

Bouwe van der Eems

From: karin@pestalozzi.org
Sent: Monday, 19 February 2018 9:18 AM
To: emb.pretoria@mfa.no
Subject: Please protect Kai Kristiansen's right to parental care, education, dignity and personal security

The Honorable Trine Skynoen
Royal Norwegian Embassy
Ozmik House
165 Lynnwood Road
Brooklyn, 0181
Pretoria, South Africa
By e-mail: (emb.pretoria@mfa.no)
20th of February, 2018

Dear Ms Skynoen

We are writing to you today to ask for your assistance for the protection of an important human right in Norway. Leif and Terese Kristiansen and their son Kai recently moved from Canada to Norway in search of new opportunities. Both Terese and Kai are Canadian citizens. They placed the 12-year-old Kai in the local public school, but unfortunately he became the victim of merciless bullying. School officials did not resolve the situation. To protect Kai's fundamental rights to dignity and personal security, his parents did the responsible and loving thing: they removed him from school and immediately began to homeschool him. By choosing to homeschool their son, the Kristiansens did what was obviously in the best interest of their child.

As if being the victim of school bullying wasn't enough, on Thursday, February 9, 12-year-old Kai was hunted down and then tackled in the snow by Barnevernet agents and police. In a Facebook video of the incident that has already been watched over 600,000 times, Kai's mother, Terese, looks on in terror, screaming for help as Kai is chased by the police and the Barnevernet. *"My son is being stolen by Barnevernet in Norway because we want to homeschool!"* Terese shouted, as helpless friends and neighbours watched. Kai can be heard screaming "No!" over and over as the police and a Barnevernet investigator attempt to subdue him and take him into custody, pursuant to an order from the local authorities. The 12-year-old was ordered into state custody because his family chose to homeschool. The video is available at <http://bit.ly/2ExsJ8j>

The Pestalozzi Trust is a civil rights organisation established in 1998 in order to protect the rights of member families who choose to educate their children in the context of the family, as articulated in art. 26(3) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: "Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children."

During the period of apartheid, home education was illegal in South Africa. The parents Andre and Bokkie Meintjies were jailed in 1994, and their children were placed in an orphanage, because they educated their children at home. However a few years later the Nelson Mandela government legalised home education in South Africa. Since it was legalised, homeschooling has grown exponentially in South Africa, and is widely recognised as an successful proven alternative to public schooling. Tens of thousands of parents will be able to testify how home education serves the best interests of their children.

South Africa is a constitutional democracy and South African homeschooling parents were shocked to see how Norwegian officials mercilessly infringed on the rights to dignity, personal security and parental care of

a 12-year old child. The Pestalozzi Trust would like to urge the Norwegian government to protect the human rights of the Kristiansen family and return Kai to his parents. Research has repeatedly confirmed that home education is successful education, and choosing this type of education cannot be allowed to be a reason to strip young citizens of their fundamental human rights.

Yours sincerely

CEvan Oostrum

CE van Oostrum
(Executive Officer)

 **Pestalozzi Trust** (IT6377/98)

the legal defence fund for home and community based education
die regsfonds vir tuis- en gemeenskapsonderwys

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