The Convention on the Rights of the Child: How North Korea is Violating a Child's Right to a Quality Education

Tom Papain*

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is an international human rights treaty which lays out the fundamental civil, political, cultural, social and economic rights of children. Adopted in November 1989, the CRC has to date been ratified by 192 countries, and is currently the most widely ratified human rights treaty in the world. However, not all the state parties have complied with the provisions of the CRC. In fact, one country in particular - the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) - has consistently and egregiously violated many of the CRC's provisions since it became a party to the treaty. In this article, the author discusses how North Korea has been violating Article 29(1) of the CRC, which talks about a child's right to a quality education, since day one. Four ways in which North Korea is violating a child's right to a quality education are highlighted, notably the use of propaganda in textbooks and the country's overarching philosophy of education which permeates every school, grade and classroom in North Korea. The article ends with possible future developments in North Korean education and the steps that can be taken to mitigate North Korea's violation of Article 29(1).

* JD Candidate (Final Year), Fordham University School of Law, USA.