Submission concerning the human rights situation in Norway on
“The Sexual Exploitation of Children”
submitted by
ECPAT Norway
To the Human Rights Council
October 2018
for the 33rd session (Apr-May 2019)
of the
Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review (Third Cycle)
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ECPAT International is the leading global network of civil society organisations working for the eradication of sexual exploitation of children. For the past 28 years, ECPAT has monitored States’ prevention and response to sexual exploitation of children and advocated for robust international measures to protect children from sexual exploitation. ECPAT Norway was established in 2015, the year of the 25th anniversary of the establishment of ECPAT International. Together with our 104 sister organisations in 93 countries worldwide, ECPAT Norway is working to end all forms of sexual exploitation of children.

**Acronyms**

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<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tr>
<td>CSAM</td>
<td>Child Sexual Abuse Material</td>
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<td>ECPAT</td>
<td>End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual purposes</td>
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<td>FGM</td>
<td>Female Genital Mutilation</td>
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<td>ICSE</td>
<td>International Child Sexual Exploitation database</td>
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<td>KRIPOS</td>
<td>National Criminal Police Unit for Combating Organized and other serious Crime</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organization</td>
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<td>OCSE</td>
<td>Online Child Sexual Exploitation</td>
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<td>OPSC</td>
<td>Optional Protocol to the CRC on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography</td>
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<td>SEC</td>
<td>Sexual Exploitation of Children</td>
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Justification for the submission

1. The present submission is an update to review the progress that has been made by the Government of Norway (GoN) to end sexual exploitation of children (SEC) and to follow up on the implementation of the recommendations made during the twenty-seventh session of the Universal Periodic Review (7 July 2014) related to the sexual exploitation of children (SEC). This report will identify emerging challenges that need to be further addressed and prioritized.

Methodology and Scope

2. The content of this report is based on ECPAT Norway’s recent study on the Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel and Tourism (SECTT), and a desk review conducted to establish an overview of the knowledge basis concerning sexual exploitation of children, and its different manifestations in Norway, including available research, government reports and data, as well as reliable news sources.

3. The scope of this submission is limited to child sexual exploitation and its different manifestations.

The last UPR recommendations made to the Government of Norway on SEC

4. During the twenty-seventh session of the UPR in 2014, recommendations included: to ratify the European Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (Lanzarote Convention); to implement policies and programmes for the prevention, rehabilitation and social integration of victims of sexual exploitation and abuse, particularly minors; as well as recommendations related to sexual abuse and trafficking of children.

Current status and developments of sexual exploitation of children in Norway

5. Norway is ranked the highest in human development in the global ranking. The risk of children becoming victims of sexual exploitation is considered low, however it is considerably increasing with the reach and use of the internet and mobile technologies. Norway is one of the most connected countries in the world, this includes children. 91% of children aged 9-16 years of age have access to a smartphone. There are particularly vulnerable groups in Norway that run a greater risk of becoming victimised both online and offline. Such groups include children on the move, in particular unaccompanied and separated children, LGBTQ children and children belonging to minorities and indigenous groups.

6. Data collection: There are various State institutions gathering information pertaining to violence against children (VAC) in various settings. However there is currently no systematic and coordinated effort to collect data on SEC related crimes and there is thus a lack of reliable data.

7. Sexual abuse of children in Norway and abroad: Approximately 20 per cent of women and 8 per cent of men report having been victims of sexual abuse during their childhood. In the past few years the number of reports of sexual abuse against children have increased.
drastically, in particular in cases of rape against victims younger than 14 years of age, indicating an increased propensity to report abuse. In 12 per cent of convicted cases the offense had been documented by filming or taking pictures. 69 per cent of the perpetrators convicted of rape against a child are multiple offenders.  

8. In 2018 the GoN anticipates over 3000 reports concerning the perpetration of sexual abuse of children abroad by Norwegians, however this does not reflect the actual number of incidents, which is believed to be much higher. This is an increase from 900 reports in 2016.

9. **Sexual exploitation of children**: there is a lack of concerted data on different forms of sexual exploitation of children in Norway.  

10. **Online child sexual exploitation**: There are daily media reports concerning cases related to OSCE throughout the country. The Norwegian jurisprudence indicates that perpetrators of SEC related offences online can exploit a large number of victims, both within Norway and abroad simultaneously. The number of incidents of sexual extortion online as well as grooming is also increasing. The extortion can occur for various reasons, to receive further sexualised pictures, to perform sexual acts or for financial remuneration. The financial exchanges that result from sexual extortion is believed to be of significant proportions.  

11. **Rape over the internet**: The police indicates that the increase in cases of rape of children younger than 14, reflects an actual increase in the number of incidents of abuse in the online context.

12. **Child sexual abuse material (CSAM)**: The number of reported cases of people sharing and downloading CSAM images in Norway has doubled since 2013. Based on Interpol’s database with known pictures of abuse they were able to verify that approximately 15’000 people in Norway attempted to download or access CSAM on a daily basis. Norwegian jurisprudence indicates that investigation of the possession and/or distribution of child sexual abuse materials often leads to the uncovering of offline sexual abuse and exploitation. Private sector engagement is crucial to prevent and report CSAM related activity as consumers of CSAM search for this material at all hours of the day, including at work.

13. **Trafficking of children for sexual purposes**: Many agencies have reported concern for the hidden statistics of child victims of trafficking in Norway, especially in regards to the great increase in asylum seekers in 2015, including unaccompanied minors. Overall, regulations and measures are organized in an unpredictable manner, where no agency is responsible for coordinating the identification and follow-up suspected child victims of trafficking. There is also need for more knowledge on new forms of trafficking of children related to the internet as a new arena of abuse.

14. **SECTT**: Very few cases of SECTT have been prosecuted and lead to convictions within Norway so far. However, due to increased police efforts and changes in the Penal Code 2005 (entered into force October 1st 2015), hundreds of cases related to CSAM, OSCE and SECTT are currently under prosecution (see para 33).
15. The police, as well as reliable media sources, suggest that a considerable number of previously convicted child sex offenders travel abroad where they potentially can continue to exploit and abuse children in other countries. In some countries, offenders have been known to join volunteer programmes abroad in order to access children in such places as orphanages and schools. These volunteer programmes oftentimes lack proper vetting systems and child protection policies.

16. **Child marriage:** There is no synthesized data on the extent of the issue of child marriage in Norway. However, since 2015 an increased number of cases of child marriage has been noted due to an increased number of asylum seekers arriving in Norway with child spouses.

**Recommendations:**

1. Adopt a comprehensive national plan of action to address SEC in all its forms, as recognized by the OPSC, taking into consideration the interrelated and evolving nature of the different forms of sexual abuse of children and SEC. Provide the adequate human, technical and financial resources for its implementation. Such a plan should include further research on all forms of SEC.

2. Adopt a comprehensive prevention, treatment and follow-up policy and programme targeting persons who have a sexual interest in children who have yet to commit an offence, as well as those who are perpetrators of child sexual abuse and/or exploitation. The policy should take into consideration the high recidivism rates among these offenders.

3. Implement measures to prevent SEC within the travel and tourism industry, among expatriate Norwegian staff as well as within organized volunteer programmes and explicitly prohibit the sale of voluntourism trips to orphanages.

4. Collect reliable and disaggregated data concerning incidents of child marriage in Norway, including children who, upon their arrival in Norway, are already married.

5. Support civil society organizations and NGOs working with SEC through predictable funding.

**Legislative framework**

17. In the last Universal Periodic Review the main recommendation made pertaining to area of SEC, was to ratify the Lanzarote Convention. The GoN ratified the **Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse** (the Lanzarote Convention) on June 13th 2018, and enters into force on October 1st 2018.

18. The GoN, as one of 10 states, has ratified the **Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence** (the Istanbul Convention) on July 5th 2017, and the convention thereafter entered into force November 1st 2017.

19. Since the last UPR review, significant changes have been made to strengthen the law to protect children against sexual abuse and exploitation through the entry into force of the new Penal Code 2005 (entered into force October 1st 2015).
20. **CSAM**: The new Penal Code 2005 includes a broad prohibition against the production, possession, consumption, and dissemination of CSAM in all its forms, including all children under the age of 18 years. It also includes inciting or tricking a person under the age of 18 to produce CSAM with commercial intent (photos and video).

21. **Exploitation of children in prostitution**: Article 309 of the new Criminal Code prohibits the purchasing of sexual services from persons under the age of 18, this includes inciting the child to perform sexual acts on his or herself. The maximum term of imprisonment is two years, which is very low. We urge prosecutors and judges to interpret the law further, so that inciting a child under the age of 16 and 14 to perform sexual acts on themselves, should be considered rape. Article 315 which prohibits ‘pimping’ or the controlling and facilitating of prostitution, does not mention children.


23. **Trafficking of children**: The new Penal Code defines human trafficking under articles 257 and 258. The trafficking of a minor is considered an aggravating factor, regardless if the act involved violence, threat or taking advantage of a vulnerable situation. The Norwegian legislation does not include slavery as part of the trafficking definition, although slavery is included in a separate provision.

24. **Protection against SECTT**: Norwegian legislation lacks an explicit prohibition against SECTT. Nonetheless, Norwegian travelers have been prosecuted for SECTT related offences. However, legal provisions do not extent to SECTT-related responsibilities of tour-operators that organize or facilitate SECTT or a duty of travel and tourism companies to prevent that their own infrastructure and services are misused to commit these crimes. Nor does it provide tour operators that offer voluntourism trips, including to orphanages, the obligation to require police checks from traveling volunteers.

25. Changes in the **marriage law**: 15 June 2018 a change entered into force to ensure an absolute minimum age of 18 years for marriage. However, there is a gap in the legislation concerning children that are brought into Norway who have already been married abroad.

26. In accordance with current legislation **ISPs** are only allowed to store IP addresses for 21 days after which they must be deleted, often they are stored for even shorter periods or not at all, making police investigations very difficult in cases related to child sexual abuse and exploitation online.
Recommendations:

1. Include an explicit prohibition against the sale of children and SECTT in the Penal Code.
2. Increase the maximum term of imprisonment for the crime of purchasing sexual services from children (article 309 of the Penal Code).
3. The legal reform concerning child marriage needs to also address the gap concerning the right of migrant and refugee children who are married and arrive in Norway, to ensure that they receive support, can access justice and rehabilitation services through the Children’s Houses.
4. Adopt legislation specifying the obligations of internet providers in relation to child abuse materials, including the sharing of live content, the storage of such materials, and the distribution of such materials, as well as the obligations to actively prevent grooming, sexual abuse and sexual extortion on their platforms.
5. Increase the allowed data storage period for ISPs to enable the effective investigation of SEC related crime committed over the internet.
6. Comprehensive policy and strategy

27. There is no synthesized national plan or strategy geared toward the state obligations under the Optional Protocol of the Convention on the Right of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (OPSC). However, there are a few plans that cover sexual abuse of children more broadly as well as some forms of SEC.

28. Sexual abuse: The parliament has adopted an action plan to increase efforts to combat violence and abuse (Opptrappingsplan mot vold og overgrep (2017-2021)) wherein is specified the importance of treating adult and child perpetrators of sexual violence. However, as Save the Children point out, there are no specifications concerning preventative treatment of perpetrators that are specifically sexually attracted to children.

29. Child marriage: The GoN has adopted a national plan of action on negative social control, forced marriage and FGM (No: Retten till å bestemme over eget liv) and also includes child marriage. The national plan ‘from arrival to work’ (Meld. St. 30 (2015-2016) Fra mottak til arbeidsliv- en effektiv integreringspolitikk) recognizes that all vulnerable children, women and men shall access coordinated, holistic and specialized professional help in areas concerning violence and exploitation.

30. Trafficking of children: On June 6th 2017, the Norwegian Parliament considered a floor motion to strengthen the efforts targeting children exploited by human traffickers. Parliament has adopted a motion to order the Government to "establish a central unit responsible for following up minors who are victims of human trafficking and providing guidance to local child welfare services offices in cases where human trafficking is suspected”.

Protection and support of child victims
31. **Child victims of sexual abuse:** Child victims of violence and sexual abuse in Norway benefit from access to ‘Children’s Houses’ where all legal assistance as well as support services should be provided in the same location. However, as there are only 11 of these, children in rural areas cannot access them easily.\(^{48}\)

32. **Identifying victims:** The ECPAT report on SECTT, as well as recent prosecution in the area of SEC, indicate that child victims, particularly those situated abroad are seldom identified in these cases. Due to significant difficulties in identifying victims and a lack of financial resources child victims are left without justice, rehabilitation, compensation, reparation and other support, even in cases where the perpetrator has been convicted.

**Recommendations**

1. In the context of development cooperation, strengthen child protection systems and promote one-stop shops (Children’s Houses) that provide multi-disciplinary and child sensitive support and services for recovery and reintegration of child victims in destination countries.

2. Step-up efforts to identify child victims of CSAM related crimes, through, for example, the ICSE and ICCAM databases.

3. Establish Children’s Houses all across the country, to ensure that all children victims of sexual abuse and exploitation can access these comprehensive services, no matter where in the country they are.

**Prevention and coordination**

33. **Combatting OSCE/SECTT:** Operation Dark Room was initiated in the Vest politidistrikt and has so far resulted in 116 criminal cases, following this example, several other police districts have opened similar task forces that together have resulted in 296 criminal cases to date.\(^{49}\) However, the police districts lack the resources to follow up on all cases as funding has thus far been earmarked.\(^{50}\)

34. There is still a lack of focus on prevention of OSCE on a broad scale. A holistic and multi-sectoral approach to prevention is absolutely crucial, in which the role of civil society organizations and the private sector are indispensible.

35. The police has increased cooperation with payment service providers and credit card companies to prevent payments for abuse materials, however more concrete and formalised collaboration is indispensible to ensure that as many private actors as possible are engaged in this work.
Recommendations:

1. Allocate permanent funding, and establish a permanent national task force programme to prevent, investigate and prosecute online crimes related to SEC, including grooming, CSAM, sexual extortion and other crimes committed not only by adults but also by young people and children.

2. The GoN should take measures to encourage the formalization of a collaboration between finance institutions, the police and civil society organizations to combat and counteract SEC related transactions, following the model of the Swedish Financial Coalition.

3. The GoN should take measures to encourage employers to prevent the consumption and sharing of CSAM in the workplace. By for example installing software to detect and alert when such activities occur on their devices and intranet.

4. Strengthen corporate liability and enforcement in law and policy, including obligations for employers to obtain police clearances and implement codes of conduct for employees going abroad. Raise awareness among companies and travel and tourism providers on various risks of SECTT, including business trips and ‘voluntourism’.

5. Establish educational and awareness raising programmes focusing on the identification and the monitoring of vulnerable groups of victims who are at risk of becoming SEC victims.

Endnotes


3 Including exploitation of children in prostitution, online child sexual exploitation (OCSE), the exploitation of children in the production of child sexual exploitation materials (CSAM, also known as ‘child pornography’), child trafficking for sexual purposes, sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism (SECTT) and child marriage.

4 para. 131.22 recommendation made by France during the Human Rights Council Twenty-seventh session.

5 para. 131.147 recommendation made by Costa Rica Human Rights Council Twenty-seventh session.

6 para. 131.130; 131.134; 131.35; 131.128; 131.130; 131.133; 131.134; 131.135; 131.136; 131.151, 131.120; 131.124; 131.126. op.cit. op.cit.

9 Such as: Norwegian Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies; Kripos, the Ministry of Children and Equality; Koordineringsenheden for ofre for menneskehandel/ Coordination Unit for Victims of Human Trafficking (KOM); Ministry of Justice and Public Security; Ministry of Health Care Services.
10 Within the police data base Strasak, reports are filed based on coding systems of different police districts, due to a lack of streamlining it is therefore difficult to compile and aggregate the data. Therefore much of the available data is based on convicted cases.
11 Barne-, ungdoms- og familiedirektoratet, Found at: https://www.bufdir.no/Statistikk_og_analyse/Oppvekst/Vold_og_overgrep_mot_barn/Seksuelle_overgrepp_mot_barn/
16 ECPAT Norway is constantly monitoring the media, and collecting information of developments within the field of SEC.
18 Ibid.
20 Kripos Trendrapport 2016, op.cit.
22 Harald Skjonsfell, the National Criminal Investigation Services (Kripos), Expert Consultation ECPAT Norway, Oslo, Norway, 2016.
23 Kripos Trendrapport 2016, op.cit.
25 In 2015 Norway received a total of 5000 unaccompanied asylum seeking children, and in 2016, a total number of 320 were registered to have arrived
27 For example, there is currently a case under prosecution where a 47 year old man is being accused of human trafficking related to his purchasing of sex from children in the Philippines over the internet.
28 ECPAT Norway 2018.
30 http://www.thecode.org/about/
de ønsker.

50 leads to cases involving the possession, production and sharing or selling of CSAM. sexual abuse images, and the police point out that one single case can lead to many thousands of new

Operasjon Jupiter (Møre og Romsdal politidistrikt), 84 criminal cases; Operation Duck (Trøndelag politidistrikt), 57 criminal cases; Operasjon Mørketid (Finnmark politidistrikt), 15 criminal cases; Operasjon Zero (Innlandet politidistrikt), 20 criminal cases; Operation Dark Room Agder (Agder politidistrikt), 3 criminal cases; Operasjon Sandra (Øst politidistrikt), 1 criminal case. Found at: https://www.tv2.no/a/9760339/

51 ibid.


36 Penal Code 2005 §310. Fremvisning av seksuelle overgrep mot barn eller fremvisning som seksualiserer barn. This was not the case before the changes made in 2005 (entered into force in 2015), when the penal code did not cover all children under the age of 18.

37 Penal Code 2005 §309 (c), §311.

38 Prosecution in Sweden has made this interpretation in recent cases involving OCSE.


41 ECPAT Norway 2018, op.cit.


https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumenter/vare-om-overgrep-pannet/id2578758/


45 ibid.


49 Operasjon Jupiter (Møre og Romsdal politidistrikt), 84 criminal cases; Operation Duck (Trøndelag politidistrikt), 57 criminal cases; Operasjon Mørketid (Finnmark politidistrikt), 15 criminal cases; Operasjon Zero (Innlandet politidistrikt), 20 criminal cases; Operation Dark Room Agder (Agder politidistrikt), 3 criminal cases; Operasjon Sandra (Øst politidistrikt), 1 criminal case. Found at: https://www.tv2.no/a/9760339/ (17/04/2018) The police’s largest cases included 25 million child sexual abuse images, and the police point out that one single case can lead to many thousands of new leads to cases involving the possession, production, sharing or selling of CSAM.