**Committee: UNICEF**

**Topic: Preventing Child Trafficking In Third World Countries**

**Country: Iran**

**Delegate: Elvin Karakaya**

Child trafficking is an issue we don’t talk about enough, when it is such a big problem in today’s world. According to The International Labor Organization’s research in 2002, 1.2 million children are being trafficked each year. This huge number is especially bad news for Iran, since government has a hard time managing and preventing this crime from taking place.

Based on a report done by US State Department Iran is one of the most dangerous countries in the world in terms of human trafficking. In the report they mention how the economic and environmental downfall of Iran also has an impact on this issue, by saying: “...They have significantly exacerbated Iran’s human trafficking problem, particularly for vulnerable communities such as ethnic minority groups, refugee and migrant populations, and women and children.” They also find Iran government to be rather passive in regards of elimination of said matter, by pointing out: “The Government of Iran does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking and is not making significant efforts to do so.”

Though Iran has failed to get trafficking of children and women under control, there certainly were some attempts. In 2002, Law to Protect Children and Adolescents criminalized buying, selling, and exploiting children. However, the punishments for said crimes were six months to one year imprisonment which hardly was a sufficient retribution for kidnapping and exploiting of children. A 2004 law criminalized trafficking in persons by means of threat or use of force, coercion, abuse of power, or abuse of a victim’s position of vulnerability for purposes of prostitution, slavery, or forced marriage.  Although now the sentence was estimated to be at least 10 years of imprisonment, it still wasn’t enough to stop this violation all together. One of the reasons why was that in Iranian court system legal testimony by women only half the weight accorded to the testimony by men, thereby restricting female trafficking victim’s access to justice.  There were other incredible wrongdoings that were committed by the government when it came to protecting and identifying the victims. Including; “…The government reportedly continued to punish trafficking victims for unlawful acts traffickers compelled them to commit, such as prostitution and immigration violations. The government did not screen for trafficking among detained migrants pending deportation, and there were credible reports some of these individuals were victims of trafficking. Some of these individuals experienced severe physical abuse while in government custody, which at times resulted in death and lack of food and water for extended periods of time.”

There are many laws and practices that need to be enforced, especially regarding the education of children and general awareness of human trafficking through the public. UNICEF mentions in an article about trafficking of minors, saying: “Attitudes and practices need to change: Getting and keeping all children in school –especially girls – would dramatically improve their protection, but 120 million children still never go to school, the majority of them girls. Awareness campaigns need to empower communities, families and children themselves to prevent trafficking.” Iran has a long way to go in terms of completely getting rid of human trafficking, but not all hope is lost. In January 2018, the Iranian parliament approved a bill to join the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC). Whereas, this is a small step towards the right direction, it most certainly is not enough. Many changes are in need to be made, and Iranian government is expected to perform their best in every step of the way.