



## 2.7 Children

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In June 2023, a draft child protection law was introduced to the Iraqi parliament. The bill aimed at safeguarding the children's fundamental rights and addressed issues such as child labour and child abuse and exploitation.<sup>841</sup> According to a Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) report published in July 2025, the bills aiming at protecting children's rights have still not been adopted neither in the federal Iraq, nor in KRI.<sup>842</sup> The Penal Code allows 'the disciplining by parents and teachers of children under their authority within certain limits prescribed by law or by custom'.<sup>843</sup> CRC reported on a high prevalence of child victims of sexual exploitation, particularly girls, and the stigmatisation of victims, including in the courts.<sup>844</sup>

Despite a constitutional prohibition against violence,<sup>845</sup> corporal punishment of children remained legal, according to a report published by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in November 2024.<sup>846</sup> However, a decision of the Supreme Court reportedly banned 'violence against children in any form', according to a meeting summary of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child released in May 2025. Courts are obliged to follow this interpretation of the law, and the police have acted on it and responded to around hundred cases.<sup>847</sup> Sexual abuse, sexual harassment, sexual exploitation, including for prostitution and pornography, and trafficking of children are banned as per the provisions of the Penal Code.<sup>848</sup>

Violence against children is 'highly prevalent' in Iraq.<sup>849</sup> In 2024, the UN verified 58 grave violations against 50 children in the context of armed conflict in Iraq,<sup>850</sup> compared to 47 violations in 2023.<sup>851</sup> A UNICEF study found that some 89 % of children faced 'violent discipline', of whom almost 31 % experienced 'severe physical punishment'.<sup>852</sup> Cases of violence against children are underreported due to a fear of tribal retaliation and the lack of legal protection.<sup>853</sup>

- <sup>841</sup>

HRW, World Report 2025 - Iraq, 16 January 2025, [url](#)

- <sup>842</sup>

CRC, Concluding observations on the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Iraq, 18 July 2025, [url](#)

- <sup>843</sup>

CRC, Concluding observations on the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Iraq, 18 July 2025, [url](#), para. 26

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CRC, Concluding observations on the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Iraq, 18 July 2025, [url](#), para. 26

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UNICEF, Identifying Opportunities for Coordination Between Violence Against Children and Violence Against Women Efforts in Iraq, December 2024, [url](#), p. 10

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HRC, Summary of stakeholders' submissions on Iraq; Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 6 November 2024, [url](#), paras. 129-130

- [847](#)

OHCHR, Experts of the Committee on the Rights of the Child Praise Iraq's Child Rights Strategy, Raise Issues Concerning Child Marriage and Corporal Punishment, 16 May 2025, [url](#)

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NRC Legal Guide to Children's Rights in Iraq, November 2024, [url](#), pp. 37-38

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UNICEF, Identifying Opportunities for Coordination Between Violence Against Children and Violence Against Women Efforts in Iraq, December 2024, [url](#), p. 4

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UNSG, Children and armed conflict, Report of the Secretary-General, 17 June 2025, [url](#), para. 83

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UNICEF Iraq, Annual Report 2023, 2024, [url](#), p. 18

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UNICEF, Identifying Opportunities for Coordination Between Violence Against Children and Violence Against Women Efforts in Iraq, December 2024, [url](#), p. 4

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UNICEF, Identifying Opportunities for Coordination Between Violence Against Children and Violence Against Women Efforts in Iraq, December 2024, [url](#), p. 15

