



# Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Newsletter

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

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## Table of Contents:

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>1. Global Developments on Children's Rights .....</b>   | <b>3</b> |
| Climate change and the right of children to a clean environment .....  | 3        |
| The International Community celebrates Human Rights Day.....   | 3        |
| UN General Assembly adopts a resolution marking the end of the International Year of<br>Human Rights Learning.....                     | 3        |
| CRC: Report on the 52nd session of the Committee on the Rights of Children .....   | 4        |
| Working group to explore the possibility of providing the CRC with a communication<br>procedure.....                                   | 4        |
| <b>2. MENA Regional Child Related Activities (events, conferences, news, vacancies,<br/>announcements, reportages, campaigns).....</b> | <b>5</b> |
| The Cairo Declaration on the CRC and Islamic Jurisprudence .....   | 5        |
| UNESCO Associated schools (ASPnet) regional seminar for Arab States .....  | 5        |
| Vacancy – Amnesty International is seeking an International Human Rights Education<br>Project Coordinator .....                        | 5        |
| Vacancy – Two positions offered at Save the Children.....  | 5        |
| <b>3. Sub-Regional and Country Updates: .....</b>  | <b>6</b> |
| In the Levant:.....  | 6        |
| Iraq – Bomb explodes at a school in Baghdad.....   | 6        |
| UNIFEM issues a report on prostitution of women and girls in Palestine .....   | 6        |
| Israel/Opt – UN Human Rights Committee releases list of issues .....   | 6        |
| Israel/Opt – Remember the children of Gaza.....  | 6        |
| Israel/Opt – Palestinian children in Israeli detention centers.....  | 6        |
| Israel/Opt – Human Rights Days 2009: Israel continues to violate the rights of<br>Palestinians, according to DCI Palestine.....        | 7        |
| Israel/Opt – Gaza: Childhood in ruins.....   | 7        |
| Israel/Opt – Water price increase affects marginalised communities.....  | 8        |
| Israel/Opt – Victims of Gaza still await for justice.....  | 8        |



|   |    |
|---|----|
| Israel/OPT – Palestinian human rights activists detained.....   | 8  |
| Jordan – The right to education for young Iraqi refugees .....  | 8  |
| Jordan – Palestinian children denied social services .....  | 9  |
| Lebanon – Lebanese mothers score points for women’s rights .....  | 9  |
| Lebanon – Ethiopian maid cleared of killing baby.....   | 9  |
| Syria – Tougher law against tobacco use to benefit the health of young Syrians.....   | 9  |
| Syria – Poverty suspected of fueling child labor among Iraqi refugees.....  | 9  |
| In North Africa: .....  | 10 |
| Algérie – Des jeunes sous l’emprise de la drogue.....   | 10 |
| Libye – Le droit des enfants à la citoyenneté de leur mère .....  | 10 |
| Libye – Concours artistique pour les enfants handicapés .....   | 10 |
| Egypt – Christian Coptic adoption draft law refused.....  | 10 |
| Egypt – 9,301 cases of underage marriage found.....   | 11 |
| Maroc – Scolarisation refusée aux enfants autistes.....   | 11 |
| Maroc – Appel à la mise en place de mécanismes de recours pour les enfants .....  | 11 |
| Maroc – École mobile pour élèves nomades .....  | 11 |
| Maroc – Appel à la libération des enfants sahraouis marocains.....  | 11 |
| Maroc – Le Maroc dispose d’importants mécanismes pour la protection des enfants<br>contre la violence .....                     | 12 |
| Tunisie – Participation de la société civile tunisienne au sommet mondial de la famille à<br>Istanbul.....                      | 12 |
| Tunisie – Programme national contre la violence envers l’enfant.....  | 12 |
| Tunisie – Le Ministre des Affaires Sociales reçoit la représentante de l’UNICEF .....   | 12 |
| Tunisie – Deuxième session ordinaire du parlement de l’enfant de 2009 .....   | 13 |
| Tunisie – 8 <sup>e</sup> rencontre sur le programme d’action sociale et scolaire.....   | 13 |
| Tunisie – L’Organisation tunisienne des mères ouvre un nouveau bureau .....   | 13 |
| Tunisie – Jeune célèbrent proclamation de l’année 2010 comme année internationale de<br>la jeunesse .....                       | 13 |
| In the Gulf: .....  | 14 |
| Bahrain – Be-Free Center works with universities in the fight for children’s rights.....  | 14 |
| Kuwait – Two women to be awarded the UNESCO/Emir of Kuwait prize for their<br>work with children living with disabilities ..... | 14 |
| Saudi Arabia – Saudi King to build war refugee homes .....  | 14 |
| Saudi Arabia – Bin Laden’s Children detained.....   | 14 |
| Yemen – Population of biggest IDP camp doubles .....  | 14 |
| Yemen – Raising awareness on the use of child soldiers.....   | 15 |
| Yemen – Poor education system feeds children labour in Yemen.....   | 15 |
| Yemen – Training course on children rights.....   | 15 |
| Yemen – Oxfam signs agreement with civil society .....  | 15 |
| Yemen – Yemeni children trafficked to Saudi Arabia for begging .....  | 15 |
| Yemen – Record exodus from Horn .....   | 16 |



## 1. Global Developments on Children's Rights

### **Climate change and the right of children to a clean environment**

7 December 2009 – 164 children from 44 countries signed a declaration at the end of a children's climate forum organized by UNICEF which took place in Copenhagen, asking for the world leaders to take action immediately on climate change. Article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child states that all members must take actions to provide a healthy environment for children. Furthermore, article 12 of the present Convention reiterates the right of participation of the child in all matters that concern him. It is thus interesting to see how children are addressing climate change, an issue that is affecting their daily lives. According to the UN Standing Committee on Nutrition (UNSCN), climate change has serious impacts on access to food and clean water, thus raising the rate of malnutrition and other related diseases among children.

[Full article](#) – CRIN

[Full article](#) – IRIN

[For more information on children's participation](#) – Institute of Development Studies

### **The International Community celebrates Human Rights Day**

10 December 2009 – Every year, the International Community celebrates the anniversary of the [Universal Declaration on Human Rights](#), which was adopted on 10 December 1948. This year's theme was discrimination. The United Nation's High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, reiterates in her statement the importance of the concept of non-discrimination. According to Ms. Pillay, racial and ethnic discrimination, along with discrimination based on gender or religion, can lead to several violations of human rights. She thus calls upon the International Community to take actions in the eradication of all forms of discrimination. In fact, many children suffer from discrimination worldwide, often because of their color, gender, or ethnic groups or because they live with disabilities and diseases such as HIV/AIDS.

[Full statement](#) – UNHCHR

### **UN General Assembly adopts a resolution marking the end of the International Year of Human Rights Learning**

10 December 2009 – The General Assembly adopted resolution A/RES/64/82 to mark the end of the International Year of Human Rights Learning. The resolution underlines the fact that education should be made through seminars and extracurricular activities in order raise awareness about human rights. However, George Kent from the University of Hawai'i states that the resolution is especially significant in the sense that we must ask ourselves about the meaning of human rights and what it means for the diverse groups living in this multicultural world. We must question what it means to educate 'others' about human right and how they can take part, not only in the application of these rights but also in their process-making.

[See press release related to the resolution](#)



## **CRC: Report on the 52nd session of the Committee on the Rights of Children**

17 December 2009 – The NGO group for the Convention of the Rights of the Child recently published its report on the 52nd session of the Committee, which took place in Geneva from 14 September to 2 October 2009. Reports were examined from the States of Bolivia, Mozambique, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Qatar. Poland and Yemen submitted States Reports concerning the implementation of the Optional Protocol to the CRC on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography while the States to be examined under the Optional Protocol to the CRC on the involvement of children in armed conflict were Poland and Turkey. The report includes an overview of the dialogues between the relevant actors of each country discussing specific themes. The main areas of concern for Yemen with respect to the sale of children were temporary marriage, illegal adoption, sexual exploitation, transfer of organs, and engagement of children in forced labor and child pornography. Some of the Committee's recommendations to Yemen included addressing the problem of child trafficking across Yemeni borders, as well as the rehabilitation of streets juveniles and the establishment of new programs facilitating the access to health services and education for children living in rural areas. As for Qatar, the area of focus for the dialogue was children's survival, safety, development and protection against violence. Also included in the report are the Committees Concluding Observations which urges Qatar to undertake measure to raise awareness within the society with respect to the Convention and to stop all discrimination against children, especially girls, children with disabilities, children born out of wedlock and children of migrant workers. Qatar is expected to submit in 2013 its 3rd and 4th periodic reports combined, within which information on the OPAC and OPSC should also be included.

[For more information](#)

[See full report](#)

## **Working group to explore the possibility of providing the CRC with a communication procedure**

During its 11<sup>th</sup> session which took place in June 2009, the Human Rights Council adopted Resolution A/HRC/RES/11/1 which decides to establish a working group to explore the possibility of elaborating an optional protocol to the CRC allowing individuals who have had their rights violated under the CRC to submit individual communications to the Committee. The 1<sup>st</sup> session of the Open-Ended Working Group will take place from 14 to 18 December 2009. Currently, five committees (CCPR, CEDAW, CERD, CAT, and CRPD) have a communication procedure complementary to the reporting procedure provided under the Convention. Two instruments which have not entered into force yet, the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance also provide for a communication procedure.

[Resolution A/HRC/RES/11/1](#)

[For more information on the Working Group](#)

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

### **The Cairo Declaration on the CRC and Islamic Jurisprudence**

3 December 2009 – The Cairo Declaration on the CRC and Islamic Jurisprudence was adopted as the outcome of a conference which took place in Egypt in November 2009. The main objective of this gathering was to enhance compliance with the Convention. The conference addressed the themes of corporal punishment, juvenile justice and female genital mutilation.

[Declaration](#)

[For more information](#) – CRIN

### **UNESCO Associated schools (ASPnet) regional seminar for Arab States**

9 December 2009 – 15 Arab States are meeting at the UNESCO's headquarter from 14 to 18 December to plan the UNESCO Associated School Strategy and Plan for the years 2010-2015. The plan aims at promoting intercultural exchange among the participating countries and educational for all. Experts in education from United Nations' agencies and international NGOs will also be attending the gathering.

[Full article](#) – UNESCO

### **Vacancy – Amnesty International is seeking an International Human Rights Education Project Coordinator**

18 December 2009 – Amnesty International is seeking an International Human Rights Education Project Coordinator to coordinate an international human rights education initiative aiming at raising awareness and taking action to fight against human rights abuse that deepens poverty. The candidate must have excellent communication skills. This is a three year contract taking place in London. Some traveling will be required.

[For further information on the posting](#)

### **Vacancy – Two positions offered at Save the Children**

Save the Children has launched a Global Child Protection Initiative which aims at enhancing child protection globally through strategic pacification and through the development of new tools allowing the international community to share a pool of information and resources. Save the Children is thus seeking both a Program and a Fundraising Manager to develop this new project. This assignment is for a period of one year with possibility of extension, starting as soon as possible for the Fundraising Manager and on 1 April 2010 for the Program Manager. The application deadline for both positions is 17 January 2010. Consult the links below for further details.

[Description for Program Manager position](#)

[Description for Fundraising Manager position](#)



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

#### *In the Levant:*

#### **Iraq – Bomb explodes at a school in Baghdad**

7 December 2009 – Seven children were killed and 42 others were wounded after a bomb exploded in Baghdad's Sadr City slum, located in a Shi'ite district of the capital. The building in which the explosion took place included a primary school and a school for children between the ages of 13 and 15.

[Full article](#) – MECA for peace

#### **UNIFEM issues a report on prostitution of women and girls in Palestine**

9 December 2008 – In June 2008, UNIFEM issued a report on women and girls who are being trafficking in Gaza, the West Bank and Jerusalem for prostitution. According to the report, girls are forced into prostitution because of harsh economic conditions and a lack of social security. UNIFEM thus urged the authorities to acknowledge the existence of this problem and recommends that a bill be passed which will treat prostitution as a sexual violence. This organization also demands that the authorities treat girls and women as victims rather than criminal and provide them with a shelter and other basic material need.

[Full report](#) – UNIFEM

#### **Israel/Opt – UN Human Rights Committee releases list of issues**

The review of Israel's period report of Civil and Political Rights is scheduled for the UN Human Rights Committee's 99th session (12-30 July 2010). The committee has released a list of issues that the State of Israel needs to address by then. Many of these issues concern children and the justice system. Defence for Children International has also released a report which will be taken into consideration at the time of the evaluation.

[Full article](#)

[See list of issues](#)

[DCI's alternative report](#)

#### **Israel/Opt – Remember the children of Gaza**

4 December 2009 – Almost one year after Israel's attacks on Gaza, the children are still suffering. Even though the attacks are over, the children are still being discriminated against and they are living under constant oppression from the Israeli government. To this day, they live in a precarious environment in which they lack access to education, food and water. Thanks to generous donations, Middle East Children's Alliance (MECA) was able to provide humanitarian relief to Gaza's children.

[Full article](#) – MECA

#### **Israel/Opt – Palestinian children in Israeli detention centers**

9 December 2009 – The average number of Palestinian children who are detained in Israeli jails is of 360 per month, compared to 319 for 2008, representing an increase of 13% since last year. Children as young as 12 years old are being detained. As a State party to the



Convention of the Rights of the Child, Israel must respect article 37 which states that children shall be detained only as a last measure and for the shortest length of time possible.

### *The case of Mohammed Baran*

Mohammed Baran has been detained without charge or trial since March 2008 on the grounds that he represents a danger to society. The Israeli authorities will not let him or his lawyer see the evidences they hold against him. Under Israeli Military Order 1591, the military commanders are entitled to detain individuals who are as young as twelve years old for up to six months without charge or trial if it is believed that the person poses a threat. This type of detention is what Israel calls administrative detention, which is often based on secret evidences. After the six-month detention period has elapsed, it can be extended another six months and this process can be repeated indefinitely. This is a clear violation of CRC's article 37.b which states that: "No child shall be deprived of his or her liberty unlawfully or arbitrarily. The arrest, detention or imprisonment of a child shall be in conformity with the law and shall be used only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time".

[Full article](#) – DCI

[Latest DCI's report on Palestinian child prisoners](#)

[Read more on Mohammed Baran's case](#)

## **Israel/Opt – Human Rights Days 2009: Israel continues to violate the rights of Palestinians, according to DCI Palestine**

9 December 2009 – 61 years after the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Israel still violates the rights of its Palestinian population. Last year's 23 day war on Gaza, the continuous economic blockades, the construction of the wall separating Israel and the West Bank, the attacks on human rights defenders and the refusal to comply with the Gladstone report demonstrate that Israel has no intention of respecting the rights of its Arab citizens. Some States, through a lack of pressure on Israel, allow for the violation of these rights, even though they themselves give the image of being advocates of human rights.

[Full article](#) – DCI

## **Israel/Opt – Gaza: Childhood in ruins**

17 December 2009 – The 23-day war which started on 27 December 2008 has had tremendous consequences on the lives of Palestinians, especially those of children. Based on the statistics from *The Gaza Community Mental Health Programme*, 1, 420 Palestinians were killed as a result of the attacks, of whom 446 were children. 5, 320 were injured, among which 1, 855 were also children. As many as 20, 000 houses were either partly or fully destroyed. 36 UN schools were also bombarded. According to a study conducted between Palestinians aged six to seventeen, 75 percent suffer from post-traumatic trauma. The children of Gaza do not feel safe in their homes anymore and they cannot enjoy their lives like normal children do. They cannot go to school on a regular basis as the bombardments have made the education system dysfunctional. Many of the parks in which they used to play have been destroyed. They cannot enjoy the fresh air without fearing a deadly military attack. Their childhoods have been stolen from them as they must face the harsh reality of life and daily oppression.

[Full article](#) – MECA for peace



### **Israel/Opt – Water price increase affects marginalised communities.**

24 December 2009 – NGOs express concerns over Israel's water price increase, which will affect vulnerable populations the most. Israel plans to built six desalination plants in 2010 and to do so, the State is increasing the price of water by 40 percent. Poor families already have to pay 27\$ monthly to have access to water and they will now have to pay an extra 11\$ each month. This means that water has now become a commodity for the rich, depriving the poor of their right to fresh water. Arab families living in the occupied territories will be particularly affected by this new policy.

[Full article](#) – IRIN

### **Israel/Opt – Victims of Gaza still await for justice**

27 December 2009 – One year after Israel's attack on the Gaza strip which killed over 1,400 Palestinians, of which many were women and children, the perpetrators still enjoy impunity. The Goldstone report, which was released at the end of the UN Human Rights' Council's fact finding mission established to verify the allegation of war crimes during the war on Gaza, concluded that both the Israeli military forces and the armed groups indeed committed war crimes. The UN thus urged both parties to conduct investigations leading to the condemnation of the perpetrators. Should both sides fail to take such actions, Amnesty International said that the International Community has the obligation to intervene in order to ensure that the criminals of war be held accountable.

[Full article](#) – Amnesty International

### **Israel/OPT – Palestinian human rights activists detained**

31 December 2009 – Israel has launch several raids in villages of the West Bank in response to the 'Stop the Wall' campaign, headed by several human rights activists who fight peacefully for stopping the construction of the wall separating Israel and the West Bank. Israeli soldiers have destroyed the houses of several campaigns' leaders, many of whom have also been detained arbitrarily. Among them also figure activists below the age of eighteen. This is a clear violation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which states that no one shall be subject to unlawful detention and that everyone shall enjoy the right to association.

[Full article](#) – HREA

### **Jordan – The right to education for young Iraqi refugees**

7 December 2009 – Omar is a thirteen year old boy who fled the war to go to Jordan after is father was killed in Baghdad. Omar's mother left Jordan to go to the United-Kingdom but could not take her children with her because their documents had been left behind in Iraq. Omar is one of many children who suffer from discrimination for being undocumented. Children living in refugee camps have access to education provided by the UNHCR but those living in the city do not have such privilege. Fortunately, a royal decree was passed in 2007 stating that all Iraqi children shall have access to public education, regardless of their status.

[Full article](#) – UNHCR



## **Jordan – Palestinian children denied social services**

23 December 2009 – Several Palestinian refugees and their children are being refused basic services such as healthcare and education because they are not Jordanian citizens. Jordan is home to the highest number of Palestinian refugees in the world. Many have obtained citizenship and live a normal life but many more live in unofficial camps where the socio-economic conditions are precarious. The division between Palestinian refugees is due to the fact that Jordan granted citizenship to Palestinian refugees who lived prior to 1954 in what is now Israel but what used to be the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan after the creation of Israel in 1948 and before the six-day war in 1967. The new wave of Palestinian refugees coming into Jordan thus lives at the margin of society, and their children are denied their basic rights such as access to education and health services.

[Full article](#) – Arab Reform Initiative

## **Lebanon – Lebanese mothers score points for women's rights**

18 December 2009 – Lebanese are now able to open bank accounts for their children while, in the past, only men were able to do so. In a country like Lebanon where women have the right to become ministers, why is it that they are not able to open bank accounts for minors? Lebanese women and NGOs see this as a step towards women empowerment, while also benefiting children, the banking system and the economy as a whole.

[Full article](#) – Arab Reform Initiative

## **Lebanon – Ethiopian maid cleared of killing baby**

31 December 2009 – An Ethiopian woman who came to Lebanon to work as a housemaid while she was pregnant was cleared after being charged by the Lebanese authorities for leaving her baby unattended in a closet after rushing to the hospital for excessive bleeding which occurred during the birth of the child. The baby died immediately after birth because of breathing problems which were not being taken care of due to a lack of medical care.

[Full article](#) – The Daily Star

## **Syria – Tougher law against tobacco use to benefit the health of young Syrians**

3 December 2009 – Syrian President Bashar al-Assad passed a new law starting at the beginning of 2010, which prohibits the use of tobacco products in closed public places such as restaurants, hospitals and cinemas. Smoking is a serious problem in Syrian society. As much as 60 percent of men and 23 percent of women smoke while it is estimated that 98 percent of the population is exposed to secondary smoke. Smoking shisha, an eastern water flavored tobacco pipe, has become increasingly popular among youths. This preoccupies the Syrian authority who says that the long-term effects of shisha are still unknown. It is therefore important to raise awareness on tobacco in Syria and especially among children and adolescents. Anyone breaking this new law is thus subject to a 2000 SYP (US 44\$) fine.

[Full article](#) – IRIN

## **Syria – Poverty suspected of fueling child labor among Iraqi refugees**

14 December 2009 – Iraqi children living in Syria have access to the education system but according to statistics, as much as ten percent do not attend school because they have to



work. This number is rising as economic conditions are getting worse. According to the Ministry of Education, 32,425 children were enrolled in school in 2008-2009, compared to 49,132 for the year before. Syrian law states that Iraqi refugees do not have the right to work so families end up working low paying jobs and rely on their children to help them earn money. These children are often exposed to dangerous work conditions. A study is currently being done in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Affairs, the International Labor Organization and UNICEF on the worst forms of child labor in Syria. Article 32 of the Convention of the Rights of the Child states that members should protect children from economic exploitation and work which can enter in contradiction with their education and which can be harmful to their physical or mental health.

[Full article](#) – IRIN

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

#### **Algérie – Des jeunes sous l'emprise de la drogue**

12 décembre 2009 – De plus en plus de jeunes algériens font l'utilisation de cannabis et de psychotropes. Selon une étude effectuée par l'Office nationale de lutte contre la drogue, 72 pourcent de ceux qui consomment de stupéfiants sont adolescents. Ceux-ci sont pour la plupart orphelins ou proviennent de familles dysfonctionnelles.

[Article complet](#) – La Tribune

#### **Libye – Le droit des enfants à la citoyenneté de leur mère**

2 décembre 2009 – Une table ronde a été organisée à Tripoli par l'Association caritative libyenne Waatassimou et le Programme des Nations unies pour le développement (PNUD) afin de discuter des droits de la femme libyenne. Plusieurs membres du secteur de l'enseignement, des institutions étatique et de la société civile ont participé au débat à l'intérieur duquel le droit des enfants libyens à recevoir la société de leur mère a notamment été abordé. Actuellement, les femmes qui sont mariées à des étrangers n'ont pas le droit de passer à leurs progénitures la citoyenneté libyenne. Ces enfants n'ont par conséquent pas accès aux services de santé et d'éducation offerts pour les citoyens.

[Article complet](#) - Afrique en ligne

#### **Libye – Concours artistique pour les enfants handicapés**

3 décembre 2009 – Plusieurs enfants handicapés provenant de divers pays arabes se sont rassemblés dans la capitale libyenne, Tripoli, afin de participer à un concours artistique visant à sensibiliser la population sur les droits des enfants, et notamment de ceux vivant avec un handicap.

[Article complet](#) – Afrique en ligne

#### **Egypt – Christian Coptic adoption draft law refused**

14 December 2009 – The Islamic Research Center refused to discuss a draft law allowing Christian Coptic couples to adopt children because the draft was not presented by a legislative party. Furthermore, the Islamic Research Center argues that adoption strictly goes against Islamic law.

[Full article](#) – Daily News Egypt



## **Egypt – 9,301 cases of underage marriage found**

18 December 2009 – 9,301 cases of underage marriage were found in Egypt, according to Prosecutor general Abdel Meguid Mahmoud. The Minister of Family and population, Moshira Khattab, says that child marriage is considered to be a form of child trafficking which is punishable by a five-year jail sentence and a fine of 200,000 LE. A new child law was passed in June 2008 by the People's Assembly rising the minimum age for girls who are getting married from 16 to 18 years old. The Muslim Brotherhood Bloc strongly opposed this new law, stating that the prohibition of underage marriage is a concept imposed by western countries and it goes against Islam and the cultural values of Egypt.

[Full article](#) – Daily News Egypt

## **Maroc – Scolarisation refusée aux enfants autistes**

7 décembre 2009 – Une manifestation culturelle organisée par l'Association Autisme France-Maroc qui a débuté dans la capitale marocaine en octobre et qui prendra fin le 12 décembre vise à sensibiliser la population sur les enfants vivant avec un handicap. Au cours de l'événement, plusieurs parents se sont plaints que leurs enfants n'avaient pas été admis dans certaines écoles privées, dû à leur condition mentale. Ceci viole l'article 2.1 de la CRC qui stipule qu'aucun enfant ne sera victime de discrimination à cause d'un handicap.

[Article complet](#) – Le Matin

## **Maroc – Appel à la mise en place de mécanismes de recours pour les enfants**

13 décembre 2009 – Lors d'une rencontre entre le Conseil Consultatif des Droits de l'Homme (CCDH) et du Fonds des Nations Unies pour l'Enfance (UNICEF), le président du CCDH a mentionné que le Maroc a fait des efforts considérables en matière de la mise en œuvre de mécanismes visant à promouvoir l'application de la CRC. Il a toutefois mentionné qu'il est nécessaire de permettre au Comité des droits de l'enfant d'examiner des plaintes collectives et individuelles relatives à la violation des droits des enfants. Il a également souligné qu'il est nécessaire de mettre en place un organe de supervision national qui aura le mandat de surveiller la situation des droits des enfants au Maroc et de recevoir des communications relatives aux cas de violations des droits des enfants, tel que recommandé par le Comité de la CRC, suite à l'évaluation du deuxième rapport périodique soumis par l'État marocain.

[Article complet](#) – Le Matin

## **Maroc – École mobile pour élèves nomades**

28 décembre 2009 – Une école mobile a été créée pour faciliter l'accès à l'éducation des enfants provenant des communautés nomades de Ouarzazate. Selon le délégué à l'éducation pour cette région, Al-Hussein Al-Bouzidi, même les moyens non-conventionnels sont explorés afin de respecter le droit à l'éducation des jeunes marocains.

[Article complet](#) – Le Matin

## **Maroc – Appel à la libération des enfants sahraouis marocains**

29 décembre 2009 – Le collectif international « Almohagir » qui regroupe une soixantaine d'ONG et qui œuvre dans dix pays européens fait un appel à la communauté internationale



pour que les enfants sahraouis de nationalité marocaine qui ont été déportés à Cuba ou qui sont détenus contre leur gré dans les camps de Tindouf, en sol algérien, soit immédiatement rapatriés au Maroc. « Almohagir » estime que ces enfants ont droit à leur liberté et à leur dignité ainsi qu'à un système d'éducation adéquat, tel que stipulé dans l'article 28 de la CRC, ratifiée par l'Algérie le 16 avril 1993.

[Article complet](#) – Le Matin

### **Maroc – Le Maroc dispose d'importants mécanismes pour la protection des enfants contre la violence**

31 décembre 2009 – La ministre du Développement Social, de la Famille et de la Solidarité, Nouzha Skalli, a mentionné que le Maroc a adopté un Plan d'action national pour l'enfance (Pane) 2006-2015. Un projet de loi interdisant le travail des enfants de moins de 15 ans a été présenté. Deux enquêtes ont été conduites à Casablanca, une concernant les enfants de la rue et l'autre concernant le travail domestique des jeunes filles. Trois unités de la protection de l'enfance ont également été créées à Marrakech, Casablanca et Tanger et la ministre assure que d'autres seront mises sur pied, couvrant une plus vaste partie du territoire.

[Article complet](#) – Le Matin

### **Tunisie – Participation de la société civile tunisienne au sommet mondial de la famille à Istanbul**

7 décembre 2009 – Saida Agrebi, présidente de l'Organisation tunisienne des mères, a mis de l'avant lors du sommet mondial de la famille qui s'est déroulé à Istanbul du 4 au 7 décembre 2009 le programme présidentielle 2009-2014 qui a comme objectif de réaliser la cohésion sociale familiale, l'amélioration des conditions socio-économiques et la promotion de la participation des femmes dans la société.

[Article Complet](#) – Agence Tunis Afrique Presse

### **Tunisie – Programme national contre la violence envers l'enfant**

16 décembre 2009 – Un Programme national de lutte contre la violence à l'égard de l'enfant a été présenté lors d'une conférence qui a eu lieu mercredi dernier à Gammarth. Se programme répond aux recommandations émises en 1995 par le Secrétaire Général de l'ONU qui encourage la Tunisie à adopter des plans nationaux visant la réalisation des droits de l'enfant.

[Article complet](#) – Agence Tunis Afrique Presse

### **Tunisie – Le Ministre des Affaires Sociales reçoit la représentante de l'UNICEF**

23 décembre 2009 – Le Ministres des Affaires Sociales, de la Solidarité et des Tunisiens à l'Étranger a accueilli la représentante de l'UNICEF dans le but d'augmenter la coopération entre les deux instances. La formation de nombreux experts sur le terrain a entre autre été discutée. Ces derniers œuvreront notamment dans les zones rurales et quartiers populaires à forte densité démographique. L'UNICEF a également pris cette occasion pour féliciter la Tunisie qui a accompli un travail remarquable en matière de développement social, particulièrement en ce qui a trait à la protection de l'enfance.

[Article complet](#) – Agence Tunis Afrique Presse



## **Tunisie – Deuxième session ordinaire du parlement de l'enfant de 2009**

26 décembre 2009 – Une deuxième session ordinaire du parlement de l'enfant s'est déroulée au siège de la chambre des députés au Bardo, dans laquelle le Ministre de la Santé Publique a alimenté un débat animé sur la santé de l'enfant. Des thèmes comme l'immunisation et la réduction de la mortalité infantile ont entre autre été abordés. Une question majeure sur laquelle ont également discutée les participants est celle de la protection de l'enfant contre les comportements à risque, tel que le tabagisme.

[Article complet](#) – Agence Tunis Afrique Presse

## **Tunisie – 8<sup>e</sup> rencontre sur le programme d'action sociale et scolaire**

27 décembre 2009 – Une nouvelle édition du guide sur l'action sociale et scolaire pour l'année 2010-2011 a été présentée lors de la 8<sup>e</sup> rencontre sur le programme d'action sociale et scolaire. Ce programme a débuté en 1991 dans le but d'aider les enfants qui font face à des échecs scolaires. En 2008-2009, le programme a réussi à aider 23 589 cas d'échec scolaire, soit 64 pourcent des cas présentés.

[Article complet](#) – Agence Tunis Afrique Presse

## **Tunisie – L'Organisation tunisienne des mères ouvre un nouveau bureau**

29 décembre 2009 – L'Organisation tunisienne des mères ouvre un nouveau bureau à Mahdia. Sa Présidente, Sayda Agrebi, mentionne que la société civile est un acteur extrêmement important pour la mise en œuvre du programme du chef d'État qui vise le développement de plusieurs secteurs de la société et, notamment, l'avancement de la femme et de la famille. Elle souligne entre autre l'importance de la dimension humanitaire des politiques sociales, dimension qui est reflétée à travers de nombreux programmes de solidarité.

[Article complet](#) – Agence Tunis Afrique Presse

## **Tunisie – Jeune célèbrent proclamation de l'année 2010 comme année internationale de la jeunesse**

31 décembre 2009 – Les maisons des jeunes de Selina ainsi que plusieurs étudiants se sont réunis pour célébrer l'adoption par l'Organisation des Nations Unies de 2010 année internationale de la jeunesse, une initiative prise par le Président tunisien Zine el Abidine Ben Ali. Dans le cadre de la célébration, les jeunes ont organisé plusieurs activités telles que des ateliers technologiques, peinture, danses artistiques, musique, chansons et compétitions scientifiques. Les participants ont également affirmé être satisfaits des actions entreprises par le Président en ce qui a trait à la jeunesse. Le programme présidentiel « ensemble nous relevons des défis » inclut notamment un point intitulé « pour la jeunesse nous bâtissons un avenir meilleur ».

[Article complet](#) – Agence Tunis Afrique Presse



## *In the Gulf:*

### **Bahrain – Be-Free Center works with universities in the fight for children's rights**

15 December 2009 – Be-Free Center participated in a seminar on child abuse and neglect taking place at a Bahrain polytechnic university. Be-Free Center, who aims at raising awareness among youth with respect to child neglect, reiterates the importance of cooperating with universities and educational institutions in the fight for children's rights. Be-Free Center has also been awarded the European Commission 2009 Chaillot Prize for their achievements in the prevention of child trafficking and abuse.

### **Kuwait – Two women to be awarded the UNESCO/Emir of Kuwait prize for their work with children living with disabilities**

2 December 2009 – A woman from Lebanon and a woman from South Africa will be awarded on 8 December 2009 the UNESCO/Emir of Kuwait prize for the work they have done among children living with disabilities. This prize is awarded once a year to two individuals or institutions, one from an Arab state and one from any other country, for outstanding labor carried in the field of education among those who are intellectually disabled. The award was created in 2002 through the government of Kuwait and its value is of US\$40,000 to be shared between both awardees.

[Full article](#) – UNESCO

### **Saudi Arabia – Saudi King to build war refugee homes**

3 December 2009 – Saudi Arabia is building 10,000 homes for families who are fleeing the war in Yemen. Several camps had already been set up to welcome the refugees who have been living under harsh conditions since the beginning of the war between the Yemeni military forces and the Houthis rebel group in 2004. Saudi Arabia has been helping the Yemeni government fighting the rebellion and has set up a military perimeter close to the border in order to counter the rebel's attacks.

[Full article](#) – HIC MENA

### **Saudi Arabia – Bin Laden's Children detained**

28 December – Several of Osama Bin Laden's wives, children and grand-children have been detained in Iran since 2001 for the terrorist acts committed by their father. They are being deprived of their right to freedom and live in fear of the authorities, not knowing what will happen to them. Not only it is unfair but it is also against international treaties to imprison someone for the actions committed by another family member. This lengthy unlawful detention will forever change the lives of those children who have been living for so long in precarious conditions and without access to education.

[Full article](#) – Asharq Alawsat

### **Yemen – Population of biggest IDP camp doubles**

9 December 2009 – The population of the biggest Yemeni camp for internally displaced persons doubled in the past few weeks as a result of the ongoing conflict between the government and the Houtis rebels. It is estimated that there are 175,000 IDP affected by the war, many of whom are women and children.



[Full article](#) – IRIN

### **Yemen – Raising awareness on the use of child soldiers**

10 December 2009 – There was a gathering last month in Sana'a in which a discussion was opened to end the use of child soldiers in the conflict between the Houtis rebels and the government, which started in 2004. It is common for Houtis rebels to recruit children as young as 12 years old to participate in combat against the government forces. Despite the fact that the Yemeni government ratified in 2007 the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflicts, minors are also used as soldiers in the tribal militias which are armed by the government to fight off the rebels.

[Full article](#) – IRIN

### **Yemen – Poor education system feeds children labour in Yemen**

13 December 2009 – Experts confirm that the poor education system in Yemen feeds children labour. Children who have repeatedly failed at school tend to drop out and enter the labour market. Not only children from poor backgrounds but also children who come from middle-class families tend to have difficulties in school. According to some studies on child labour in Yemen, 15 percent of working children do not attend primary school while 97 percent have illiterate parents. Children often work long hours in low-paying jobs and they often work in dangerous conditions. Children living in these conditions are more at risk of developing anti-social behaviour such as smoking or chewing qat and may also get involved with street gangs. The educational situation in Yemen is in fact rather preoccupying as nearly half of all Yemeni children do not attend primary school.

[Full article](#) – Yemen Times

### **Yemen – Training course on children rights**

15 December 2009 – The National Organization for Community Development set-up, in cooperation with Child and Motherhood Welfare Society, a three day course aiming at raising awareness on children rights. 30 individuals will attend the seminar which will hold a special focus on child abuse and violence against children.

[Full article](#) – Yemen News Agency

### **Yemen – Oxfam signs agreement with civil society**

16 December 2009 – UK Oxfam signed an agreement with civil society organizations in Aden for improving the conditions of basic educational establishments. The agreement includes building schools, restoring bathrooms and providing health services to children attending primary schools.

[Full article](#) – Yemen News Agency

### **Yemen – Yemeni children trafficked to Saudi Arabia for begging**

19 December 2009 – Five Yemeni children ages 8 to 15 returned to Yemen after having been trafficked to Saudi Arabia for begging. In 2009, the Yemeni police detected 70 cases of children who had been trafficked to this neighbouring country, while 20 persons were arrested and charged for trafficking children in the same period of time.

[Full article](#) – Yemen News Agency

### **Yemen – Record exodus from Horn**

23 December 2009 – According to the UNHCR, in 2009, 74,000 people crossed the Red Sea from Somalia or Ethiopia, with the hope of finding a better life in Yemen. Many of those migrating are children whom are being sent by their families to find work. Crossing the Red Sea is particularly dangerous because of shark attacks, people smugglers, and high risks of drowning. This year alone, at least 309 people died during transportation.

[Full article](#) – IRIN

### **Yemen – Civil society organises a meeting with UNICEF**

23 December 2009 -- The Children and Young People Protection Initiative organised a meeting with its UNICEF partners in order to share experiences on the organisation of a peer education forum. The meeting's representatives stated that it is important to raise awareness and social participation, especially in regards to peer education and HIV/AIDS infection.

[Full article](#) – Yemen News Agency