

Hand delivered to:  
Consulates General of Germany in Canada  
Vancouver, BC & Toronto, ON



Canadian Health & Human Rights  
Partnership For Children  
1300 King St E PO Box 31011  
Kingsway Village PO  
Oshawa, ON L1H 8N9  
[www.chhrp.org](http://www.chhrp.org)

24 July 2012

Dear Mrs. Chancellor,

We are writing to offer you a Canadian perspective on the issue of genital cutting and children's rights, supported by unique Canadian contributions listed on page two of this letter.

We know that you have heard very loud voices from those concerned about religious freedom in Germany after the Cologne court ruled that religious male circumcision causes bodily harm and violates children's rights. We write to you on behalf of those who have no voice; those whose freedom of choice is usurped. They are the children who depend on you for protection, but who have no vote to offer you.

**We ask you and members of the Bundestag to examine more deeply the impact of the Cologne ruling on children's rights and to resist calls to create legislation that would undermine the court's ruling. If, however, Germany chooses political expediency and rushes to codify into law - for the first time in the history of the world - that adults have a 'right' to cut the genitals of a child for non-therapeutic reasons, it will harm children far beyond Muslim and Jewish boys in Germany.**

How? If citizens in other countries try to enforce laws to protect the rights of boys from genital cutting customs, religious groups in those countries will point to the German decision and try to end debate before it even begins.

It will make it practically impossible for children's rights advocates in the Philippines who want to stop the practice of 'tuli'. In Canada it will hamper our efforts to challenge unequal treatment of boys under our Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It will impede South Korean efforts to eradicate the American-influenced secular custom of circumcision in their society. U.S. circumcision advocates will be emboldened to spread the practice globally, as they are already doing in Africa.


We understand this is a complex issue that pits children's rights against parental rights and religious freedom. However there is more at stake than religious freedom in Germany. This is about the basic and universal human rights of children around the world. \*

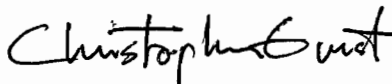
We remind you that Germany has ratified the **U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child**, Article 24.3 of which obligates all ratifying states to *"take all effective and appropriate measures with a view to abolishing traditional practices prejudicial to the health of children."*


If Germany hastily passes legislation to 'protect circumcision' at the expense of children's rights, it will forever haunt Germany's reputation for its failure to protect children. The issue will not go away simply by passing a law favoring parental rites over children's rights.

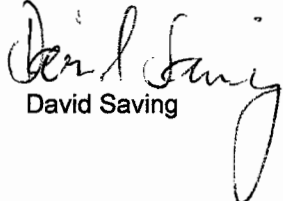
In September we will send representatives to Helsinki for the **Twelfth International Symposium on Law, Genital Autonomy and Children's Rights** to explore the deeper and broader dimensions of this issue. We encourage you as well to send representatives. \*\*

Respectfully submitted by the Co-Founders,

  
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Christopher Guest, M.D.

  
Tim Hammond

  
David Saving

\* [arclaw.org/human-rights-table](http://arclaw.org/human-rights-table)

\*\* [genitalautonomy.eu/#/genital-autonomy-2012/4563224012](http://genitalautonomy.eu/#/genital-autonomy-2012/4563224012)



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## Canadian contributions to a deeper understanding about children's rights to bodily integrity and the harm of circumcision

- For the first time ever, Vancouver's **Global Survey of Circumcision Harm** is documenting the long-term harm to men of circumcision imposed on them as children. Since June 2011, more than 900 respondents, including many Jewish men, have documented the physical, sexual and psychological damage of circumcision, including photo evidence and video testimonies. (1)
- In 2009 the **British Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons** stated: "...in light of evidence based medicine and contemporary principles in ethics, law and human rights...(R)outine infant male circumcision, i.e., routine removal of normal tissue in a healthy infant, is not recommended...(P)roxy consent by parents is now being questioned. ...Under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, an infant has rights that include security of person, life, freedom and bodily integrity. Routine male circumcision is an unnecessary and irreversible procedure. Therefore many consider it to be `unwarranted mutilating surgery". (2)
- **McGill University Medical Ethicist Margaret Somerville** stated in 1997: "...non-medical infant male circumcision is technically criminal assault. We have to start from the basic presumption of the utmost respect for people's religious beliefs and traditions and rituals. But there's a point at which we also have the utmost duties to protect those unable to protect themselves. Sometimes that means we must trespass on those other things." (3)
- Muslim physician Dr Arif Bhimji of Toronto's **Association for Genital Integrity** asserted in 2009 that circumcision customs violate medical ethics and human rights. (4)
- Canadian pathologist **John Taylor** published two groundbreaking studies about the importance of the prepuce to human male anatomy and physiology:  
**The prepuce: Specialized mucosa of the penis and its loss to circumcision** [1996] (5)  
**The prepuce** [1999] (6)
- The **Canadian Children's Rights Council** condemns genital cutting customs imposed on unconsenting children of both sexes. (7)

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(1) [circumcisionharm.org](http://circumcisionharm.org)

(2) [circumcisionharm.org/BC%20College%20of%20Physicians.pdf](http://circumcisionharm.org/BC%20College%20of%20Physicians.pdf)

(3) [cirp.org/news/ottawacitizen10-17-97/](http://cirp.org/news/ottawacitizen10-17-97/)

(4) [youtube.com/watch?v=uoBAI7pxDe8](http://youtube.com/watch?v=uoBAI7pxDe8)

(5) [cirp.org/library/anatomy/taylor/](http://cirp.org/library/anatomy/taylor/)

(6) [cirp.org/library/anatomy/cold-taylor/](http://cirp.org/library/anatomy/cold-taylor/)

(7) [canadiancrc.com/Circumcision\\_Genital\\_Mutilation\\_Male-Female\\_Children.aspx](http://canadiancrc.com/Circumcision_Genital_Mutilation_Male-Female_Children.aspx)