



BUREAU
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DES DROITS DES ENFANTS

INTERNATIONAL
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FOR CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

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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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1. Global Developments on Children's Rights

The Human Rights Council dedicates a full day to discussing sexual violence as a children's rights violation

10 March 2010 – A whole day at the Human Rights Council was given over to a discussion on children's rights. This year, State delegates, NGOs, UN agencies and individual experts gathered at the Palais des Nations, in Geneva, Switzerland, to discuss the issue of sexual violence. The aim of the discussion was to “raise awareness about the question of sexual violence against children, reaffirm existing standards and commitments, highlight good practices and lessons learnt from work over the years, identify key challenges and anticipate future work.”

[Full article](#) – CRIN

Report of the UN Secretary-General for MDG Summit highlights successes and gaps for children and women in progress towards MDG achievements

16 March 2010 – The report highlights both significant improvements and shortfalls in global efforts to meet these goals and improve the lives of children and women around the world. Successes have occurred in some of the poorest countries and regions, showing what can be achieved, but progress remains uneven. Far too many children and women are still suffering from the effects of poverty, hunger, preventable diseases and lack of access to clean water and sanitation, adequate health care and schooling.

[Full article](#) – UNICEF

UNICEF welcomes announcement of next Executive Director

16 March 2010 – UNICEF today welcomed the UN Secretary-General's announcement that Anthony Lake will take over as Executive Director of UNICEF after Ann M. Veneman's term ends on 30 April. Mr. Lake will become the sixth Executive Director in UNICEF's sixty-three year history on 1 May.

[Full article](#) – UNICEF

UNIFEM: Launch of the global virtual knowledge centre to end violence against women and girls

4 March 2010- A Global Virtual Knowledge Centre to End Violence against Women and Girls is launched on the 4th of March 2010 by UNIFEM. The one-stop centre will support practitioners around the world in effective design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes. The web-based site brings together lessons learned and recommended practices gleaned from initiatives in all regions, whether originating from the women's movement, civil society organizations, governments, the UN system or other actors. The centralized database is fully searchable and available in English, French and



Spanish.

[Full article](#) – UNIFEM

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

The Arab Council for Childhood and development and the Yemeni Council for Motherhood and Childhood organise a workshop for the protection of children against violence

Vacancy: UNICEF

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) is seeking a qualified and experienced Consultant to support the Child Protection Programme through provision of regular analysis and reports on grave violations of child rights and to systematise the data collection and reporting system on grave violations against children. The deadline for applications is 4 April 2010. For further information, please consult UNICEF's website.

[UNICEF's website](#)

Vacancy: African Child Policy Forum – Director of Programmes

ACPF is recruiting a Director of Programmes who would be responsible for overall programmatic direction, advocacy strategy and managerial oversight of its programmes. As part of the senior management team, he/she would play a key role in the leadership and direction of ACPF. Other key functions will include resource mobilisation and representational roles. The deadline for applications is 15 April 2010.

Email: jobs@africanchildforum.org

[For more information](#)

Vacancy: Save the Children Sweden – Education advisor (Yemen)

Since 1960, *Save the Children Sweden* has been operational in the Middle East and North Africa region. Their main focus of work is on children's rights to education and protection. They give direct support to more than 60,000 children and many more through advocacy and policy initiatives. The Emergency Child Protection/education Advisor will lead and



manage the emergency response in child protection and education. He/she will ensure that comprehensive needs assessments are conducted in child protection and education as required alongside initial child protection/education emergency responses. The deadline for application is the 31th of March 2010. For more details and to download the full application, visit the organisation's website.

[SCS's website](#)

Masters Program in Human Rights and Democratisation

Applications are now being accepted for study in the Master of Human Rights and Democratisation (Asia Pacific Regional Program) (MHRD) 2010/2011. The MHRD is a unique Master degree program in which students undertake a foundational semester of study at the University of Sydney, and then a second semester at one of four partner universities: Gadjah Mada University (Indonesia), Mahidol University (Thailand), Kathmandu School of Law (Nepal) and the University of Colombo (Sri Lanka). The deadline for applications is 30 April 2010. Consult the link below for further information.

University of Sydney [website](#)

The Center for Migration and Refugee Studies (CMRS) at the American University in Cairo AUC is offering two short courses on refugee issues in June 2010

The Center for Migration and Refugee Studies (CMRS) at the American University in Cairo AUC is offering two short courses on refugee issues in June 2010. The courses offered are "Meeting the Psychosocial Needs of Refugees" and "Introduction to International Refugee Law". If you are interested to apply for one or more courses, please submit your application form, letter of interest, and Curriculum Vitae to Sara Sadek, CMRS outreach coordinator: cmrscourses@aucegypt.edu by 1 May 2010.

[For further information](#)

3. Sub-Regional and Country Updates:

In the Levant:

Irak – Malformation congénitales en Irak

5 Mars 2010 – Les médecins de Fallujah rapportent un nombre élevé de malformations congénitales, que certains attribuent à l'utilisation de certaines armes américaines sur la ville, après l'invasion de 2003. Interviewée par le réseau britannique BBC, la pédiatre Samira al-Ani affirme voir chaque jour deux ou trois nouveaux cas d'enfants présentant des malformations, essentiellement des anomalies cardiaques. Un total, donc, avoisinant le millier de cas par an.

[Article complet](#) – Radio Canada



Iraq – Families returning home after displacement are being help by the government

9 March 2010 – The security situation in Iraq's northeastern province of Diyala is slowly improving and thousands of displaced families have returned to their homes, according to officials. Some 12,500 families who had returned in the above time period had received the government's one-off grant of one million Iraqi dinars (US\$850) and other aid to help them resume their lives. The remaining 400 families were expected to receive this aid soon. His office had also helped people return to their former jobs.

[Full article](#) – IRIN

Asking input on “Safety and Security of Children and Youth in Fragile and Conflict-Affected States and Emergencies”

19 March 2010- Peacebuild has undertaken a consultancy with CIDA to produce a series of short discussion papers. The goal for this work is to respond to the demand within CIDA programmes - to produce up-to-date materials to inform CIDA's work to ensure the human rights, security and protection of children and youth within these particular contexts (emergencies, fragile and conflict-affected states like Afghanistan, Pakistan, Haiti, Sudan and West Bank/Gaza), with a particularly focus on girls. Peace Build is asking input on the project. For more information please contact Rena Ramkay at rramkay@comnet.ca.

Lebanon – Lebanese children raise funds to build kindergarten in Gaza

23 March 2010 – The head of the United Nations' humanitarian mission in Gaza visited Lebanon on Monday to receive funding of \$226,000 to build a kindergarten in the besieged enclave, in a project constituting “tangible, positive action.” The amount was raised by collections from Lebanese school children and will go toward building an educational facility for the children of Beit Hanoun in Gaza.

[Full article](#) – The Daily Star

Lebanon – Study sheds light on ‘tragic reality’ in Ain al-Hilweh camp

24 March 2010 – The Shahed study is composed of 110 pages and touches upon the demographic, economic, social and political situation of refugees inside the camp. The study indicated that the Ain al-Hilweh camp, situated in the south of Lebanon, has a young society with 38.4 percent of the population below the age of 15. Palestinians are excluded from the Lebanese public health and education systems and only a very small percentage can pay for private doctors and schools. They are also prohibited from working in 70 professions.

[Full article](#) – The Daily Star

Occupied Palestinian Territories (Opt)/Israel – MECA develops clean drinking water project in Gaza

The Middle East Children's Alliance (MECA) and their partner in Gaza responded to the children's request to access to drinking water and built a water purification and desalination unit for their school. They have sent funds to provide clean drinking water to 15 schools in Gaza so far and hope to complete at least 200 more purification and desalination units at Gaza schools.



[Full article](#) – MECA

Opt/Israel – Kuwait Red Crescent donates \$277,000 for Gaza refugee families

9 March 2010 – The Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) has donated \$277,000 in response to UNRWA's 2010 Emergency Appeal for the occupied Palestinian territory (oPT) launched in January of this year. Under the direction of the President of the KRCS, Mr. Barges Hamoud Al Barges, the generous donation is to be distributed as cash assistance for woman-headed families in Gaza whose homes were destroyed by the most recent Israeli assault.

[Full article](#) – UNRWA

Opt/Israel – Israeli raids target children

15 March 2010 – Clashes took place in several areas of East Jerusalem, including Shu'afat refugee camp, Wadi Joz and Silwan. This comes on the heels of accelerated attacks by Israeli forces and Jewish settlers inside Silwan in particular, directed towards the community's youngest and most vulnerable population. Since January, at least 33 children from the area have been arrested, detained and interrogated by Israeli forces as home demolitions and settler takeovers continue apace.

[Full article](#) – MECA

Promoting employment and entrepreneurship for vulnerable youths

16 March 2010- Youth in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (WBGs) face enormous challenges related to occupation, conflict, deep rural poverty, food insecurity and lack of extracurricular activities. The case study Promoting Employment and Entrepreneurship for Vulnerable Youths explores the activities undertaken by the Gender, Equity and Rural Employment Division (ESWD) jointly with the Emergency Operations and Rehabilitation Division (TCES) to improve youths' skills and abilities in carrying out income generating activities.

[Full report](#) (Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations)

Opt/Israel – Mass arrest of children in Jalazun Refugee Camp

16 March 2010 – DCI-Palestine reports that, on 11 February 2010, at least 17 children were arrested from the Al Jalazun Refugee Camp in the middle of the night by Israeli soldiers. The children and their families report the use of excessive force during the arrests, and ill-treatment and coercion during subsequent interrogations. The children were interrogated in the absence of a lawyer and family member, and the interrogations were not video recorded. The children are accused of throwing stones, and in some cases, Molotov cocktails at Israeli soldiers in 2009 and 2010. The children are being prosecuted in military courts.

[Full article](#) – DCI-Palestine

Opt/Israel – Operation Cast Lead: 5 children and mother killed

16 March 2010 – On 16 January 2009, a missile hit the home of Isa al Batran by the UNRWA clinic of al-Bureij Camp in Gaza. Isa's wife and all of the children, except baby Abed al-Hadi were killed.



[Full article](#) – DCI-Palestine

Opt/Israel – Domestic violence on the rise in Gaza

16 March 2010 – There has been an increase in domestic violence in Gaza in recent years which could be linked to a rise in poverty and harsher socio-economic conditions. A study - based on 24 workshops and interviews with 350 other women in the last quarter of 2009 - found that 77 percent of women in Gaza had experienced violence of various sorts, 53 percent had experienced physical violence and 15 percent sexual abuse. This situation of course affects the environment in which children live in, putting at risk their physical and mental conditions.

[Full article](#) – IRIN

Opt/Israel – Palestinian child and university student killed south of Nablus

20 March 2010 – On Saturday afternoon, 20 March 2010, the Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF) killed two Palestinian civilians, including a child, in cold blood in Iraq Bourin village, south of Nablus. IOF intentionally fired at the two civilians from a close range. The [Palestinian Centre for Human Rights](#) (PCHR) condemns this crime, which demonstrates total disregard for the lives of Palestinian civilians. PCHR stresses that failure to open investigation with suspected Israeli soldiers encourages them to perpetrate more of such crimes.

[Full article](#) – MECA

Opt/Israel – UN Human Rights Council calls for independent inquiry into Gaza conflict

25 March 2010 – The United Nations Human Rights Council today, echoing the General Assembly, called on the Israeli Government and the Palestinian side to carry out independent and credible investigations into the deadly conflict in the Gaza Strip that ended early last year. The majority of the casualties resulting from this war were women and children.

[Full article](#) – UN News Service

Opt/Israel – Trial opens for soldiers accused of using child as human shield in Gaza

25 March 2010 – DCI-Palestine welcomes the commencement of the trial of two Israeli soldiers accused of using a 9-year-old boy for military purposes and to shield themselves from danger during Operation Cast Lead in Gaza (December 2008-January 2009). The incident, documented by DCI-Palestine, is one of three that occurred during Operation Cast Lead, with seven children in total used to assist Israeli soldiers in military operations.

[Full article](#) – DCI-Palestine

Opt/Israel – UNRWA's 'adopt a school' scheme

30 March 2010 – A new UNRWA scheme gives donors the chance to make a direct contribution to Palestine refugee children's education by 'adopting' a school in Gaza.



Donors can finance a Gaza school for a set period, normally one year. The donations will help children and staff overcome the damage – both physical and mental – caused by years of isolation and deprivation.

[Full article](#) – UNRWA

Opt/Israel – Two soldiers charged over human shield case

30 March 2010 – The complaint concerns the use, by Israeli troops, of a nine-year-old boy as a human shield during Operation Cast Lead. On 15 January 2009, Majed, from Tel al-Hawa, was coerced into assisting Israeli soldiers and shielding them from potential danger during a military raid into his building. Soldiers forced him to open bags thought to contain explosives; Majed was also slapped, grabbed by the hair, pushed against the wall.

[Full article](#) – CRIN

Syria – Severe food shortage in the eastern region

3 March 2010 – Thousands of people have fled drought-affected eastern Syria and those that remain are struggling to survive on limited food stocks, according to a UN report released at the end of February. According to [the report](#) - billed as a mid-term assessment of the Syrian Drought Response Plan (SDRP) formulated in August 2009 - 65,000 families have left the region since early 2009. Those who remain face chronic food shortages.

[Full article](#) – IRIN

Syria – Students spread the word about safe water

29 March 2010 – In Syria, children came out on the streets to raise awareness about World Water Day. This year's theme, 'Clean Water for a Healthy World,' focused on water-quality challenges and solutions, as water systems have become increasingly polluted with human, agricultural and industrial waste. This is more important than ever in the northern regions of the Syrian Arab Republic, which have received exceptionally low levels of rainfall in recent years.

[Full article](#) – UNICEF

In North Africa:

Algérie – Troisième salon international de l'enfant: sensibilisation à l'écologie

25 mars 2010 – La 3e Salon international de l'enfant se tiendra du 29 mars au 3 avril, au niveau du Palais des expositions des Pins maritimes. C'est sous le haut patronage du ministère de l'Environnement, du Tourisme et de l'Aménagement du territoire et du ministère de la Solidarité nationale, de la Famille et de la Communauté nationale établie à l'étranger que cet événement permettra à l'enfant d'approcher, de comprendre et de s'impliquer dans l'environnement qui l'entoure.

[Article complet](#) – El Watan



Algérie – Projet de stratégie nationale de la famille sera prêt en juin

25 mars 2010 – La ministre déléguée chargée de la Famille et de la Condition féminine, Mme Nouara Saâdia Djaâfar a annoncé que le projet de la stratégie nationale de la famille 2010-2015 sera prêt en juin prochain et aura pour objectif de soutenir la structuration de la famille et renforcer la cohésion sociale. La mise en œuvre de cette stratégie vise également l'élaboration d'un programme national "unifié" sur la promotion de la famille qui s'adapte aux nouveaux changements et mutations et aux exigences du développement durable.

[Article complet](#) – El Moudjahid

Egypt – FGM still widespread, says WHO-funded study

8 March 2010 – Despite efforts by the authorities, NGOs, and international agencies to eliminate Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C), the practice is still widespread in Egypt and deeply rooted in the minds of the people, according to a study funded by World Health Organization (WHO) entitled Investigating Women's Sexuality in Relation to Female Genital Mutilation in Egypt.

[Full article](#) – IRIN

Egypt – Communication development programme launched by UNICEF

30 March 2010 – After the concept of 'communication for development' proved effective in terms of building awareness and combating social problems, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) is partnering with Ahrum Canadian University (ACU) to launch a Communication for Development (C4D) capacity building course.

[Full article](#) – Daily News Egypt

Maroc – Deux conventions de partenariat signées avec l'UNICEF

15 mars 2010 – Unicef et Casa.net ont décidé d'entamer un partenariat pour la promotion des droits de l'enfant, ce qui a mené à la signature de deux conventions. La première convention, signée entre l'Unicef et le cabinet Capital consulting tend à promouvoir la culture des droits de l'enfant en renforçant les capacités des intervenants dans ce domaine et à soutenir les actions du programme de coopération (2007-2011) entre le Maroc et l'Unicef. Quant à la deuxième convention signée entre l'Unicef et Casanet, filiale de Maroc Telecom, elle consiste en la promotion des droits de l'enfant, à travers son site Menara qui sera doté d'un portail dédié aux enfants et aux adolescents.

[Article complet](#) – Le Matin

Maroc – Campagne de sensibilisation sur l'autisme

23 mars 2010 – L'association Lea pour Samy procédera au lancement d'une campagne de sensibilisation sur l'autisme qui sera répétée annuellement. Baptisée «Vaincre l'autisme», la campagne vise à sensibiliser les citoyens marocains, les acteurs économiques et les pouvoirs publics pour faire progresser la recherche, et tenter d'éradiquer cette maladie mais aussi diminuer la souffrance de ceux qui en sont atteints grâce à une meilleure prise en charge.

[Full article](#) – Le Matin



Maroc – 50,000 élèves participent dans la lutte contre la déscolarisation

26 mars 2010 – Aujourd'hui, les élèves, premiers concernés par la déscolarisation, ont voix au chapitre grâce à l'opération nationale de recensement «Enfants pour enfants» qui est aujourd'hui à sa deuxième édition. Cette opération qui s'inscrit dans le cadre de l'application du projet E1P5, vise la sensibilisation à la non scolarisation et à l'abandon scolaire au niveau de l'enseignement fondamental et collégial. Ainsi, durant les mois d'avril et mai prochains, 50.000 élèves mettront la main à la pâte pour recenser les enfants non scolarisés dans leurs régions et réaliser des entretiens avec eux. C'est ainsi que, grâce à l'opération, 800.000 enfants non scolarisés seront recensés et 30.000 reprendront le chemin de l'école.

[Article complet](#) – Le Matin

Tunisia – Meeting of education experts

3 March 2010 – Experts and representatives of education ministries from the "5+5" countries (Tunisia, Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Mauritania, Spain, France, Italy, Malta and Portugal) met, on Wednesday in Tunis, to identify joint action plans to develop education and digital contents at schools, promote digital education infrastructure and enhance training of teachers in pedagogical uses of new technologies.

[Full article](#) – Tunis Afrique Presse

In the Gulf:

Bahrain – Weak laws for rapists

16 March 2010 – In Bahrain, many rape cases remain unreported because victims fear social rejection and where those who do pursue lawsuits face humiliation throughout the long and tiring court process. Furthermore, the penal code state that rape takes place only if the victim is a virgin. On the other hand, if the woman is not a virgin, the crime is only considered to be damaging honour, and its punishment is less than that of a rape. According to sources from the Ministry of Interior, the police registered 144 sexual abuse cases, including 13 involving minors, in 2009. The police also recorded 361 sexual harassment cases in which females were the victims.

[Full article](#) – CRIN

United Arab Emirates (UAE) – 10-year-olds forced to risk lives camel racing

3 March 2010 – Children as young as ten years old are still being forced to take part in dangerous camel races in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). It is illegal for anyone under the age of 18 to take part in camel racing in the UAE and the recruitment or use of children in camel racing is punishable by three years in prison or a minimum fine of 50,000 dirhams (\$13,614/£8,928) or both. Despite the ban the race was watched by police and attended by Sheikh Sultan bin Zayed al Nahyan, the president of the Emirates Heritage Club and the younger brother of President of the UAE.

[Full article](#) – CRIN



UAE – Council forms committee of school principals

23 March 2010 – A school advisory committee comprising 11 school principals has been formed to ensure that effective communication channels are established between the Abu Dhabi school community and the Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC). Committee members will be divided into sub-groups that will be responsible for specific concerns, such as curriculum, student performance, teacher professional development and monitoring the new school model to be implemented starting in the coming school year.

[Full article](#) – Gulf News

UAE – Programme to fight sexual harassment

29 March 2010 – The Juvenile Care Association has launched a preventive anti-sexual harassment programme. As per instruction of Lieutenant-General Dhahi Khalfan Tamim, Chairman of Board of Directors of the Juvenile Care Association, has ordered the organisation of the awareness programme in coordination of Security Awareness Department and Dubai women aims at protecting children and families from dangers of sexual harassment.

[Full article](#) – Khaleej Times

Yemen – Project to strengthen juvenile justice launched

6 March 2010 – A three-year project to strengthen juvenile justice systems in Yemen was launched today by the Ministry of Justice, in cooperation with the Ministry of Human Rights, the Delegation of the European Union and UNICEF. The 2010-2012 project aims to offer alternatives to detention and access to services at the pre-trial, trial and post-trial stages, and to promote the social reintegration of juveniles in conflict with the law and community-based prevention.

[Full article](#) – UNICEF

Yemen – Landmine awareness training for children

23 March 2010 – At al-Hamza Girls School in the northern Governorate of Amran, Afra Omar from the National Mine Action Programme (NMAP) teaches a class of 50 students about the risk of mines. She holds up photos of some of the improvised explosive devices (IEDs) that were found in neighbouring Saada Governorate, where a war between the army and Houthi-led rebels recently ended. Children are one of the main groups being addressed in a mine risk education campaign launched in March that is also focussing on the country's 250,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs).

[Full article](#) – World News

Yemen – Thousands of internally displaced families hit by food ratio cut

23 March 2010 – Thousands of families living outside camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Amran Governorate, some 50km north of the capital Sanaa, are finding it increasingly difficult to cope after aid agencies scaled down their regular food rations as a result of funding shortfalls since mid-February. In addition, the World Food Programme advocacy and reporting officer in Yemen, Maria Santamarina said that: “Beginning in May 2010, as many as 50,000 IDP children under five will no longer receive supplementary nutrition support,” and that “By the end of June 2010, WFP will face a total food pipeline



collapse. Overall 1.4 million beneficiaries out of a monthly planned 1.5 million will not receive assistance.”

[Full article](#) – IRIN

Yemen – Yemeni families are running out of water

23 March 2010 -- Yemen's capital, Sanaa, may run out of economically viable water supplies by 2017 as available groundwater is unable to keep pace with the needs of a fast-growing population, experts warn. Only 200 cubic metres of water is available per capita per year in Yemen, well below the international water scarcity threshold of 1,700 cubic metres. In addition, water shortages in the summer months greatly affect low-income families who are forced to spend about a third of their revenue on buying water from trucks.

[Full article](#) – IRIN

Yemen – Child bride gets her divorce

28 March 2010 – Sally was 10 years old when her family married her off to an older man in exchange for a US\$1,000 dowry. Within her first week of marriage, Sally began trying to escape the terrible treatment she said she received from her husband. After finally getting her divorce, the twelve-year-old girl is now Yemen's fourth child bride divorcee.

[Full article](#) – IRIN

Yemen – Deep divisions over child brides

28 March 2010 – The debate on early marriages has polarized Yemeni society. Some cite religious texts as a justification not to set a minimum age. Others say Islam does not advocate child marriages and that the negatives of children getting married far outweigh the positives. Prior to the unification of Yemen in 1990, the law set the minimum age of marriage at 16 in South Yemen and 15 in the north. After unification, the law was set at 15. In 1999, the civil status law was amended and the minimum age was abolished.

[Full article](#) – IRIN