

Concluding Observation Committee on the Rights of the Child CRC/C/IRN/CO/3-4 para 56

Full recommendation:

In the light of its general comment No. 8 (2006) on the right of the child to protection from corporal punishment and other cruel or degrading forms of punishment, the Committee urges the State party to review its legislation with a view to prohibiting all forms of corporal punishment irrespective of its purpose, including by parents, guardians and teachers, and instead to promote positive, non-violent and participatory forms of child-rearing and discipline.

Assessment using Impact Iran indicators¹

As all Iranian laws have religious (Shia Islam) roots, many cases of acts of violence against children are not recognized as violence and are attributed to the right of a parent to discipline their child, this includes violence in child-rearing situations and parents or guardians disciplining children within the household. After a particularly gruesome incident in 2016, where a father beheaded his child, Government officials and international organizations highlighted these deficiencies in Iran and the government pledged to enforce protective laws on children exposed to violence.² For this reason, the Iranian government prepared a bill entitled "The Law on Protection and Protection of Children and Teenagers from Violence" and submitted it to parliament for due process. This law had been submitted in 2012 but was stalled in Parliament. It was resubmitted by President Rouhani's government in 2016 and was ultimately approved by the Guardian Council on June 7th 2020. The new law introduces several updates to a previous law passed in 2003, in the form of new procedures for social workers to investigate the situation of children under "extreme danger" (article 33) from abuse and exploitation, as well as by criminalizing several forms of female genital mutilation.

Despite the above highlighted improvements, the new law has been found lacking in some regards and human rights organizations have pointed out that, even with these protections in place, if the murder that prompted lawmakers to draft the bill in the first place had occurred after its passing, the father of the young child who was murdered would still face a minor sentence (3-10 years).³ Additionally the bill doesn't deal with issues of children affected by armed conflict.

There is insufficient information to argue for the positive effects of the new child protection law, yet there is evidence that the recent COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated cases of child abuse in Iran. Iran's welfare organization has speculated that (as of August 13th) child abuse instances had grown fivefold since the beginning of the pandemic.⁴

¹ CRC.19.1.S.1; CRC.19.1.P.1; CRC.19.1.O.1

² Human Rights Watch: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/06/23/iran-child-protection-law-positive-insufficient>

³ Atlantic Council: <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/iransource/the-new-iranian-child-protection-law-is-holistic-but-discriminatory/>

⁴ Atlantic Council: <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/iransource/coronavirus-pandemic-exacerbates-irans-child-abuse-problem/>

Recommendation Status:

This recommendation has **NOT** been implemented.