**Oral Statement to the 44th Session of the Human Rights Council: Interactive Dialogue with the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Violence Against Children**

Friends World Committee for Consultation (Quakers) thank you for acknowledging that children of incarcerated parents experience violence at all levels, in particular in your recent report on violence against children and children deprived of their liberty in Latin America and the Caribbean.[[1]](#footnote-1) As you identified, they are at risk of increased exposure to physical violence, as well as suffering structural violence within criminal justice systems whether they are detained with their parent or separated from them.

The focus of your report is pertinent to children of incarcerated parents, for whom separation from their parent or caregiver by incarceration causes extreme mental distress. These children have been observed to have an increased incidence of behavioural and emotional problems, cognitive and attitudinal problems, as well as long-term problems, as reflected in your report on children deprived of their liberty in Latin America and the Caribbean.[[2]](#footnote-2)

State responses to the Covid-19 pandemic have had a disproportionate impact on children of incarcerated parents: research recently published by the International Network for Children with Incarcerated Parents found that 79% of respondents had increased difficulty maintaining contact with their incarcerated parent during the pandemic.

The 2019 Global Study on Children Deprived of their Liberty recommends a presumption against custodial measures or sentences for primary caregivers.

Special Representative, how can you use your involvement in the implementation of the Global Study on Children Deprived of their Liberty to take this forward?

1. Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence Against Children, ‘Children speak about the impact of deprivation of liberty: the case of Latin America’, (2020) <https://violenceagainstchildren.un.org/news/children-speak-about-impact-deprivation-liberty-case-latin-america> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)