

Iran position paper

Country: Iran

Committee: United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

Topic: Child Labor

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Currently, Iran is massively struggling with the problem of child labor. Child labor is the use of children in any kind of business or industry when its both legal and illegal that is considered inhuman when there is a work that should be done by an adult. However, it is different if a child willingly works under supervision in a safe environment without the disturbance of their physical or mental health and education. Child labor became a problem since the Qajar era in 1905 when the children were forced to work in carpet workshops, fruit and vegetable gardens and animal husbandry. Lack of education and poverty were the main causes of this problem back in the day. The modernization of Iran started in 1925. However, child labor still existed in some areas until the white revolution in 1964 when it reached the lowest rate. Later on article 79 of the Iranian labor law was rectified therefore, banning the labor of any child under 15 years of age. Throughout the previous four decades many children were forced to start working again leading to the reopening of child labor cases. This matter only became worse when Iran started taking immigrants. The biggest challenges that follow the problem of child labor are: Illiteracy, lack of health and sanitation, and long-term economic problems leading to the failure of society.

It is estimated that there are more than 120 thousand labor children in Iran, many of which are involved with underground black markets and child trafficking mafia. About 14 thousand of these children are homeless and a large percentage of them go under heavy exploitation and different types of abuse.

UNICEF is not able to directly interact with the problem of child labor as many of these children are included in the outermost layers of underground mafias and are very difficult to get in contact with to the point that we are not completely sure if they even exist or not. This makes the problem harder to solve and leaves Iran in need of international support. Yet despite all of the problems, we are still working hard to do whatever we can for solving the issue. There are many workshops taking place for different communities such as students, local non-government organizations (NGO) and government workers, in order to raise awareness and increase community sensitization. With help and commitment from the government and international communities we want to overcome this issue and stop any more innocent children from getting mixed up in the cycle of child labor and abuse.