

## Concluding Observations Committee on the Rights of the Child CRC/C/IRN/CO/3-4 para 80

### Full recommendation:

*The Committee draws the State party's attention to its general comment No. 17 (2013) on the right of the child to rest, leisure, play, recreational activities, cultural life and the arts, and urges the State party to stop discriminating against girls in access to these rights, and to ensure that they are guaranteed the same rights to enjoy cultural, artistic and sports activities on equal terms with boys.*

### *Assessment using Impact Iran human rights indicators<sup>1</sup>*

There is currently no law in Iran that specifically protects the right of children to rest, leisure, play and partake in recreational activities.<sup>2</sup> However, school regulations, which are enforced by school principals, include breaks as well as plans for exercise and recreation classes in their curricula.<sup>3</sup>

After accepting the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Islamic Republic of Iran, while establishing the "National Authority for the Convention on the Rights of the Child" in the Ministry of Justice, prepared a set of measures to implement the provisions of this convention in various dimensions. One of these measures is the preparation of the "National Document on the Rights of the Child,"<sup>4</sup> which has been discussed in the media since 2014 and, according to reports, has been approved by the "Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution."<sup>5</sup> Article 5 of this "National Document" refers to the issue of children's right to rest, recreation and play.<sup>6</sup> However, this document is currently a strategic document and in order to be implemented, there is a need for instructions and other details that must be followed and implemented by the responsible institutions.<sup>7</sup> Although the full text of the document is not yet available to the public, according to Justice Ministry officials, it addresses the right of children to rest, leisure, and play.<sup>8</sup>

The issue of children's right to rest, leisure, and play has been raised by experts in Iranian media for years and is part of domestic discourse.<sup>9</sup> There are nevertheless many shortcomings in

<sup>1</sup> CRC.17.1.S.1.1; CRC.17.1.S.4; CRC.30.1.S.1  
CRC.17.1.P.2.1; ESCR.15.1.1.P.1; ESCR.15.1.1.P.2  
CRC.17.1.O.1; CRC.29.1.O.2; CRC.30.1.O.1; CRC.30.1.O.2; ESCR.15.1.1.O.3

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.isna.ir/news/94072215014/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ghazavatonline.com/?p=14053>

<sup>4</sup> [The government of I.R of Iran website](#)

<sup>5</sup> [PANA news agency](#)

<sup>6</sup> <https://sccr.ir/News/11437/1/>

<sup>7</sup> [Mehr News Agency](#)

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Recent reports: [IRNA news agency](#); [ISNA news agency](#); [Hamshahri Newspaper](#); [Mehr New Agency](#); [The Welfare Organization](#)

schools and cities when it comes to access to and preponderance of physical facilities. Media reports show that many schools do not have playrooms,<sup>10</sup> and that urban planning often fails to address the issue of child-friendly environments.<sup>11</sup>

Although Iranian law protects social and cultural rights for adults and children alike, it contains discriminatory provisions between men and women, ultimately resulting in unequal access to recreational activities between boys and girls. Article 3 of the constitution obliges the government to ensure the universal rights of individuals (both men and women), judicial justice for all, and equal protection by law for the public.<sup>12</sup> In addition, Article 20 of the Constitution emphasises that all people of the nation, both men and women, are equally protected by law, and enjoy all human, political, economic, social and cultural rights, in accordance with “Islamic standards.”<sup>13</sup> Article 21 of the Constitution obliges the government to guarantee the rights of women in all respects, in accordance with “Islamic standards.”<sup>14</sup> While these provisions supposedly safeguard the human rights of women and protect them from discrimination, such legal guarantees exist as long as they are in conformity with “Islamic criteria.” Room for interpretation allowed under qualifications such as “in conformity with Islamic criteria” has often resulted in provisions that discriminate or have a discriminatory impact on various grounds, including gender.

Women and girls have limited access to recreational environments in Iran. According to reports, some cities in Iran have begun establishing women-only parks, chief among them the “Mother’s Paradise” park in Tehran.<sup>15</sup><sup>16</sup> The construction of such parks is based on urban planning implemented by municipalities, who develop and design the parks.<sup>17</sup> At least 20 cities in Iran currently have women's parks. While they give women and girls the opportunity to participate in recreational activities, gender-segregation does not imply equality, even in the realm of recreation.<sup>18</sup>

Women in general do not enjoy the same protections as men in Iranian law. This inequality can also be observed in the realm of sports. Women are, for example, banned from engaging in certain contact sports including wrestling and boxing,<sup>19</sup> and in some cases have restricted ability to watch men's sports in person. Inequalities also exist in the areas of budget allocation and access to facilities.<sup>20</sup> Though all sport majors in Iran have a federation, women's sports often

<sup>10</sup> [Hamshahri Newspaper](#)

<sup>11</sup> [Report focusing on this issue and talking about shortcomings in Iranian. Published through Tabriz city hall website \(East Azerbaijan province\)](#)

<sup>12</sup> [Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran](#)

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> [Radio Free Europe](#)

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> <https://titreshahr.com/fa/news/5407/>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.independentpersian.com/node/63061/>

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.isna.ir/news/99052417613/>

have only a small "association." That is, they are organisationally very small and have limited members.<sup>21</sup> Many of these discriminatory restrictions stem from the attitude of religious institutions in Iran, which consider the role of women in society to be limited to family and motherhood.<sup>22</sup>

As previously mentioned, and as Human Rights Watch reported in 2017, women and girls in Iran are prevented from attending certain sporting events including men's soccer and volleyball.<sup>23</sup> If women try to attend these events, they could be subject to arrest.<sup>24</sup> Bans such as these prevent girls from enjoying leisure activities as equally as boys do. The ban for female attendees for soccer matches has been present since 1981, and for volleyball since 2012.<sup>25</sup> The Iranian government did lift the ban temporarily in 2018 due to pressure from FIFA, and allowed 4,000 tickets to be purchased for the Asia Champions League final, which Iran was hosting.<sup>26</sup> Women were seated 200 meters away from men, but their inclusion in the event was important nonetheless.<sup>27</sup> Despite historic discrimination in women's participation and viewing of sporting events, the Iranian government is indeed slowly increasing access to these leisure activities for women and girls. For example, the government has tried to ensure the presence of a female vice president on the football federation's board of directors by encouraging federations to amend their bylaws<sup>28</sup>, or by equipping football stadiums for female spectators.<sup>29</sup> As stipulated by the Committee on the Rights of the Child, legislation "is required to guarantee access for every child, without discrimination on any ground, to all recreational, cultural and artistic environments, including public and private spaces, natural spaces, parks, playgrounds, sporting venues, museums, cinemas, libraries, theatres, as well as to cultural activities, services and events".<sup>30</sup> While the Islamic Republic of Iran has increased women's access to sports, discriminations between men and women, and between boys and girls still stand. Due to lack of readable information, equal access to other cultural and artistic activities is difficult to determine with precision in Iran. It is not clear that the Islamic Republic is actively ensuring that those rights are guaranteed, and structural discriminations enshrined in Iranian law suggest that the right to rest, leisure, play, to enjoy recreational activities, cultural life and the arts is not ensured for girls. Gender-segregation remains predominant and policies ensuring equal access to cultural and artistic activities are lacking both in regards to sports and more generally.

<sup>21</sup> <https://tn.ai/2444201>

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.sarkhat.com/fa/news/142931613/> and <https://p.dw.com/p/QNfW>

<sup>23</sup> [Human Rights Watch](#)

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> [Human Rights Watch](#)

<sup>26</sup> [Associated Press](#)

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> <https://tn.ai/2444201>

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.irna.ir/news/83486036/>

<sup>30</sup> [UN Committee on the Rights of the Child \(CRC\), General comment No. 17 \(2013\) on the right of the child to rest, leisure, play, recreational activities, cultural life and the arts \(art. 31\), 17 April 2013, CRC/C/GC/17](#)

Besides increasing access to sports venues, the Islamic Republic of Iran has not stopped all discriminations against girls and their rights to rest, leisure, play, and partake in recreational activities, cultural life and the arts has not been ensured.

Recommendation Status:

This recommendation has been **PARTIALLY** implemented.