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Dalw 1399 (February 2021)

Report Summary

The information for this research was collected through the completion of monitoring and case registration forms carried out by the field and border monitoring team of the Children's Rights Unit of the Commission in which 5,318 children, including 3,807 (71.6%) boys and 1,509 (28.4%) girls were interviewed in 28 provinces of the country.

Among the children included in the study, 1,024 (19.3%) were between 7 and 11 years of age and 4,294 (80.7%) were between 12 and 18 years of age.

835 (15.7%) children included in the study were from displaced families and 1,990 (37.4%) from returnees' families. The remaining 2,493 (46.9%) were neither from the families of displaced nor from the returnees.

4,456 (83.8%) children included in this research lived at home with their families, but 862 (16.2%) others lived apart from their families i.e., 264, (30.7%) in orphanages and 598 (69.3%) in correction centers.

Children Victims of Armed Conflict

The total number of civilian casualties registered with the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) in the fiscal year 1399 (2020), reaches 8,500 people, including 2,019 (23.8%) children. This figure was 2,696 (25%) in the fiscal year 1398 (2019) when the overall number of civilian casualties was 10,772; thus, this year, the number of child casualties has decreased by 1.2% compared to the total civilian casualties in the previous year and by 25.1% compared to the number of child casualties in the previous year.

Children Involved in Armed Conflict

According to the findings of this study, in the fiscal year 1399 (2020), 126 children were involved in the conflict in the ranks of the armed forces, including government forces and anti-government armed groups, of which 20 (15.9%) were in the ranks of government forces and 96 others (76.2%) were in the ranks of anti-government armed groups. The other 10 (7.9%) did not answer to this question.

In the fiscal year 1398 (2019), the number of children participating in the ranks of government armed forces and anti-government armed groups reached 90, which was 28.58% less than in 1399. (2020).

The information also reveals that, in addition to the children participating in the conflicts, 13 other children served as workers in government military and security units as well as in checkpoints of anti-government armed groups.

Children Victims of Violence

In the fiscal year 1399 (2020), of the 5,318 children included in the study, 1,391 (26.2%) were victims of violence, while in 1398 (2019), 535 (10.2%) of the 5,248 children included in the study were victims of violence; thus, in 1399 (2020) incidents of violence against children increased by 16%. Among 1,391 children who were victims of violence, 948 (68.2%) were boys and 443 (31.8%) were girls.

Type of Violence Against Children

In 1399 (2020), 628 (45.1%) of children included in the study, were victims of psychological violence, 606 (43.6%) were victims of physical violence, 44 (3.2%) victims of economic violence and 34 (2.4%) were victims of sexual violence; and 79 (5.7%), were victims of other types of violence that are not listed under verbal-psychological, physical, economic and sexual violence.

Types of Sexual Violence

Findings of this study showed that 34 children included in the study were victims of sexual violence, 16 incidents (47.1%) of rape, four incidents (11.8%) of forced prostitution, two incidents (5.9%) of forced sodomy, seven incidents (20.6%) of sexual harassment, four incidents (11.8%) of forced marriage and one incident (2.9%) of forced pregnancy.

Types of Physical Violence

Among the children victims of physical violence, 11 (1.8%) were killed, including three honor killings, two (0.3%) were burned, and two (0.3%) were amputated, seven (1.2%) were injured, one (0.2%) was forced to use drugs, three (0.5%) were subjected to forced labor and 117 (19.3%) were beaten. 463 (76.4%) others did not specify the type of physical violence.

Types of Verbal and Psychological Violence

Out of 628 children who were victims of verbal and psychological violence, nine (1.4%) children were accused of crimes, five (0.8%) were forced into isolation, two (0.3%) were insulted for not giving birth to a child (child marriage), 12 (1.9%) were threatened with divorce and eviction (child marriage), five (0.8%) received death threats and in 74 (11.8%) were insulted, humiliated and intimidated. 521 (83%) children victims of verbal and psychological violence did not specify the type of violence.

Types of Economic Violence

Of 44 children victims of economic violence, 36 (81.8%) were deprived of their right to alimony (child marriage) and five (11.4%) were deprived of their right to receive their Mahria (dowry). (Child marriage) two (4.5%) were deprived of the right to possess personal property and one (2.3%) was deprived of the right to inheritance.

Other Types of Violence

Other types of violence against children are as follows: One (1.3%) incident of misconduct, two incidents (2.5%) of female trafficking under the pretext of marriage, 16 incidents (20.3%) of the prohibition of the right to freely choose a spouse, 33 incidents (41.8%) of forced engagement, six incidents (7.6%) of denial of kinship, 11 incidents (13.9%) of the prohibition of visiting relatives, two incidents (2.5%) of polygamy, two incidents (2.5%) of the prohibition of the right to access health services, six incidents (7.6%) of denial of the right to access education.

Perpetrators of Violence Against Children

Of 1,391 children who were exposed to violence, 511 (36.7%) incidents were perpetrated by police officers, 241 (17.3%) by family members, 111 (8%) by employers, and 81 (5.8%) by teachers, 55 (4%) by other children and 392 (28.2%) by other people.

Children Deprived of Identity

The Commission's data show that out of 5,318 children included in the study, 2,874 (54.8%) confirmed that they had an ID card, while 2,367 (45.2%) others stated they did not have an ID card. The remaining 17 (0.3%) did not express their opinion in this regard.

Children Who Cannot Get ID Card

Among those stated that they did not have an ID card, 67 (3%) of them living in orphanages stated that they could not obtain an ID card, because their parents' identities were not clear and that they were essentially denied to have access to this right.

Children's Human Rights Challenges in Correction Centers

The Commission's findings on the human rights situation of children in correction centers show that out of 598 children, 112 (18.7%) are allegedly tortured and ill-treated during the detention period. 200 (33%) children stated that they had been forced to stay longer in detention, and 286 children in detention didn't report cases of human rights violations.

The incidence of abuse or alleged torture of children has increased by 1.6% this year compared to 1398 (2019), when 101 (17.1%) out of 591 children were allegedly abused and tortured by the relevant authorities.

Challenges for Children's Access to Education

Of 5,318 children included in the study, four children were under 7, the age of three children was unidentified, 5,311 (99.9%) children were over 7, eligible to go to school, but only 1,962 (36.9%) of them reported that they were going to school; 3,039 (57.2%) others said that they were not going to school. 310 (5.8%) children eligible of school, did not answer the question.

The Commission's findings last year showed that of the 5,248 children included in the study and were eligible to go to school, 2,661 (50.7%), did not attend school; therefore, in the fiscal year 1399 (2020), the number of eligible children deprived of schooling has increased by 6.5% compared to the previous year.

Reasons for Not Going to School

145 (4.8%) of those who did not attend school said that they did not attend school because society had a negative attitude towards school. 251 (8.3%) said it was due to insecurity, 1,633 (53.7%) said it was due to their work at home, 73 (2.4%) said it was due to long distance from school, 31 (1%) said it was due to school closure, 745 (24.5%) said it was due to family financial and economic problems, 147 (4.8%) said their families didn't allow them to go to school, 14 (0.5%) said it was due to lack of necessary facilities at schools. It is worth mentioning that in 1399 (2020), the outbreak of Qovid-19 caused school closure across the country in the first five months of the year.

Challenges of Children's Access to Health Care

The findings of this study show that in the fiscal year 1399 (2020), out of 5,318 children included in the study, 3,734 (70.2%) said that they would see a doctor at a clinic or hospital when getting sick; but 1,584 (29.8%) said they did not see a doctor at a clinic or hospital when they were sick. It is worth mentioning that last year (1398) (2019) this

figure was 3,697 (70.4%) of all children included in the research (5,248 children); thus, in 1,399 (2020), the number of children who saw a doctor in a clinic or hospital during an illness has decreased by 0.2%.

Children who confirmed that they did not see a doctor in a hospital or clinic when they were sick, reported that they had referred to other facilities, such as pharmacy 329 (6.2%), health workers 128 (2.4%), Hakim 302 (5.7%) and Mullah 36. (0.7 %); also, 79 (1.5%) said they didn't go anywhere when they were sick, and 710 (13.4%) children didn't answer this question.

Reasons Why Children Do Not Go to the Clinic or Hospital When They Are Sick

Of children who do not see a doctor in a clinic or hospital at the time of illness, 150 (22%) said due to a long-distance, 166 (24.4%) said due to lack of medicine in clinics and hospitals, 135 (19.8%) said due to expensive fee of doctors, 99 (14.5%) said due to inability to pay car rent to doctor's house or hospital and clinic, 83 (12.2%) said due to the low quality of service and lack of trust in doctors, 22 (3.2) said due to the absence of a female doctor in clinics or hospitals, 10 (1.5%) said the family did not allow them to visit a doctor, four people mentioned discriminatory treatment of doctors and employees of hospitals and clinics as reason(s) for not visiting a doctor in a hospital or clinic. 915 people (57.8%) did not mention a specific reason in this regard.

Child Laborers

According to the findings of this study, out of 5,318 children included in the study, 3,175 (59.7%) have confirmed that they were working. 1,756 (33%), said they did not work, and 387 (7.3%) children did not answer this question.

In the previous year (1398) (2019), the number of working children was 2,582 (49.2%) out of 5,248 children included in the study, 10.5% less than this year.

Type of Child Labor

According to the findings of this study, child laborers have been engaged in various activities as follows:

Garbage collection 315 (9.9%), porter 314 (9.9%), peddler 249 (7.8%), brick kiln worker 222 (7%), construction worker 188 (5.9%), tailoring and carpet weaving 150 (4.7%), car washing 149 (4.7%), working at home as waiters 144 (4.5%), working in restaurants or hotels 149 (4.7%), working in industrial factories 80 (2.5%), begging 60 (1.9%), peasantry 86 (2.7%), working in the baths 34 (1.1%), working in poppy fields 26 (0.8%), working in military and security forces and groups as workers, not soldiers, 13 (0.4%), shepherding 22 (0.7%), shoe polishing 4 (0.1%), water selling 3 (0.1%), working in a car workshop, 1 (0.1%). The remaining 964 (30.4%) children did not specify their type of work.

Commission's Actions

Following the investigation and registration of 174 cases in which child human rights violations were identified, the AIHRC took practical action based on the form and criteria of the case, including:

A: Advocacy

The Commission has advocated for insuring justice in 72 (41.6%) cases of children's rights violations.

B: Monitoring and Follow Up

The Commission has actively followed up 93 cases (53.4%) by monitoring the relevant process, sending letters and referring cases to the relevant institutions.

C: Legal Advice

The Commission provided legal advice in 6 cases (3.4%) and finally in 3 cases where there were no criminal specifications but the human rights of children were violated, the Commission contacted the parties concerned and successfully resolved the case preventing the further violation of human rights of children.

D: Conducting Researches

In addition to the research on the human rights situation of children, the Commission also published two additional reports in the fiscal year 1399 (2020), entitled "An Overview of the Impact of Qovid-19 on the Human Rights Situation of Children," "Unidentified Children in Afghanistan Orphanages;" the findings of the study were published along with specific recommendations to resolve the problems identified in the researches.