

Fast Facts

- From 1995 to 2000, over 10,500 children were arrested and detained every year
- In the first quarter of 2003, over 4,500 children had been imprisoned, 441 of them girls
- Children make up more than 5 per cent of total inmates in city and municipal jails
- More boys than girls are in jail
- 7 out of 10 children offenders are detained by police for one of these crimes:
 - petty theft
 - sniffing solvent
 - vagrancy

Jail is no place for a child

Amnesty International reported:

- Children are frequently detained in the same cells or facilities as adults
- Children are sometimes given prison sentences designed for adults
- Many youth offenders have experienced torture and abuse
- Severe over-crowding and conditions in jails typically violate minimum standards for the treatment of prisoners

Save the Children Fund reported:

- In a study in Southern Mindanao, more than half of juvenile delinquents suffered from sexual advances and psychological harm while in the custody of government authorities. Most of those who had been abused were females (2002)

Profile of a youth offender

- Male, between 14 to 17 years old
- From a poor family in an urban slum or rural village
- An elementary school drop out
- Among children detained in Molave Youth Home: almost 8 out of every 10 come from families with a monthly income of less than US\$73 (Social Services Development Department, 2002)

Crime prevention programmes are more effective than jail

Reduction in crime and delinquency after special interventions for children and youth in the United States:

- Perry (High Scope) Preschool and Home Visits 80%
- Children-at-risk Comprehensive Youth Services 53%
- Salt Lake County Juvenile Court Family Counseling Youth Services 50%

The proposed law on a comprehensive juvenile justice system would

- Raise the age of criminal responsibility from nine to 12 years of age
- Prohibit the detention of children with adults
- Redirect cases of petty or victimless crimes from courts to diversion programmes
- Develop a juvenile delinquency prevention programme