



BUREAU
INTERNATIONAL
DES DROITS DES ENFANTS

INTERNATIONAL
BUREAU
FOR CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

OFICINA
INTERNACIONAL DE
LOS DERECHOS DEL NIÑO

Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Newsletter

February 2009

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

For more information, please contact:

Rouba Al-Salem

Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Programme Manager

International Bureau for Children's Rights
2715 Chemin Côte-Sainte-Catherine, Montréal (Québec) H3T 1B6
Tel: +1 514 932 7656, poste / extension 227
Fax : + 1 514-932-9453
Email : r.al-salem@ibcr.org
Website : www.ibcr.org

Table of Contents:

1. Global Developments on Children's Rights	4
UN: Strengthen Action to End Use of Child Soldiers	4
Home Truths: Facing the facts on children, AIDS and poverty	4
International Service for Human Rights – Advanced Geneva training Course (AGTC) on International Human Rights Law and Advocacy	4
The Hague, Holland – Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs organizes Girl Child Conference	4
UN: Global report on trafficking in persons	4
Joint UN, European initiative seeks to protect children from online dangers	5
Petition for a complaints mechanism under the Convention on the Rights of the Child.....	5
UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) adopts General Comment no 11 regarding Indigenous Children and their Rights under the Convention	5
2. MENA Regional Child Related Activities (Events, conferences, news, vacancies, announcements, reportages, campaigns)	6
Al Haq – Job Vacancy: Legal Researcher	6
Amnesty International – Job Vacancy: Researcher- Special Focus on Jordan, Lebanon and Syria	6



Amnesty International – Job Vacancy: Special focus on Israel, the Occupied
Palestinian Territories and the Palestinian Authority 6

UNICEF – Middle East and North Africa Region Humanitarian Action Report 2009
..... 7

The Center for Migration and Refugee Studies at the American University in Cairo
offers a course on International law on migrant and refugee women and children 7

3. Sub-Regional and Country Updates: 7

In the Levant: 7

Israel/Occupied Palestinian Territory (oPt)– UN Special Representative for
Children and Armed Conflict visiting the occupied Palestinian territory and Israel .. 7

Israel/oPt – Children demand answers and we must deliver now 7

Israel/oPt – Joint written statement to Tenth Session of UN Human Rights Council
by Al-Haq and Defence for Children International (DCI-Palestine) 8

Israel/oPt – 320 Palestinian Children detained and ill-treated in Israel’s prisons 8

Israel/oPt – Report on the situation of Palestinian detainees in Israeli detention
facilities..... 8

Israel/oPt – Gaza war deals blow to schools..... 8

Israel/oPt –Key steps to building a future for the children of Gaza..... 9

Israel/oPt – New mental health plan includes post war crises intervention..... 9

Israel/oPt – One month on, children’s needs remain great in Gaza..... 9

Israel/oPt – UNICEF seeks \$34.5 million to address urgent recovery needs for
children and families in Gaza 9

Israel/oPt – Gazan children denied treatment abroad 10

Israel/oPt – Children in Gaza left without textbooks as paper bans continues 10

Israel/oPt – A future for Gaza’s children 10

Israel/oPt – Defence for Children International (DCI)-Palestine Section and Save the
Children Sweden publish Child Protection Situation Analysis 2008 10

Israel/oPt – New report highlights child abuse risks 11

Israel/oPt – Gaza children “afraid to return to school” 11

Israel/oPt – Save the Children senior executives visit Gaza on fact-finding trip 11

Israel/oPt – Performers unite for the children of Gaza 11

Israel/oPt – Children of Gaza: Living to tell the story of life and grit..... 12

Jordan – 28th children congress slated for June 12

Jordan - Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review of the Human Rights
Council concludes review of Jordan during its fourth session in February 2009..... 12

Jordan – The Unity Circle Project – Experiences of Iraqi Children and Parents
Living in Amman..... 13

Jordan – Bearing children: not always a woman’s choice 13

Lebanon – Funding struggle slowing down cluster bomb clearance in south 13

Syria – Child-friendly spaces bring hope to Iraqi refugee children in Syria 13

Syria – Government failing on child labour 13

In North Africa..... 14

Algeria – Growing number of children left in streets 14

Algeria – Algerian women allowed to transmit nationality to their children 14



Algeria – 839 cases of sexual abuse against minors reported in 2008.....	14
Egypt – Street children sold and used in prostitution in Alexandria	14
Egypt – Trash- Recycle School aims at ending child labour	14
Egypt – New child participation law decides custody battle	15
Egypt - Changes to the law governing access to children following divorce are causing controversy	15
Egypt – Street children victims of commercial sexual exploitation	15
Morocco – Launch of the State of the World’s Children 2009 in Morocco	15
Tunisia – Concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child concerning State Report submitted in relation to the Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict.....	15
In the Gulf:	16
Bahrain – World award for the best practices and achievements in child protection from abuse.....	16
Kuwait – Steps to prevent child sexual exploitation.....	16
Saudi Arabia – Child Protection in Arab countries: Working together towards safer childhood.....	16
Saudi Arabia – Medical committee stands against fatwa allows young girls marriage	17
Saudi Arabia – Saudi Arabia/UN: Deliver on promises of rights reforms	17
United Arab Emirates – Child rights references in the working group for the Universal Periodic Review (UPR)	17
Yemen – State of children in Yemen deteriorates, Children’s Parliament	17
Yemen - Yemen rebuts report’s claim of child recruitment	17
Yemen – New law on child marriage	18
Yemen – Poverty and lack of education boosting HIV-AIDS.....	18
Yemen – Child marriage ban under threat	18
Yemen – Threat to legislation outlawing child marriage.....	18



BUREAU
INTERNATIONAL
DES DROITS DES ENFANTS

INTERNATIONAL
BUREAU
FOR CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

OFICINA
INTERNACIONAL DE
LOS DERECHOS DEL NIÑO

1. Global Developments on Children's Rights

UN: Strengthen Action to End Use of Child Soldiers

New York, 12 February 2009 - Former child soldiers and other youth representing a grassroots campaign from around the world will present thousands of symbolic "red hands" to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon today to demand stronger action by international leaders to end the use of child soldiers.

[Full Article](#) – Human Rights Watch

Home Truths: Facing the facts on children, AIDS and poverty

The global response to HIV and AIDS must be significantly reoriented to address the unmet needs of millions of children and their families in the worst affected countries. The report, "Home Truths: Facing the Facts on Children, AIDS, and Poverty" summarises two years of research and analysis of AIDS-related policies, programmes and funding and their effectiveness in addressing the needs of children. It calls for change in global, regional and national responses to the epidemic, including greater emphasis on strengthening families and communities to enable them to give children the care and support they are uniquely suited to provide.

[Full Report](#) - Joint Learning Initiative on Children and HIV/AIDS

International Service for Human Rights – Advanced Geneva training Course (AGTC) on International Human Rights Law and Advocacy

The Advanced Geneva Training Course on International Human Rights Law and Advocacy will be held in Geneva from **16 to 27 March 2009**. Applications for the 2009 course are now closed. The deadline for the March 2010 AGTC will be announced on this website as soon as the information is available. For further information on the AGTC, please contact courses@ishr.ch This e-mail address is being protected from spam bots, you need JavaScript enabled to view it

[Full Announcement](#) – International Service for Human Rights

The Hague, Holland – Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs organizes Girl Child Conference

A conference on violence against girls is to be held in The Hague on 9 and 10 March 2009. It is being organised by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in cooperation with the Ministry for Youth and Families, the Ministry of Health, Welfare & Sport, the Ministry of Justice, and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, and the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre. The theme of the conference is violence against girls in the home and family setting. The UN Secretary-General's study on Violence against Children by Professor Paulo Sergio Pinheiro will serve as a reference for discussion

[Full Announcement](#) – Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs

UN: Global report on trafficking in persons

16 February 2009 - A Global Report on Trafficking in Persons launched today by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) provides new information on a crime that



BUREAU
INTERNATIONAL
DES DROITS DES ENFANTS

INTERNATIONAL
BUREAU
FOR CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

OFICINA
INTERNACIONAL DE
LOS DERECHOS DEL NIÑO

shames us all. Worldwide, almost 20 per cent of all trafficking victims are children. Based on data gathered from 155 countries, it offers the first global assessment of the scope of human trafficking and what is being done to fight it. It includes: an overview of trafficking patterns; legal steps taken in response; and country-specific information on reported cases of trafficking in persons, victims, and prosecutions.

Countries and territories covered in this report include 10 MENA countries (Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Israel/oPt, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Sudan). According to the report, the majority of countries in the MENA region have recorded no prosecutions for the specific offence of trafficking persons.

[Full Article](#) – CRIN

Joint UN, European initiative seeks to protect children from online dangers

10 February 2009 – The United Nations telecom agency and the European Commission have teamed up to protect children, among the most active – and most vulnerable – users of the Internet from online dangers, including cyber-bullying and paedophilia. “Child online safety must be on the global agenda,” Hamadoun Touré, Secretary-General of the UN International Telecommunication Union (ITU), said in a press release. The Geneva-based union has joined forces with the EC to mark Safer Internet Day, which includes more than 500 events in 50 countries worldwide, including the MENA region, to promote child online protection

[Full Article](#) – UN News Centre

Petition for a complaints mechanism under the Convention on the Rights of the Child

11 February 2009 - 450 organisations from around the world have signed a petition to establish a communications (complaints) procedure under the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. In order to establish a new Optional Protocol for the CRC, the Human Rights Council (HRC) must first issue a resolution to create an open-ended Working Group to draft the procedure.

In commemoration of the CRC’s 20th anniversary this year, the HRC will be devoting a full day to the topic of children’s rights at its session in March.

[More information available](#) - CRIN

UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) adopts General Comment no 11 regarding Indigenous Children and their Rights under the Convention

On 30 January 2009, the CRC adopted a General Comment on indigenous children and their rights under the Convention. The eleventh comment of the Committee is looking at the issues associated with these children who “continue to experience serious discrimination in a range of areas”, including in their access to health care and education. Low incidences of birth registration for such children and particularly high incidences of



BUREAU
INTERNATIONAL
DES DROITS DES ENFANTS

INTERNATIONAL
BUREAU
FOR CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

OFICINA
INTERNACIONAL DE
LOS DERECHOS DEL NIÑO

mortality and vulnerability in armed conflict are among issues addressed in the general comment.

[Full Article](#) – CRIN

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

Al Haq – Job Vacancy: Legal Researcher

Al-Haq, the West Bank affiliate of the International Commission of Jurists, Geneva, is currently seeking to fill a one-year fixed-term contract position for a Legal Researcher. The position is full-time (40 hours/week) and is based in Ramallah. The Legal Researcher will work under the direct supervision of the Head of the Legal Research and Advocacy Unit.

[Full Announcement](#) – Al Haq

Amnesty International – Job Vacancy: Researcher- Special Focus on Jordan, Lebanon and Syria

Job Title: Researcher

Programme: Middle East and North Africa

Recruit Reference: MENA/09/02

19 February 2009 - Amnesty International needs a temporary researcher at its International Secretariat to lead its research and campaigning work on Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. The post is for one year beginning on 1 April 2009. Working as part of the East Mediterranean Team, you will monitor, investigate and analyse the human rights situation in these countries, in the context of political, social, economic and legal developments.

[Full Announcement](#) – Amnesty International

Amnesty International – Job Vacancy: Special focus on Israel, the Occupied Palestinian Territories and the Palestinian Authority

Job Title: Researcher - Special focus on Israel, the Occupied Palestinian Territories and the Palestinian Authority

Programme: Middle East and North Africa Programme

Recruit Reference: MENA/09/01

Amnesty International needs a temporary (one-year) researcher at its International Secretariat to lead its research and campaigning work on Israel, the Occupied Palestinian Territories and the Palestinian Authority. Working as part of the East Mediterranean Team, you will monitor, investigate and analyse the human rights situation in these countries, in the context of political, social, economic and legal developments.

[Full Announcement](#) – Amnesty International



BUREAU
INTERNATIONAL
DES DROITS DES ENFANTS

INTERNATIONAL
BUREAU
FOR CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

OFICINA
INTERNACIONAL DE
LOS DERECHOS DEL NIÑO

UNICEF – Middle East and North Africa Region Humanitarian Action Report 2009

The MENA region, with its heterogeneity of oil-rich, middle-income and least developed countries is also one of the most politically volatile regions in the world. The combination of economic divisions and rising hardships for poor populations, plus high levels of risk for violent conflict, creates a high-risk situation for humanitarian concerns in much of the region. Conflicts in the region will likely continue to frame UNICEF's work in the coming years, as the brunt of the suffering continues to fall on civilians and most vulnerable groups, children and women primary amongst them.

[Full Report](#) – UNICEF

The Center for Migration and Refugee Studies at the American University in Cairo offers a course on International law on migrant and refugee women and children

06 February 2009- This course aims at giving the students a thorough overview and understanding of international law instruments pertaining to migration movements and to migrant and refugee women and children in particular. The course will have a human rights focus. The course will be structured around an examination of two groups and their rights; women and children. No single international treaty governs migration and migrants' rights, but that does not mean that there is no "international migration law".

[Full Course Description](#) – PAMBAZUKA NEWS

3. Sub-Regional and Country Updates:

In the Levant:

Israel/Occupied Palestinian Territory (oPt) – UN Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict visiting the occupied Palestinian territory and Israel

New York/Jerusalem, 2 February 2009 – The UN Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict Ms. Radhika Coomaraswamy, will be visiting the oPt and Israel from 2 to 6 February 2009. The objective is to ascertain first hand the situation of children in Gaza and also to visit Southern Israel. The Special Representative will liaise with stakeholders to ensure that children are protected and their needs are addressed in the aftermath of the recent hostilities.

[Full Article](#) – Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Children and Armed Conflict

Israel/oPt – Children demand answers and we must deliver now

Jerusalem, 6 February 2009 – “Despite the Gaza ceasefires, children continue to suffer and remain in a precarious state of insecurity”, stated Ms. Radhika Coomaraswamy, Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, after her four-day visit to the occupied Palestinian territory and southern Israel. She was in the region to assess first hand the situation of children.



[Full Article](#) - Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Children and Armed Conflict

Israel/oPt – Joint written statement to Tenth Session of UN Human Rights Council by Al-Haq and Defence for Children International (DCI-Palestine)

18 February 2009– Al-Haq and DCI would like to express their concerns relating to the goals and mandate of the fact-finding mission established by the HRC pursuant to resolution (A/HRC/S-9/L.1). The goals and mandate appear to preclude the mission’s usefulness in any eventual reparations scheme involving criminal investigations and, where evidence directs, prosecutions, for serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law.

[Full Statement](#) – Euro-Mediterranean Network for Human Rights

Israel/oPt – 320 Palestinian Children detained and ill-treated in Israel’s prisons

320

135

2009 29
18 13

[Full Article](#) (Arabic) – CRIN

Israel/oPt – Report on the situation of Palestinian detainees in Israeli detention facilities

300

-

[Full Article](#) (Arabic) - CRIN

Israel/oPt – Gaza war deals blow to schools

Beit Lahiya, 4 February 2009- The jewel of Gaza's bare-bones education system - a US-style school on lush grounds overlooking the Mediterranean - is now a mound of broken concrete. The territory's only laboratory for genetic testing, at a Gaza university, lies in ruins. With 37 primary and secondary schools destroyed or damaged by Israeli air strikes, and 18 others still serving as refugee shelters, learning in Gaza has become even more of a struggle.

[Full Article](#) – Jordan Times



BUREAU
INTERNATIONAL
DES DROITS DES ENFANTS

INTERNATIONAL
BUREAU
FOR CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

OFICINA
INTERNACIONAL DE
LOS DERECHOS DEL NIÑO

Israel/oPt –Key steps to building a future for the children of Gaza

1 February 2009– As in all conflicts, children and youth are among the most vulnerable. In Gaza, 56 percent of the population are children. This translates into some 850.000 children in urgent need of a future perspective. Although they are used to violence and a dire humanitarian situation, the recent conflict has brought new horrors to their lives. Some have lost family members and homes and many suffer from traumatic experiences.

In an Op Ed by Karen Abu Aayd the Commissioner General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRA) and Sweden's Minister for Development Co-operation, Gunilla Carlsson, they define 10 key steps to building a future for the children of Gaza, and which includes: meeting humanitarian needs, removing unexploded ordnance, the need to sustain development plans, etc.

[Full Article](#) – CRIN

Israel/oPt – New mental health plan includes post war crises intervention

2009 3

[Full Article](#) (Arabic) – CRIN

Israel/oPt – One month on, children's needs remain great in Gaza

Jerusalem, 30 January 2009– More than a month after violent conflict disrupted life in and around Gaza, Save the Children is stressing that the health and well-being of Gazan children remain under threat and that full humanitarian access to the region is required to carry out a large-scale relief effort to meet children's increasing needs

[Full Article](#) – Relief Web

Israel/oPt – UNICEF seeks \$34.5 million to address urgent recovery needs for children and families in Gaza

Amman/Geneva, 3 February 2009 – UNICEF is seeking \$34.5 million to address urgent recovery needs for children and their families in Gaza. The request forms part of the UN appeal for \$613 million to cover needs for over a nine-month period, launched today in Geneva.



BUREAU
INTERNATIONAL
DES DROITS DES ENFANTS

INTERNATIONAL
BUREAU
FOR CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

OFICINA
INTERNACIONAL DE
LOS DERECHOS DEL NIÑO

UNICEF is working with partners in Gaza to address the extensive humanitarian and recovery needs of children and women through the delivery of urgent supplies, financial assistance, and technical expertise.

[Full Article](#) – Relief Web

Israel/oPt – Gazan children denied treatment abroad

7 February 2009– For four days running, an ambulance has driven 15-year-old Amira Ghirim from Shifa Hospital in Gaza to the Rafah border in the hope that she will be allowed to cross into Egypt and then on to France, where she has been promised emergency surgery.

[Full Article](#) – CRIN

Israel/oPt – Children in Gaza left without textbooks as paper bans continues

11 February 2009– The United Nations agency tasked with assisting Palestinian refugees has distributed notebooks to 11 schools in Gaza over the past week, but has halted further distribution since it has not been able to import any additional notebooks. The UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East added that it has still not received permission to import the necessary paper to print the remainder of its textbooks, leaving 60 per cent of children without textbooks.

[Full Article](#) - CRIN

Israel/oPt – A future for Gaza's children

3 February 2009– The latest reports that the number of Gaza's casualties surpasses 1,000 is truly disturbing. Tragically, Gaza's children account for more than one-third of that total - innocent victims caught in the crossfire. We are especially concerned about those who may have survived but who have suffered physical injury and, more disturbing, invisible wounds that will haunt them for years to come.

[Full Article](#) – Yemen Observer

Israel/oPt – Defence for Children International (DCI)-Palestine Section and Save the Children Sweden publish Child Protection Situation Analysis 2008

11 February 2009 - This situation analysis provides an overview of the extent to which Palestinian children living in oPt were able to enjoy their rights to protection in 2008, from a structural and practical perspective. The study focuses on the level of protection available to three particular target groups of children living in the oPt, in terms of laws, policies, mechanisms and practices. The target groups in question are children vulnerable to violence, neglect, abuse and exploitation in their homes and communities; children in conflict with the law under Palestinian Authority (PA) jurisdiction and children detained by Israel under its military order system.

[Full Report](#) – DCI-Palestine Section



BUREAU
INTERNATIONAL
DES DROITS DES ENFANTS

INTERNATIONAL
BUREAU
FOR CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

OFICINA
INTERNACIONAL DE
LOS DERECHOS DEL NIÑO

Israel/oPt – New report highlights child abuse risks

Tel Aviv, 12 February 2009– Israel's National Council for the Child (NCC) published a report on 8 February in which it said 309,141 children had been described by social services as being at risk of abuse.

In most cases the main risk factors were to be found in the family environment. At-risk children faced threats, hunger, beatings, and lack of education and medical care. Some were taken out of their homes and placed in foster care or boarding schools but most were unable to get the help they needed and remained in abusive family settings, the report said.

[Full Article](#) – CRIN

Israel/oPt – Gaza children “afraid to return to school”

Gaza City, 23 February 2009– School-children in the Gaza Strip face psychological trauma and lack facilities after schools were badly damaged or destroyed during Israel's three-week assault on the enclave that began in December.

Primary and secondary schools in Gaza run by the government and the UN Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA) report a shortage of drinking water and textbooks for students, according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

Restrictions on the amount and type of materials being allowed into Gaza by Israeli authorities are hindering the education system.

[Full Article](#) – IRIN Middle East

Israel/oPt – Save the Children senior executives visit Gaza on fact-finding trip

Westport, Connecticut 24 February, 2009 – While a tenuous, month-long ceasefire has brought some respite from violence in and around Gaza, children there still face enormous challenges and risks to their lives and well-being, say Save the Children senior executives who visited the territory this week

The plight of children in Gaza remains dire. They face physical deprivation, serious environmental dangers and ongoing displacement, all of which have a critical impact on their current and future well-being," said Charles MacCormack. "The fortunate few have access to child-friendly spaces and programs that focus on their needs, such as those provided by Save the Children. A great many, however, still lack the healthy food, clean water and adequate living conditions that they need to grow, develop and achieve their potential."

[Full Article](#) – Relief Web

Israel/oPt – Performers unite for the children of Gaza

London, 23 February, 2009– Muslim Aid hosted a high profile fundraising dinner, An Evening for the Children of Gaza, at Hilton Metropole on Saturday 21st February 2009.

Muslim Aid emphasized the need for continued support from donors who have already managed to raise £1,800,000 for the £5 million emergency Gaza appeal. Ticket proceeds and funds raised will go directly towards Muslim Aid's rehabilitation work in Gaza.



BUREAU
INTERNATIONAL
DES DROITS DES ENFANTS

INTERNATIONAL
BUREAU
FOR CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

OFICINA
INTERNACIONAL DE
LOS DERECHOS DEL NIÑO

[Full Article](#) – Relief Web

Israel/oPt – Children of Gaza: Living to tell the story of life and grit

Gaza, 22 February 2009– The Gaza strip is one of the most thickly populated places on earth, and the bombings have reduced homes, schools, hospitals and market places into twisted steel and rubble. The UN says that 840,000 children are under extreme stress and trauma inducing conditions, and 56 % of the Gaza's population is children.

A study by Gaza Community Mental Health Programme, just after the war, showed that over 98 percent children in Gaza feel unsafe and insecure. The continuing bombings tearing asunder the tenuous ceasefire, has only amplified their anxieties and trauma.

[Full Article](#) – Relief Web

Jordan – 28th children congress slated for June

AMMAN, 09 February 2009 - The 28th International Arab Children's Congress (IACC) will take place in June, with focus this year on protecting children's rights and the effect of the global economic crisis on their well-being.

Organised by the King Hussein Foundation's National Centre for Culture and Performing Arts (PAC), the congress opens June 5 with the participation of over 100 teenagers from different cultures and backgrounds. The conference aims at shedding light on common problems facing young people worldwide, through several action-oriented workshops and activities. Participants will also share thoughts and experiences on the main conference topics.

[Full Article](#) – Jordan Times

Jordan - Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review of the Human Rights Council concludes review of Jordan during its fourth session in February 2009

17 February 2009 - The Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), established in accordance

with the Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 of 18 June 2007, held its fourth session from 2 to 13 February 2009. The review of Jordan was held at the 15th meeting on 11 February 2009.

Issues and questions raised by the working group included progress achieved in implementing the national plan on the rights of children; whether Jordan was considering to review the draft Child Rights Act with a view to introducing a ban on corporal punishment; information on the results achieved in protecting and providing assistance to children and young people who have been victims of sexual exploitation or any form of trafficking

[Full Report](#)– Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)



Jordan – The Unity Circle Project – Experiences of Iraqi Children and Parents Living in Amman

6 February 2009– According to the International Institute for Child Rights and Development, since the 2003 invasion of Iraq by American-led coalition forces, thousands of Iraqi children and their families have fled to Jordan. The need for specialised services for this community is clear. In addition to their many difficult experiences of the war in Iraq, these children and their families face a number of challenges and risks to their well-being, associated with their displacement from their home, communities and country – including economic hardship, discrimination, violence, and the effects of social, cultural and religious isolation.

[Full Article](#) – CRIN

Jordan – Bearing children: not always a woman's choice

5 February 2009– Many women throughout the rural deserts of Jordan do not control the timing of their own pregnancies, according to a recent survey. Women regularly discuss family planning with their husbands, yet only 54 percent said they had a choice in the frequency of child births, the Integration Health and Empowerment of Women in the South Region Project reported last month. "Women in the south region of Jordan...need to be empowered in terms of [their] ability to make the appropriate decision and consider their health as priority," the study said.

[Full Article](#) – World Changing

Lebanon – Funding struggle slowing down cluster bomb clearance in south

Beirut, 5 February 2009– Waning international interest and funding is harming efforts to rid southern Lebanon of its hundreds of thousands of remaining cluster bombs, posing a continuing threat to farmers and children, according to mine clearance organisations.

[Full Article](#) – CRIN

Syria – Child-friendly spaces bring hope to Iraqi refugee children in Syria

Damascus, 10 February 2009 – With as many as 1.5 million Iraqi refugees in Syria, it is a struggle to provide basic necessities for people who have left everything behind in their war-torn country. In this setting, the special needs of children can be overlooked.

In 2007, UNICEF and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) opened five child-friendly spaces to fill the needs of Iraqi refugee children

[Full Article](#) – Reuters

Syria – Government failing on child labour

24 February, 2009– Increasing numbers of Syrian children are being compelled to turn their backs on education and join the country's work force, say human rights advocates. In December, an expert from Syria was elected to join the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, Although Syria ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1991, local observers said that conditions within Syria for minors are getting worse.



[Full Article](#) - CRIN

In North Africa

Algeria – Growing number of children left in streets

- -

[Full Article](#) (Arabic) - CRIN

Algeria – Algerian women allowed to transmit nationality to their children

13 February 2009– Algerian women are now allowed to transmit their nationality to their children after the government withdrew its reservations to a section of the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, according to a presidential decree.

[Full Article](#) – CRIN

Algeria – 839 cases of sexual abuse against minors reported in 2008

2008 839 – 2009 16

460

143

[Full Article](#) (Arabic)- CRIN

Egypt – Street children sold and used in prostitution in Alexandria

2009 2198 2009 1

60

[Full Article](#) (Arabic) – CRIN

Egypt – Trash- Recycle School aims at ending child labour

[Full Article](#) (Arabic) – CRIN



BUREAU
INTERNATIONAL
DES DROITS DES ENFANTS

INTERNATIONAL
BUREAU
FOR CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

OFICINA
INTERNACIONAL DE
LOS DERECHOS DEL NIÑO

Egypt – New child participation law decides custody battle

3 February 2009– A Christian woman has won a landmark case in Egypt to retain custody of her children despite the father's conversion to Islam, thanks to a new law demanding that children have more say in legal proceedings.

[Full Article](#) – CRIN

Egypt - Changes to the law governing access to children following divorce are causing controversy

12-18 February 2009– The law is being changed to guarantee that children of divorced parents will be able to see both their fathers and mothers, though it is the latter who normally retain custody of children under the age of 15. The amendments are designed to minimise the number of cases coming to the courts, most commonly brought by fathers seeking visitation rights.

[Full Article](#) – Al Ahram Weekly

Egypt – Street children victims of commercial sexual exploitation

2009 16

[Full Article](#) (Arabic) - CRIN

Morocco – Launch of the State of the World’s Children 2009 in Morocco

Rabat, Morocco, 9 February 2009 – “The State of the World's Children 2009: Maternal and newborn health” was launched today in Morocco by Yasmina Baddou, Moroccan Minister of Health and Dr Aloys Kamuragiye, UNICEF Representative Morocco. On this occasion, the Ministry of Health, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP and WHO signed a joint programme to reduce maternal and neonatal mortality.

[Full Article](#) - UNICEF

Tunisia – Concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child concerning State Report submitted in relation to the Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict

[Full Article \(Arabic\)](#)- UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

[Full Article \(English\)](#)- UN CRC



In the Gulf:

Bahrain – World award for the best practices and achievements in child protection from abuse.

28

-

-
-
-
-

[Full Article](#) (Arabic) - CRIN

Kuwait – Steps to prevent child sexual exploitation

2009

2

[Full Article](#) (Arabic) – CRIN

Saudi Arabia – Child Protection in Arab countries: Working together towards safer childhood

22 February 2009– Under the patronage of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz the National Family Safety Program (NFSP) organises in collaboration with the International Society for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ISPCAN) "The 3rd Arab -ISPCAN Regional Conference on Child Protection" between 4-7 Rabi' I 1430 (H) 1-4 March 2009 (G) at King Faisal Convention Center in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The conference carries a theme of "Child Protection in Arab Countries: Working Together Towards Safer Childhood".

The conference represents a unique opportunity for professionals in different disciplines (health, social work, education, mental health, and law enforcement) working with children or in the field of Child Abuse Prevention to meet and discuss violence and exploitation of children in Arab countries. Distinguished keynote speakers will provide updates to issues related to the field of child protection. In addition, multidisciplinary and discipline specific training workshops will be provided to participants and various research papers presentations.

[Full Article](#) – CRIN



BUREAU
INTERNATIONAL
DES DROITS DES ENFANTS

INTERNATIONAL
BUREAU
FOR CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

OFICINA
INTERNACIONAL DE
LOS DERECHOS DEL NIÑO

Saudi Arabia – Medical committee stands against fatwa allows young girls marriage

[Full Article](#) (Arabic) – CRIN

Saudi Arabia – Saudi Arabia/UN: Deliver on promises of rights reforms

Geneva, 4 February 2009– The international community should hold Saudi Arabia to its promises of rights reform, Human Rights Watch said today. UN member states will review Saudi Arabia's record during the Universal Periodic Review at the Human Rights Council in Geneva, the first time that the kingdom will submit its entire human rights record to international review.

[Full Article](#) – Human Rights Watch

United Arab Emirates – Child rights references in the working group for the Universal Periodic Review (UPR)

The Working Group on UPR of the UN Human Rights Council held its third session from 1-15 December 2008. The review of the United Arab Emirates was held on the 9th of December 2008. Child related recommendations include the need to invite the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, to visit the country; the need to pursue efforts to promulgate a national law guaranteeing better protection for children, and that the general principle of the best interest for the child, as is fully reflected in that law; and to enact national legislation to protect the rights of children.

[Full Report](#) – OHCHR

Yemen – State of children in Yemen deteriorates, Children's Parliament

3 February 2009– The Yemeni Children's Parliament has issued the first shadow report in the region concerning the state of children in Yemen during 2008. The report shed light on several important issues, including child trafficking and labor, juvenile prisoners, birth registration, and the situation of the children of Somali refugees in Yemen

[Full Article](#) – Yemen Observer

Yemen - Yemen rebuts report's claim of child recruitment

7 February 2009– Yemen's Ministry of Defense last Tuesday refuted information from a global report condemning the recruitment and use of young children in armed conflicts.

“The report is baseless, and the allegations included within the report are not true and have nothing to do with reality,” an official source at the Ministry of Defense said.

[Full Article](#) – Yemen Observer



Yemen – New law on child marriage

Sanaa, 12 February 2009– A new law passed in Yemen gives women greater legal protection, in relation to marriage and motherhood. The law raises the minimum age for marriage to 17, and provides for the right to alimony and recognition of the mother as the sole guardian of her children.

[Full Article](#) - CRIN

Yemen – Poverty and lack of education boosting HIV-AIDS

17

2009

15

22

[Full Article](#) (Arabic) – CRIN

Yemen – Child marriage ban under threat

25 February 2009– Yemen's minimum age for marriage could, it is feared, be overturned because some MPs say the new age cap violates Sharia law. Earlier this month, most of Yemen's MPs agreed to alter some of the country's laws to protect women and children's rights.

But a minority of extremist MPs are still putting up a resistance to the changes. "They want to bring the amendments into discussion again".

[Full Article](#) – CRIN

Yemen – Threat to legislation outlawing child marriage

Sanaa, 23 February 2009– Although Yemen's parliament has agreed to set the minimum age for marriage at 17, there are concerns the decision may be rescinded as some members of parliament (MPs) say the amendments violate Sharia (Islamic) law. On 11 February, most MPs agreed on amending some articles in the law regarding women and child rights.

[Full Article](#) – IRIN Middle East