

**Concluding observation Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
E/C.12/IRN/CO/2 para 11**

Full recommendation:

The Committee recommends that the State party increase its efforts to combat unemployment through specifically targeted measures, in particular aimed at women and youth, including by addressing mismatches between education and labour markets through increases in the quality of technical and vocational training and education. The Committee also urges the State party to adopt temporary special measures to address the very high unemployment rates in areas with ethnic minorities, and to include information in its next State party report on the progress achieved.

Assessment using Impact Iran human rights indicators¹

- A. The Committee recommends that the Islamic Republic of Iran increase its efforts to combat unemployment through specifically targeted measures, in particular aimed at women and youth, including by addressing mismatches between education and labour markets through increases in the quality of technical and vocational training and education.**

Women have limited access to work which exacerbates unemployment within this group. A husband can prevent his spouse from pursuing an occupation which he believes to be against family values or harmful to his or her reputation.² There is no law prohibiting an employer from seeking a husband's permission for a woman to work and employers have been reportedly requiring engaged or married women to provide a written statement of permission from their husbands in order to be hired.³ Although not challenging the discriminatory legal framework described above, the Government has engaged in steps addressing the status of women with regards to the right to work in the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Supreme Administrative Council reportedly decided to require the Government to allocate 30% of the managerial positions to women. Additionally, the Deputy-President for women and family affairs has drafted a document on the promotion of the status of women and the family through identifying the indicators of gender balance, and consultation with the civil society. The Government also established a National Task Force on the Empowerment of Female Heads of Households in the field of

¹ESCR.6.2.P.1
ESCR.6.2.O.1
ESCR.6.1.S.3
ESCR.6.1.P.1 ESCR.6.1.O.1

² Civil Code of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Art.1117 < <https://shenasname.ir/laws/6664> >

³ Human Rights Watch, 'It's A Men's Club': Discrimination against Women in Iran's Labour Market, May 2017
https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/iran0517_web_11.pdf

development of employment and entrepreneurship. The Government reportedly increased the quota of women in recruitment of government departments and launched the Women's Business Development and Acceleration Center which aims at “strengthening rural women's associations and cooperation” as well as “entrepreneurship development for women”.⁴ There is no readily available information as to what extent these measures effectively translated in practice. In fact, recent statistics suggest otherwise: a recent World Bank study ranked Iran fourth lowest in its 2019 Women, Business and the Law index,⁵ and according to the Government’s statistics published in 2018, female economic participation stood at 15.9 per cent for women, compared to 64.1 per cent for men, one of the lowest rates in the world.⁶

With regards to vocational trainings, Iran adopted the Law on Requirements for Vocational and Technical Training in 1997. The law entitles employers to request and obtain professional and technical certificates from relevant education authorities regarding applicants from jobseekers. Additionally, it contains provisions concerning training and education to improve the educational skills of existing qualified and semi-qualified workers.

In 1980, Iran’s government established the Technical and Vocational Training Organization under the Ministry of Labour. This organization is in charge of arranging vocational courses ranging from 1 to 18 months in duration in the public sector, with permanent centers and mobile training centers for rural areas, as well as in prisons, garrisons, industries and in private authorized institutions. In the Persian year 1396 (2017), there were reportedly 552 such institutions, in which 191 were for men, 95 women and 226 were multi-gender. This represents a slow decline in the number of training centers, of which there were 588 in the Persian year 1395, 698 in 1394 and 719 in 1393.⁷ Nevertheless, it is not apparent whether a decrease in quantity of vocational and technical training opportunities is correlated with a similar decrease in quality. There are no reports that indicate that this mechanism has had a substantial positive effect in the labour market for women and youth. Despite a decrease in overall unemployment rates, youth unemployment (ages 15-29) in 2019 remained high at around 23.7% in which 20.3% of the unemployed workforce was male and 35.3% was female.⁸

B. The Committee also urges the Islamic Republic of Iran to adopt temporary special measures to address the very high unemployment rates in areas with ethnic minorities

⁴ UPR 2019, National Report, Islamic Republic of Iran, <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/WG.6/34/IRN/1>

⁵ World Bank, Women, Business and the Law 2019: A Decade of Reform, May 2019, p.9

⁶ Statistical Centre of Iran, *Natayej-e-Amar giri-ye- nirou-ye-kaar, Paeiz-e-1396* [Results of the census on workforce, Autumn of 1396], <https://bit.ly/330NG8t>

⁷ Combined data from the Iranian Statistics Center (<https://www.amar.org.ir/>) and the Annual statistics of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs. (<https://plp.mcls.gov.ir/>)

⁸ <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2019/08/iran-improved-employment-women-youth-left-behind.html>

Many articles of Iran's Labour Law emphasize the right to work without discrimination for all citizens. Article 6 of the Labor Code deals with non-discrimination and notes that everyone is equal before the law. Article 28 of the Constitution also obliges the government to create employment for all without discrimination. Despite this, in various professions, including judicial and governmental positions, gender and religious restrictions apply. For example, women cannot stand as judges, or religious minorities cannot be hired in positions where Shiite beliefs are required. Although Article 28 of the Constitution guarantees the freedom to choose a job, the inclusion of the condition that a person is only allowed to hold a position if it "is not against Islam and the public interests and rights of others" allows for arbitrary interpretations of the law and for restrictions to one's right to work, especially for minorities.

There is a mechanism included in the structure of the Ministry of Labour that is tasked with receiving and analyzing complaints related to labour standards. Despite its existence, this mechanism is not known to be efficient. Reports from the last few years describe a pattern of workers' complaints regarding poor working conditions, exploitation and discrimination being disregarded, leading to public displays of protest.⁹

In 2017, Khuzestan Province, where the majority of Arabs reside, had an unemployment rate of 11.7% for males and 28.5% for females.¹⁰ In the same year, Sistan and Baluchestan Province, where the Balouch ethnic group reside, had the highest unemployment rate in males of 13.6% and 14.8% for females. Lastly, Kurdistan province had an unemployment rate of 8.8% for males and the highest unemployment rate in Iran for women, with 27.8%.¹¹ Despite the fact that these statistics are likely lower than the actual unemployment numbers due to the government skewing data, this contrast in unemployment numbers between ethnic minority areas and the rest of the country.¹²

C. The Committee also urges the Islamic Republic of Iran to include information in its next State party report on the progress achieved.

Iran hasn't submitted another report to the ICESCR since its review on the implementation of the Covenant in 2013.¹³

The state has not been able to combat unemployment efficiently, especially in minority areas where unemployment rates are much higher than other parts of the country. Iran has also not

⁹ <https://www.en-irana.org/four-months-report-of-workers-conditions-in-iran> and <https://en.radiozamaneh.com/29631/> and <https://en.radiozamaneh.com/28616/>

¹⁰ Source: Statistical Centre Iran, 2017

¹¹ Information taken from Statistical Centre of Iran available in: <https://minorityrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Rights-Denied-Violations-against-ethnic-and-religious-minorities-in-Iran.pdf>

¹² For more, please see: Minority Rights Group, <https://minorityrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Rights-Denied-Violations-against-ethnic-and-religious-minorities-in-Iran.pdf>

¹³ https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/countries.aspx?CountryCode=IRN&Lang=EN

been reporting on its progress on employment issues in reports to ICESCR. Considering this information, this recommendation has not been implemented.

Recommendation Status:

This recommendation has **NOT** been implemented.