



High Council for Human Rights of
the Islamic Republic of Iran

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An Elucidating Report on: Children during the January 2026 Unrest; The Murder Case of a Three-Year-Old Child in Kermanshah

**The High Council for Human Rights
of The Islamic Republic of Iran
(February 2026)**

In the Name of GOD

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Introduction

Children's rights, as one of the most fundamental obligations of governments and societies, are more at risk than ever in times of instability and mass violence. During the unrest in January 2026 in some cities in Iran, reports of civilian casualties, including children, were published. One of the most tragic cases was the killing of a three-year-old child in Kermanshah province, a case that quickly became a narrative, without careful fact-finding and legal accountability being the focus of attention.

This report, with a humane approach based on children's rights, attempts to reexamine the incident, challenge the dominant narrative of "the government violating children's rights," and draw attention to the direct role of those who promote violence and make children's living environments unsafe.



1. Incident Description

The murder case of a three-year-old child in Kermanshah (Melina) – January 2026



در آغوش پدر، جان داد

ماجرای شهادت ملینا ۳ ساله در اغتشاشات کرمانشاه

According to field reports, family statements, and information published in the media, on the evening of January 8, 2026, during street unrest and riots in Kermanshah, a three-year-old child named Melina lost her life due to a gunshot wound. The incident occurred in a residential area of the city and in a situation where the public space of the area was affected by chaos, congestion, and insecurity resulting from violent movements.

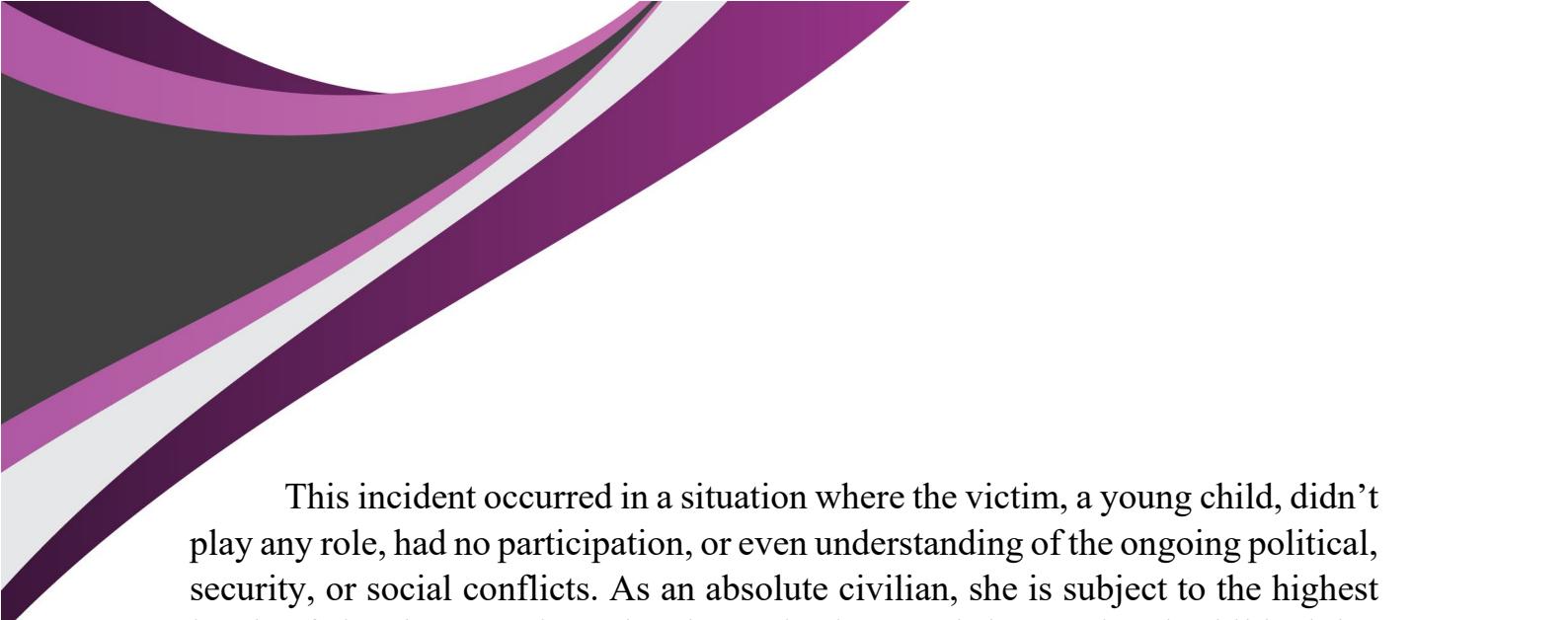
According to the child's father, Ehsan Asadi (34 years old), a driver for the Kermanshah Bus Organization, he and his daughter left their residence in Taqbostan Boulevard to buy medicine and powdered milk for their two-year-old

child. Their destination was a pharmacy a short distance from home, and they left home solely to meet urgent medical needs.

On the way back, while the father and child were walking towards home in the opposite direction of the street gatherings, upon reaching the beginning of the street where they lived, a gunshot was heard in the air. Immediately after that, the child fell to the ground. The physical evidence and the child's physical condition indicate that the bullet hit the head, resulting in a fatal injury.

Immediately after that, the child's father took his child to the nearest emergency room and then to Taleghani Hospital in Kermanshah. However, according to the announcement of the rescue forces and medical staff, the child had died before reaching the hospital.





This incident occurred in a situation where the victim, a young child, didn't play any role, had no participation, or even understanding of the ongoing political, security, or social conflicts. As an absolute civilian, she is subject to the highest level of legal protections in domestic law and international child rights instruments.

What is of legal importance in this case, regardless of determining the direct cause of the shooting, is that the child's death occurred in a context of insecurity resulting from street violence and the use of weapons in public and residential environments; which in itself is considered a clear violation of the child's right to life and right to security.

In the days following the incident, numerous media accounts emerged about the perpetrator or perpetrators of the shooting. Some reports have assessed the incident in the context of acts of violence and indiscriminate shootings during the riots. However, from a legal perspective, determining criminal responsibility requires a thorough judicial investigation, identifying the source of the shooting, the type of weapon, and the causal chain of the incident; something that must be pursued regardless of media hype and hasty narratives.

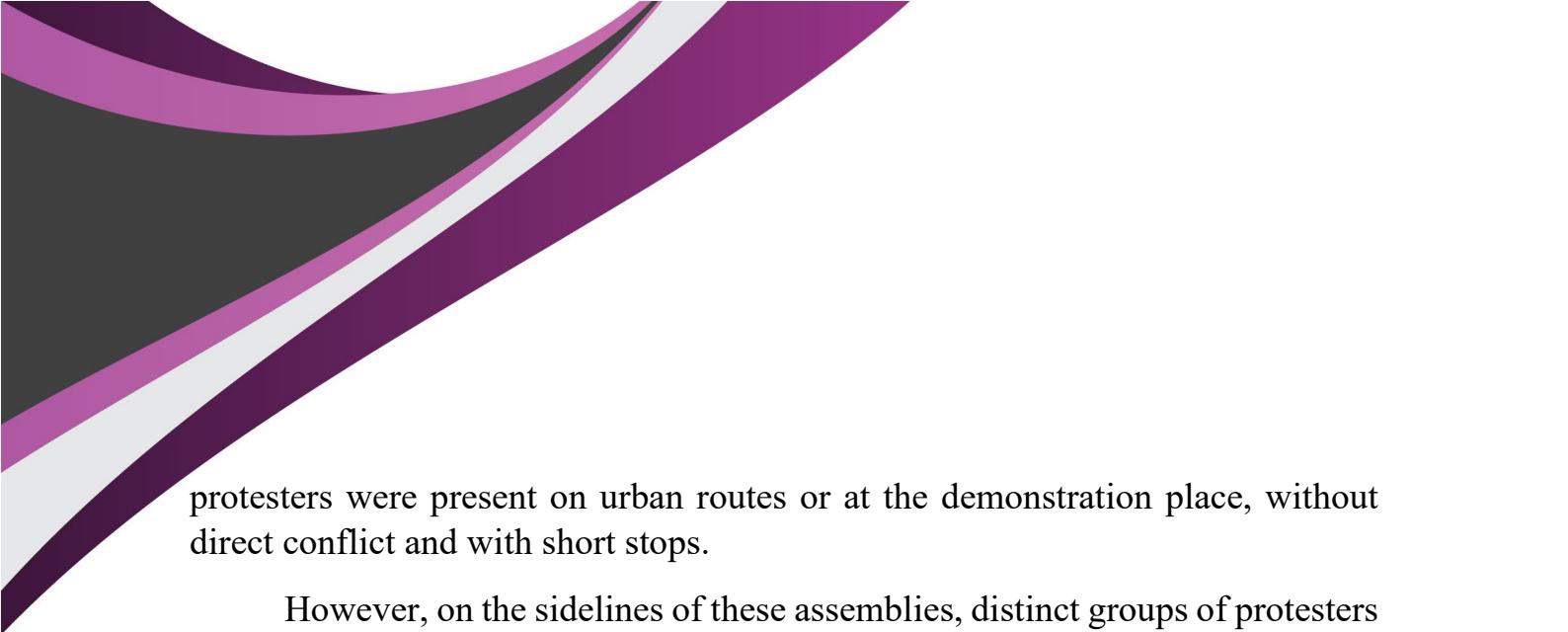
The child's body was buried after the funeral; however, the case of her death is not simply an individual or family incident, but rather an objective example of the direct negative impacts of the spread of violence and insecurity in urban spaces on the fundamental rights of children; rights that, according to the law, should not be the subject of conflict under any circumstances.



2. Investigating the Context of the Incident

- **Environmental violence, weapons and responsibility for creating insecurity in violation of children's rights**

The death of a three-year-old child in Kermanshah, regardless of determining the direct cause of the shooting, occurred in a context of street violence and environmental insecurity; an issue that has independent importance from the perspective of children's rights. An examination of the events of January 2026 in various cities of the country shows that protest demonstrations, in the initial stage, were mainly based on economic demands and were held peacefully with the presence of ordinary citizens, even in the form of families. In many cases,



protesters were present on urban routes or at the demonstration place, without direct conflict and with short stops.

However, on the sidelines of these assemblies, distinct groups of protesters entered the scene, behaving in a completely different manner from civil protest:

- Destruction of public property, including traffic lights, city signs, and street curbs
- Throwing rocks and concrete blocks in the path of vehicles
- Burning trash bins, tires, and creating artificial obstacles in the path of traffic
- Attacking bank branches, shops, and citizens' homes
- Threatening and in some cases using weapons against the public

These measures severely disrupted urban traffic, created heavy traffic, increased public tension and insecurity, and turned environments that should have been safe for citizens, especially children, into high-risk spaces. In some areas, armed individuals attempted to attack military centers, administrative centers, and sensitive locations, and a significant number of people from both sides lost their lives in the ensuing clashes.

- Environmental violence and violation of children's rights

Children, as the group most in need of protection, are the most vulnerable victims of public insecurity in such circumstances. The death of a three-year-old child in Kermanshah is an example that shows that even the indirect role of the perpetrators of the child's death in the protests does not reduce the legal responsibility of the perpetrators of the violence. In other words, from the perspective of children's rights, the responsibility for this tragedy is not limited to the moment of the shooting; rather it goes back to the process of making the urban environment unsafe, the presence of weapons, and the deliberate destruction of public and residential spaces.

- Legal responsibility of those who create insecurity

According to Article 6 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, states are obligated to guarantee the right to life, development and survival of children, and this obligation includes preventing the behavior of third parties that make the living environment of children unsafe. In addition, domestic law of Iran considers any use of weapons, creating a danger in the public environment, destruction of property and threats against civilians to be prosecuted under various criminal headings.

In this context, those who:

- Intentionally or knowingly incite street violence
- Turn residential and public environments into dangerous spaces
- Or organize armed and destructive actions

hold direct or complicit responsibility in violating the fundamental rights of children. Even without examining the direct cause of the shooting, the process of creating insecurity in itself is considered a violation of the right to life, security and health of the child.

Therefore, the incident of Melina's death is a bitter example of the direct negative impact of the spread of violence and weaponization of public environments on children. The legal analysis of this case shows that:

- The death of a child is the result of the collapse of environmental security due to street violence;
- Judicial review and transparent fact-finding are prerequisites for any responsible legal and media action.

More than an individual tragedy, this case is a symbol of the violation of children's rights in conditions of urban chaos and crisis and highlights the need for legal and social attention to protect children in high-risk environments.

3. Legal Responsibility of Perpetrators of Violence in the Framework of Child Rights

The incident of the death of a three-year-old child in Kermanshah is an example where the violation of children's rights is directly related to the use of street violence and the creation of environmental insecurity by rioters. From a legal perspective, this case reveals several levels of responsibility:

- Criminal responsibility of the direct perpetrator

The perpetrator or perpetrators of shooting at residential areas and civilians, even if the direct target was not a specific individual, can be prosecuted under various headings of criminal law of Iran. These headings include:

- Quasi-Intentional homicide or homicide resulting from pure negligence (depending on the determination of the mental element)
- Causing murder or creating a dangerous environment leading to death
- Unauthorized use of a weapon in a public environment

In this case, the shooting in a residential and crowded environment directly led to the death of a child. In criminal law, even acts of violence with potential intent or knowledge of the possibility of harming civilians can lead to criminal responsibility.

- Responsibility of participants in public insecurity

Regardless of the direct perpetrator, those who have made the public environment unsafe by causing destruction, using weapons, or creating obstacles are also legally responsible. This concept is known in criminal law as causing and creating a specific danger.

- Any destruction of public property, attacks on private or public places, and attempts to block traffic routes create an environment in which the lives of civilians, especially children, are at risk.

- Actions including breaking traffic lights, signs, burning tires and trash bins, attacking shops and homes, or using weapons, are all considered to be contributing factors to accidents and child deaths.

- Combined responsibility and a comprehensive approach

The legal approach to such cases is not limited to a single factor or moment of the incident; rather, it includes a chain of violent actions, organizers, and armed individuals in an urban environment. From this perspective:

- The shooter is directly responsible for the death;
- Those who have turned the environment into a field of violence with weapons—and not just peaceful protests—are responsible for facilitating the death.

Therefore, legal responsibility in such a case is multi-layered and simultaneous, and includes individual criminal responsibility and contributory responsibility for creating insecurity.

Therefore, the case of the murder of a three-year-old child in Kermanshah shows that:

- The child's death is the result of the disruption of environmental security and the street violence of rioters;
- The responsibility of the perpetrators of violence is not limited to the moment of shooting and includes all those who, through their actions, have turned the environment into a dangerous space for civilians;
- Legal and enlightened analysis, places not only the direct perpetrator, but also all the factors and contexts that create insecurity, in the cycle of responsibility.

4. International and Legal Framework for the Protection of Children and Violations of their Rights in Recent unrest

Protection of children's rights at the international and domestic levels is based on principles that recognize the right to life, security, and healthy development of children. Countries have enacted numerous laws and regulations with the aim of protecting children, and among them, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is one of the most important international documents that obligates member states to respect the rights of the child.

The right to life, as one of the fundamental principles of the rights of the child, is guaranteed in this convention, and member states are obliged to protect the right to survival, life, and development of the child.

In Iran's domestic law, the protection of children is legally emphasized. According to the Law on the Protection of Children and Adolescents:

- Any harassment that leads to physical, mental or moral harm to a child and threatens his or her health is prohibited.
- Article 4 of this law considers any physical or mental harm, torture, and neglect of the mental and physical health of a child a crime and sentences the perpetrator to imprisonment and a fine.
- According to Article 5, child abuse is considered a public crime and does not require a private plaintiff.

- Legal and media criticism of the instrumental use of children

During the recent unrest, we witnessed the rapid spread of the names and images of children who were victims of violence in the media and on social media, and some reports were accompanied by biased and often incomplete narratives without completing the fact-finding and thorough review process. This creates two major legal and human harms:

a) Harm to the rights of children and families

The instrumental use of children's names, regardless of whether the purpose is to reveal the truth or to warn, can:

- Violate the privacy rights and dignity of the child and family;
- Expose the family to social pressure, fear and even possible threats;
- Disrupt the legal and judicial process of fact-finding and prevent the realization of the child's rights.

Children's rights and international principles emphasize that the protection of the identity and dignity of the child victim must always be a priority. According to Article 19, paragraph 4, of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, states are obliged to take legislative, administrative and educational measures to prevent any psychological and social harm to the child.

b) Propaganda abuse and distortion of the truth

In many cases, publishing images and names of child victims without official confirmation and a thorough investigation of the cause or causes of the incident provides the basis for propaganda and political abuse. This abuse can take the form of:

- Changing the narrative of the incident and attributing it to a specific group or institution,
- Creating a war of narratives in the media space,
- Politicizing the child's death and presenting it as a tool for pressure

From a legal perspective, these actions contradict the principle of fact-finding and criminal justice and prevent the prosecution of those truly responsible for the incident.



- Legal obligations for media and institutions

Given the legal status of children as a group deserving additional protection, media and information institutions are obliged to:

- Publish information only on the basis of official reports and judicial investigations;
- Avoid portraying the child's identity or family details that may be harmful;
- Strive to ensure that the media environment contributes to clarification and fact-finding rather than deepening tension.

These principles are especially important in situations of unrest and security crises, as any hasty and biased narrative can further threaten the environmental and psychological security of children and their families.

Conclusion

During the events of January 2026, civil and demand-oriented assemblies that aimed to express the economic and social demands of citizens turned into riots in some areas with the entry of armed and violent groups. This change in nature, especially in urban and residential environments, created an unsafe environment for civilians, especially children. A bitter example of these consequences is the death of a three-year-old child from Kermanshah; a child who had no role or participation in these protests and who lost her life simply because she was present in an environment that had become unsafe due to the violent and destructive actions of the rioters.

From the perspective of children's rights and international law, responsibility for this tragedy is not limited to the moment of the shooting, but rather to all factors and processes that created the insecurity. Actions that include the destruction of public and private property, attacks on residential areas, the creation of dangerous obstacles in the streets, and the use of children as instruments of violence directly contradict the fundamental rights of children, including the right to life, security, and physical and mental health, and violate the general rules of civil and criminal responsibility.

International mechanisms and authoritative child rights instruments, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child, explicitly oblige member states to provide additional protection to children and prevent their harm in situations of violence. These principles include prohibiting the use of children in violent activities and ensuring their safety and health in public settings. In this context, the death of a three-year-old child in Kermanshah clearly demonstrates that the extreme and organized violence of rioters directly violates children's rights and that the perpetrators of violence bear legal and criminal responsibility for it.

This incident also highlights the importance of documented investigations, fact-finding and accurate accountability for perpetrators of violence, and shows that the protection of children in urban and crisis-affected environments can only

be guaranteed by adhering to peaceful principles, preventing insecurity and responding to violent behavior. This legal analysis provides a clear basis for responding to international allegations and accusations, emphasizing that the child is the victim of violent acts of rioters, not law enforcement or security forces.

