

## STATEMENT

### **KSC Condemns Shocking Child Labor Reports, Calls for Immediate Action and Stronger Protections for Vulnerable Children**

**Slemani, Iraq – November 12, 2024:** Kurdistan Save the Children (KSC) is deeply concerned by recent unofficial reports highlighting alarming cases of child labor in our city. The exploitation of vulnerable children is unacceptable and KSC has mobilized its night-time security team to work closely with local law enforcement to investigate reported incidents, examine video footage and determine whether these alleged incidents in front of our headquarters are part of an organized child labor operation or a potential smear campaign.

Regardless of the outcome of this investigation, it should be clear that KSC is committed to taking immediate and appropriate actions against the perpetrators, swiftly and thoroughly.

KSC has dedicated countless hours to child workshops and advocacy, urging the government to implement stronger measures to protect vulnerable children and calling for harsher penalties for anyone who exploits children, even family members.

Launched in 2007, KSC's Child Labor Protection and Monitoring Project works in close collaboration with local authorities to address exploitation risks facing children. The project has made strides across Slemani, Erbil, Duhok and surrounding areas. Since 2023, KSC's Child Protection and Observation Committee has conducted over 12,480 site visits, identifying 1,584 children at risk, who were subsequently removed from hazardous environments. At the Sara Children Activity Center, 208 children from Slemani alone have been receiving crucial psychosocial care, helping them to recover from trauma and rebuild their emotional well-being in a supportive environment.

Our recommendations, submitted to policymakers, include an updated list of hazardous activities that should be prohibited to minors, along with a review of child labor laws to ensure they address modern challenges. However, to truly prevent child labor and abuse, we must address the underlying cause: poverty. KSC is advocating for a benefits system that ensures essential healthcare, food security and social services for children living below the poverty line, creating a safety net for vulnerable families and reducing the risk of child exploitation.

Programs like KSC's Sponsorship Project provide monthly financial support to eligible families, enabling children to focus on their education and development, rather than work. In collaboration with juvenile police and various other municipal bodies, KSC's social workers monitor these children and ensure they have access to vital services. KSC also conducts awareness programs for families and communities to build a stronger understanding of the risks and impact of child labor.

To strengthen protections, KSC has partnered with the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs to advance the Committee for Monitoring and Protecting Working Children, attending monthly High Council for Child Protection meetings.

### Contact KSC:

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## Kurdistan Save the Children (KSC) Press Release



To ensure a more robust and united front, KSC is spearheading efforts to establish a national task force on child labor aimed at creating coordinated, long-term solutions to this crisis.

Casting unfounded allegations against KSC's integrity detracts from our mission and jeopardizes the well-being of the children we strive to protect. KSC will remain committed and unwavering in its mission to provide a safe, healthy and supportive environment for all children, working tirelessly to ensure a brighter, more secure future for each.

-ENDS-

### ABOUT KSC

KSC is a non-profit, non-political and non-sectarian organization that provides assistance to children regardless of race, gender, political or religious affiliation. It operates through four essential programs: Child Protection, Education, Health and Youth Ability Development as well as emergency relief during disasters.

KSC's main aim is to work directly or indirectly to ensure a better future for children by improving and providing their various medical, social, economic and educational needs.

KSC was co-founded in 1991 by Hero Ibrahim Ahmad and Shanaz Ibrahim Ahmad, currently First Lady of Iraq.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Visit our website: <https://www.ksc-kcf.org/>

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<https://www.youtube.com/@KurdistanSavetheChildren>

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