

# SWEDEN

## A CONSTITUTIONAL STATE IN DECLINE

*A Critical Report (2017–2025)*

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## Author's Note

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This report constitutes a critical examination of publicly available documents and official pronouncements issued by Swedish governmental entities, including the author's personal experiences. While it does not seek to disregard legitimate national security considerations, its purpose is to underscore the imperative of governance characterized by proportionality, transparency, and unwavering adherence to fundamental rights.

Democracy is not determined by the absence of adversarial forces, but rather by the manner in which a state conducts itself toward its citizens, particularly those who dissent.

*This report is dedicated to Anthie' and Alexandra, and to all those who have suffered abuse, and to every child worldwide who has been unjustly separated from parental care. May their resilience serve as both a testament to human dignity and a call for systemic accountability.*

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## Introduction

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Sweden's democratic foundations and legal safeguards are being tested by a systematic and pervasive dismantling, where formal constitutional structures merely provide an illusion of stability. Despite the country's nominal adherence to the framework of the Instrument of Government (Regeringsformen), a practical erosion of constitutional principles – **for example, in the application of Chapter 1, Section 1 – has resulted in a silent constitutional collapse** [01]. This, in turn, has created a perilous accountability vacuum, eroding democracy in terms of civil rights and the fundamental respect for the norms of the rule of law.

A meticulous constitutional analysis of the exercise of public authority reveals a glaring discrepancy between the ideals proclaimed in the Instrument of Government, human dignity, freedom, and equality, and the actual conduct of power in practice. Particularly in areas such as the application of the Act with Special Provisions on the Care of Young People (LVU), cultural and personal welfare, and social care, the state systematically fails to translate these foundational values into meaningful action. This disconnect not only jeopardizes individual rights but also undermines the basic functions of democratic governance.

An international analysis of Sweden's handling of coercive interventions, with particular focus on LVU proceedings, secure youth care (SIS), and residential care (HVB), reveals a rule of law in which transparency, accountability, and legal certainty teeter on the brink of collapse. Despite Sweden's formal commitment to international legal principles and guidelines, the evidence demonstrates systemic and pervasive irregularities in which all institutions, from Parliament and the executive to the courts, contribute to a structure that undermines accountability and erodes the protective mechanisms of the rule of law.

The analysis published by Ronja Helensdotter on 4 November 2024 makes clear that legal certainty in LVU cases is severely compromised [02]: a systemic collapse in which the structural deficiencies of Sweden's administrative model radically erode impartiality, legal security, and the individual's right to a fair trial. A coordinated interplay between municipal actors, courts, and other authorities is revealed to be foundational to a systematic undermining of constitutional principles, one in which collective responsibility is evaded in favor of an administrative machinery that prioritizes institutional self-interest over citizens' rights.

## Summary

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Despite its constitutional obligations and well-maintained international reputation, Sweden is in a state of severe rule-of-law erosion. This report identifies a systematic discrepancy between the principles enshrined in the Instrument of Government and their practical implementation, with particular focus on the state's handling of coercive interventions under LVU and cases involving missing and abducted children under the 1980 Hague Convention [\[03\]](#), which Sweden has ratified.

Behind the facade of a celebrated welfare system lies an administrative machinery marked by inertia, fragmentation, and an inability to act with the urgency and legal certainty required. Vulnerable families are left to navigate a system in which institutional passivity, procedural fixation, and inadequate investigative practices take precedence over children's fundamental right to safety and protection.

This is not a matter of isolated deviations but a structural, systemic failure in which legal and administrative actors, including courts, prosecutors, and social services, consistently fail to fulfil their core mandates. The lack of coordination, deficient competence, and a pervasive disregard for Sweden's international commitments, particularly regarding implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, create legal uncertainty that undermines the credibility of the entire legal order.

The consequences are devastating: children endure prolonged psychological trauma, parents are denied constitutional protections, and public trust in institutions is eroded. Without deep and coordinated reforms, including legal capacity-building, improved interagency collaboration, and legally secure support for victims, Sweden risks losing all credibility as a champion of human rights.

Symbolic politics are insufficient. The current passivity can no longer be dismissed as merely an organizational failure, it must be acknowledged as an ethical collapse threatening the foundations of democratic governance and lawful public authority.

## Chapter 01

# Sweden's Failure to Protect Its Children

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## The Hidden Crisis

Every year, an unknown number of Swedish children are unlawfully abducted across international borders by one parent, often in direct violation of custody orders and Sweden's international legal obligations. These acts constitute not only grave violations of a child's right to security and family life, but also leave the remaining parent in a prolonged and psychologically debilitating struggle marked by uncertainty, fear, and state passivity.

Despite the acute severity of these cases, Sweden's handling of international child abductions is characterized by delays, paralysis, and a striking bureaucratic inadequacy. Multiple international actors have criticized Sweden's lack of efficiency and engagement. The Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs (UD) frequently adopts a passive stance, reducing child protection to administrative routines rather than pursuing active measures for repatriation.

*In March 2023, SVT published an [interview with Erica Neiglick](#), head of the department at Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs responsible for child abduction cases [\[04\]](#). In responding to criticism of Sweden's handling of such cases, her statements do not merely reflect institutional constraints but instead reveal indications of systemic incapacity. Rather than clarifying the state's limitations, the interview underscores the need for a fundamental reassessment of Sweden's accountability structures, policy priorities, and commitment to effective international cooperation in child protection matters.*

Child abduction, in its most fundamental form, is a crime against a child's right to stability, identity, and family life. When such violations occur in direct defiance of court orders and international arrest warrants, it is the state's duty to act decisively, swiftly, and with full legal certainty [\[05\]](#), [\[06\]](#).

## The Hague Convention's Legal Framework – and Sweden's Shortcomings

The Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction (1980) is explicit in its purpose: to ensure the prompt return of children wrongfully removed from their habitual residence. Despite this, Sweden consistently deviates from the Convention's principles and prescribed timelines [\[07\]](#). The following constitutes a critical review of key contradictions and deficiencies in Sweden's implementation.

### 1. Convention Violations Disguised as Pragmatism

***While the Hague Convention mandates swift repatriation, the UD has asserted:*** 'It is not always self-evident that a child should be returned.' Such rhetoric fundamentally undermines the Convention's purpose. Exceptions must be narrowly defined; yet Sweden's discretionary interpretations foster legal uncertainty and subjective diplomacy, delaying justice and jeopardizing children's stability.

### 2. Unacceptable Procedural Delays

***The Convention requires legal proceedings to be resolved within six weeks.*** However, the UD has acknowledged that proceedings often take several months. This passivity constitutes not only a breach of the Convention but a direct harm to the child's best interests. Alarming, the state offers no concrete reforms to expedite proceedings.

### 3. Visitation as a Substitute for Justice

***In some cases, the MFA pursues visitation arrangements in lieu of repatriation.*** This represents a fundamental departure from the Convention's intent to restore the status quo

ante. Transforming a repatriation obligation into a visitation matter effectively legitimizes the legal violation inherent in the act of abduction.

#### 4. Absence of Bilateral Strategies

***Most abductions from Sweden involve non-Convention states, yet Sweden declines to prioritize bilateral agreements***, preferring instead to promote broader accession to the Convention. This idealism leaves Swedish children unprotected. A proactive state would pursue bilateral solutions with key countries of concern rather than await hypothetical ratifications.

#### 5. Ethical and Diplomatic Reciprocity

***The MFA has framed its obligations in terms of diplomatic reciprocity, treating child abductions as though they were bargaining chips in international relations***. This approach is fundamentally incompatible with the Convention's child-centric principles. A child's best interests are non-negotiable and must not be subordinated to diplomatic calculations.

#### 6. Legal Inconsistency and Institutional Fragmentation

***The MFA has identified delays in court proceedings as the primary bottleneck***. Yet these delays stem from political priorities and systemic disarray, not merely procedural inefficiency. Sweden's institutional fragmentation renders justice unattainable for affected families.

### Conclusion: Sweden Evading Its Child Rights Obligations

Sweden's passivity in addressing international child abductions constitutes not only a humanitarian and legal betrayal but a profound systemic failure in the state's exercise of its constitutional duties. By retreating behind convention loopholes, avoiding bilateral solutions, and treating children as diplomatic pawns, Sweden has abdicated its responsibility to protect its most vulnerable citizens.

## Chapter 02

# The Constitutional Dismantling of Sweden

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## A Silent Constitutional Collapse

Chapter 1, Section 1 of the Swedish Instrument of Government (Regeringsformen), 'All public power in Sweden proceeds from the people' [\[01\]](#), has, in practice, lost its normative and operational significance. In its place, a technocratic and bureaucratic administrative system has emerged in which agencies, legal professionals, and bureaucratic actors wield extensive power without effective democratic oversight or judicial review. The constitutional separation of powers has been effectively neutralized: the institutions designed to serve as checks and balances are frequently neither independent, proactive, nor transparent.

[Courts overwhelmingly approve agency decisions without substantive review.](#) The Parliamentary Ombudsman (JO) issues criticism in only a fraction of the thousands of complaints received annually, while the Committee on the Constitution's scrutiny operates largely within partisan political frameworks, rarely yielding tangible consequences. The result is a post-democratic condition in which the external forms of the rule of law remain nominally intact, but the constitutional substance, civil rights, accountability, and the balance of power, has been hollowed out.

## Linguistic Distortion and Secrecy as Tools of Power

**The principle of 'the best interests of the child,' central to both Swedish law and Article 3 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child** [\[06\]](#), has in practice been weaponized as a rhetorical instrument to legitimize coercive interventions, institutional placements, and the isolation of children from their families, often without regard for the child's own voice or the right to be heard. The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child has repeatedly criticized Sweden's implementation of the Convention, particularly regarding LVU interventions.

**Simultaneously, secrecy legislation, notably Chapter 26 of the Public Access to Information and Secrecy Act** [\[08\]](#), is exploited to withhold information from the media, elected representatives, and judicial bodies, even in cases where affected families have consented to public scrutiny. This subverts the principle of transparency and violates constitutional requirements for openness and civic accountability under the **Freedom of the Press Act, Chapter 2** [\[09\]](#).

## Legal Uncertainty in LVU Proceedings – An Empirical Example

Research from the University of Lund reveals that the majority of LVU rulings in certain counties function as rubber stamps of social services' requests [\[10\]](#), often based on circumstantial evidence and subjective assessments rather than legally secure proof. These decisions have life-altering consequences for children and parents, yet are rarely subjected to critical judicial review. Research highlights a dangerous and escalating trend: courts increasingly presume agency decisions to be correct, effectively shifting the burden of proof and eroding individual legal protections.

**This occurs alongside statistics demonstrating that children subjected to LVU interventions face heightened risks of mental illness, suicide, social marginalization, and, in some cases, premature death** [\[11\]](#). Such data must be understood not as isolated incidents, but as indicators of systemic failure.

## Sweden's Violations of International Conventions

Sweden is bound by multiple international conventions, including the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and the

Convention Against Torture (CAT), all of which have been ratified and, in many cases, incorporated into Swedish law. Yet Swedish authorities' actions in care proceedings systematically deviate from these binding norms.

**Children are separated from their families without legal proportionality, the right to effective defense, or meaningful avenues for appeal, in direct violation of ECHR Articles 6, 8, and 13 [\[12\]](#).**

According to the Venice Commission's guiding principles for rule-of-law governance [\[13\]](#), **Sweden no longer meets the functional standards expected of a constitutional democracy.**

Principle	Assessment
Popular Sovereignty	Undermined
Transparency	Severely Restricted
Legal Certainty	Inverted in Practice
Judicial Independence	Formal, Not Substantive
Accountability	Virtually Absent

### Conclusion: A Rule of Law in Disintegration

The Swedish legal system is in a state of gradual constitutional erosion. Rights guaranteed by domestic and international law exist on paper but lack practical enforcement. Sweden has thus evolved into what might aptly be termed a democratic facade governance: a system in which the rule of law is upheld in form but not in substance.

*"Democracy is not merely a matter of form – it is a matter of function." – [Cass R. Sunstein](#), Harvard Law School*

*"We live in a masquerade of democratic dictatorship – granted the right to exist, but not to live." – [Nic. Cheropoulos](#)*

## Chapter 03

# Examination of Swedish Public Exercise of Power

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## The Constitution's Principles – A Value-Based Facade

Chapter 1 of the Instrument of Government (Regeringsformen) proclaims that public power in Sweden shall be exercised with respect for human equality, freedom, and dignity, and that the state shall promote family life, health, education, cultural identity, and combat discrimination. These declarations are deeply rooted in international commitments such as the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the European Convention on Human Rights, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

However, when these norms are tested against the reality of Swedish administrative practice, particularly in matters involving coercive interventions under LVU, a starkly different picture emerges. ***Constitutional values increasingly function as rhetorical declarations, while the lived reality is marked by systemic repression, legal uncertainty, and an institutional culture of silence.***

## The Practical Reality – A System in Regression

### 1. LVU – A Tool for Control Rather Than Protection

The LVU legislation governing the coercive care of minors is applied arbitrarily and without adequate oversight. A comprehensive analysis of 20,000 rulings (Helensdotter, 2024 [\[02\]](#)) reveals that children's own expressed wishes are routinely misinterpreted or disregarded. Secrecy provisions are used to conceal systemic abuse, and children's right to family life is sacrificed to institutional interests.

### 2. Welfare Principles Replaced by Institutional Logic

Rather than protecting children and families, the system promotes a pathologizing view of normative deviation. Religiosity, cultural distinctiveness, and strong family bonds are in some cases treated as risk factors rather than as resources, a fundamental inversion of child welfare principles.

### 3. State Care That Causes Harm

Research and investigative journalism consistently indicate that children in coercive care face ***heightened risks of suicide, abuse, and lifelong mental health challenges*** [\[14\]](#). Deaths have occurred within the system. Meanwhile, care staff frequently lack adequate training and oversight is demonstrably deficient.

### 4. An Economy Built Upon Abuse

The system has created a parallel economy in which children function as ***revenue sources*** for both private and municipal actors. This occurs under the banner of “***social sustainability***”, yet the outcome is lifelong institutional dependency and psychological trauma rather than genuine support.

### 5. Legal Certainty – A Judicial Illusion

Courts approve agency decisions with near-automatic frequency, often without substantive evaluation of the evidence presented. Reviews are formalistic rather than legally rigorous. Individuals are routinely denied access to documentation, and proceedings lack any meaningful transparency.

## 6. Cultural Discrimination Through Legal Terminology

Concepts such as 'excessive attachment' are applied against families with strong emotional bonds, particularly within minority communities. This constitutes a normative assault on cultural identity conducted through the language of law [\[15\]](#), [\[16\]](#).

### Fundamental Freedoms – Formally Protected, Practically Undermined

- **Freedom of Speech:** Social services staff and care workers risk reprisals, a pervasive culture of silence, or psychiatric labelling if they publicly question institutional decisions.
- **Freedom of the Press:** Editorial pressure and institutional obstruction impede serious journalism on LVU and related social abuses.
- **Freedom of Information:** The state dismisses credible criticism as 'disinformation' [\[18\]](#), [\[20\]](#) without producing evidence to substantiate such characterizations.
- **Principle of Public Access:** Systemic failures are concealed through targeted secrecy provisions and deliberate case isolation.

### The Parliament (Riksdag) – A Silent Accomplice

Although the Instrument of Government assigns Parliament ultimate responsibility for overseeing the exercise of public authority, the Riksdag has effectively abdicated this role. Extensive reports on coercive interventions, deaths in state care, and systemic legal uncertainty have failed to prompt significant parliamentary inquiry or investigation. Representative democracy has thereby been reduced to a formality.

*"This constitutes a crisis of legitimacy: when the people's representatives remain silent, abuses are legitimized."*

### Council of Europe Guidelines on Child-Friendly Justice

The Council of Europe's guidelines on child-friendly justice establish clear standards against which Sweden's conduct must be measured [\[21\]](#):

- **Participation:** Children have the right to be heard in decisions affecting them, and adults are obliged to take their views seriously.
- **Best Interests of the Child:** All decisions must fully respect children's rights and account for their needs in a manner proportionate to their age and maturity.
- **Care and Respect:** Children must be treated with dignity and care at all times, and their privacy must be protected.
- **Equal Treatment:** All children, regardless of origin, religion, disability, or background, are entitled to equal protection under the law.
- **Rule of Law:** Children facing legal proceedings must have access to legal representation, and courts must account for their unique circumstances.

*"It is not more laws that we need – but loyalty to the constitutional laws we already have."* [\[22\]](#)

## Chapter 04

# Systemic Collapse at the Core of the Rule of Law

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## Sweden's Administrative Practices and Constitutional Accountability

### 1. A Rule-of-Law Violation in Real Time: The Passivity of Government and Parliament

According to the *Venice Commission* [23], UN human rights conventions, OECD principles of good governance, and *GRECO* recommendations [24], [25], the legitimacy of public authority rests upon transparency, legal certainty, and accountability to the people. Despite these obligations, Sweden's highest state institutions continue to act in violation of these foundational principles:

- **Parliament** continues to fund coercive LVU interventions without evidence-based justification or assessment of legal proportionality.
- **The Government** avoids engaging with international and academic scrutiny, responding to systemic criticism with silence or through the deployment of repressive measures.
- **No legislative reforms** have been enacted despite extensive and well-documented evidence of legal uncertainty, abuse, and systemic failures in child protection.

Collectively, this constitutes what UN special rapporteurs have termed a “*systemic failure of legislative responsibility*” [26], [27], a parliamentary collapse in oversight, accountability, and the safeguarding of citizens against the abuse of power.

### 2. Scientific Evidence: An Abuse Model Conducted in the Child's Name

A November 2024 presentation to the Swedish Parliament by researcher *Ronja Helensdotter* [02], based upon an analysis of 20,000 LVU rulings, reveals a system that is structurally arbitrary and harmful:

- **Judicial Arbitrariness:** Outcomes in LVU proceedings depend more on the practices of individual judges than on objective legal review.
- **Excess Mortality:** 6.8% of children subjected to coercive care have died, without official explanation or any state-initiated corrective action.
- **Social Bias:** Children from stable homes and minority families are disproportionately overrepresented in coercive care placements.

The state's continued funding of this system without revision or reform constitutes a structural betrayal of both the constitution and Sweden's international commitments.

### 3. Institutional Corruption: A Silent Economy of Abuse

The LVU system has evolved into a commercially lucrative industry for private and municipal actors:

- **Revenue per child** in coercive care frequently exceeds 1 million SEK annually.
- **Complex corporate structures** obscure profits and ownership arrangements, deliberately evading public scrutiny.
- **Financial incentives**, rather than children's welfare needs, drive coercive intervention decisions.

The OECD and GRECO (Council of Europe) characterize this as *institutional corruption*, a situation in which public resources sustain a profit-driven system fundamentally at odds with individual rights.

#### 4. Courts Without Independence – The Rule of Law Hollowed Out

Chapter 1, Section 8 of the Instrument of Government mandates judicial independence. Yet in LVU proceedings, a legal culture prevails in which:

- **Role Conflict:** Judges function as institutional enforcers for social services rather than as impartial arbiters of law.
- **Reversal of the Burden of Proof:** Parents are required to disprove allegations without access to the evidence upon which those allegations are based.
- **Absence of Proportionality Assessment:** Courts fail to evaluate children's best interests in any substantive or meaningful manner.

These deficiencies violate ECHR Articles 6 and 8 and represent, according to international experts, **a systematic denial of justice** [28].

#### 5. Municipal Self-Governance – Power Without Accountability

Chapter 1, Section 7 of the Instrument of Government regulates municipal self-governance, a democratic principle now weaponized as a legal shield against accountability:

- **Municipalities such as Linköping** have abolished family support services and blocked legitimate avenues for appeal.
- **Parents who question institutional decisions** risk being subjected to psychiatric labelling as a disciplinary mechanism.
- **Social welfare boards** operate in practical terms beyond meaningful judicial oversight.

This conduct breaches both the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Council of Europe's Charter on Local Self-Government, which explicitly require transparency, legal review, and the protection of individual rights.

#### 6. Constitutional Accountability Dissolved – The Heart of Democracy in Decay

Chapter 1, Section 6 of the Instrument of Government states: ***“The Government governs the realm. It is accountable to the Parliament.”*** In practice:

- **The Government** dismisses credible criticism as **“disinformation”**, without producing any supporting evidence [29].
- **Whistleblowers**, researchers, and journalists who expose systemic misconduct face threats, exclusion, and coordinated defamation campaigns.
- **Parliament** exercises neither effective oversight nor constitutional responsibility, it remains silent, provides funding, and thereby enables the continuation of abuses.

According to international indices including **Freedom House** and **IDEA**, **Sweden now exhibits measurable signs of democratic erosion: a lack of accountability, insufficient transparency, and a systematic denial of systemic failure.**

#### Call for International Scrutiny and Action

Sweden's handling of coercive interventions is not a series of isolated failures, it is symptomatic of a profound **systemic crisis** in which:

- **Parliament** has ceased to safeguard citizens' rights.
- **The Government** acts without transparency, proportionality, or accountability.
- **The judiciary** has abandoned its role as a protective mechanism for the vulnerable.

*“A democratic parliament cannot remain passive when scientific evidence reveals a life-threatening systemic abuse financed by public money.”* [30], [32], [33].

## Chapter 05

# A Constitutional State in Decline

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## A Structural Analysis of the Swedish Administrative System in LVU Cases

This report exposes a systemic, long-standing, and legally devastating practice within the Swedish administrative system, specifically in relation to the forcible removal of children under the **Care of Young Persons (Special Provisions) Act (1990:52), known as LVU** [34], [35]. While Sweden is internationally regarded as a model for human rights, this analysis reveals a deeply rooted contradiction between official rhetoric and the actual exercise of state authority. A bureaucratic system emerges in which children are removed on vague grounds, courts function as formalistic rubber stamps, and secrecy legislation serves to shield authorities rather than to protect individual rights.

**Sweden's persistent evasion of international scrutiny is in large measure attributable to its strong global reputation, a reputation which now, perversely, serves to protect systematic abuses** [36], [37], [38]. Particularly affected are families subjected to the most intrusive state interventions within the sphere of private family life.

## Key Observations and Systemic Failures

### 1. Courts Have Lost Their Adjudicative Function

Over 95% of social services' applications for compulsory care are approved by administrative courts. The courts of appeal reverse fewer than 2% of lower court decisions, and oral hearings are routinely denied, a state of affairs that directly contradicts ECHR Article 6, which guarantees the right to a fair trial.

### 2. Municipal Law Without Constitutional Boundaries

Municipal legal officers simultaneously serve as advisors to social welfare committees, decision-makers in individual cases, and legal representatives for the state in court proceedings. This conflation of roles constitutes a direct breach of the constitutional requirements for objectivity and impartiality as prescribed in **Chapter 1, Article 9 of the Swedish Instrument of Government** [01].

### 3. Secrecy as a Shield for Authorities – Not for Children

Confidentiality provisions are routinely applied to withhold information from parents, legal representatives, and journalists, thereby preventing transparency, accountability, and access to effective legal remedies. The principle of public access is overridden under the pretext of “protecting the child,” when in practice it serves to shield the actions of state agencies from scrutiny.

### 4. Systematic Violations of International Law

Sweden's application of LVU contradicts several binding international conventions:

- **European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)**, [Article 6](#) (right to a fair trial), [Article 8](#) (right to respect for family life), [Article 13](#) (right to an effective remedy) [39].
- **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)**, [Article 12](#) (the child's right to be heard in proceedings affecting them) [06].
- **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)**, [Article 14](#) (right to a fair and public hearing) [40].

## 5. Total Institutional Control

Authorities effectively control the evidence, the structure of proceedings, the flow of information, and the interpretation of **“the child's best interests”**, without any effective mechanism for independent legal oversight or external accountability.

## 6. Arbitrary and Legally Insecure Decisions

Forcible removals are frequently carried out on the basis of subjective psychological evaluations, anecdotal accounts, and municipal interests, rather than objective evidence or legally principled assessments.

## Constitutional Erosion in Practice

The Instrument of Government (Chapter 1, Articles 1 and 9) [101](#) requires that all public power be exercised with respect for individual freedom and dignity, impartiality, and objectivity. In practice, however, the Swedish administrative system has evolved into a self-referential mechanism in which government decisions are not subjected to substantive review, and courts function more as **institutional rubber stamps** than as genuine judicial bodies.

Those subjected to forced removal do not receive a fair, public, and impartial hearing. Instead, they are met with silent, written, and mechanical approval. **This constitutes a violation of both the Swedish Constitution and binding international human rights conventions.**

## Secrecy as a Systemic Tool of Power

In the context of LVU proceedings, Swedish confidentiality legislation is not deployed to protect children, but rather to shield authorities from scrutiny:

- Parents are denied access to their own records, recordings, and the decisions made about their families.
- Legal representatives are prevented from reviewing the key evidence upon which judicial decisions are based.
- Journalists and researchers are denied access to relevant documentation even in cases where children are demonstrably suffering harm.

**Sweden thereby violates Articles 6 and 13 of the ECHR as well as Article 12 of the UNCRC. In numerous cases, there is no meaningful possibility of effective legal review or institutional accountability.**

## An International Issue – A European Precedent

This is not an isolated national concern. Sweden's regression in the rule of law is a matter of direct relevance to the entire international community. The following measures are therefore called for:

- **An independent international investigation** into Sweden's LVU practices, initiated by the UN Human Rights Council, the Council of Europe, and relevant EU institutions.
- **The designation of Sweden as a high-risk country** for rule-of-law backsliding in international monitoring frameworks.
- **Redress for affected children and families**, and robust protection for civil society actors from institutional retaliation.

*“When a country with Sweden's global standing and influence in rule-of-law discourse can deteriorate without consequence, the entire international legal order is undermined. We urge action, before more rights are lost behind closed*

| *doors in what was once considered the world's most transparent society." [\[33\]](#), [\[36\]](#).*

## Conclusion: A Constitutional Emergency

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Sweden's systematic failure to protect abducted children, to respond to international child abduction with urgency and legal rigor, and to uphold the rule of law in LVU proceedings reflects far more than administrative shortcomings, it signals a deep constitutional breakdown. Despite a constitution that proclaims human dignity, legal certainty, and transparency, the state's conduct has been reduced to a legal facade devoid of substantive meaning.

Repressive silence, bureaucratic automatism, and a culture of institutional self-preservation have displaced openness, accountability, and genuine child protection. ***What is officially framed as “the best interests of the child” has, in practice, become a technocratic construct, one frequently deployed to legitimize abuses of power rather than to secure the child's rights.***

This rule-of-law emergency is not a domestic Swedish matter, it concerns the entire international community. When courts are reduced to formalistic executors of administrative presumptions, when legitimate criticism is met with silence or repression, and when children are treated as socio-political objects rather than as rights-bearing individuals, both democracy and legal trust are fundamentally undermined.

***It is time for Sweden to be held accountable according to the same standards that are applied to other states governed by the rule of law.***

## Appeal to the International Community

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In light of serious and systemic deficiencies in Sweden's adherence to the principles of the rule of law, particularly within child protection and compulsory care under the LVU, the following measures are proposed:

### 1. Independent Review

Initiation of an internationally led, independent review of Sweden's adherence to the rule of law, with particular focus on the LVU system, children's rights, and the exercise of state authority over families.

### 2. Constitutional and Judicial Reform

- Recommendation that Sweden establish a constitutional court with the mandate to adjudicate the compatibility of government decisions with the Instrument of Government.
- Demands for reforms in accordance with the ECHR, the CRC, and Sweden's own Instrument of Government.
- Legislative amendments to restore the principle of public access to information and to strengthen legal safeguards within confidentiality legislation.

### 3. Protection of Democratic Actors

- Enhanced statutory protections for whistleblowers, journalists, and researchers who expose misconduct within healthcare, education, and social services.
- The establishment of an independent Child Rights Ombudsman, empowered to represent children in legal and administrative disputes with the state.

### 4. Accountability and Transparency

- A comprehensive public audit of the entire LVU system and its compliance with rule-of-law principles.
- An international evaluation of Sweden's adherence to UN and Council of Europe rule-of-law standards.
- Consideration of targeted sanctions against Swedish institutions that systematically violate binding international conventions.

### 5. Democratic Awareness

- Promotion of open international discourse on the state of Sweden's rule of law.
- Acknowledgement by the international community that Sweden, like any state, may be subject to systemic abuse of power, and a corresponding demand that Sweden honor its constitutional and international obligations.

*"Sweden's constitution is not the problem, the problem is its abandonment in practice. What is now required is not new legislation, but transparency, accountability, and a return to foundational rule-of-law principles."*

## Advocating Parents & Organizations

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- [Sweden's Failure to Protect Its Children – Abducted and Abandoned](#) | Nic. Cheropoulos (18 January 2025)
- [Sweden's Political Establishment – A Circus?](#) | Nic. Cheropoulos (17 March 2025)
- [Sweden's Authorities Destroy Families and Children's Lives](#) | Nic. Cheropoulos (20 March 2025)
- [Prosecutors' Indifference – From Victim to Forgotten](#) | Nic. Cheropoulos (29 March 2025)
- [Sweden's Supervisory Authorities – Government Lackeys?](#) | Nic. Cheropoulos (27 April 2025)
- [The Parliamentary Ombudsman \(JO\) – A Toothless Tiger](#) | Nic. Cheropoulos (29 April 2025)
- [A Father Fighting for Justice / En Pappa Kamp Rättvisa](#) (Facebook)
- [Children's Rights / Barnens Rätt](#) (Facebook)
- [Family United Sweden](#) (Facebook)
- [B.A.R.N. – Best Interests of the Child, Legal Certainty Now](#) (Facebook)
- [THE HORROR SERVICE AND THE FAILED SYSTEM](#) / Skräcktjänsten och Felsystemet (www)
- [ActionAgainstChildAbduction](#) (www)

## Ongoing Campaigns

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- [We Demand Legal Safeguards in Sweden's Social Services](#) (Vi kraver rattsakerhet inom Socialtjänsten i Sverige)
- [Abducted and Abandoned – Sweden's Failure to Protect Its Children](#)

## Relevant Public Articles & Reports

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- [“What If I Have Done Something Wrong”](#) Mission Investigative: *They Take Our Children*, **SVT** (2024.03.06)
- [“We Want Our Children Back”](#) Mission Investigative: *They Take Our Children*, **SVT** (2024.03.06)
- [Swedish Authorities Have Lost Respect for Freedom of Expression](#), **DN** Dagens Nyheter (Nils Funcke 2024.07.29)
- [Foster Children Forced to Relocate Despite Legal Reform: “We Want to Stay”](#), **SVT** (2024.12.20)
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