



INTERNATIONAL LEGAL FOUNDATIONS FOR THE PREVENTION OF JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

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Abstract

The article examines the international legal foundations for protecting the rights and freedoms of minors and their role in preventing juvenile delinquency. It analyzes key international documents regulating children's rights, including the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, ILO conventions, UN declarations, and guidelines. The importance of international standards in improving the national legislation of Uzbekistan and developing effective mechanisms for safeguarding children's rights is emphasized. The article presents statistical data on violations of children's rights worldwide, identifies challenges in implementing international requirements at the national level, and proposes measures to enhance the effectiveness of law enforcement and legal protection of minors.

Keywords: International legal foundations; children's rights; minors; prevention of juvenile delinquency; UN Convention on the Rights of the Child; international instruments; ILO; child protection; national legislation; Uzbekistan; juvenile policy.

Introduction

Juveniles are the future of society and a key factor in the development and stability of a country. Ensuring and protecting children's rights is not only a national but also an important international issue.



Today, numerous international documents aimed at protecting children's rights have been adopted and are actively applied worldwide. This article analyzes the international legal foundations for the protection of the rights and freedoms of minors, their implementation, and the existing challenges.

One of the primary factors in preventing juvenile delinquency in our country is the effective organization of preventive activities carried out by bodies and institutions responsible for preventing neglect and juvenile offenses[1]. Their tasks include timely identifying the causes and conditions that contribute to juvenile delinquency and eliminating them.

Protecting the rights and freedoms of minors plays a crucial role in raising a well-educated and morally strong young generation.

The great enlightener Abdulla Avloni stated: "For us, education is a matter of life or death, salvation or destruction, happiness or disaster"[2]. These words, which were highly relevant at the beginning of the last century, still retain their importance today.

According to various global statistics, around 250 million children are working instead of studying; 5.7 million children are involved in forced labor; over 70 million children do not attend school; 1.8 million children are engaged in prostitution or pornography; and 1.2 million children become victims of human trafficking[3]. These figures alone show how critical it is to protect and ensure children's rights.

The legal foundations for protecting the rights and freedoms of minors encompass a set of normative legal documents that define state policy in this area, regulate the arising social relations, and determine the rights, obligations, and preventive activities of all stakeholders[4].

In Uzbekistan, the legal foundations for protecting the rights and freedoms of minors consist of international legal instruments, the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, national laws, decrees of the President, resolutions of the Cabinet of Ministers, and regulatory acts of ministries, state committees, and local authorities[5].

International legal foundations for the protection of minors include:

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)
- Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (1957)



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- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966)
 - International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965)
 - Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979)
 - Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1984)
 - Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power (1985)
 - UN Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty (1986)
 - Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons Under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment (1988)
 - Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)
 - Guidelines for the Effective Implementation of the Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials (1989)
 - UN Standard Minimum Rules for Non-Custodial Measures (“Tokyo Rules”) (1990)
 - Basic Principles for the Treatment of Prisoners (1990)
 - Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials (1990)
 - UN Guidelines for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency (“Riyadh Guidelines”) (1990)
 - Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (2000)
 - Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006)
 - Declaration on the Protection of Children Against Trafficking, Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (2005)

In international law, a juvenile is generally understood as any person under the age of 18. This definition is provided in the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. However, the age limit may vary based on a state’s national legislation. Defining the legal status of minors is essential in law enforcement, education, healthcare, and judicial processes.



The Convention on the Rights of the Child is the most fundamental international document protecting the rights of minors. It consists of 54 articles that guarantee children's rights to:

- life,
- development,
- education,
- freedom of expression,
- protection from violence and exploitation.

More than 190 states have joined the Convention and pledged to comply with its requirements.

Monitoring the implementation of the Convention is carried out by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. The Committee regularly reviews state reports, provides recommendations, and examines issues related to children's rights. It pays particular attention to violence, poverty, child labor, and lack of education.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions No. 138 and No. 182 serve as foundational documents in combating child labor. These conventions establish:

- minimum age for employment,
- prohibition of the worst forms of child labor,
- measures to prevent exploitation.

UNICEF – a UN agency working on children's rights, education, healthcare, and social protection – provides financial assistance, conducts awareness campaigns, and supports legislative reforms in various countries to improve children's living conditions.

International treaties often stimulate improvements in national legislation. Uzbekistan has ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child and adopted numerous laws aligned with international standards:

- Law “On Guarantees of the Rights of the Child,”
- Law “On Education,”
- Labour Code reforms.

To align national legislation with international norms, Uzbekistan ratified the ILO Minimum Age Convention No. 138 and the Worst Forms of Child Labour



Convention No. 182, resulting in several amendments to national laws. For example, according to Article 77 of the Labour Code, the minimum employment age was set at 15.

The Law “On Guarantees of the Rights of the Child,” adopted on 7 January 2008, serves as a unified mechanism regulating children’s rights in various fields. It embodies the core principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and may be regarded as the “Children’s Constitution.”

In accordance with Articles 43–45 of the Convention, a UN Committee on the Rights of the Child consisting of 10 experts was established. The Committee reviews reports from member states, collects and analyzes information on the condition of children globally, prepares recommendations, and submits a report to the UN General Assembly every two years.

UNICEF reports that more than 40 countries have national or regional child ombudsman services functioning as independent mechanisms for ensuring the protection of children’s rights.

International initiatives – such as the declaration of 1979 as the “International Year of the Child” – demonstrate the importance of children’s rights and the need for mechanisms to monitor compliance.

The protection of children’s rights is ensured through universal international treaties, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child adopted unanimously by the UN General Assembly.

More than twenty countries have incorporated the principles of the Convention into their national constitutions, and over fifty countries have reviewed their legislation to bring it into full compliance with the Convention.

International legal instruments play a crucial role in protecting children’s rights and freedoms. They help strengthen national policies and social guarantees. However, full implementation remains challenging.

Therefore, to ensure the effective protection of children’s rights, states must:

- improve reporting mechanisms;
- expand public awareness through mass media;
- enhance legal literacy within the education system.



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