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ASIA/JORDAN - Exploitation, abuse, hard labor and underpaid workers for 50 000 children

Amman (Agenzia Fides) - In Jordan, because of poverty, many children have never had the chance to play or lead a life as a child because they are forced to work to survive. According to the latest census, the total workforce in the country has 1 million 200 thousand people, including 33,000 children. Other figures say that there are more than 50 000 young workers. The reports by activists for the protection of human rights and trade unions reported physical, psychological and sexual abuse, as well as inhuman working conditions, such as very tiring and long underpaid days which these children live daily. The National Center of Forensic Medicine does not officially confirm cases of child victims of abuse in the workplace or make public any figures related to the phenomenon. However, a study conducted by an international expert confirms that 15% of all cases of sexual abuse of children under 18 are connected with the sexual exploitation of children at work or prostitution of girls. Jordanian law is in conformity with international conventions on child labor, which include fines and imprisonment. However, in practice, these laws are not enforced. Often the inspectors of the local Ministry of Labour tolerate irregularities because most of these children desperately need to work for a living. (AP) (Agenzia Fides 01/02/2013)

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