

Child labor in Iran: Life in the dumps for millions of Iran's youth

As the world marked the International Youth Day on August 12, Iran's record on this subject is one of the worst in the world, and is rapidly deteriorating.

LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM, August 16, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- There are no official statistics on the number of child and youth laborers in Iran. However, according to unofficial sources, the number of working children is between four to seven million (Asia Times 11.2.21). These sources estimate that these are minimum numbers.

Data and researches collected, indicate that children and youth labor in Iran and entities backed by Iran, is on the rise and have deteriorated to its worst situation ever. While children and youth labor has declined globally, in Iran it is still increasing.



Children of the waste collection industry in Iran
Photo By: Mohammad Barkar.

Vice president of the association for the protection of children's rights in Iran Telereh Pazhuhesh said, "despite the global reduction in the child labor statistics, we see child labor surge in Iran".
-(borgenproject.org/10-facts-about-child-labor-in-iran)

Experts indicate that increasing poverty, inflation, parental addiction and rising prices are among the main factors behind the ever rising levels of child labor in Iran.

Waste Collection

As reported by The state-run ILNA news agency in September 2020, One of the leading fields of

child labor in Iran is waste collection.

This industry is estimated to result in a daily revenue upwards of 2000 billion Tomans (60 million USD). The municipality of Tehran alone benefits from child labor by generating 200 billion Tomans (6 million USD) in revenue.

The waste collection mafia in Iran is among the largest syndicates of organized crime in the country. According to government officials, only 2.5 percent of the profits from waste collection go to children with the mafia pocketing the rest. This is especially dangerous because as Teheran council member Elharm Efrtekhari noted: "these children not only work but also live and sleep in garbage factories that are filled with vermin and odors".

Mohammad is 15 years old, when meeting a reporter he said: "I've been doing this for five years. Now in order to collect more rubbish and waste, I had to hire two more children to help in this task -(Asia Times 11.2.21).

Most children who work as waste collectors are the main breadwinners of their families. According to The Brogan Project, an American non-profit organization that is addressing poverty and hunger, the Iranian government reports that 60,000 children live in the streets, of which officials believe that as much as 90% of the child laborers were subject to sexual harassment.

Elaheh Ghorbani, a senior expert in women's studies and sociologist, examined the living conditions of working girls in Tehran. - (Research Paper: The Consequences of Street Life for Work Girls). She interviewed 50 working girls from the ages six to sixteen. Some of the conditions relayed by the girls were poverty, the family's inability to earn a living, family breakdown and abusive or single parents. To avoid harassment, the girls would try to look like boys by cutting their hair short and wearing boyish clothing.

Minoo Mehrz, director of the AIDS Research Center, indicated that the rate of HIV positive working children is equal to that of sex workers. About 10 percent of the children who are sexually abused experience HIV at the age of seven.- (The Kurdish website aasoo.org – June 12, 2020).

According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, member's of the United Nations General Assembly, including Iran must combat the economic abuse of children. Sources say that the lack of government support and solutions on the issue of child laborers in Iran shows that child laborers are not important to the Iranian officials and these children have no share in their own country. As long as the government fails to support families financially, these children will continue to labor in the never-ending cycle of street work.

The Nikolaus foundation dedicated to bringing awareness to the plight and hardships children face worldwide. We evaluate and compile lists of organizations dedicated to the welfare and support of children worldwide. www.nikolausfoundation.org

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