Who is a child?

Multiple definitions of a "CHILD" in Iranian law

Age ranges from 9 to 18 depending on law

Age of criminal responsibility:
- 9 years for girls
- 15 years for boys

Iran does not comply with international law that defines a child as anyone under 18

Iran's population: 82 million

Children under age 15: 20 million

Why is there a child protection crisis in Iran?

INADEQUATE child protection laws
WEAK labor regulations
Civil society RESTRICTED by state

Juvenile executions

7 juvenile offenders known to be put to death in 2018 (actual number likely higher)

90+ juvenile offenders currently on death row in Iran

Iran executed more than TWICE as many child offenders as the other eight countries combined between 1990 and 2017

Iran: 93 child offenders executed

Eight countries combined: 45 child offenders executed
Child labor

Work that deprives children of their childhood, interferes with their schooling, and is harmful to their physical, mental, social or moral development (ILO)

3 million - 7 million child laborers in Iran

3 million
Source: UN

7 million
Source: Scientific Association of Urban Economics of Iran

20 million
Children under age 15

Present throughout economy

Why so prevalent in Iran?

Weak legal and regulatory environment

Labor Code says under age 15 can’t work, but not enforced

Workplaces with less than 10 employees exempt from most regulations (which may account for 50% of workplaces)

Large undocumented Afghan population vulnerable to exploitation

High-risk sectors

Carpet and rug weaving | Waste disposal | Textile work | Mining | Brickmaking | Masonry | Construction | Chemical production | Domestic work | Street vendors

3 million (mostly Afghan) migrants/refugees in Iran

2 million of these migrants/refugees are undocumented

1.5 million of these migrants/refugees are children

Migrant/refugee children

Children of 2 million undocumented migrants used widely for child labor

These children are highly vulnerable to forced labor, human trafficking and the sex trade

Since 2015, undocumented children are allowed to register at school, but many are not registered due to fears of deportation or financial constraints

Source: Iranian government
Sexual/physical abuse
Infectious and sexually transmitted diseases
Trafficking for labor and sex trade

Street children

Highly vulnerable to:

- Estimated at 200,000
- Mostly in urban centers
- Often used as trash sifters
- Half are children of Afghan migrants
- Come from families with drug addiction, illness, poverty

Girls under 13 years old

- Can be married with consent of father/guardian and judge

13 years old

- Allowed for girls at age 13

15 years old

- 40,404 marriages for girls under age 15 registered in 2015
  Source: Iranian government

18 years old

- 17% of girls in Iran married before age 18
  (Numbers under-report; under-age marriages often not registered)
  Source: UN

Child marriage

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Iran’s international commitments

- Iran is a State Party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (1994) but will not apply any provision “incompatible with Islamic laws or [domestic] legislation”

Signs of progress: citizenship laws

- New law pending that allows mother to pass citizenship on to her children regardless of father’s nationality

- Girls under 13 can be married with consent of father/guardian and judge

- Allowed for girls at age 13

- 6% of Iranian girls married between ages 10 and 14
  Source: Iranian MP

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  Source: Iranian government

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The Center for Human Rights in Iran is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to the protection and promotion of human rights in Iran.

For more information on these issues visit www.iranhumanrights.org