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# **Human Right Developments in Iran**

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**ORGANIZATION FOR DEFENDING VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE**

**[www.odvv.org](http://www.odvv.org)**

**The Human Rights Development of Iran Newsletter,** stresses on the promotion of human rights through monitoring positive actions and developments that have occurred with regards to human rights and raising the awareness of the audience in this regard. This newsletter, compiles measures taken for the promotion and realisation of human rights for the transparency of the real human rights situation in Iran through benefiting from correct information and credible documents.

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## **1- Education Rights**

### **1-1 20 Percent of Schoolchildren have Access to the Internet and Smartphones**

According to reports published by the Ministry of Education, more than 70 percent of schoolchildren in the country have access to the internet and smartphones, and eventually more schoolchildren will have access to internet. To this aim, the Education and Communication Ministries will be obliged to set up a mechanism for smart communication between schoolchildren and teachers and the executive bodies of schools and also publish digital textbooks and make them available for all and utilize online education capacities.

The main aim of these actions is to establish an equal education opportunities in all parts of the country especially because of the outbreak of the Coronavirus.

Considering that 30 percent of education districts still do not have communications access for online education, the Ministry of Education alongside the Ministry of Information and Communications Technology of Iran are in the process of creating easy internet access for all.

## **1-2 Education of 2,746 Autistic Schoolchildren**

Children with autism require special education. Thus, the Ministry of Education has facilitated their registration in special schools and presents special services to families that have autistic children. Also, on the occasion of the World Autism Awareness Day, the Special Education and Training Organization unveiled 5 guideline books for parents with autistic children.

Since 2005 to-date through specialized exams, the Special Education and Training Organization identified and provided education, rehabilitation and training to new learners and students with autism who have the ability to learn academic concepts.

Currently the Special Education and Training Organization provides education, training and rehabilitation services to 2,524 autistic schoolchildren and there are 222 autistic schoolchildren in the comprehensive integration program.

For the provision of better services to this community, while holding courses for school heads, and teachers, there are rehabilitation and counselling teams for

introducing autism which has resulted in the improvement of the quality of services. Using experts knowledge on autism through projects and national and international studies and holding specialized sittings with ministries, universities and autism related NGOs, is another part of the programs of the Special Education and Training Organization.

The slogan for 2020 World Autism Awareness Day is “The Transition to Adulthood”. And to this aim the Special Education and Training Organization has focused on transition of autistic schoolchildren to adulthood. The Organization has paid special attention to this slogan and to this aim designed two “gardening and administrative services assistance courses” and presented lessons on everyday life skills.

Of course it must be said that in the event of suitable communications and interactional abilities these schoolchildren will be able to continue education in 36 skills courses for students with special needs.

With the help of “the Organization for Development, Renovation and Equipping Schools”, in the current year 14 special schools will be developed and equipped for autistic children in Provinces that are in need of these schools.



## **2- Refugees Rights**

### **2-1 Free Medical Treatment of Refugees Infected with Coronavirus in Iran**

In view of the spread of Coronavirus in the country, refugees and foreign nationals that are infected by the virus are given free of charge medical care and treatment.

Currently there are nearly 3 million Afghans residing in Iran out of which only around 1 million of them have been registered in the country as refugees, and benefit from the services rendered by the international organizations such as the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR). This is while around 2 million of them are unregistered/undocumented and have inflicted a heavy financial burden on the country's health and education system.

At the same time the country's Health Ministry officials have declared readiness for creating future opportunity to

send doctors and nurses and equipment to neighbouring countries to provide services within their own countries.

Prior to this, representative of the Afghanistan Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation (MoRR) in the Afghan Embassy in Tehran had announced that: “The total figures show that 50 Afghan refugees have lost their lives to Coronavirus in Iran and approximately another 100 Afghan refugees are infected with the virus. Most of the victims of this virus are Afghans residing in Qom province.”

In this regard, in a statement the Afghan Embassy in Tehran thanked the Islamic Republic of Iran government for free admission of foreign nationals including Afghan nationals to hospitals in the event of contracting the Coronavirus. The Afghanistan Minister of Refugees and Repatriation, Seyed Hussein Alemi-Balkhi also thanked the Islamic Republic of Iran’s humanitarian assistance such as free medical and educational services given to Afghan refugees.

## **2-2 Three-month Renewal of Visas and Residency Permits of Foreign Nationals in Iran Does not Require Physical Presence**

In view of the spread of Coronavirus in the country and towards the protection of refugees and foreign nationals in the country and protection of their health, a new mechanism – particularly in the area of visa and residency permit extension - has been put in the working agenda of relevant authorities.



According to this notification, from the 1<sup>st</sup> March 2020, foreign nationals' visas and residency permits have been extended for three months, and individuals do not need to approach the Immigration and Passport Police Centers in person.

During the implementation of this programme we have noticed that some Afghan nationals insist on making physical appearances for the renewal of their documents. On this basis with the agreement made with BAFIA and foreign nationals offices it was agreed that these individuals visit the relevant centers alongside their documents for the renewal of their documents.

### **2-3 Permits Issued to Sewing Workshops for the Production of Face Masks**

Due to problems caused by the spread of Coronavirus in the country and the impact on the jobs and livelihood situation of many people, including refugees, sewing workshops have changed their production line and set the production of face masks in their agenda.

While helping the country's health system, this move has resulted in a drop in the unemployment of many, including refugees who mostly work in tailoring workshops throughout the country.



### **3- Right to Health**

#### **3-1 Distribution of 120,000 Hygiene Packs in Various Regions of the Country**

With the outbreak of Coronavirus in the country, governmental and nongovernmental organizations and institutions have expanded free services to vulnerable individuals across the country. Just “the Execution of Imam Khomeini’s Order” (Task Force) in a joint action with the Ministry of Health, launched the national “Ehsan Salamat” survey, and in its first step, while allocating a 10 billion Rials budget to this survey, this Task Force is distributing 120 thousand hygiene packs (masks, disinfectant gels, and detergents) through sister groups of Ehsan Foundation of the Execution of Imam Khomeini’s Order across the country.

This campaign has been launched with the aim of supplying hygiene goods and items for regions hit by the virus across the country and with a priority given to underprivileged regions and vulnerable groups.

It must be said that as part of support for vulnerable individuals, the ODVV has distributed 300 food and hygiene packs itself.

### **3-2 Presence of Psychological Teams at the Bedside of Coronavirus Patients**

With the joint cooperation of the country's Psychological and Counselling Order Organization and the Ministry of Health, the implementation of the psychological-social intervention for combating COVID -19 Protocol was launched in various provinces.

Also it has been decided that at the same time as the setting up of intensive cares for caring for COVID 19 patients, and admission of patients, specialist teams have started work to provide psychological-social services.



## **4- Human Rights**

### **4-1 Leave Given to More Than 93,000 Prisoners**

With the outbreak of the Coronavirus in the country, in adherence to observation of prisoners' human rights and also protection of their health, through an executive order issued by the head of the Judiciary, more than 93,000 prisoners have been temporarily released, and this figure will rise in the coming days.

In view of the spread of Coronavirus in the country, it is possible for the extension of the leave of the released prisoners by the head of the Judiciary. According to a report released by the Judiciary all those prisoners released on leave will receive following release care. Also those who are still in prison will benefit from all medical and health services and also prevention without any discrimination.

There are some noted individuals among those released, such as Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe, a British-Iranian dual citizen who has been detained in Iran since 3 April 2016.

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet deemed Iran as an example in efforts to try and reduce the prisons population to combat the spread of Coronavirus and guaranteeing right to health for prisoners.

#### **4-2 Launch of HAMYAR Social Responsibility Campaign**

The HAMYAR Social Responsibility Campaign was launched with the aim of introduction of services and startups and knowledge companies who during the outbreak of the Coronavirus with the aim of implementation of social responsibility programmes tried to make changes in their services to users, and also launch new production equipment.

To this aim a large number of startups and knowledge companies active in the country, have tried in the current conditions to change their business tactics with the aim of providing services in these critical times. Provision of free medical services to users, elimination of fees in internet shopping sites, provision of online education services, making of medical equipment, production of disinfectants, face masks, hospital gowns, were all services which startups and knowledge companies presented.



## **5- Introducing Human Rights Organizations**

### **5-1 Child Foundation**

The Child Foundation began its activities in Iran and the United States in 1994. This Foundation is known as the Child Welfare Charity Institute and in America as the Child Foundation. The Foundation was registered in Iran in 1999.

This Foundation is a non-governmental, non-political, non-profit, supra-religious institute which has a totally humanitarian approach. The aim of the institute is to reach the “no talented student must fall behind education due to economic problems.”

While expanding its activities to various provinces, through setting up offices abroad the Child Foundation managed to establish a sentimental link between Iranians living abroad with their fellow country folk inside the country. International offices in the United States, Switzerland, Germany, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Canada, Afghanistan and Australia are all active.

From its launch to-date the Child Foundation has managed to give support to more than 16,000 students and their families and today it has provided scholarships to more than 105,000 talented students across the country, and more than 10,000 of these students have gone on into universities.

In 2005, the Child Foundation received consultative status from UN ECOSOC. For further details on the Foundation and its work refer to the following website:

<http://www.childf.com/>