

## **Violence Against Children in**

### **UZBEKISTAN**

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

**CRC Session 28, 24 September - 12 October 2001**

Save the Children UK - Uzbekistan – English

[www.crin.org/docs/resources/treaties/crc.28/Uzbekistan.doc](http://www.crin.org/docs/resources/treaties/crc.28/Uzbekistan.doc)

[...]

- Another category of children who are abused by the system are those detained in the two special institutions in Samarkand (for boys) and Kokand (for girls). These children are indefinitely detained up to the age of 17-18 for social reasons.

[...]

- There are cases of discrimination of the rights of disabled children, children in institutions, street children, children released from prisons, and refugee children who due to their status cannot have equal access to education, healthcare services, and opportunities for their social integration.
- The education system discriminates against children with disabilities by excluding them from mainstream schooling
- Street children represent one of the categories of children who are more often exposed to discrimination because of the very few opportunities for their rehabilitation. A street child can be detained and placed in a detention centre, where he or she is held for up to one month before his or her parents are identified.

[...]

- There are cases of tortures (beatings) noted particularly towards juveniles held in temporary isolators (special prisons for detainees and suspects), penitentiary colonies and prisons.
- Corporal punishment are also found in families, especially in dysfunctional families, schools and children institutions, e.g. orphanages, where parents, teachers or other relevant staff physically and psychologically abuse children by beating them considering it an educational norm.

[...]

- One of the common problems in Uzbekistan is latent violence used mainly by parents towards their children. In many cases children do not report about the fact of their abuse for some certain reasons
- Preventative work of the guardianship and adoption service is sometimes confined to a mere registration of cases of abuse some of which, should they be brought to court, can result in the denial of parental rights.
- Children deprived of the family environment are usually placed in children institutions, such as orphanages, where they can stay until the age of 16. Afterwards, they must leave the institutional care but the majority of them have nowhere to go and therefore have all the chances of being left on the street.
- There are cases when children's rights to property are violated. While children live in institutions, their apartments or houses that they legally inherit are sold by their relatives
- There are cases of sexually abused girls being sent to detention institutions to cover up the abuser in the family.

[...]

- The level of general secondary and vocational education has declined. General state expenditure on education decreased from 11,6% of GDP in 1993 to 5,5% of GDP in 1998. The number of students admitted in educational institutions dropped from 57,2% in 1993 to 45% in 1999

- There are cases of violation of children's rights to adequate education when medical-pedagogical commissions examine children with low attainment and send them to special institutions for children with learning impairments. As a rule, the curriculum in these special institutions is not up to the standard but simplified, which limits their further educational and job opportunities.
- Gender indicators in the education of children show that the percentage of girls applying to secondary and higher education institutions went down from 49% in 1992 to 45% in 1998.
- Corruption in higher education institutions becomes a common problem, though often hidden. There are more and more cases of bribery practised during admissions and examinations of students.

[...]

- The practice of the administration of juvenile justice in Uzbekistan has a lot of imperfections. There are no special departments of investigation appropriate to deal with juvenile offenders. Cases on juvenile crimes are investigated by general jurisdiction, sometimes even by those who are incompetent and inexperienced to deal with juvenile offenders, which creates delays in investigation that cannot be allowed according to article 20.1 of the Criminal Code of Uzbekistan.
- An infringement of children's rights takes place in the two detention institutions in Samarkand and Kokand where children are detained for uncertain periods for inconsiderable delinquencies.
- Since different departments manage detention centres, guardianship and adoption service, commissions on non-adult issues, there is lack of co-ordination in their activities and this creates undue delays in the work with children.
- Torture of children in prisons, colonies or other similar types of institutions are reported to be common. There are known cases of torture of children by the staff, officials and, worst of all, by other children whose behaviour is initiated by the so-called informal code of behaviour common to juvenile prisons.
- According to paragraph 13.4 of the Criminal Proceedings Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan, arrested juveniles should be kept separate from adults. But many times this regulation is not complied with and as a result children become subject to a negative influence and more likely to abuse from adults.
- There is no effective system on the rehabilitation and reintegration of children released from prisons in Uzbekistan. They have limited opportunities of education and employment.
- Child economic exploitation in Uzbekistan was and still is mainly associated with cotton harvesting season when children are taken from schools to work in cotton fields. During the cotton harvesting season classes in rural schools and provincial higher educational institutions are usually cancelled and those who refuse to work in the fields are subject to academic punishment.
- Poverty and inability of families to sustain themselves makes children leave schools and start working to help raise their families income. In many cases, out of the economic necessity parents themselves force children to work depriving them thus of their educational opportunity.
- Child prostitution is an existing problem in Uzbekistan. However, there is no official data about the age and percentage of children involved in prostitution. Street children and children in institutions, such as orphanages are often coerced in to prostitution, either voluntarily or by force.

Street girls and children in prisons can often be subject to sexual abuse practised by the prison staff or by their elder peers.

[...]

Economical problems and low level of community participation has resulted in inappropriate institutionalisation of children and creation of the phenomenon of children living and working on the streets. The harshest institutional conditions are created in two extra-judiciary detention institutions in Samarkand (for boys) and Kokand (for girls). These children are sent to these institutions after decision taken by the commission on minors, sending their cases to the court. The reason for detaining them ranges from being in the street to hooliganism, minor thefts, prostitution, drug abuse, and being sexually abused at home. Sometimes parents initiate their detention because of various reasons, one of which is extreme poverty. These children are detained for indefinite period up to the age of 17 -18. There is no provision for the after release and the families sometimes don't accept them back.

[...]

Street children represent one of the categories of children who are more often exposed to discrimination because of the very few opportunities available for their rehabilitation. A street child

can be detained and placed in a intermediary reception-distribution centre, which is under the management of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, where he or she is held for up to one month before his or her parents are identified. After the identification of parents, the child is simply returned back to the family that he or she ran away from for some certain reasons that are not investigated. The reasons may be related to possible abuse of the child in the family, alcohol or drug addicted parents, etc. When the child is brought back to the family there are virtually no attempts to improve the family environment or try to find some other alternative forms of care to prevent the child from being in the streets again. As a result, some time later the child happens to be in the streets again, being exposed to and sometimes involved in prostitution, drugs, abusive behaviour on the part of adults and other children, begging, etc.

[...]

The principle of the best interests of the child is ignored in cases of early marriages among girls at the age of 16-17. This in part is associated with local traditions, more practised in rural areas, and in part with financial difficulties that some families hope to solve through marriage when their daughters are married to men from well-off families.

[...]

There are cases of exploitation of disabled children not only by their employers but also by their relatives who use them as one of the profitable ways of making money. There are no accurate statistics on that respect but it is a well-known fact that disabled children are often seen begging in the streets. Allowances are paid to children until their reach of the age of 16 years.

[...]

Economical instability has notably decreased the standards of living in the society and consequently the welfare of children. According to the empirical data, up to 85% of children may be living in poor families. An average monthly salary is sufficient for three days of family's minimum living. Basic food expenses make 70% of family's total expenditure whereas the remaining 30% are left for other needs such as medical treatment, education, clothes, etc., which leads to the inability to provide favourable conditions for children's physical, intellectual and psychological development. Cultural activities and other means to provide children with quality leisure time are out of question. Scarcity of food products consumed in poor families leads to malnutrition.

[...]