Dominican Republic: U.N. Study On Absolute Poverty, Child Abuse

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According to a study by the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), released Feb. 23 in Santo Domingo, an estimated 800,000 children live in conditions of absolute poverty. Over 25% of all Dominican households are below the absolute poverty level. The study indicated that despite government participation in a UN children's rights program, rights of minors are consistently violated. In an interview broadcast by the Para Todos TV program, UNICEF's national official Aragena Martinez said, "The police are responsible for serious abuse against children, particularly against those who live in the streets or spend most of their time on the streets." According to Martinez, over 80% of street children have been physically harmed, or taken into custody between one and five times. Of this total, 60% were "punished" by police. Next, Martinez said that all children taken to prison are objects of sexual abuse. (Basic data from EFE, 02/23/91)

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