Name: Duru Karalar

Country: Iran

Committee: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees | UNHCR

Topic: Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by UN Peacekeeping Troops Toward Refugees

We, as the Islamic Republic of Iran are aware that UN troops in Haiti and Sudan have been accused of sexual abuse of children. In 2004–2007, according to an internal UN report, over 100 UN soldiers were sent home for their involvement in a “sex ring”, but none were charged. In 2015, the UN started disclosing more figures about thousands of allegations of forced sex with UN soldiers in exchange of material aid, of which hundreds involving minors.

Sexual exploitation and abuse by humanitarian workers and peacekeepers represent a catastrophic failure of protection. It brings harm to the very people the UN, and international organizations are mandated to protect the reputation of these organizations. It also violates universally recognized international legal norms and standards. Although not a new phenomenon, sexual exploitation, and abuse were brought to the forefront of public attention in 2002 following allegations of widespread abuse of refugee and internally displaced women and children by humanitarian workers and peacekeepers in West Africa. Since then, the international community has taken action to address the shortcomings of existing mechanisms to prevent such abuses.

We are, as the Islamic Republic of Iran host to one of the largest and most protracted urban refugee situations in the world and has provided asylum to refugees for over four decades. Forty years on since the 1979 Soviet invasion and the subsequent waves of violence, displacement from Afghanistan continues in the longest protracted refugee situation covered under UNHCR’s mandate. Nearly five million Afghans remain displaced outside of the country; of these, 90% are hosted by the Islamic Republics of Pakistan and Iran. The Government of Iran is responsible for refugee registration and status determination. The legal status of refugees is defined by two international instruments: the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. The Islamic Republic of Iran acceded to the 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol on 28 July 1976, with reservations to Article 17 (wage-earning employment), Article 23 (public relief), Article 24 (labor legislation and social security), and Article 26 (freedom of movement).

Recognizing the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse by UN peacekeeping troops toward refugees; our citizens and our refugees are being abused by UN peacekeeping troops and other refugees. We must to be together and stop this situation.