

Violence Against Children in

UKRAINE

Extracts from the latest national NGO coalition's report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child

CRC Session 10, 30 October - 17 November 1995

All Ukrainian Committee for Children's Rights – English

www.crin.org/docs/resources/treaties/crc.10/Ukraine_NGO_Report.pdf

[...]

Every year, Ukraine loses 16,000 children aged 14 and under as a result of trauma, suicide, murder, and so on. Every day, an average of 32 children 12,000 children per year are found abandoned, lost or forgotten. It is a pity that almost half of them are under the age of 7. As a result, 84,500 orphans and children are placed in state institutions.

[...]

Juvenile delinquency is becoming a social evil. Almost 10,000 minors serve sentences in conditions not at all conducive to their rehabilitation. The number of offenses committed by minors is rising. Any activity in the prevention of offenses is conducted by means of inhuman methods and consequently proves to be ineffective.

[...]

In addition, there have been multiple incidents of child beatings in schools by the teachers. Thus far, there is no law regulating the right of the child to be heard and to act as plaintiff in court; this actually makes it impossible to investigate such cases, thus limiting the possibility to restrain these teachers from the educational process or to punish them.

[...]

There is no legal provision of the right of the child to protection from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent care, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse on the part of parents, legal guardians or any other person endowed with the care of the child (Article 19).

Although such cases do occur, but they are not investigated and the offenders are not punished; this is **due to the** absence of proper attentiveness to the opinions, evidence and feelings of children in this country.

Official statistics regarding the registration of children without lodging and children whose parents **or legal guardians left them without care** have not been presented in this country. At the same time, there is an increasing number of children in the streets and railway stations who beg or who are in the presence of adult beggars.

[...]

In regard to this issue, due attention should be paid to the special reform schools for juvenile delinquents who cannot be sentenced because of their age (between 11 and 14). The stay in these schools is mandatory; the most severe measure is the isolation of the children from society, and their exclusion from the common family environment.

Without questioning the right of the state to institute analogous establishments aimed at the prevention of juvenile delinquency, it is difficult to agree with the form of regime for the children and the methods of reformation applied to them.

Children sent to such schools for a period of three years are in fact kept there longer.

Assessment of the conditions and results of the reformation are not presented by any independent body or the court. The principle of collective responsibility for wrongdoing reigns in these schools. Children are collectively deprived of rest, participation in cultural events, meetings with their relatives, rights to receive food parcels, and correspondence.

The mail received at the address of the children is unlawfully opened by the school's administration, a breach of privacy and criminal offense in itself. The children's letters addressed to their parents undergo internal censorship; in the event that any complaints of the regime or personnel are discovered, the letters are not sent to the addressees. Thus, there are grounds to declare major violations of the fundamental rights of the child in such establishments, officially subject to the Ministry of Education but in fact administrated by the Ministry of Internal Affairs through the use of police methods.

The analysis of the results of such "reformation" testifies to the fact that every second child who was kept in this type of establishment (there are 11-14 schools of this kind in Ukraine with children aged 15 to 18) commits a crime and is brought to court within two years of being released from the school.

[...]