

108 ILC – 2017
IRAQ – Convention No 182

Chair, I will speak on behalf of the trade unions in the Nordic countries.

Children in Iraq continue to be victims of grave child rights violations. This is confirmed by a report of the UNs Secretary General on Children and Armed Conflicts and several other reports from the UN bodies. Boys as young as 12 years are recruited and used in military operation by the islamic state in Iraq and Levant (ISIS), by the Government Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) and by self-defence groups supporting Iraque security forces. The Iraqi government has not shown any political will to curb these groups use of child-combatants.

Children in Iraq are vulnerable to recruitment in the ongoing conflicts. They are used as suicide bomber and combatants, for logistics and manufacturing explosive devices. In addition they are sexually exploited and used as wife of fighters and as sex-slaves.

During the war a large number of children were detained and convicted of terrorism for their association with armed groups. Only in 2017 at least 1,036 children remained in detention on national security-related charges, mostly for their alleged association with ISIS. The Nordic trade unions express its deep concern of this practise. We do emphasize that children under the age of 18 should be treated as victims and not offenders.

Refugees and internally displaced children in camps remain vulnerable to sale and trafficking for sexual purposes. NGO reports contain evidence of local government authorities and security personel working in collaboration with human trafficking networks in the kurdish region particularly in the Domiz refugee camp.

Iraq has made a minimum of efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor although a new policy has been adopted. However, children continue to engage in child labor, including forced begging and commercial sexual exploitation.

The Nordic trade unions are deeply concerned about the violations of childrens rights in Iraq. We urge the Government to take immediate measures to put an end to recruitment of children for use in armed conflicts. It is also necessary for the Government of Iraq to improve access to free basic education of all children also in areas affected by war, particularly girls. Penalties for offences related to the use of Children in armed conflict, hazardous work and prostitution should be introduced and enforced. Persons who forcibly recruit children under 18 years should be prosecuted and punished.

Thank you.

