It is common practice not to believe a mother when she speaks up about the abuse and violence, she and her children have endured. Although the Directive¹ to the Parental Responsibility Act from 2007 clearly states, that the authorities must protect children and their mothers from abuse, battered mothers are dismissed and blamed for lying, being mentally diseased and manipulative if they tell about the violence they experience from the father of their child.

For years the Ministry of Children and Social Affairs has ignored numerous studies and international criticism of the practice in child cases in Denmark.

In 2011 the Danish National Social Board published the results of a 4-year study on children and mothers in families with violence and abuse². The study reveals that the National State Administration, which is the administration deciding on visitation rights and temporary custody, does not work for the best interest of the child and that the National State Administration allow the continuation of abuse, battering and incest of the children. Despite this knowledge the practice continued.

In 2013 the department of trauma psychology at University of Southern Denmark³ published a study demonstrating that the National State Administration does not work according to the best interest of the children. It further showed that a high percentage of battered mothers develop Post Traumatic Stress Disorder because the National State Administration does not protect their children from further abuse. Nonetheless the practice continued.

¹ Betænkning afgivet af Retsudvalget den 26. april 2007. URL: <https://www.retsinformation.dk/eli/ft/200614L00536>

² Socialstyrelsen (2011) *Børn og Kvinder i Familier med Vold*. Servicestyrelsen: Børn og Unge, sagsnr. 11/024742

³ Schandorph, S. & Elklit, A. (2013) *Med Barnet som Gidsel – Stalking af Mødre*. Videnscenter for Traumatologi: Syddansk Universitet (SDU)

Again in 2013 the European Council visited Denmark to evaluate the highly critical practice in Denmark where protective parents lose their children to the abuser⁴. The Council concluded the practice of the Danish authorities violated the best interest of the child and the Council wrote a highly critical report. Still the practice continued.

In 2014 a UN survey concluded that Danish women were the most battered in Europe⁵. Still the practice continued.

In 2015 The Un women council CEDAW criticised Denmark for violating mother's rights to their children and asked that the kidnapped boy Oliver returned to his mother in Austria⁶. Nothing happened.

In 2017 the UN 5th annual report on Denmark⁷ criticised Denmark because the Child Protective Services violates Human Rights and ignore and violate national law in cases of forcibly removing children from their parents. A random examination of the Child Protective Service in Copenhagen revealed violation of the national law in 100% of the cases. Nevertheless, the practice continued.

Later in 2017 GREVIO which is the UN board overseeing that member states protects women and children heavily criticise Denmark in several areas⁸. Especially the National State Administration received substantial critique due to the obvious mishandling of cases where there have been

⁴ Werthmann, A. Jahr, P. & Angulo, Cl., Europa Parliament (2013) *The European Parliament Committee: Fact finding report*.

⁵ European Union, Agency for Fundamental Rights (2014) *Violence against women: An EU-wide survey*. Vienna: FRA

⁶ The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), (2016). Communication No. 46/2012 M.W. v. Denmark. *Follow-up observations of the Government of Denmark*, Copenhagen.

⁷ United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child examines the situation of children in Denmark - Concluding consideration of the fifth periodic report of Denmark on its implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. (2017).

⁸ GREVIO (2017) *Violence against women and domestic violence*, Denmark. Strasbourg: Council of Europe. URL: www.coe.int/Conventionviolence

abuse of mother and child. The Minister of Children and Social affairs publicly dismissed the report and the practice was allowed to continue.

In 2018 the largest child help-organisation in Denmark published a report on neglect of children in Denmark⁹. The report accentuates the illegal practice by the authorities and the violations of article 12 in the Convention on The Right of the Child. Children report that they are not provided with the opportunity to be heard in judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child and if they are heard their views bear no weight.

Adding to this a large number of independent Human Rights Organisations criticise Denmark for violating children's Human Rights in cases where there have been abuse and violence against children and their mothers.

In 2007 Denmark implemented a Parental Responsibility Act which defined that equal right to both its biological parents is in best interest of the child. The juridical committee included in its directive to the Act that the National State Administration was obliged to protect abused children and mothers but the National State Administration developed the opposite practice and focused entirely on the part of the Act concerning the child's right to both parents.

To mainstream this practice psychologists and caseworkers developed a method endorsing the child's right to both parents. The method entails the consensus that the worst a child can experience is to be put in loyalty conflict between its biological parents.

Hence the definition of good parenting became skills of collaboration and not skills of caring and protecting. Since 2007 the focus in child cases has therefore been on the parents and not on the thriving of the children.

When skills of collaboration are those most necessary in order to show good parenting skills the problem of evaluating abuse and violence dissolved. When mothers tell about abuse and violence it is habitually ignored by the National State Administration and Child Protective Services. Psychologists, the police and social workers consider allegations of abuse and violence to be false even despite children and mother's sought protection in women shelters and despite numerous hospital and GP statements suggesting that the child and mother have been abused. This is serious neglect from the State because the latest statistical numbers show that every 11th child in Denmark experience severe domestic violence and abuse.

⁹ Børns Vilkår (2018) *Svigt af Børn i Danmark*. Trygfonden

Because a mother doesn't show good skills of collaboration when she refuses to hand over her child to violence or sexual abuse she is then accused of creating a loyalty crisis within the child and not being able to protect the child from herself. This even despite the child tells case workers, psychologists and social workers about the abuse. Most cases reflect that the more insisting the child and mother becomes in protecting themselves the less they are believed and the more sympathy is developed for the abusive and violent father. Mothers are continuously pressured to collaborate and yearly thousands of mothers are forced by case workers to collaborate with a man who has beaten her, abused her and her children otherwise the authorities will remove her children.

When a mother psychologically and emotionally reacts to the terror she is exposed to she is then accused of being mentally diseased which in turn then is the leading cause of why she finally loses her children to an abusive father. In Denmark, social workers in Child Protective Services enjoy the liberty to personally conclude what is right and wrong and up and down child cases. The social worker has the liberty to dismiss opinions and evaluations from external specialists, follow her own dislikes and likes and ignore the national law. The latter because Danish authorities never question other Danish authorities and therefore complaints of malpractice and abuse of power is never believed by The National Complaint Board or any courts. Hence accusations of a mother being mentally diseased can be put forward as a truth without anybody asking for any documentation.

The general practice of the Parental Responsibility Act has conveniently stopped mothers from filing police reports when their children speak about abuse or when she herself experiences abuse and violence. If she files reports and seek help from professionals in cases of sexual abuse (which by the way is almost impossible to get convicted for in Denmark) she is considered by case workers and psychologist working in the child system as being a trouble maker and making up stories of abuse and violence. When a mother expresses concern handing over her child to a father who has beaten her in front of the child, or because her child tells her about sexual abuse and even shows symptoms hereof it is immediately turned upside down and the father becomes the victim of a mentally diseased mother and the mother is accused of not showing adequate parenting skills. Because the mother tells the truth she is not collaborating and she is then held responsible for creating a crisis of loyalty conflict within the child. Or told in other words: When social workers, police and a certain segment of psychologists evaluate what is best for the child they consider violence, abuse and paedophilia less damaging for a child than a crisis of loyalty. This is because the Parental Responsibility Act dictates that the child has the right to 2 parents and the practice has excluded all other considerations and the focus of the child's best interest.

Parents who refuse to collaborate with the Danish authorities about damaging their child by handing them over to abusive parents are stigmatised and often the protective parent will be forced by the social worker to participate in programs where she or he will learn to abide and collaborate with their abuser and the social worker.

An appointed psychologist will get between 7000 to 20.000 US dollars to carry out a superficial evaluation of the parents and children. Psychologist within the child system do not have specialised training in abuse patterns and will just apply whatever knowledge they own to their evaluation method. The psychologist will evaluate which parent collaborates the best and recommend the child live with that parent. Without any consideration to bonding, siblings of the child and abuse a psychologist can recommend the child go live with an abusive and violent parent only because the protective parent is in opposition to further damaging the child and therefore considered in opposition to the authorities, which is regarded as lack of parenting skills. This is abuse of power.

Motherhood in Denmark is devaluated and it is worth noting that when the child lives with the mother the authorities are very keen to insist on the child's right to two parents. After the child has been removed from the mother suddenly the child doesn't have any rights to two parents and the mother is cut off from the child, leaving the child with no other option than comply. Children in Denmark quickly learn that their words have no value. Danish fathers who gain sole custody of the children has in average raised with 9% during the past five years. In some areas of Denmark, the number is as high as 45%¹⁰. A large percentage of the mothers losing custody are battered mothers who have been subjected to psychological and physical abuse and violence and whose children have been violated.

From April 2019, a new Parental Responsibility Act and a Family Court House¹¹ has substituted the National State Administration. However, the staff and the practice will follow into the new system. The new Act states that the Family Court House renounce any obligations to follow international conventions. The new Act does not command staff in the Child Protective Services to abide the law but instead give the social workers even more power. The decisions made in the Family Court House already show that the practice remain the same.

¹⁰ Karoline Kert (2019) Far tager ansvar: Markant flere enlige fædre. URL: <https://www.dr.dk/nyheder/regionale/hovedstadsomraadet/far-tager-ansvar-markant-flere-enlige-faedre>

¹¹ Lov om Familieretshuset. URL: <https://www.retsinformation.dk/Forms/R0710.aspx?id=206287>

Danish authorities protect each other and no one will question a social workers decision despite the social worker is not in any way educated to handle cases where there is violence and abuse. In Denmark case workers who forcefully and without consent remove children from their parents don't need more than one year education and that education does not entail any knowledge about child psychology, abuse or domestic violence.

Although the new Parental Responsibility Act is an attempt to change the perspective for the thousands of children experiencing abuse thousands upon thousands of children still suffer or have died due to the practice we have just explained.

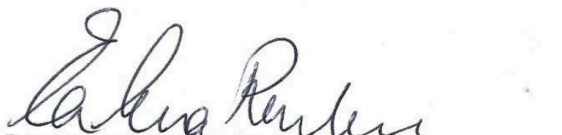
It is paramount that cases which have been handled with the perspective that abuse, violence, paedophilia is less damaging than a loyalty crisis are being re-opened and re-evaluated with focus on what is really in the best interest of the child as defined by the child and human rights conventions.

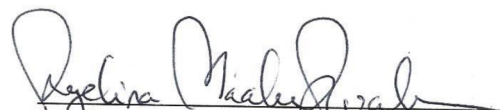
Denmark has to stop criminalising and persecute mothers who speaks up about violence and abuse. Denmark has to stop imprisoning and punish mothers who protect their children from domestic violence and abuse.

The Danish Child system is a disaster and it is adamant that international powers interfere helping Danish children and their protective parents.

We need and ask for International interventions to cease the abuse of power and we need and ask for international interventions to cease the tragedy the mis-handling of child cases, persisting for more than two decades, has created.

Yours Sincerely


Ealeorah Ravleen, Chair Woman


Angelina Maalue Avalon, acting deputy chair