

# Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Newsletter

*November 2009*

Submitted by: the International Bureau for Children's Rights (IBCR)

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BUREAU  
INTERNATIONAL  
DES DROITS DES ENFANTS

INTERNATIONAL  
BUREAU  
FOR CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

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INTERNACIONAL DE  
LOS DERECHOS DEL NIÑO

## 1. Global Developments on Children's Rights

### **UN Security Council releases report on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict**

30 October 2009 – This 2009 *Cross-Cutting Report on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict* builds on the historical background and analysis of the first report published in October 2008 and looks specifically at developments since the end of 2007, both at the thematic level and in country-specific situations. In addition to analyzing recent Council action related to the protection of civilian's agenda, including through case studies of the situations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gaza and Sri Lanka, and identifying key challenges, the present report suggests some possible future options for the Council. This and future annual cross-cutting reports on protection of civilians should enable stakeholders to begin to systematically track progress in the Council's handling of this issue.

[Link to the report](#)

### **OXFAM releases a new publication on human rights in the field of education**

28 October 2009 – This resource entitled “Developing rights – a resource exploring rights around the world for ages 11-14” will help students to think about the place of rights in their own lives, and see how young people from around the world are claiming theirs. Useful for exploring issues such as equality, the right to education, and the balance between rights and responsibilities, the activities also use case study material from South Africa, Lebanon, and Ethiopia.

[For more information and report](#) – OXFAM

### **UNICEF launches special website for the 20th anniversary of the CRC**

On 20 November 2009, the world will commemorate two decades of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). UNICEF invites you to visit a special CRC website dedicated to this occasion: [www.unicef.org/rightsite](http://www.unicef.org/rightsite). The official commemoration of the Convention at Headquarters will take place on 20 November at the UN Trusteeship Council.

[For more information](#) – UNICEF

### **‘Tracking Progress’: UNICEF report calls for urgent international action on nutrition**

11 November 2009 – As the number of hungry and malnourished people passes 1 billion, a new UNICEF report identifies malnutrition as one of the major causes of death among young children. ‘Tracking Progress on Child and Maternal Nutrition’ says that malnutrition in mothers and children is a factor in a third of all deaths of children under five. At the same time, the global financial crisis and rising food prices have left many more families struggling to put nutritious food on the table. Egypt and Yemen are two countries out of the 24 studied in the report.

[For more information](#) and [report](#) – UNICEF

## **The global community celebrates the 20th anniversary of the CRC**

19 November 2009 – The Convention on the Rights of the Child is a universal standard for building a better world – a world in which the best interests of children are a primary concern of all. This November 20th the global community commemorates the 20th anniversary of the Convention, the most widely ratified international human rights treaty in history. Also, UNICEF launches a special edition issue of *The State of the World's Children report*, tracking the impact of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the challenges that remain, was released today on the eve of the 20th anniversary of the Convention's adoption by the UN General Assembly.

Also in the commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), HREA is launching a new web portal to promote understanding and application of a human rights-based approach to schooling. A human rights-based approach (HRBA) to schooling is concerned with the organisation of learning so that it is reflective of human rights principles and promotes understanding and cherishing of the human rights framework. HREA has compiled a wealth of resources on the human rights-based approach to schooling, which can be found in our new [Portal for Human Rights Schools](#). The Portal for Human Rights Schools can be accessed at: <http://www.hrea.org/humanrightsschools>

[Read more](#) – UNICEF

[Full press release and report](#) – UNICEF

[Read more](#) – IRIN

## **UNICEF launches a Legislative Reform Initiative**

UNICEF's Legislative Reform Initiative reiterates the importance of the implementation of the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). This initiative underlines that State members need to do more than just adopt new laws, in fact, they should implement measures and programs of actions that will work towards the application of these laws. This initiative offers new tools with which States can learn about other legislative reforms while globally sharing their experiences.

[For more information](#)

## **2. MENA Regional Child Related Activities (events, conferences, news, vacancies, announcements, reportages, campaigns)**

### **Final call for applications for e-learning course Child Rights Programming**

A distance learning course will be offered to staff members of (international) development agencies and NGOs to child rights programming from 3 February-20 April 2010. A child rights-based approach is a conceptual framework for the process of human development

that is normatively based on international children's rights standards and operationally directed to promoting, protecting and fulfilling children's human rights. Essentially, a child rights-based approach integrates the norms, standards and principles of the international human rights system into the plans, policies and processes of programme development for children. To apply for the course, please consult the link here below.

[For more information](#)

### **New material on the HIC-MENA website**

New material has just been added to the HIC (Habitat International Coalition)-MENA website. The new item - "Prospects for the Arab City Facing the Multiple Challenge of War, Conflict, Social Cohesion and the Fulfillment of Human Rights" is available at the following link:

[http://www.hic-mena.org/documents/Arab\\_Cities\\_Final\\_en\\_300308.pdf](http://www.hic-mena.org/documents/Arab_Cities_Final_en_300308.pdf)

### **A new book published by the Arab Council for Childhood and Development**

"Various cultural influences on the Arab child" is the title of the new book published by the Arab Council for Childhood and Development (ACCD) and several partners. This publication presents an in-depth research conducted by a number of scholars from various Arab countries on the relationship between the cultural values of the child's language on the one hand and the economic situation on the other. It also explores the cultural identity of children issued from migrant families and the impact of Arab and Western television and consumer culture on the Arab child. For more information, please contact Mrs. Eman Bahi El-Din at the following e-mail address: [bahi.e@arabccd.org](mailto:bahi.e@arabccd.org).

### **Conférence sur «les pires formes de travail des enfants » tenue au Caire**

6 novembre 2009 - Quelque 218 millions d'enfants dans le monde sont victimes d'exploitations dans le milieu du travail, dont 13 millions d'enfants dans le monde arabe, a annoncé, mardi le 3 novembre au Caire, le directeur général de l'Organisation arabe du travail (OAT), M. Ahmed Loqmane. Lors d'une conférence sur «les pires formes de travail des enfants», le responsable arabe a mis en garde contre la prolifération de ce phénomène qui commence à prendre de l'ampleur dans les pays arabes, notamment les secteurs de l'agriculture.

[Read more](#) – Le Matin

### **3<sup>e</sup> Congrès consultatif sur les permanences téléphoniques d'assistance aux enfants**

novembre 2009 - Le 3<sup>e</sup> congrès consultatif des permanences téléphoniques d'assistance aux enfants dans la région Moyen orient Afrique du Nord (MENA) a eu lieu du 3 au 5 novembre à Rabat. Initié par l'organisation Child Helpline international et l'Observatoire national des droits de l'enfant (ONDE), la manifestation a réuni une soixantaine de participants, dont plusieurs organisations régionales et internationales concernées par les questions de l'enfant dans plusieurs pays arabes et islamiques, œuvrant dans le domaine des permanences

téléphoniques existantes ou en cours de réalisation ainsi que des réseaux agissant dans le domaine de la protection de l'enfant.

[Full story](#) – Agence Maghreb Arabe Presse

[Read more](#)

### **Regional training workshop on Early Childhood Care and Education in Beirut**

November 2009 - Practitioners from Egypt, Sudan, Yemen, the Syrian Arab Republic and Lebanon participated in a five-day training workshop on early childhood care and education organized by the International College in Beirut and UNESCO Cairo from 7 to 11 November 2009. The training, given by two preschool directors, will include exposure to participatory learning methods, techniques for working with young children and visits to pre-school classes.

[More information](#) – UNESCO

### **The 7<sup>th</sup> National Children's Conference to be hosted by DCI-Palestine**

In line with the celebration of the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Defence for Children International (DCI), Defence for Children International/Palestine Section (DCI/PS) will be hosting “The 7<sup>th</sup> National Children's Conference” under the motto “Life – Freedom – Dignity for Children of Palestine” on Thursday, 19 November 2009, in Al Bireh, West Bank.

[For more information](#) – DCI-Palestine

## **3. Sub-Regional and Country Updates:**

### ***In the Levant:***

#### **Iraq – Iraqi organization wins the 2009 Rights & Democracy's John Humphrey Award**

10 November 2009 - Rights & Democracy is pleased to present the *2009 Rights & Democracy's John Humphrey Award* to the Iraqi nonviolence network La'Onf in recognition of its efforts to encourage Iraqis to reject violence and build a peaceful Iraq founded on the respect for human rights. Established in April 2006, La'Onf (“nonviolence” in Arabic) is a national network of civil society organizations consisting of more than 120 organizations from every region of Iraq. Human rights groups, women's organizations, unions, student groups, humanitarian organizations and cultural associations all work together to carry out campaigns promoting human rights and civic activism among Iraqis from all communities. Their combined efforts to end the war and political violence, ease sectarian tensions and put an end to corruption are motivated by the common goal of enabling Iraqis to create for themselves a prosperous, peaceful and stable future.

[Full press release](#) – Rights & Democracy

### **Israel/Opt – Israel delays expulsion of children of foreign workers**

3 November 2009 - Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has delayed until the end of the school year the expulsion of 1,200 children of foreigners working illegally in Israel, his office said on Sunday. Some 1,200 Asian and African children born in Israel had faced deportation along with their parents on November 1 following a crackdown on foreign workers who have overstayed their visas and continue working in Israel. The fate of the children has struck a deep chord in Israel, which has absorbed millions of Jewish immigrants since its founding in 1948.

[Full story](#) – The Daily Star Lebanon

### **Israel/Opt – Former Palestinian child prisoner speaks out on a UK tour**

2 November 2009 - On Monday, 2 November 2009, DCI-Palestine accompanied Mohammad and his mother Somaya on a four-day speaking tour of the UK to highlight the plight of Palestinian child prisoners. Mohammad, from the occupied West Bank, was 14 years old when he was detained by Israeli forces in February 2008 and accused of throwing stones at the Wall. Mohammad was beaten, interrogated in the absence of a lawyer, deceived into signing a confession, prosecuted in a military court and sentenced to four months imprisonment inside Israel. Whilst in prison, he received no education and no family visits. Today, DCI-Palestine is launching a short film which tells the story of Mohammad and his experiences in a military court system which prosecutes around 700 children each year, some as young as 12. The most common offence these children are charged with is throwing stones.

[Full story and video](#) – DCI-Palestine

### **Israel/Opt – Emirati doctor helps Gaza children hear**

13 November 2009 - Emirati doctor Mazen Al Hajiri, who specialises in operations to regain hearing, has been offering his services free of charge to Gazan children who lost their hearing due to Israeli operations over the years. The procedure, which is only offered in the UAE, involves inserting a small electronic "snail" device in the ear, giving the gift of hearing back to the patient. The UAE Red Crescent Authority last week inaugurated a centre for hearing in Gaza complete with supplies and modern medical equipment with the agreement of Saleh Al Ta'ei, the director of relief and emergencies for the society.

[Read more](#) – Gulf News

### **Israel/Opt – DCI celebrates CRC's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary**

20 November 2009 – *Defense for Children International* celebrates the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. However, DCI expresses deep concerns because, even though Israel has ratified the Convention, it continues to systematically violate the rights of Palestinian children. During 2009, 313 children were murdered as a result of military actions taken against the Gaza strip and many more were wounded. In addition to violating the right to life to many children, Israeli's military

occupation on the West Bank and Gaza and the embargos imposed upon them also limits their access to food, fresh water, education and health services.

[Full article](#) – DCI

### **Israel/Opt – 10-year-old boy beaten and detained by soldiers**

23 November 2009 – A 10 year old boy was beaten and detained for 11 hours by Israeli soldiers after he participated in a protest against the construction of the wall separating Israel and the West Bank. In July 2008, another 10 year old Palestinian boy took part in a peaceful demonstration, unfortunately, he was shot in the head by an Israeli soldier.

[Full article](#) – DCI

### **Israel/Opt – Palestinian children face attacks going to school**

23 November 2009 – Palestinian children face daily attacks while they are on their way to school. The attackers are Jewish settlers who are colonizing the West Bank. In addition to attacking children, the settlers destroy agricultural fields, chop up olives tree and poison water sources. Despite the gravity of these actions, the Israeli authorities shut their eyes on those horrible crimes.

[Full article](#) – IPS

### **Jordan – New campaign seeks to combat violence in schools**

10 November 2009 - The Education Ministry will designate November 25 as a day to raise students' awareness of school violence, in preparation for the "Together Towards a Safe School Environment" campaign. The initiative, which is being implemented by the ministry in cooperation with UNICEF and several national institutions, will be launched in the next few months. The campaign seeks to curb all forms of violence in schools, including corporal punishment and other practices that harm children.

[Full article](#) – The Jordan Times

### **Jordan – New initiative seeks to transform children's lives through sports**

9 November 2009 – More than one million Jordanian schoolchildren are expected to develop their leadership skills through involvement in International Inspiration programmes to be implemented over the next three years in 20 countries across the globe. The International Inspiration project, developed by London 2012, the British Council (BC) and UNICEF, aims to reach Jordanian children of all abilities - including girls and marginalised children - to build their leadership skills through sports, BC country director Marc Jessel told The Jordan Times. "Jordan was selected as the only country in the Middle East and North Africa region to implement this project, which is designed to ensure that the Olympic Games have an everlasting impact, a vision shared by a number of different partners," he said.

[Full story](#) – The Jordan Times

### **Jordan – Health officials to focus on child victims**

6 November 2009 – Child victims of family violence will receive better medical and psychological care at the hands of 30 medics who completed intensive training on Thursday. The medics, who work in 30 hospitals across the country, were trained on how to deal with children subjected to domestic violence, of which some 400-500 cases are reported in the Kingdom annually. In a speech at the graduation ceremony yesterday, Nasser Moeini, UNICEF deputy representative, underlined the Kingdom's efforts to combat the phenomenon.

[Full story](#) – The Jordan Times

### **Lebanon – Children gather at Phoenicia to celebrate differences**

3 November 2009 – In an effort to foster a community of acceptance to realize the abilities of those with disabilities, InterContinental Phoenicia Beirut gathered over 50 children from Al-Kawthar School, a private high school in Beirut and Foyer D'Enfants, a Kesrouan-based school for children with special needs. The pouring rain and thunderstorms prevented many more children who were invited from arriving at the Phoenicia InterContinental Hotel in Beirut for the festivities, which included singing, dancing, a magic show and an elaborate lunch.

[Full story](#) – The Daily Star Lebanon

### **Lebanon – Lebanon – One woman's fight against Lebanese nationality law**

9 November 2009 – Samira Soueidan's story is not unusual in Lebanon. The Burj Hammoud resident fell in love, married and started a family. When her husband passed away in 1994, Soueidan was left with four children the Lebanese state viewed as foreigners. What is her crime? Soueidan had married an Egyptian. While Lebanese law allows men to pass on their nationality to their non-Lebanese wives and children, it prohibits Lebanese women married to non-Lebanese from doing the same. Without the proper papers, Soueidan's children faced problems at military checkpoints, had difficulty obtaining employment or affordable education and health care, were made to undergo regular medical check-ups and blood tests, and lived with the threat of deportation every day.

[Full story](#) – The Daily Star Lebanon

### **Lebanon – Lebanon suffers problem of child brides**

10 November 2009 – Early marriages are making an unwelcome comeback in impoverished Lebanese villages and among the Palestinian refugee community, spurred on by the global economic crisis and harmful gender stereotypes, women's rights activists warned Monday. Child brides are seen as more of a problem in countries like Saudi Arabia or Yemen but have been steadily increasing in poor areas throughout Lebanon over recent years. Girls as young as 13 are being married off by their parents with damaging consequences on their education and psychological and physical well-being, experts said.

[Read more](#) – The Daily Star Lebanon

### **Lebanon – Reconstruction of Nahr al-Bared camp**

25 November 2009 – Two years after the destruction of Nahr al-Bared camp which resulted from a confrontation between the Lebanese army and Islamist militant group Fatah al-Islam, the Palestinian refugee camp is finally under reconstruction. However, the refugees are somewhat sceptical about the reconstruction as UNRWA has only been able to raise one third of the US 328\$ million required for the project. The families which have been living under especially harsh economic conditions for the past two years have nonetheless been hoping that the reconstruction will allow them to improve their situation.

[Full story](#) – IPS

### **Syria – UNRWA Opens US-funded School in Dera'a Camp**

2 November 2009 – UNRWA unveiled a building today in Dera'a that will house a new school for girls. The Ein Karemeh Girls School was funded generously by a USD 822,600 donation from the United States government. It has well-equipped and spacious classrooms, and specialised rooms for the teaching of science, computing and music teaching.

[Full story](#) – UNRWA

### **Syria – Story of a young Iraqi forced to work for survival**

30 November 2009 – Karrad is a young adolescent who left Iraq after the war broke out. He came to Syria with his parents and two younger brothers in search for a better life. Even though Syria provides access to education for Iraqi, Karrad and his bother Ali, 12 years old, have not been able to benefit from this since they have been forced to work since their arrival in Syria in order to support the family. By working 12 hours a day, seven days a weeks, they only bring home on average US 108\$ monthly. Karrad still hopes for a better future, however, this will only be possible if he moves to another country because the socio-economic conditions in Syria do not allow for him or his bothers to pursue an education.

[Full Story](#) – IRIN

### ***In North Africa:***

### **Egypt – Nearly a third of children malnourished – report**

5 November 2009 – Despite a number of positive economic indicators, Egypt has a hunger problem: Nearly a third of all children are malnourished, according to a new report compiled by the Ministry of Health and the UN Development Programme (UNDP). The [Egyptian Demographic Health Survey \(EDHS\) 2008](#), published in March 2009, recorded a 6 percent increase in under nourishment severe enough to stunt growth in children under five, pushing the percentage of stunted Egyptian toddlers to 29 percent from 23 percent in 2000.

[Full report](#) – IRIN

## **Egypt – Egypt to be reviewed by the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child**

The African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child has issued its first recommendations to Egypt.

[Full report](#) – CRIN

## **Egypt – Government not doing enough against human trafficking**

27 November 2009 – According to “Land Center for Human Rights”, Egyptian authorities are not doing enough to fight against human trafficking. Modern slavery has now become a worldwide phenomenon and Egypt is shutting its eyes to this growing social problem by simply not addressing the issue by failing to provide accurate statistics. Many young Egyptian girls are not unknown to this phenomenon as they are sold as sex slaves into prostitution or forced into marriage with older men from the Gulf region.

[Full report](#) – Land Center for Human Rights

## **Libye – Le salon du livre dédie un espace aux enfants**

18 novembre 2009 – La 9eme édition du salon du livre en Libye a réservé un espace pour les livres destinés aux enfants. Ceci a notamment comme objectif de sensibiliser les enfants afin qu'ils développent un intérêt pour la lecture.

[Article complet](#) – Afrique en ligne

## **Maroc – Les avancées en matière des droits humains permettent aux enfants de vivre dans un cadre plus favorable**

4 novembre 2009 – Les acquis et les "avancées réalisées par le Maroc en matière des droits humains, particulièrement les droits des femmes, permettent aux enfants de vivre dans un cadre plus favorable", a affirmé, mardi dernier à Rabat, la ministre du Développement social, de la Famille et de la Solidarité, Mme Nouzha Skalli. S'exprimant à l'ouverture du 3e Congrès régional de concertation sur les permanences téléphoniques d'assistance aux enfants dans la région MENA, Mme Skalli a indiqué que le Royaume dispose d'une vision, qui est le fruit de la convergence positive de plusieurs facteurs, notamment "l'engagement de S.M. le Roi Mohammed VI pour l'instauration des bases d'une société moderne et démocratique et pour la promotion des droits de l'Homme en général". Elle a cité, à cet égard, l'implication personnelle de S.A.R. la Princesse Lalla Meriem, Présidente de l'Observatoire national des droits de l'enfant (ONDE), l'impulsion de stratégies gouvernementales volontaristes qui mettent l'accent sur l'intégration des droits de l'enfant dans toute politique publique et la dynamique des initiatives innovantes de la société civile.

[Full story](#) – Le Matin

## **Maroc – Le lancement du Programme national d'extension de l'offre d'enseignement scolaire**

6 novembre 2009 – Selon la secrétaire d'Etat chargée de l'enseignement scolaire, Mme Latifa Labida, le Programme national d'extension de l'offre d'enseignement scolaire vise à combler le déficit du système éducatif qui n'accompagne pas la demande croissante en

matière de scolarisation au niveau national. Ce programme ambitieux prévoit la création de 1.246 nouveaux établissements scolaires et le renforcement de l'offre éducative, à travers la réalisation de 4.745 salles de classe et 846 internats additionnels.

[En lire plus](#) – Agence Maghreb Arabe Presse

### **Maroc – Pour l'amélioration de l'espace scolaire**

8 novembre 2009 – La région de Fès-Boulemane sera enrichie de 80 nouveaux établissements scolaires de 2009 à 2012. L'annonce a été faite par Le directeur de l'Académie régionale d'éducation et de formation dans la région de Fès-Boulemane, Mohamed Ould Dada, lors d'une conférence de presse sur la rentrée scolaire. «Ce projet s'inscrit dans le cadre du plan d'urgence visant la lutte contre le sureffectif au niveau des établissements scolaires, l'amélioration du taux d'assiduité et la qualité de l'enseignement, l'élargissement de l'offre en matière d'éducation et la lutte contre le redoublement et la déperdition scolaire. Ce projet couvre 10 établissements primaires, 29 secondaires, 15 qualifiants et 24 internats», précise-t-il. La mise à niveau de 245 établissements scolaires en 2010 s'inscrit également dans la même perspective. La ville de Fès figure en première place avec 167 établissements. Elle est suivie de Boulemane, Moulay Yacoub et Sefrou avec respectivement 43, 20 et 15 établissements. La tâche n'est pas aisée...

[Full article](#) – La Matin

### **Maroc – Instruction des sourds-muets: Un défi majeur pour la société**

10 novembre 2009 – Privés de la faculté d'ouïe et de la parole, ils ne peuvent que susciter l'admiration à les voir sur les bancs d'école en quête du savoir. En les observant en action, en ce début d'année scolaire, on ne peut que s'interroger sur leur nombre à travers le pays. A en croire le peu de statistiques existantes sur leur cas, ces «oubliés de la société», qui traînent avec eux leur handicap comme une malédiction, sont légion au Maroc. Leur défi : découvrir la magie des mots et exprimer, tout simplement, ce qu'ils pensent.

[Full story](#) – Le Matin

### **Maroc – Le 3ème Forum Jeunes des Etats de la Ligue Arabe du 14 au 20 novembre à Assilah**

10 novembre 2009 – Le Forum Méditerranéen de la Jeunesse et de l'enfance au Maroc organise, du 14 au 20 novembre à Assilah, la 3ème session du Forum des Jeunes des Etats de la Ligue Arabe et la 2ème réunion de coordination Euro-Arabe. Organisée par la Ligue des Etats arabes en coopération avec le Conseil de l'Europe et le Forum Européen de la Jeunesse, cette édition connaîtra la participation d'importantes délégations constituées des membres d'organisations non-gouvernementales et d'organisations internationales ainsi que des chercheurs, spécialistes et jeunes actifs dans le domaine des migrations. Le forum vise à activer la participation des jeunes leaders des pays arabes et européens pour l'établissement d'un dialogue fondé sur le développement humain en vue de comprendre la problématique des jeunes et la migration.

[Read more](#) – Agence Maghreb Arabe Presse

## ***In the Gulf:***

### **Bahrain – ‘Protect children’ drive**

23 November 2009 - An initiative that aims to combat child abuse in the Middle East was launched by a Bahrain Women’s Association for Human Development’s Be Free Centre, together with various local, regional and international organisations and groups working in the field of child protection. The Protect Children Now movement’s primary aims are to create better legislation on child abuse, create awareness on legislation and advocate its implementation. Another objective is to create a database that identifies the best practices in child protection in the region in the way of laws, research and case studies. The movement plans to create a network for legislators, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and interested parties that will enable them to work together on combating child abuse.

[Full article](#) – Gulf Daily News

### **United Arab Emirates – Dubai children’s book fair to be held in February**

19 November 2009 - Children’s literature in the Arab world is expected to get an impetus with the launch of The Dubai International Children’s Book Fair, which will be held from February 3-10. The book fair is organised by the Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Foundation to create a platform that will generate greater awareness about the importance of children’s literature as a key component in the development of the youth throughout the Arab World. The fair also intends to create new business and investment opportunities in publishing and support the development of children’s literature in the Arab World.

[Full article](#) – Gulf News

### **United Arab Emirates – Children’s charity given shot in arm**

13 November 2009 - Times are hard for a charity organisation as the "big cheques" have stopped coming in, which in turn has affected children’s activities, *Gulf News* has learned. Mariam Othman, director of the Rashid Pediatric Therapy Centre said the number of sponsors has dropped and companies are no longer holding events and donating part of the proceeds to the centre. The director said the centre does not have a fixed income and that fees partially pay the cost of running the centre for special-needs children. She explained that while the UAE has a number of centres, there is still a long waiting list of children.

[Read more](#) – Gulf News

### **United Arab Emirates – UAE gallery gives helping hand to children’s charity**

15 November 2009 - Make-A-Wish-UAE (MAW-UAE) is a non-profit charitable organisation that has helped fulfill the wishes of 80 expatriate and Emirati children with terminal medical conditions since its establishment in 2004. The MAW-UAE is the only branch available across the Arab world alongside other international affiliated MAW international branches that grant dreams of children aged three to 18 years, most of whom only have a few more years to live. With the foundation’s motto calling for support of their

efforts in helping ill children, the MAW-UAE is coordinating with an upcoming art gallery. The Opera Gallery houses 26 masterpieces, worth \$30 million (Dh110 million), and 75 contemporary works. Approximately five per cent of the gallery's sales and 15 per cent of the proceeds made from the gallery will go to the MAW-UAE's cause.

[Read more](#) – Gulf News

### **United Arab Emirates – Children step on board mobile library**

13 November 2009 - Kitab Bus, the mobile library on a bus, was launched to ensure that all parts of the Abu Dhabi community have access to books and reading. The bus started its journey from Al Ain on October 4. It has hundreds of books, both Arabic and English, including fiction and non-fiction titles, chosen with readers of all ages in mind. The book lovers were participating in storytelling sessions, meeting authors and reading their favorite books on board. The bus has been touring primary schools and public places in Abu Dhabi. The response was overwhelming, Al Qubaisi told *Gulf News*.

[Read more](#) – Gulf News

### **United Arab Emirates – A look into the fate of abandoned children in the UAE**

20 November 2009 - A box placed near a garbage container drew the attention of passers-by. Little did they know what was inside it — a baby had been abandoned. This incident was one of several this year. In March, three babies were abandoned in Sharjah. The body of a four-month-old girl was found by Sharjah Police in Al Khan area near a seafood restaurant. A child was found at Al Faisal mosque and then a 16-month-old boy was later found abandoned in a toilet at Al Sahabah mosque. The two infants were found alive and were placed in the custody of the Social Services Department which takes care of such children. Women and their partners most often abandon their illegitimate babies to escape punishment and imprisonment. Sometimes married couples abandon their babies due to poverty.

[Read more](#) – Gulf News

### **United Arab Emirates – Dubai students raise funds for poor children**

5 November 2009 – A group of students from the Universal American School of Dubai decides to step out of their classrooms and take concrete action to raise funds for a Dubai Cares campaign.

[Read more](#) – Gulf News

### **Yemen – ToT program of offering psychological support started**

31 October 2009 – A training of trainer program was begin for improving capacities of social guides in field of offering social and psychological support for children and families who were affected because of armed conflict in Saada province.

[Read more](#) – Yemen News Agency

### **Yemen – Displaced students' conditions in al-Merzaq camp inspected**

2 November 2009 – Deputy Education Minister Abdullah al-Hamedi affirmed on Monday that Education Ministry gives special priority for receiving all displaced students in the public education schools. During his visit to al-Merzaq camp in Hajjah province accompanied by Hajjah Governor Farid Mujawar, al-Hamedi was introduced to conditions of the displaced students in the camp due to the insurgency war in Saada province.

[Full story](#) – Yemen News Agency

### **Yemen – Save the Children arranges training on child rights**

1 November 2009 – Save the Children arranged on Sunday in Sana'a a training course on child rights with participation of 35 of local education and health providers in al-Safia and al-Sabeen districts. The training course aims to raise the participants' awareness in the importance of advocating for child rights, particularly in Education and Health areas.

[Read more](#) – Yemen News Agency

### **Yemen – Education now more available to girl than before**

1 November 2009 – Fawzia Noman, who is now Minister of education in Yemen, said that education was not always available to girls in Yemen. It used to be that girls were only allowed to participate in Koranic studies. When Fawzia was young, she was not able to study in Yemen. She pursued her education in Cairo, as her father conducted business there. She later returned to Yemen and dedicated herself to the right of education for young girls.

[Full article](#) – Yemen Today

### **Yemen – Clambering up mountains to find water**

3 November 2009 – Tens of thousands of people in Milhan District, Mahwit Governorate, around 100km northwest of the Yemeni capital Sanaa, are facing acute water shortages due to lack of rainfall, according to local officials. Most of the district's residents depend on rainwater so are vulnerable in the dry season, and many springs have dried up, according to Mohammed al-Nuzail, head of the General Rural Water Authority (GRWA) in the governorate. Up to 40,000 women and children are obliged to walk - or rather clamber - 10-15km to reach the nearest water sources, said Ali Saeed, a local environmental activist.

[Full story](#) – IRIN

### **Yemen – A young nation with growing pains**

10 November 2009 – Teenage pregnancies are common in Yemen. In fact, Yemen is a nation raised by young mothers. Teenage and child marriages are widespread here, particularly in rural areas, where the majority of Yemen's population of 22 million lives. In 2008, 10-year-old Nujood Ali made headlines locally and worldwide when she escaped from her older husband's home to a courtroom and succeeded in getting a divorce. Something like that had been unheard of before. She helped bring much attention – to some, too much attention – to the plight of child brides in this country.

[Read more](#) – The Daily Star Lebanon

## **Yemen – Thousands of pregnant women and girls at risk due to current conflict in northern Yemen**

2 November 2009 – Women, children and elderly individuals make up the majority of the 150,000 people displaced by the current Sa'adah conflict. Thousands of pregnant women and girls are at risk, and their situation is of great concern to the UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund. Displaced women are having difficulties registering as heads of households due to social and traditional cultural beliefs that forbid women from assuming this role. Such discrimination is hindering their access to food rations and other non-food items, as well as various essential services. These displaced women are suffering from a lack of access to basic hygiene; some have not even had a change of clothes in three months.

[Read more](#) – The Yemen Observer

## **Yemen – Too many kids out of school in Hodeidah Governorate – report**

19 November 2009 – Nearly half of children in rural areas of the western Yemeni governorate of Hodeidah, have no access to basic education, according to a new report by the Seyaj Organization for Childhood Protection (SOCP) and the Yemen News Agency. A survey was conducted on a random sample of 3,249 boys and girls from 1,542 families in the districts of Liyah, Zahrah and Beit al-Faqih, said Fahd al-Sabri, lead author of the report. The survey results, announced on 18 November, indicate that 45 percent of boys and 52 percent of girls in the 6-15 age group have no access to basic education - for several reasons, including vulnerability of their families, lack of schools and teachers, or schools being far away from their homes, al-Sabri told IRIN.

[Full article](#) – IRIN

## **Yemen – Agencies battle with minors seeking new life in Gulf**

30 November 2009 – An increasing number of children is fleeing the horn of Africa in search for a new life in the Gulf region, rising concern amongst NGO's and UN agencies operating in Yemen. Many unaccompanied children are sent by their parents to Yemen, a point of entry from where they can later on access some wealthier Gulf States, such as Saudi Arabia. These children are put in an extremely vulnerable situation in which they are often abused sexually or trafficked for modern slavery. This of course goes without saying that these minors are deprived of their right to education.

[Full article](#) – IRIN