

Swedish Ombudsman calls for ban on circumcision

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The Swedish Ombudsman for Children has written to a newspaper calling for the country to outlaw the circumcision of boys.

"Circumcising a child without medical justification or his consent contravenes the child's human rights," wrote Fredrik Malmberg in a text co-signed with representatives from the Swedish Society of Medicine, the Swedish Society of Health Professionals, the Swedish Paediatric Society, and the Swedish Association of Paediatric Surgeons, and published in the Swedish daily newspaper *Dagens Nyheter*. "The operation is painful, irreversible and can lead to dangerous complications."

Mr Malmberg, said the practice of circumcision violates the basic rights of boys and is against the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Circumcision was legalised in Sweden in 2001, when a new law permitted religious practitioners to perform the operation if the child is under two months old. After that it has to be done by a physician with the full consent of the parents, who must be fully informed of the implications. It is estimated that some 3,000 boys are circumcised every year in Sweden.

Ombudsmen from across Scandinavia are scheduled to meet today (Monday 30 September) in Oslo, Norway, to discuss the issue.

Last year, an attempt by the far-right Sweden Democrat party to ban circumcision was rejected.

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