

Treating Children as Children

A review of violence against children within the justice system in ASEAN Member States



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Street Kids: More Time in Lock Up Than School

Despite government and NGO efforts to keep street children enrolled in classes, analysts estimate that just half of the street children in the country attend school. They are far more likely to spend time begging on the streets or in government detention centers. Analysts say roughly 80 percent of street children have been "detained" in one way or another, many in Phnom Penh's notorious Prey Speu detention center.

Instead of being allowed to attend school, many street children are forced to beg, making as much as \$700 a month for their families or handlers. "If the children don't get money, they are punished, or they don't get food," said You Sopheak, the deputy director of the city's Department of Social Affairs. "They want to study, but they have to devote their time to knocking on car windows, begging for money."

Finding these children is easy, said Mr. Sopheak, but with a limited budget and personnel the Ministry of Social Affairs has few options for offering them a better life.

Often, the children are taken by social workers to the city's "vocational training center," Prey Speu. Touch Channy, director general of the Department of Social Affairs, said that the center provides free education and housing to children, but many NGOs describe it as little better than a prison. Once released from Prey Speu, most children go back to begging. Families are reluctant to give up this source of income by sending the children to school. Mr. Sopheak said this makes it difficult to ensure they stay enrolled in school. "How can we get them off the street?" he said. "The parents sign contracts with us [promising to keep the children in school], but the children just return to the traffic intersections to beg. They are like a leaf, just floating back and forth on the water."

with minors who violate the law because they are only allowed to turn them over to social workers, emboldening them to commit more crimes knowing they can do scot-free.

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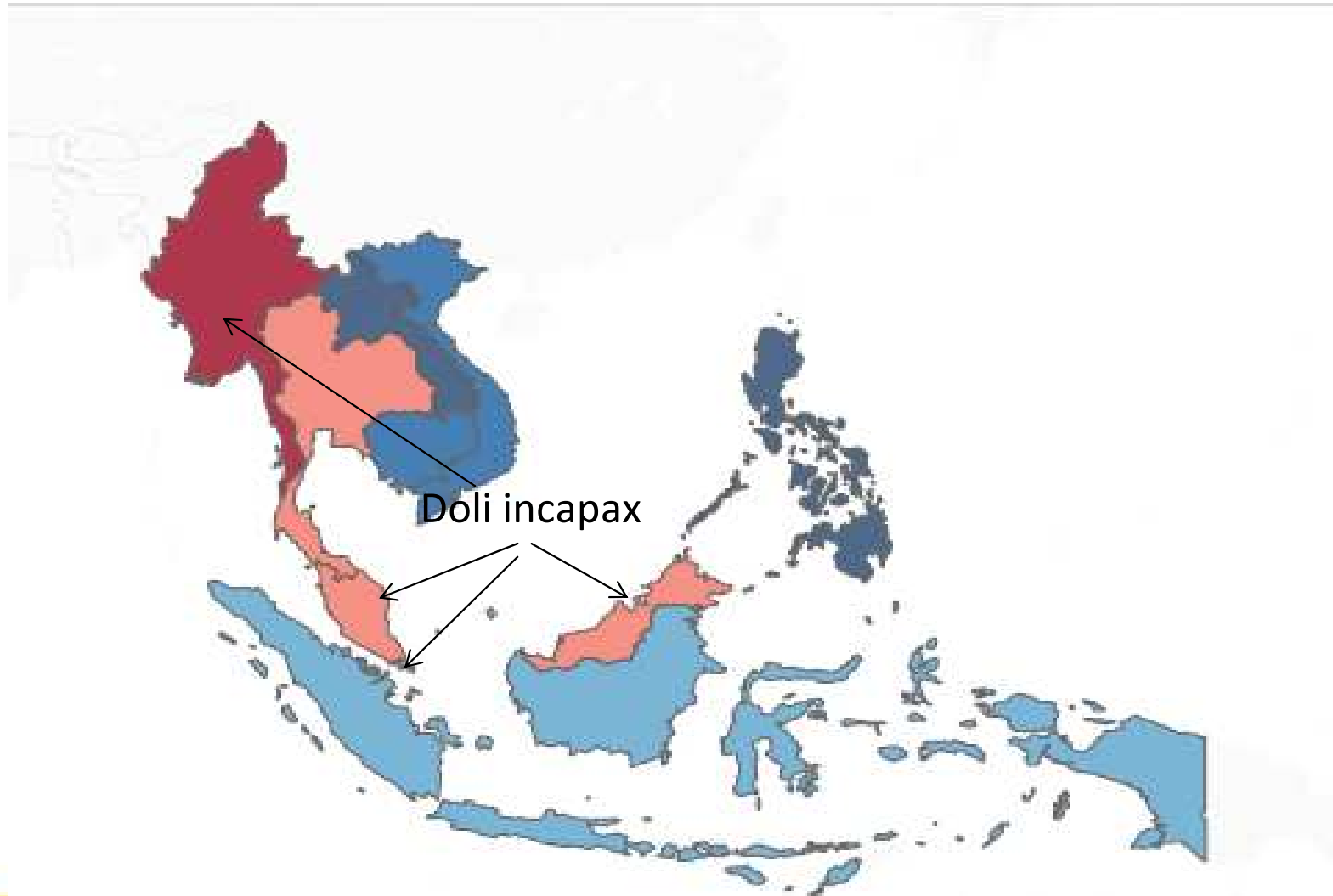
It comes after a 14-year-old his Housing Board block in from Ang Mo Kio Police Di alleged molestation case.

No adult was present at his such cases here.

What are the Laws in Place?



Age is not Just a Number



On Diversion



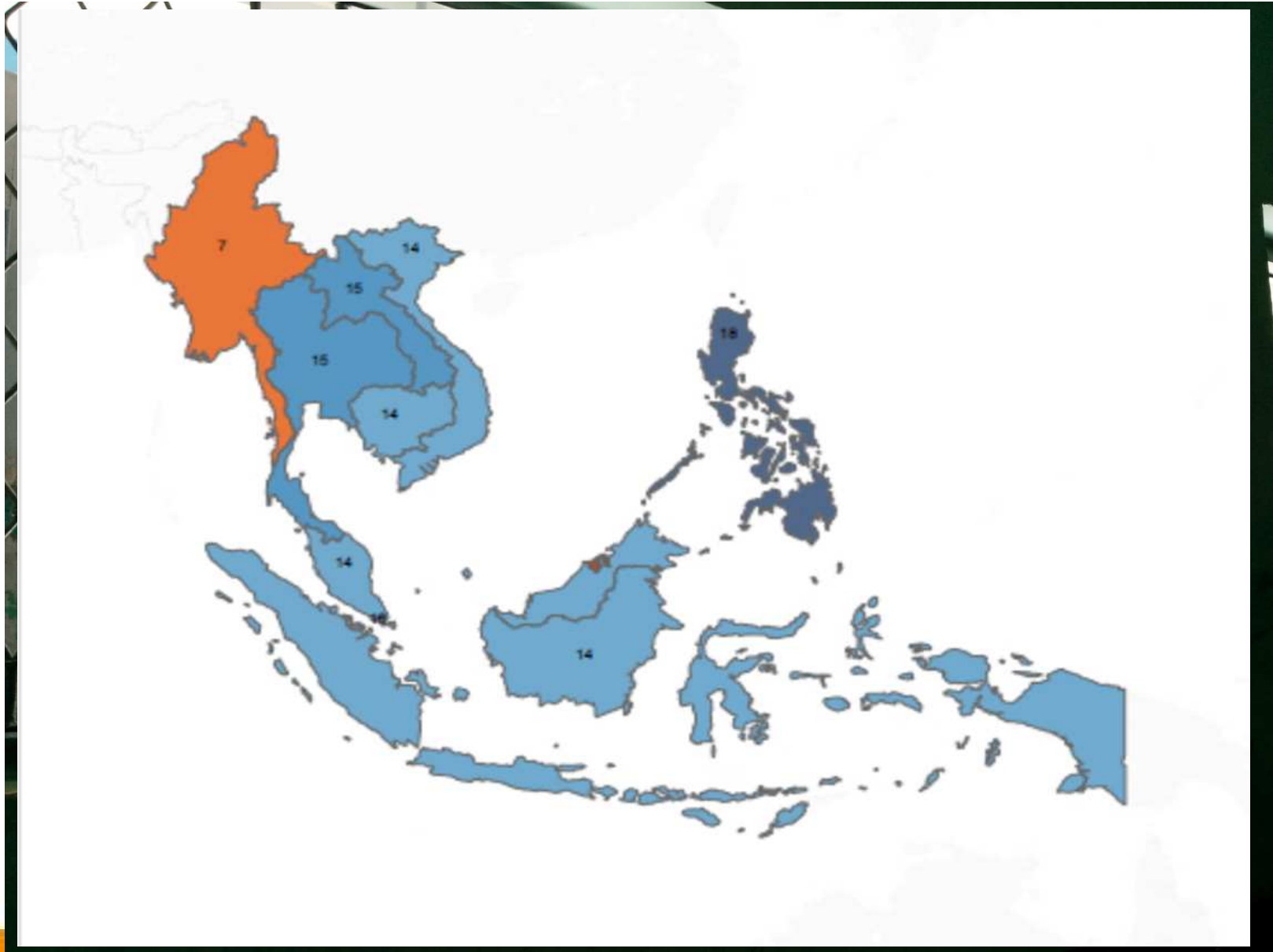
Law Enforcement and Prosecution Activities

- Police oversight through possibility to lodge online complaint (Malaysia)
- While all member states prohibit torture and violence by police, 6 countries still need to strengthen legal provision on limitation of the use of force and firearms when in contact with CACL
- No rights to have parents or parents “may” accompany, without clarification on when that is permissible – solved through Appropriate Adult

Violent Sentences

- Children still have the chance of receiving life imprisonment in four countries
- Corporal punishment is used against children in three countries

Last Resort?



What's Next?

- ASEAN guidelines on Juvenile Justice
- Standardized indicator + system -> Database system
- Stronger regional forums
- Regional monitoring mechanism

