

# Child influencers: 'Abusive parents' to come under scrutiny

## Social Desk

The secretary of the Iranian National Council for Children's Rights has announced that the Cyberspace Committee is now active within their organization. This committee is working in collaboration with the Supreme Council of Cyberspace and other institutions to address concerns related to children's safety online, ISNA reported.

One of their key initiatives is to draft amendments and additions to the Child Protection Law. Seyyed Ali Kazemi highlighted emerging phenomena such as modeling, blogging, and influencing among children and teenagers. He emphasized that if not managed properly, these activities could harm young individuals. Research indicates that engagement in social networks through modeling, blogging, and influencing can impact children negatively by exposing them to inappropriate content, challenges harmful to their well-being, invasion of privacy regarding family matters, and unwanted interactions from profit-seeking or harassing individuals.

Kazemi also noted that image-oriented platforms are often used for advertising purposes by models and bloggers due to their high visibility. These activities aim at attracting a large audience and gaining maximum attention. The secretary further explained how

child bloggers promote various brands across categories such as cosmetics, food products, home appliances, and clothing workshops for kids' apparel. Advertisements on these pages involve both active partici-

tion from children themselves in endorsing products through role-playing as well as passive involvement using photos and videos.

Regarding child modeling pages, Kazemi mentioned that models are introduced through posters, advertising videos during photography tours or featured in modeling magazines showcasing different poses along with physical appearance characteristics. "Unfortunately, these introductions often prioritize non-Iranian or non-native models while promoting consumerism patterns associated with foreign goods or lifestyles incon-

sistent with Iranian culture or Islamic values," he said.

Such practices can lead to identity issues among children who may start valuing themselves based on appearances rather than personal qualities.

Kazemi further expressed concern over families' limited awareness about the potential harms faced by children involved in advertisements, fashion, and modeling industries. The vulnerability of children participating in these areas raises significant challenges that need to be addressed.

In summary, the use of children in advertisements and modeling, coupled with a lack of understanding among families about the risks involved, has become a pressing issue. The National Council for Children's Rights is taking proactive steps by establishing the Cyberspace Committee to deal with these concerns and work towards safeguarding children in the digital realm.

While discussing the legal dimensions of children's involvement in cyberspace and referring to the Law on Protection of Children and Adolescents, it was emphasized that certain activities like blogging, modeling, and influencing can negatively impact a child's physical, mental, psychological, moral, and social well-being. These activities may also pose risks to their safety and educational status. According to the law, such situations are considered dangerous for children and can lead to social or judicial

intervention.

If these activities involve earning income and are considered "jobs" or "work," they contradict Article 79 of the Labor Law which prohibits employing individuals under 15 years old. This is seen as economic exploitation under labor laws as well as laws protecting children and adolescents.

Furthermore, producing any content that portrays a child or adolescent in a sexually suggestive manner (such as nudity) is considered pornography according to paragraph D of Article 1 of the Law on Protection of Children and Adolescents. It should be noted that even sharing pictures online where inappropriate clothing is visible can potentially be classified as pornography under this law.

It is essential to recognize that treating children as mere tools for earning money—whether in virtual spaces or real life—is against their rights.

"Exploiting children must be prevented. Children's activities in cyberspace are subject to laws just like their actions in physical space. The country's regulations including labor laws and laws protecting children govern these activities with three prohibitions: violating children's rights by using them instrumentally; exploiting them; or disregarding societal moral values," said the official.

To address these concerns effectively, the Cyberspace Committee within the National Council for Children's Rights has been activated through collaboration with various institutions including the Supreme Council of Cyberspace, the Judiciary's Office for Child

and Adolescent Protection, FATA Police, the Research Center of Islamic Council, and Prosecutor's Office. The committee meetings aim to examine issues related to child exploitation in cyberspace while also working on a draft to amend and enhance the child protection law.

It is important to note that so far, there have been no significant prosecutions against parents who exploit their children in cyberspace. Therefore, it is necessary to address this matter within the virtual space working group.

When asked about plans for dealing with offenders and abusers of children in cyberspace, it was stated that such cases will be pursued if they can be addressed by current laws. The Office for Child and Adolescent Protection of the Judiciary has already warned against widespread abuse and exploitation of children online. In specific instances, FATA police and the attorney general's office can intervene through criminal cases committees and Judiciary offices dedicated to protecting children and adolescents.

Another issue discussed in these meetings was violent content, promotion, and incitement of violence against children in cyberspace. The question arises whether existing laws including the Law on Protection of Children are sufficient to safeguard at-risk children online. It was concluded that while some aspects are covered by existing legislation, others may require interpretation or refinement, as well as amendments where certain issues should be explicitly criminalized for better protection.



## Iranian judge gives unorthodox verdict

## Social Desk

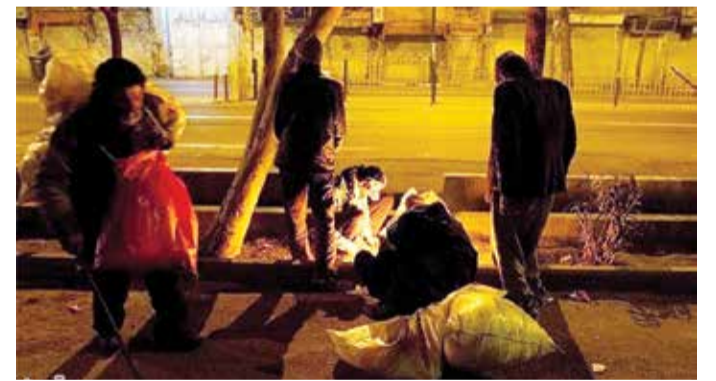
A judge made an interesting decision in a case involving someone who had helped a suspect escape from police. The accused was sentenced to provide free meals to eight homeless individuals staying at shelters for eight weeks in a row.

In the summer of 2023, police officers in Tehran were trying to arrest a wanted man when they found his hideout in a restaurant

in Lavasanat, northeastern Tehran. The owner of the restaurant then allowed the suspect to run away by delaying the officers, according to Tasnim News Agency. The owner was quickly arrested and taken to a district court for investigation. During questioning, he admitted his crime of helping the wanted to evade capture because he was his friend. After completing their initial investigation, the Lavasanat Prosecutor's Office charged the ac-

cused with aiding a fugitive. The trial took place in Branch 102 of Lavasan Two County Criminal Court, presided over by Judge Meysam Hosseinpour. During court proceedings, the man in the dock, who later confessed to his crime, was arraigned on several charges. He expressed remorse and asked for forgiveness from Judge Hosseinpour who presided over the trial. Following due legal process, the judge issued his verdict on the

case. Considering that there was no prior criminal record and acknowledging remorse shown by the accused; rather than sentencing him to eight months' imprisonment as initially anticipated, he instead ordered him to feed eight homeless individuals living in shelters within Lavasan city for eight consecutive weeks. The convict must take the homeless to his restaurant and serve them free food during this period.



TASNIM



## Climate change a matter ...

Calculating the exact death toll caused by climate change is challenging due to various factors involved. Environmental conditions already claim about 13 million lives annually according to the United Nations, but it's unclear how many are directly or indirectly related to climate change. Abnormal temperatures alone might be responsible for up to five million annual

deaths, although other estimates are lower.

Climate change affects different aspects like crop failures, droughts, floods, extreme weather events, wildfires, and rising sea levels – all impacting human lives in complex ways. Predicting future casualties from these catastrophes is inherently imperfect work; however, researchers argue that measuring emissions in terms of potential human lives lost helps people understand and emphasizes our urgent need for action. To illustrate this point further, Pearce and Parncutt, in their

publication 'Quantifying Global Greenhouse Gas Emissions in Human Deaths to Guide Energy Policy', applied their estimation method to Australia's Adani Carmichael coalmine – expected to become the world's largest coalmine. If all its reserves are burned, it could cause about three million premature deaths. These victims would largely be children living primarily in developing nations. The authors stress that burning such vast amounts of coal will almost certainly lead to future fatalities. It's important to note that

the '1000-ton rule' does not account for possible climate feedback loops, which could worsen the environmental consequences of carbon emissions. This estimation is a conservative best estimate and leaves room for even more dire scenarios.

Facing this challenging reality is crucial for both the public and policymakers. As climate scientists continue to model future outcomes, it is essential that we acknowledge these predictions and take immediate action to avoid catastrophic consequences.