17-Year-Old Asylum Seeker Imprisoned, Despite Int’l Law And Child Protective Services
A 17-year-old asylum seeker was arrested upon arrival in Iceland for carrying a false passport – despite international law forbidding this practice. In addition, Child Protective Services was never notified of his incarceration, as Icelandic law requires, and jailing children with adults also violates international law.

Vísir reports that the boy in question was jailed at the Litla Hraun prison for a whole week. During this time, Child Protective Services was never informed of his incarceration. Heiða Björg Pálsdóttir, a lawyer for Child Protective Services, told reporters that they are taking the case very seriously.

“We’ve been gathering information from the authorities who are involved in this case, and will continue to do so,” she said. “We still haven’t gotten all the explanations. We need to get to the bottom of this. If it comes to light that a mistake was made, as it appears to have been, then we need to sit down with the relevant authorities and make sure this doesn’t happen again.”

By Icelandic law, any asylum seekers under the age of 18 who arrive without an accompanying adult fall under the care of Child Protective Services, under whose care the boy now is.

Further, it should be noted that arresting asylum seekers for arriving with a false passport not only violates international law; it has also been condemned by Director of the Icelandic Prison Service Páll Winkel as “completely futile”.

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Words by Paul Fontaine (@pauldfontaine)

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