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AFRICA/MOROCCO - Thousands of children workers suffer verbal and physical abuse, despite laws

Rabat (Agenzia Fides) - There are so many children, sometimes just 8 years old, who are physically abused and spend the whole day at work as domestic servants for a paltry reward. To offer a panorama of this disconcerting reality is the recent report by the International Human Rights Watch Lonely Servitude: Child Domestic Labor in Morocco, which highlights that some children, mostly girls, work as domestic workers for more than 12 hours a day, seven days a week, often for only $11 per month. Some suffer physical and verbal abuse by the employers themselves, as well as not having the opportunity to go to school and eat properly .
Over the last decade, the government of Morocco has reduced the indices of child labor and has been able to increase the level of schooling. Nevertheless, control on the implementation of laws prohibiting the employment of children under the age of 15 for domestic service and the enforcement of sanctions against employers who facilitate recruitment is still lacking.
The NGO report is based on a market research carried out in the months of April, May and July 2012 in Casablanca, Rabat, Marrakech and in the region of Imintanoute, province of Chichaoua.
Most of the girls interviewed were from poor rural areas. Some reported they work 100 hours a week, and only 8 out of 20 had a weekly day of rest. None of these have ever gone to school while working as a maid. Several studies reported that in 2001 between 66 000 and 86 000 children under 15 years of age were employed as domestic servants across the country, including about 13,500 just on the outskirts of Casablanca. (AP) (Agenzia Fides 22/11/2012)

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