



**THE COMPARATIVE
ARAB REPORT ON
IMPLEMENTING THE
RECOMMENDATIONS
OF THE UN
SECRETARY
GENERAL'S STUDY
ON VIOLENCE
AGAINST CHILDREN**

Second Report: 2010-2012



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This report was developed by the Secretariat General of the League of Arab States (LAS), Women, Family and Childhood Department – Social Affairs Sector

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All views and analysis incorporated in this report do not necessarily express those of the League of Arab States, as they are the sum of responses by Member States to the questionnaire specifically designed for the purposes of this report. These views are also the result of a joint effort that involved the lead expert responsible for preparing this report and the team of coordinators assigned by Member States to the Follow-up Committee on Ending Violence Against Children, which is a sub-committee of the Arab Childhood Committee (ACC).

All information and data in this report has been reviewed by the ACC Member States.

Foreword

Since the 1980s, there has been a continuous development of interest in rights of children in the Arab region. This was reinforced by the entry into force of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and its two Optional Protocols.

With the third millennium, interest in the situation of Arab children was further reinforced with the rights of the child gaining priority on the agendas of Arab Summit conferences since the Amman Summit (2001) to the Baghdad Summit (2012), in addition to the deliberations of specialised Arab ministerial councils. Thus, the Baghdad Summit adopted the "Marrakech Declaration" issued by the Fourth Arab High Level Conference on the Rights of the Child (2010) as a five-year commitment by Member States to improve the situation of children in the Arab region.

This Declaration emphasised the necessity of designing programmes that provide preventive, supportive and care services to child victims of violence, while applying corrective measures and ending impunity by strengthening punishments on crimes committed against children in all forms. The Marrakech conference also called for the adoption of national strategies to combat violence against children and legislate against all its manifestations.

The concern of the League of Arab States with ending violence against children reflects awareness of the negative results of this phenomenon on development, social peace and the future of the Arab region. This position has directed the activities of the Follow-up Committee on Ending Violence Against Children, which is a sub-committee of the Arab Childhood Committee (ACC) established by the Arab Council of Ministers of Social Affairs. From the start of its first meeting, this Committee brought together representatives of Member States to take a keen interest in monitoring Arab and international efforts to protect children against all forms of violence and related issues, particularly legislation and laws aiming at ending violence against children. One important achievement of this Committee was the release of the First Comparative Arab Report on Implementing the Recommendations of the UN Secretary-General's Study on Violence Against Children representing a global model for other regions, with the English version launched in October 2011 during the 66th Session of the UN General Assembly, with the participation of the UNICEF Executive Director Mr. Antony Lake, together with Mr. Luca Zelioli, Deputy Chairperson of the Third Committee of the UNGA and Ms. Marta Santo Pais, the UNSGSR on VAC in addition to representatives of international and regional organisations.

To emphasise the Arab commitment to ending all forms of VAC, the LAS Secretariat has endeavoured to ensure the periodic release of the Comparative Arab Report on Implementing the Recommendations of the UN Secretary-General's Study on VAC every two years, particularly in view of the circumstances and variables affecting the Arab region. This second report covering the period 2010-12 also reflects the continued cooperation with the the Follow-up Committee on Ending Violence Against Children, as well as the office of the United Nations Secretary General's Special Representative on VAC and the UNICEF Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa. It covers several important issues in the context of VAC, including the international commitment of states, the position of Arab states towards international conventions and instruments on the rights of the child, and the steps taken to implement the proposed programmes and activities recommended by the UNSG's Study on VAC. This report also discusses the general legal framework for protecting children from all forms of VAC and protecting children from violence in schools and in emergency situations. It also includes a review of independent national institutions for the rights of the child and safe reporting and complaint mechanisms as well as the management of VAC data systems in the Arab region.

Finally, the Secretariat of the League of Arab States expresses its thanks and appreciation to Dr. Elie Mekhael, the lead expert, the UNICEF Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa and Ms. Marta Santos Pais, SRSG on Violence Against Children for the effort exerted in preparing this report.

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The Department presents its sincere appreciation to Dr. Elie Mekhael, former Secretary General of the Republic of Lebanon's Higher Council of Childhood who acted as the lead expert drafting this report, for his tireless efforts in preparing the questionnaire, data collection and analysis, designing the report methodology and preparing it in its final form.

WFCD would also like to extend their thanks to UNICEF MENARO for this technical and financial support during the process of preparing and reviewing this report as well as to Ms. Marta Santos Pais, the UNSG Special Representative on VAC for her efforts to maintain cooperation and coordination with the LAS, and for following up on the efforts made by the Arab states in the area of ending VAC.

WFCD also recognises the valuable cooperation with Save the Children and Child Helpline International in enriching the reference material used in this study.

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Background

Follow-up on the implementation of the recommendations of the UN Secretary-General's (UNSG) Study on Violence Against Children (VAC) represents a major concern for Arab Childhood Committee (ACC) of the League of Arab States (LAS) and its Sub-committee on the Prevention of and Protection from VAC. This latter committee has ensured that its meetings include a permanent agenda item on VAC and has adopted the follow-up of the implementation of the UNSG's study recommendations on VAC as a frame of reference for its work. It has organized several events focusing on ways to ensure the protection of children and the existence of requirements for their development in a safe environment.

The First Comparative Arab Report on the Implementation of the Recommendations of the UNSG's Study on VAC was received as an important step reflecting the seriousness of the Arab commitment towards the goals of the international study, and the determination of the LAS to follow a practical approach to track achievements and monitor failures.

The First Comparative Arab Report has been appreciated by international bodies concerned with the rights of the child and VAC and described by SRSG on VAC as an exemplary model of regional efforts. Arab states have welcomed the content of the report as an objective reading of the current situation of VAC and for the practical recommendations it contained, which member states could utilise for guiding policies, plans, and legislation with the ultimate aim of the strengthening action against VAC.

Arab states have renewed their commitment to, and adoption, of the special dynamic established by the Department of Family and Childhood on the subject of VAC through the adoption of the Marrakesh Declaration, which referred to: "Strengthening protection programmes through designing strategies to fight all forms of VAC by implementing the practical recommendations of the Comparative Arab Report on the Implementation of the UNSG's Study on VAC"¹, and the list of attached programmes and projects, in cooperation with relevant international organisations.

Both the ACC and the VAC Sub-committee have endeavoured to include in their deliberations agenda items related to the Marrakesh Declaration and the decisions of the Fourth Arab High Level Conference on the Rights of the Child. Many of the activities organised by the ACC have focussed on methodologies and mechanisms to implement these decisions and on how to support member states in fulfilling their obligations in terms of guaranteeing the rights of children, and protecting them against all forms of violence.

A decision on follow-up of Arab efforts to stop VAC was issued by the Fourth Arab High Level Conference on the Rights of the Child (Marrakesh, 2010). The first paragraph stipulates:

- "Request the Secretariat of the LAS to commit to periodically issuing the Comparative Arab Report on the Implementation of the Recommendations of the UNSG's Report on VAC, every two years, and to continue to work on documenting the cooperation between the Committee for the Follow-up of the Recommendations of the UN Study, the Office of the SRSG for VAC, and the UNICEF Regional Office".

In the context of this cooperation, the LAS Women, Family and Childhood Department organized a series of meetings to discuss the necessary technical and managerial procedures to prepare the Second Comparative Arab Report on the Implementation of the Recommendations of the UN Secretary-General's Study on VAC. Both the UNICEF Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa (MENARO) and the Office of the SRSG for VAC provided support that contributed to the completion of this report.

Report Topics

The LAS Women, Family and Childhood Department – Social Affairs Section, in agreement with UNICEF MENARO and the Office of the SRSV VAC, identified the topics of this report as follows:

1. International commitment to the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), its three protocols, and to the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).
2. Identification of the difficulties that hinder the withdrawal of existing reservations, and the difficulties that prevent the ratification of protocols not yet ratified.
3. Identification of the measures undertaken to safeguard and protect children from violence and the steps undertaken to implement the practical recommendations included in the First Comparative Arab Report on the Implementation of the Recommendations of the UNSG's Study on VAC.
4. Identification of the status of prevention of all forms of VAC in national legislations.
5. The legal framework for the prevention of all forms of VAC in schools, and the monitoring and complaint mechanisms existing in schools and on the national levels.
6. Presence of independent bodies for monitoring the rights of the child: legal frameworks, responsibilities, and protection mechanisms
7. Safe complaint mechanisms (child help lines): legal frameworks, responsibilities, mechanisms
8. Implemented or planned studies and research work on VAC

Methodology of report preparation

The preparation of this report was based on a desk review of data, studies, and research relevant to its' themes, in addition to information collected through a specially designed questionnaire (See Annex 1) which was sent to the LAS member states by the Women, Family, and Childhood Department.

The questionnaire was completed by authorised persons designated by member states based on an official request from the Women, Family, and Childhood Department.

The analysis of collected data contains a description of the current situation, including progress achieved and measures undertaken since reporting for the first report, thus covering the period from 2010 to 2012. It also includes an identification of some of the difficulties and challenges hindering the commitment of Arab states to the implementation of the recommendations of the UNSG's Study on VAC. Furthermore, this report offers practical suggestions to help states overcome these challenges through providing successful and replicable models together with practical recommendations based on the standards and principles for the protection from and prevention of VAC included in relevant international conventions, and in precedents, studies, and public comments made by international and specialised bodies.

Chapter One:
International Commitment

I. Status of Arab states ratification of CRC and the Optional Protocols

The ratification of LAS member states of all international rights of the child conventions has represented one of the most important priorities of joint Arab action for the advancement of the rights of the child over the past two decades. All Arab states have ratified the CRC, with the exception of Somalia, which has signed only. The Palestinian Authority signed and ratified the CRC in 1995, long before the United Nations granted the State of Palestine non-Member Observer State status in 2012.

This international legal commitment to the rights of the child has also been reflected by most Arab states joining or ratifying the two Optional Protocols (Table 1, Annex 2: The status of Arab states' ratification of the Convention and its' two protocols).

Three countries (The United Arab Emirates, Comoros, and Mauritania) have not yet joined the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict, and two countries (Somalia and Lebanon) have signed but not ratified this protocol.

Only two Arab countries (The United Arab Emirates and Somalia) have yet to join the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution, and child pornography. The United Arab Emirates has indicated that it has established a committee of relevant parties to study the possibility of joining the Optional Protocols.

As for the third Optional Protocol (OP3) of the CRC on a communications procedure, Morocco confirmed that it signed the protocol without any additional details. Other countries are studying the protocol. In Yemen, the Council of Ministers has agreed to join and referred the matter to the House of Representatives for discussion and approval. OP3 is also under review in the Sultanate of Oman, where the country's position will be determined after the enactment of the new Child Act. Bahrain formed a committee, chaired by the Foreign Ministry, to review the protocol and collect the views of relevant bodies on accession. Similarly, the Sudanese National Council for Childhood formed a technical committee to study OP3 and refer it to the concerned authorities.

While the completion of Arab commitments to the CRC enshrines and legitimizes its position within human rights mechanisms, it is yet to include the Optional Protocols or the withdrawal of reservations, due to the absence of official follow-up by Arab states to review reservations, consider their withdrawal and into taking steps towards ratification or accession.

1) Reservations of Arab states on the CRC

Responses from LAS member states indicate that seven countries (Bahrain, Sudan, Comoros, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, and Yemen) have not made any formal reservations on the provisions of the CRC, whereas the reservations were made by the other countries on articles that they consider to be in conflict with Islamic Shari 'a law, their constitutions, or their laws. (Table 2, Annex 3: Reservations by some Arab states on CRC: reasons and current status)

There are several forms of reservations by Arab countries; some are general statements while others are specific reservations or clarifications regarding articles 2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 13, 14, 16, 17, 20, 21, 30, and 40, on the basis that they are incompatible with Islamic Shari 'a Law or the existing laws in these states.

Eight states expressed reservations on Article 14 on freedom of thought, belief, and religion; on the basis that Islam is the country's constitution. Also, seven states entered reservations on Article 21 on adoption, on the basis that it is not allowed in Islam. As for Article 7 on birth registration, 4 countries have made reservations. In addition, 3 countries have reservations on Article 20 on foster care.

However, a review of Table 2 in Annex 3 indicates a shift in the attitudes of some Arab countries that have withdrawn their reservations; Morocco withdrew its' reservation on Article 14 on October 17th 2006, and replaced it with an explanatory declaration stating that: "The Kingdom of Morocco interprets the provisions of the first paragraph of Article 14 of the CRC in the light of the constitution of October 7th, 1996, and other specially relevant national laws: Chapter six of the constitution which states that Islam is the religion of the state, and that the state guarantees for its' citizens the right of freedom of worship. Article 54 of Law 03-70 (Family Code) which states in its' sixth paragraph that children have the right to religious guidance and to an upbringing based on ethical conduct by their parents. In accordance with this statement, the Kingdom of Morocco confirms its' commitment to human rights as they are universally recognized and to the objectives of this convention."

Egypt, Syria, and Oman also withdrew their reservations on Article 21. Egypt and Syria also withdrew their reservations on Article 20.

The position of Arab states towards maintaining reservations on some articles of the CRC and withdrawing others indicates that most of these countries have made reservations on a number of articles, based on the belief that their content or potential implications are not consistent with Islamic Shari'a. This position reflects the failure of the official authorities to periodically review the provisions of the convention, since the phrasing of these articles is non-binding. This is clear, for example, in Article 21, where a reference was made to countries that allow adoption- a clear expression that it is non-binding to countries that do not allow adoption. This article also includes a reference to "Kafala", inserted during the CRC drafting process to reflect the Islamic mechanism of adoption.

In addition, some other articles contain unbinding guidelines that do not indicate obligation, recognition, or pledging specific action, as in Articles 5 and 14: "State parties shall respect.....". This presents an additional reason for removing reservations; as such articles allow state parties the option to incorporate them in a way that does not conflict with their national laws.

It would be beneficial for countries that still have reservations on some of the articles of the CRC to take into account the experience of Morocco with regards to the withdrawal of reservations on Article 14, and also the measures adopted by Egypt, Oman and Syria.

2) Reservations of Arab states on the two Optional Protocols

United Nations documents¹ indicate that there is limited number of reservations on the two Optional Protocols by several Arab countries.

1. Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict

The Sultanate of Oman made a general reservation arising from its reservation on the CRC. Based on paragraph 2 of Article 3 of the protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict, the following countries have made a declaration stating that their military laws are in harmony with the requirements of the protocol, since the minimum age of voluntary recruitment in their armed forces is 18: Bahrain, Tunisia, Algeria, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Iraq, Qatar, Kuwait, Libya, Egypt, Morocco, and Yemen. Syria also attached an explanatory statement on the non-recognition of Israel².

2. Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child pornography, and child prostitution

Both Syria and Kuwait made reservations on Article 3, paragraph 5, on the need to take measures to ensure that all those involved in the adoption process act in accordance with the applicable international legal instruments. Syria attached a supplementary reservation on Article 3, paragraph 1B (2) on adoption, and an explanatory declaration on the non-recognition of Israel.

1- "Each state party shall deposit a binding declaration after the ratification or joining of this protocol including the minimum age of voluntary recruitment in its' national armed forces and a description of the safeguards taken to prevent the forced imposition of this recruitment." Conference on the role of Arab Members of Parliament in childhood cases. Reda, K. and Farahat, E. Unpublished Document (2009).

2- Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights at the United Nations (OHCHR). Available at <www.ohchr.org>.

UN data on the reservations of Arab states on this Optional Protocol indicate that Qatar withdrew its' reservation on 18 June, 2008, without being bound by any provisions that are inconsistent with Islamic Shari 'a. Oman made a general reservation expressing the view that its' ratification of the Optional Protocol would be constraining by its reservations on the CRC.

An overall analysis of the reservations of some Arab countries on the Optional Protocols in contrast to the CRC, allows the following conclusions:

- The reservation of Syria on Article 3.1.(a) ii of the Optional Protocol of the CRC on the sale of children, child prostitution, and child pornography as regards to adoption, and in contrast with the withdrawal of its' reservations on Articles 20 and 21 of the CRC leads to the conclusion that this withdrawal also applies to the provisions of the Optional Protocol.
- The withdrawal of the general reservations of the Sultanate of Oman to the CRC may apply to the two protocols.
- On the 2nd of April 2008, Qatar withdrew its' reservations on the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution, and child pornography.

In conclusion, while most Arab countries have ratified the two optional protocols they are currently reviewing the Optional Protocol on a communications procedure.

The CRC and its Optional Protocols represent a general framework for the civil, political, cultural, and social rights of the child, within a complete and integrated vision that prioritizes the best interests of the child. The reservations of Arab countries on the convention affect the spirit of this fundamental principle in one way or another, and thus the application of the provisions of the convention and the protocols requires placing a unified framework in the Arab region for the full recognition of the rights of the child.

The CRC approach is based on the importance and equal value of all the rights of the child, without fragmentation. This makes it necessary for Arab countries which still maintain reservations on some of the articles and Optional Protocols of the CRC to review these reservations according in line with the principle of the best interests of the child and to take practical steps to:

- Speed up the completion of reviewing national laws on the rights of the child to harmonize them with the provisions and spirit of the CRC
- Convene consultations involving specialists and stakeholders from various bodies to review other instruments related to child protection, including the Optional Protocol on a communications procedure;
- Promote the coordination, follow-up, exchange of experiences and communication between Arab bodies and institutions concerned with childhood, on various topics related to the rights of the child;
- Complete the ratification of international conventions related to international law on the rights of the child and withdraw reservations on some of the articles of the CRC, particularly as several of these reservations conflict with the basic mandatory principles of the convention representing the core or minimum inalienable rights. Examples of this are the child's right to life, right of survival, right to non-discrimination on the basis of sex or birth, the principle of the child's best interest, and respect of the child's right to freedom of expression;
- Fill the gaps regarding state reservations on the articles of the CRC and the lack of consistency of legislation with the convention and its' optional protocols especially on issues related to adoption, foster care, alternative care, the definition of a child, and VAC.

The issue of withdrawing reservations continues to be a major concern of the International Committee on the Rights of the Child, which it recalls in all of its' concluding observations thus reflecting the importance of this question for realizing the rights of the child.

Also, the declaration by the Conference on the Rights of the Child in Islam, co-sponsored by the Organization of Islamic Conference, called on its member states Arab countries to withdraw their reservations on the convention due to the lack of contradiction with Islamic Shari 'a. The declaration also called on Arab countries to join the supplementary protocols.

The Women, Family, and Childhood Department in the League of Arab States has worked on including the issue of the necessity of withdrawal of reservations on its' agenda. In addition, several recommendations were issued by the meetings of the Arab Childhood Committee in these regards. The department also organized several activities in this regards, the last of which was a workshop on "The Optional Protocols of the International CRC and the Ombudsman Mechanism", Doha 2012.

3. The supplementary optional protocol of the CRC a communication procedure on the complaint-filing procedure

The commitment of Arab countries to secure children's rights and provide a safe environment for their growth and development led them to join the rest of the world in the course of ratification and accession of the CRC and its' optional protocols on the involvement of children in armed conflicts, the sale of children, child prostitution, and child pornography. They are invited today to join the third protocol on a communication procedure complaint-filing, as a clear sign of their commitment towards children in the Arab region as rights holders who are capable of demanding their rights, and of holding accountable those responsible for violating them through the use of an international mechanism that provides them with an opportunity for equity that their countries are not able to provide. Joining the protocol also confirms that Arab countries ensure children's freedom to express their opinions and ensures their protection against all forms of abuse, violence, and violations, and also work on ensuring that violations against children do not go unpunished, and on the provision of appropriate compensation for child victims.

The International Committee on the Rights of the Child, in its' concluding observations on national reports on the situation of children provided by Arab countries, urged these countries to work on establishing independent monitoring structures to monitor violations against children and to punish those who perpetrate them, and encouraged the presence of national institutions for human rights based on the Paris principles that ensure accountability in the area of child rights' violations.

Up until now this kind of institution is non-existent in Arab countries and children are still deprived of full opportunities for redress and justice, therefore the ratification of the third protocol has an added significance as a step towards finding delicate, sensitive, and safe complaint and reporting mechanisms for children. This also came as a recommendation for countries in the Comparative Arab Report on the Implementation of the Recommendations of the UN Secretary General's Study on Violence against Children's first version.

Until the date of preparation of this report, Morocco is the only Arab country, which has signed the third optional protocol. Yemen has also taken several steps towards its' ratification, through the approval of the Cabinet, and its' referral to the House of Representatives for the completion of legal and constitutional procedures. Sudan has also formed a technical committee to study the protocol and forward its' recommendations on ratification to the relevant references. In the Sultanate of Oman, it is currently being studied, and the position of the Sultanate will be determined after the enactment of the Child Act. As for Bahrain, a committee has been formed headed by the foreign ministry to review the protocol and gather opinions of relevant bodies

on joining it.

According to a paper presented during the workshop "Optional Protocols of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Ombudsman mechanism": "Ratification of the protocol does not posit an extra burden on states, in addition to the fact that it does not affect their national sovereignty, since domestic jurisdiction and the depletion of domestic equitable measures is fully respected, and their fulfilment is required before the application of international procedures for complaint-filing. Side by side with and through the efforts of national children's rights' institutions and with the support of advice, reporting, and complaints on behalf of the child, the third optional protocol will enhance national abilities of Arab countries to address issues of violence against children, and ensure that their commitment to children's rights is at the same level as the commitment shown by the ratification of other international conventions that include the work of international mechanisms designed to compensate for damage caused by violations".

II. National periodic reports submitted to the Committee on the Rights of the Child

All Arab countries that have ratified the convention have presented their initial reports to the International Committee on the Rights of the Child. During the past two decades these countries have been characterized by regular submission of their reports, except that as a result of the political and security situation the Arab region is experiencing there has been a setback in this regularity. The same applies to initial reports on the optional protocol. (Table 3 Appendix 4 on the status of report presentation on the convention and protocols).

As regards the provision of official reports on children's rights in the Arab world, although joining of the convention was completed in 1997 when the United Arab Emirates joined, the submission of these reports range from the first report being submitted by Iraq and Comoros, and the fourth report being submitted by Algeria, Sudan, Syria, Libya, Egypt and Yemen. As for Jordan, it submitted a merged fourth and fifth report in the year 2012.

Among the countries that have passed the due date for report submission by two or more years are Djibouti, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Oman, and Lebanon. As for Qatar, Kuwait, Mauritania, and Yemen³, the due date for submission of their reports is the second half of the year 2013⁴.

Regarding the initial reports on the two Optional Protocols, amongst the Arab countries which have joined the optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflicts, there are eleven countries which have submitted their first reports in time periods, most of which were more than a year past the due date. They are: Jordan, Tunisia, Sudan, Syria, Iraq, Oman, Qatar, Kuwait, Egypt, Morocco, and Yemen. Meanwhile, countries that have not yet submitted the first report are: Bahrain, Algeria, Libya, and Mauritania. As for the due date for report submission for Djibouti and Saudi Arabia, it is during the year 2013.

In regards to the Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography, Jordan, Sudan, Syria, Iraq, Qatar, Kuwait, Egypt, Morocco, and Yemen have submitted their initial reports. Other countries, however, are significantly late in submitting their reports. Tunisia is over eight years late, Bahrain, Lebanon, and Libya are over

3- Yemen indicated that the fourth periodical report was submitted in 2010 and the report on the prevention of the involvement of children in armed conflicts in 2011. The two reports will be further discussed in January 2014. More information is currently being prepared on the observations of the International Committee on the Rights of the Child.

4- "The Third Optional Protocol of the CRC on Complaint-Filing Procedures": A New Voice for Arab Children. Ambassador Mohamed Anis Salem (2012).

six years late, whereas Algeria, Comoros, and Mauritania are three years late.

1) Concluding Observations of the International Committee on the Rights of the Child on National Reports⁵

The concluding observations of the International Committee on the Rights of the child on national reports submitted by Arab countries according to Article 44 of the convention reveal the following:

1. On the level of international commitment:

- The delay in report submission by Bahrain, in contrast to commitment to the deadline by some countries such as Syria and Egypt, despite the security conditions and unrest they are undergoing, and the lack of commitment to the state report on the revised guidelines on report submission by Algeria.
- Recommendations of previous reports have not been fully realized, and there is a scarcity of measures to remove reservations on the convention.
- Discrimination against Arab women regarding granting their children citizenship, although in Bahrain a royal decree issued in 2006 granted the Bahraini nationality to 372 children of Bahraini mothers and foreign fathers.

2. Violence and corporal punishment:

- Despite the presence of special laws for children in some Arab countries, there is no clear and comprehensive legal prohibition of all forms of violence against them in all places.
- Despite the positive development in the prohibition of corporal punishment in schools through ministerial decrees and internal circulars, the practice of corporal punishment remains common in educational institutions as an acceptable disciplinary means.

3. On the level of independent monitoring:

Many forms of monitoring bodies were established in Arab countries as follows:

- Bahrain has a National Institution for Human Rights, although its' formation doesn't take into account the Paris Principles.
- In Egypt a National Council for Human Rights was established in 2003. It is the national institution for human rights according to the Paris Principles, but it lacks an independent mechanism specifically for monitoring and promoting children's rights. Also, the committees for child protection are charged with receiving and looking into complaints on children's rights violations but they are not independent of the government.
- The absence of any national independent mechanisms to monitor the implementation of the convention and to receive complaints on children's rights violations, and to take the necessary measures to address them in Algeria, Sudan, and Syria.

4. Protection during emergency situations:

- The lack of a legal framework to protect children during armed conflicts and emergency situations, or even for asylum-seekers.

5- Concluding observations of the International Committee on the Rights of the Child were based on official reports of countries whose reports were discussed during the time period following the publication of the first Comparative Arab Report, including: Concluding observations on Bahrain's combined third and fourth periodic reports adopted at session 1639 of the International Committee on the Rights of the Child (17 June 2011); Concluding observations on Algeria's combined third and fourth periodic reports adopted at session 1725 of the International Committee on the Rights of the Child (15 June 2012); Concluding observations on Egypt's combined third and fourth periodic reports adopted at session 1639 of the International Committee on the Rights of the Child (17 June 2011); Concluding observations on Sudan's combined third and fourth periodic reports adopted at session 1583 of the International Committee on the Rights of the Child (1 October 2010); Concluding observations on the Arab Republic of Syria's combined third and fourth periodic reports adopted at session 1668 (20 October 2011).

- Resorting to various forms of violence against and torture of children during the recent political events experienced by some Arab countries.
 - Impunity for people who have violated children's rights and not bringing them to justice.
5. Data collection:
- The absence of a centralized system for data collection on the national level, which would cover all areas of the convention.
 - The total absence of data classified according to geographic location, social and economic status, and categories of children who suffer from fragility of situation, in addition to data on exposure to violence, abuse, and exploitation.
 - In most cases, policy-makers' use of unreliable national data in assessing the situation.
6. Child helplines:
- The presence of various child helplines, some run by organizations of civil society and others supported by the state.
 - The majority of calls received by these helplines are from adults and not the children themselves.

2) Recommendations of the International Committee on the Rights of the Child, on periodic reports:

1. On the level of international commitment:
 - The implementation of the concluding observations and recommendations of the International Committee on the Rights of the Child on countries' previous reports, because many of these reservations have not been adequately addressed or have been only partially addressed.
 - The undertaking of all necessary measures to consider withdrawal of reservations on the convention.
2. Violence and corporal punishment:
 - Ensure that domestic legislations explicitly prohibit all forms of physical and psychological violence against children in all environments.
 - The launching of a national awareness campaign on the prohibition and unacceptability of all forms of violence against children, as well as the enablement of children to access complaint-filing mechanisms on a large scale.
 - Establishing a system for the protection of children supported by the state, staffed by social workers to work on the local level and to receive reports on the violence, neglect, and abuse suffered by children, as well as follow-up and deal with these cases and provide the children with the support, treatment, and protection they need.
 - This system should provide the family with supportive measures to prevent the recurrence of abuse, and also refer complaints to the specialized offices of prosecution for children to conduct prompt, impartial, and fair investigations.
 - The adoption of a comprehensive national strategy to prevent neglect, violence and others forms of abuse against children, and to fight these abuses and punish those responsible for them.
 - The implementation of the recommendations contained in the UN Study on Violence against Children.

3. On the Independent Monitoring Level

- The establishment of an independent mechanism, either as part of a national institution for human rights dealing with childhood, or as an independent mechanism (Ombudsman for children for example) and the provision of the proper resources needed in order to have a presence all over the country, and to monitor the implementation of rights under the convention, as well as address complaints from children on violations of their rights in an urgent manner.
- In the case of the presence of public institutions for human rights, the committee recommended considering the possibility of establishing of a special unit for children's rights and ensuring children's access to that mechanism, and its' provision with enough human, technical, and financial resources to ensure its' independence and effectiveness.

4. Protection during emergency situations

- Strengthening the legal and institutional system for the protection and promotion of children's rights during emergencies, especially in the context of legal proceedings.
- Ensuring that no child is subjected to torture or any other form of cruel, inhumane, or degrading treatment.
- Establishing an effective system for receiving of complaints and collecting data on torture or other forms of abuse of children who are deprived of their freedom. In addition, immediate investigations should be made into all allegations of torture or other forms of abuse, and the perpetrators should be prosecuted.

5. Data collection

- The establishment of a comprehensive data collection system to ensure the systematic collection and analysis of data in a detailed way categorized according to age, gender, geographic location, and social and economic background.
- The use of collected data as a basis for policy-making for the implementation of the convention and assessment of the progress made.

6. Child helplines

- Provision of child helpline services 24 hours a day all over the country.
- Promotion of awareness of the possible ways for children to access a phone line.
- Provision of financial and technical support by the state.

III. The status of the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

Twenty Arab countries have joined or ratified the CEDAW, and the state of Palestine has committed to it under the presidential decree issued in the year 2009. The only country that has not joined or ratified the convention is Sudan. (Annex 5 table 4 on the ratification and reservation of Arab countries on CEDAW).

However, a small number of countries recorded a reservation on more than one article of the convention because they conflict with national legislations, as is the case with Algeria, Bahrain, Lebanon and Kuwait which made a reservation on article 7(1) because the Kuwaiti constitution limits the right of nomination and election for males only.

Some countries indicated that their reservations are based on the presence of articles in the convention which conflict with Islamic Shari'a, they are: Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Qatar, Kuwait, Libya, and Syria. Saudi Arabia made a general reservation on the entire convention based on the Islamic Shari'a.

Most of these reservations focus on the following articles:

Article 2: on the prohibition of discrimination in constitutions and national legislations: reservations were made by Iraq, Algeria, Libya, Egypt, Bahrain, and Syria.

Article 7: on political and public life: a reservation was made by Kuwait.

Article 9: on citizenship laws: reservations were made by Jordan, Algeria, Iraq, Lebanon, Kuwait, Tunisia, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Syria, and Oman.

Article 15: on equality before the law: reservations were made by Jordan, Algeria, Tunisia, Bahrain, Syria, and Oman.

Article 16: on marriage and family relations: reservations were made by most countries.

Article 29: on arbitration between states: reservations were made by most countries.

The careful evaluation of reservations indicates that most Arab countries do not oppose the core principles of the convention, but they are unwilling to commit to changing relevant articles in their laws, and most Arab countries made reservations specifically on Article 16, relating to the rights of men and women within the family.

What distinguishes the convention and one of its' most important obligations is the conformity of national legislations with provisions of the convention. Article 2 of the convention shows that when ratifying the convention, countries that are doing so have to review their national legislations and make the necessary adjustments in order to ensure the implementation of the rights guaranteed by the convention, and to eliminate discrimination which is a main entry to the practice of violence.

The introduction of reservations on the essence and spirit of the convention denies Arab women the protection that makes them capable of demanding their rights.

Some countries withdrew their reservations, as was the case with Jordan in regards to paragraph 4 or Article 15, Algeria with Article 9 (2), Kuwait with Article 7(1), and Egypt with Article 9 (2)*. As for Libya, it has withdrawn all of its' reservations on the condition that the convention's provisions do not conflict with the Islamic Shari 'a⁶.

In other Arab countries which are concerned with conducting reviews of their legislations to make them compatible with the provisions of the convention, the participation of clerics in lobbying has a great importance in societies where the values of male domination prevail, and in countries where uniform laws of personal status are absent, and where civil rights fall under the jurisdiction of religious courts whose laws and regulations are not compatible with the principles and provisions of CEDAW. CEDAW grants women status equal to men, removes discrimination, promotes equal opportunities with men as full partners, ensures women's protection from violence and thus raises their ability to care for and protect their children.

The political situation (reservations on Article 9)- in terms of the non-acceptance of mothers granting their children nationality- also overlaps with social attitudes, under the pretext of lack of demographic balance which contributes to changing the identity of the nation and society.

6- The Citizenship Law in Egypt for the year 2004 states in its second article that "An Egyptian is born to an Egyptian father or Egyptian mother " According to this text, those born to Egyptian mothers are Egyptians whether born in Egypt or abroad and regardless of the status of their fathers, whether known or unknown, hold a specific nationality or none at all.

CHAPTER TWO:

Measures implemented from the proposed list of programmes and activities in realization of the operational goals of the UNSG's Study on Violence Against Children (VAC)⁷

12- In addition to responses to the questionnaire used for this study, the data in this table is compiled from the following documents received from LAS Member States:

- Memorandum from the Permanent Delegation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the League of Arab States, Number 324/ 2631 dated 3/4/2013;
- Memorandum from the Permanent Delegation of the Republic of Iraq to the League of Arab States, Number 1257/4/7/G dated 31/3/2013;
- Memorandum from the Permanent Delegation of the States of Palestine to the League of Arab States, Number 2013/MF/ 785/3 dated 18/3/ 2013;
- Memorandum from the Permanent Delegation of Qatar to the League of Arab States, Number 12931-/B/12 dated 18/3/2013;
- Report from the Permanent Delegation of the Republic of Lebanon to the LAS Secretariat, May 2013;
- Memorandum from the Permanent Delegation of the Kingdom of Morocco to the League of Arab States Number 1119, dated 14/5/2013;
- Report of the Republic of Yemen to the Las Secretariat, March 2013.

Legislative framework

General Objective	Activities	Achievements
<p>Issuing a law to protect children from all sorts of violence, abuse and neglect.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review applicable laws and compare them to relevant conventions. • Draft a bill for the protection of children. • Organize consultative meetings. • Conduct campaign to mobilise support for the adoption of the bill. • Organize consultative meetings. • Conduct campaign to mobilise support for the adoption of the bill. 	<p>Jordan: The Law For Protection Against Domestic Violence (2008) states that, except for cases that fall under the jurisdiction of the Criminal Court, crimes committed against natural persons are considered domestic violence if committed by one family member against another.</p> <p>United Arab Emirates: the Child Rights Act prepared by the Ministry of Social Affairs is currently being completed. Another law was passed to provide care for children of unknown parentage in 2012.</p> <p>Bahrain: the 2012 Child Act allocated a special chapter to the protection of children from abuse. The Shura Council is currently discussing a draft law against domestic violence that includes articles that define this act and prohibit different forms of violence within the family.</p> <p>Tunisia: added Chapter 319 to the criminal code, which prohibits the physical punishment of children by those with authority over them.</p> <p>Saudi Arabia: the Shura Council approved the "Child Protection System" (2011). Follow-up efforts are underway to issue a basic system to reduce violence.</p> <p>Iraq: prepared a draft Child Act that includes specific articles on violence in schools.</p> <p>Oman: a Child Act has been drafted which includes a chapter on child protection.</p> <p>Palestine: ratified the amendments to the Child Act (2012). A draft law on protection of juveniles, in harmony with the Child Act, has also been completed, and is under review with the Palestinian presidency.</p> <p>Qatar: The Child Act has been revised by a special committee and awaits legislative action.</p> <p>Lebanon: The Parliamentary Committee on Women and Children has approved a draft law to amend the current juvenile law and passed on to relevant committees for review.</p> <p>Morocco: A new constitution was approved (2011) which strengthened the rights of the child. Legal amendments were introduced to rise the minimum age for criminal accountability, marriage and work to 18 years of age, and to provide legal protection for children from all forms of abuse and sexual exploitation.</p> <p>Yemen: A series of steps were undertaken including the review of laws for protecting the rights of the child and the formulating the final drafts of proposed legislation and submitting them for the approval of the relevant authorities for approval.</p>
<p>Strengthen the programmes and capabilities of judicial institutions and raising their level of expertise.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing specialised courts and their provision with the appropriate means for children's conditions. • Development of a training programme for judges. 	<p>Jordan: the Ministry of Justice and the Judicial Council developed procedures and protocols with mechanisms for dealing with cases of domestic violence against children. Special sections were set up in courts for families, specifically for cases of domestic violence. A special course was introduced in the Judicial Institute on domestic violence. The Judicial Council also introduced initiatives for juveniles such as restorative justice and alternative measures to incarceration.</p> <p>United Arab Emirates: worked on the integration of principles of human rights in the curricula of colleges and police academies (2009-2010).</p> <p>Bahrain: The Child Act requires that forensic and psychological examinations, together with assessments of the condition of children subjected to ill treatment and their questioning must be conducted in specially equipped rooms in the headquarters of the Child Protection Centre (CPC). A prosecutor's office for juveniles has also been established to work on VAC issues by deputizing a representative of the prosecutor's office to the CPC.</p> <p>Saudi Arabia: has made a series of judicial reforms to develop its courts, improve the capabilities of its judges and allocate the necessary budgets.</p> <p>Sudan: Courts for children have been established, together with specialized child protection police and prosecutors. Also, special waiting areas and precincts have been developed for conducting investigations.</p>

		<p>Iraq: Since 2005, a course on human rights was introduced to universities. Concepts of human rights have also been included in curricula at the primary, preparatory and secondary stages.</p> <p>Oman: A regulation was issued for juvenile reform home (2010).</p> <p>Qatar: The Family Court has been established and, since 2010, juvenile trials have been held at the Department of Social Protection, at the Ministry of Social Affairs.</p> <p>Palestine: Family Protection Units have been established by police in all provinces to handle issues of family, women and children.</p> <p>Morocco: All courts of first instance added cells for dealing with women and children victims of violence.</p> <p>Yemen: The Ministry of Justice carried out an assessment on the requirements of courts and prosecutors to process juvenile cases. Several training workshops took place with the objective of reforming and further developing the juvenile justice system. A General Department for Family Protection has been established at the Ministry of Interior.</p>
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Institutional Framework

General Objective	Activities	Achievements
<p>Develop a national strategy and action plans for protecting children from violence, including practical objectives for each of its operational activities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assigning a team of experts to prepare a draft. ● Designation of the agency responsible for implementation. ● Designing a work plan. ● Setting indicators to monitor achievement of objectives. ● Developing training plan to strengthen the capacity of the team. 	<p>Jordan: The National Framework for the Family Protection was approved by the Council of Ministers as a national reference document for responding to cases of domestic violence. Also, the National Strategic Plan for the Family Protection and the Prevention of Domestic Violence (2005-2009) was also prepared. The National Team for the Protection of the Family from Violence was also formed (2000), as a national institutional for policy making and the development of national plans and programmes for the protection of the family. A project for automated tracking of cases of domestic violence was also developed.</p> <p>United Arab Emirates: The Supreme Council for Motherhood and Childhood prepared the first national strategy for motherhood and childhood (2011-2020).</p> <p>Bahrain: The National Strategy for Childhood (2013-2017) aims to provide children with a safe environment through meeting all of their needs and rights in the areas of health, education, protection, participation and non-discrimination.</p> <p>Algeria: A national plan was developed (2012) aimed at the prevention of all forms of violence, the promotion of a culture of non-violence, strengthening of the capacity of practitioners and reinforcing systems for legal and social protection.</p> <p>Djibouti: developed the National Strategy for Childhood (2011-2016).</p> <p>Sudan: A general framework for the National Plan to Combat VAC was prepared and its operational plan is under development by the National Council for Childhood. The Second National Plan for Childhood (2013-2015) includes several programmes, projects and activities to address VAC. In 2009 a set of strategies and plans were prepared including the National Plan for Combating VAC, the National Policy for Children with Unknown Parentage and the National Strategy for homeless children.</p> <p>Saudi Arabia: The National Strategy for Children was prepared by governmental and non-governmental agencies concerned with children. It covers five themes, including social protection.</p> <p>Iraq: The Child Welfare Commission is working on a national policy for the protection of children</p>

		<p>Palestine: The National Strategic Plan for Child Protection (2013–2015) was prepared together with the National Social Protection Sector Plan covering the care and empowerment of vulnerable and marginalised groups. The National Strategic Plan for the Protection of Juveniles (2012) aims to establish legal environment supportive of juvenile justice, capacity building, and strengthening the capacity of workers in the juvenile justice sector. Also, a strategy and work system was prepared for the family protection units in the civil police (2012).</p> <p>Qatar: A set of strategies were prepared, including: Qatar’s National Human Development Vision 2030; the National Development Strategy 2011–2016 (which includes the strategy for family cohesion and women’s empowerment); the General Strategy for the Family 2011–2016, the National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking 2010–2015 (including combating child labour, and the elimination of trafficking and sexual exploitation of children through prostitution and child pornography).</p> <p>Lebanon: The Council of Ministers approved (2012) the National Strategy for the Prevention and Protection of Children from all Forms of Violence, Abuse and Neglect, prepared by the Supreme Council for Childhood. Also, Parliament launched the National Plan for Human Rights, which includes a special chapter on the rights of the child.</p> <p>Egypt: The National Council for Motherhood and Childhood developed the National Plan to Combat VAC, to be integrated with other national plans and strategies for the protection of street children and youth from drugs, prevention of child labour, combating female genital mutilation (FGM), girls’ education and for raising awareness of the rights of the child.</p> <p>Morocco: A general policy is under preparation for the protection of children from all forms of violence.</p> <p>Yemen: The National Plan for Child Protection is in the process of being approved by the Supreme Council for Motherhood and Childhood.</p>
<p>The development of institutional structures legally authorized to protect children. Headed by the Minister of Social Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formation / activation of national policy making institutions. • Establishing an independent structure to monitor violations of the rights of the child and receive complaints (ombudsman). • Establishing multidisciplinary child protection units. • Introducing specialised police units. 	<p>Jordan: The Department of Family Protection was established to deal with the protection of children and their families from domestic violence and sexual assault. A police department for juveniles was also established (2013).</p> <p>United Arab Emirates: The Supreme Committee for Child Protection was established (2010) at the Ministry of Interior. A centre for child protection concerned with all crimes against children is being formed. Social support centres have been established in the police force commands specialised in cases of domestic violence. A Department for Social Protection has been established at the Ministry of social Affairs.</p> <p>Bahrain: The National Committee for Childhood was reconstituted in 2007. Headed by the Minister of Social Development (MSD), it includes all government agencies concerned with childhood and several NGOs. MSD inaugurated the Child Protection Centre (2007), mandated to deal with cases of violence and neglect, and to receive reports and complaints on VAC.</p> <p>Saudi Arabia: Several measures were introduced strengthen child protection, including the establishing the General Administration for Social Protection, to provide preventive guidance services; the establishing social protection units in governorates; establishing 41 child protection centres in all health sectors staffed by inter-disciplinary teams; and the Human Rights Commission which monitors the activities of government agencies based on human rights principles. A comprehensive guide on internal procedures for handling cases of abuse and violence has also been prepared.</p> <p>Sudan: Systematic work continues on the development of police units for the protection of family and children on the basis of clear administrative and legal guidelines.</p>

		<p>Iraq: A Family Protection Bureau has recently been established in the Ministry of Interior.</p> <p>Oman: A Family Protection Department was established in the Ministry of Social Development (2012), offering protection and care to family members and children victims of abuse trafficking. New teams were designated to study and follow up on cases of children at risk of abuse in 2012.</p> <p>Palestine: The Department of Childhood was established to follow up on and guide the work of child protection counsellors in Social Affairs offices and in child protection centres in all provinces. Child protection networks were formed, bringing together government and NGOs, functioning according to a national referral and follow-up system based on the Child Act. The Palestinian police set up a specialised unit for the protection of the family, women and children and to receive their complaints.</p> <p>Qatar: The Qatari Foundation for Child and Women Protection provides comprehensive services for the protection of children. It has created offices to provide support services in several hospitals and public prosecutor offices, and seeks to develop a comprehensive system for the protection from and prevention of domestic violence. The National Committee for International Humanitarian Law was established (2012).</p> <p>Lebanon: The Ministry of Social Affairs institutionalised the child protection system through the designation of focal persons in all provinces to monitor and refer cases of child abuse.</p> <p>Morocco: New mechanisms were introduced, including the National Council for Human Rights, the Ministerial Commission on Human Rights (2011), and the Directorate for Family and Child Protection.</p> <p>Yemen: The Council of Ministers approved the establishment of an independent national institution for human rights (2011), and a plan of action is under preparation. Civil society is cooperating with government agencies on establishing the National Observatory for the Rights of the Child. Special police branches for juveniles have been established in a number of provinces.</p>
Promotion of the values of non-violence and increasing awareness		
<p>Strengthening the role of media and communications in raising awareness and education on VAC.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities aimed at the public. • Activities aimed at media. 	<p>Jordan: Several campaigns were launched to educate the public on the effects of VAC together with outreach programmes for parents on positive upbringing methods. Other programmes addressed children on how to protect themselves from abuse.</p> <p>Bahrain: The Child Protection Centre conducts media campaigns, distributes leaflets, and organises lectures on the rights of the child and protection from violence. The National Strategy for Childhood also addressed community awareness on children's rights through a range of training and awareness-raising programmes.</p> <p>Djibouti: The Ministry of Social Affairs in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice organized an awareness campaign to promote non-violent practices in all places.</p> <p>Saudi Arabia: The National Committee for Childhood prepared a series of preventive and educational programmes targeting workers in the field of childhood, parents, and children.</p> <p>Sudan: Several activities took place to combat violence and raise awareness on the Child Act among all sectors of society. A media campaign was launched on children born out of wedlock.</p> <p>Iraq: Media campaigns took place to raise public awareness of violence and its' effects.</p> <p>Oman: The Ministry of Social Affairs launched awareness raising campaigns on the protection of children, and methods of positive parenting.</p> <p>Palestine: Child protection networks and some NGOs have implemented awareness raising campaigns on the rights of the child, targeting both children and those working with them.</p> <p>Qatar: The Foundation for the Protection of Women and Children launched several media campaigns on helplines, internet safety and sexual violence. A media strategy was implemented to promote a culture of child protection in society.</p> <p>Lebanon: Several media campaigns were launched entitled "No to Violence Against Children."</p> <p>Yemen: The Ministry of Information prepared a media program on women and children. Radio and television broadcasts aimed at raising awareness of childhood issues. Several publications were issued and awareness-raising seminars were implemented.</p>

Strengthening capabilities of children and those working with them

<p>Development of the capabilities of all those working with children.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a comprehensive training plan. • Study training needs of all professional groups. • Develop specialized training programmes that address different patterns of violence and strengthen capacity of specialised professionals. • Issue training manuals. • Establish model codes of conduct. • Introduce university courses covering concepts of protecting children from violence, monitoring and diagnosis. • Adoption of child protection policy by all institutions. • Establishing a special university degree on the rights of the child. 	<p>Jordan: All those working with children, whatever their specialty, are subject to continuous training programmes on human rights, the rights of the child, national laws and legislations, child interviewing techniques, and procedures and protocols for dealing with cases of violence.</p> <p>Bahrain: Training programmes introduced by the National Strategy for Children established a specialized cadre qualified to deal with issues of child protection.</p> <p>Saudi Arabia: The National Committee for Childhood introduced a training package on early detection and intervention in cases of abuse to train the staff of the Ministry of Education schools. The National Family Safety Program also implemented training courses for professionals.</p> <p>Sudan: Training workshops were organised for different professional sectors dealing with children, including media, teachers, police and judiciary.</p> <p>Iraq: Teachers were introduced to psychological and social support techniques for dealing with violence.</p> <p>Palestine: Several capacity building courses were organised for those working with children in the field of child protection.</p> <p>Qatar: The Qatar Foundation for the Protection of Women and Children published a guide to cases of abuse against women and children (negligence and violence). A policy and procedures manual was prepared for those working on child abuse.</p> <p>Lebanon: Training on violence and sexual harassment was organized for staff working with children. In partnership with the private sector, a specialised package was prepared on the prevention of sexual violence.</p> <p>Morocco: The number of judicial police responsible for minors was increased (2011). Training and continuous training programmes were introduced on protection from violence. Basic training for judges, police and social workers incorporated courses on the rights of the child and juvenile justice. The curricula of medical faculties and institutes incorporated caring for child victims of violence.</p> <p>Bahrain: The Child Protection Centre raises awareness and educates parents. Also, Family counselling offices in community centres have been educating family members and society on the rights of the child and combating VAC since 2007.</p> <p>Saudi Arabia: Government and NGOs raise awareness and educate parents on their roles and responsibilities towards their children, and on protecting them from violence in the context of local values. Among new initiatives is the outreach programme for engaged couples.</p> <p>Sudan: A media campaign was organized to target families and communities. A guide for families on the protection of children has been published.</p> <p>Iraq: School parents' councils are engaged by the Ministry of Education in an outreach programme to orient families on good upbringing techniques.</p> <p>Qatar: A series of awareness raising and educational activities in took place over the past two years to educate families and youth on dealing with children. The Ministry of Endowments participated in a large number of these events.</p> <p>Yemen: Several training courses were organized for school parents' councils on child protection.</p>
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Ensuring the participation of children

<p>Develop mechanisms to encourage the participation of children, including those who are marginalised, in combating violence against them.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing parliaments and municipal councils for children. • Consultative meetings to hear the opinions of children. 	<p>Jordan: A report was prepared expressing the views of adolescents on governmental efforts to respect, protect, and realize the rights of the child.</p> <p>Bahrain: The action plan for the National Childhood Strategy included the topics of the right of participation and non-discrimination with a range of mechanisms to promote the participation of children in student councils and other programmes and activities.</p> <p>Tunisia: The legislation on the Children's Parliament has been revised to increase participation.</p> <p>Algeria: Parliamentary days for children are organized. Also, boys and girls were involved in the management of local councils and offices for children were established at the provincial level.</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing special clubs for children. • Student councils and complaint boxes within schools. 	<p>Saudi Arabia: A Child Parliament has been established together with encouraging child participation in science clubs and youth hostels.</p> <p>Sudan: The Children’s Parliament holds meetings and discusses issues in a number of states. The child parliamentary body of Khartoum held a session in the national parliament as prelude to the formation of the National Parliament for Children.</p> <p>Iraq: A law establishing a youth forum is under preparation and Child Parliaments were established in seven provinces.</p> <p>Qatar: Student parliaments are present in all levels of education in independent schools and the Friends of the Child Protection Programme.</p> <p>Lebanon: Civil society works with governmental bodies on initiatives to support children, culminating in the Children’s Parliament and Government.</p> <p>Morocco: The Children’s Parliament held its seventh session in 2010, with other branches formed in schools. Children’s councils were also formed in Child Protection Centres together with school cooperatives in primary schools. Children delegates participated in committees to support social protection institutions and secondary educational institutions.</p> <p>Yemen: National elections for the Children’s Parliament took place in 2011. Human rights clubs were established in some schools. Children were trained on data collection, reporting and documentation.</p>
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Establishment of accessible and suitable reporting systems and services for children

<p>The development of a national free helpline for children.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management or supervision committee. • A confidential, accessible and free telephone line. • Developing a map of available resources and services. • A media and advertising campaign to publicise the phone number. • Training of human resources. 	<p>Jordan: The Jordan River Foundation operates a family helpline to provide support on various family issues in general and domestic violence in particular. Also, the Public Security Family Protection Department provides a confidential, toll-free helpline operating 24 hours a day, to receive reports on VAC. In addition, the Guidance Department at the Ministry of Education’s Guidance Department operates a toll-free helpline to receive complaints on VAC from students and parents.</p> <p>Bahrain: A toll-free child support helpline was launched in 2011 with trained staff capable of dealing effectively with calls by children.</p> <p>Saudi Arabia: In November 2010, a child helpline was launched child helpline 116111 by the Family Safety Programme. Also, the General Directorate for Social Protection established a helpline and website to receive complaints (www.hemayah.org)</p> <p>Sudan: A toll-free helpline was set up in 2009 operated by police units for the protection of family and children.</p> <p>Iraq: A helpline was established in the Family and Childhood Protection Unit of the Ministry of Interior to receive complaints on domestic violence.</p> <p>Palestine: The Sawa NGO established a toll-free child protection helpline in 2004, offering support and guidance for children and youth subjected to any forms of violence, abuse, or neglect. Guidance is offered by phone as well as email for those whose circumstances prevent them from using the phones.</p> <p>Qatar: The Qatar Foundation for the Protection of Women and Children established a toll-free helpline in 2010 to support women and children 24/7. Also, the Social Rehabilitation Centre offers psychological counselling services. In addition, the Qatar Foundation for Combating Human Trafficking established a helpline to receive complaints on trafficking and the Department of Social Protection is activating a social counselling line for juvenile delinquents or those at risk of delinquency.</p> <p>Lebanon: The Ministry of Social Affairs established a line to receive complaints on violations perpetrated against children and is currently working on developing and institutionalising it.</p> <p>Morocco: In addition to cells for the protection of women and children in courts and victims of violence in hospitals, the green line was established for child victims of violence at the National Observatory for the Rights of the Child.</p> <p>Yemen: Civil society organisations provide phone psychological guidance services and receive complaints from child victims of violence.</p>
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Develop and implement a data collection and research system		
<p>Creating a national mechanism to collect data and information</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish an observatory for data collection, documentation and dissemination. • Prepare a list of child protection indicators. • A system for collecting and analysing data. • Organise records of relevant organisations. 	<p>Jordan: The Family Protection Department is designated specialised department for dealing with cases of VAC. It holds a comprehensive database on all cases of violence including information on age, gender, social, environmental, and cultural backgrounds of the perpetrators, as well as information on the victims such as age, gender and relationship to the perpetrator as well as information on the time, date, and circumstances of the assault. The National Council for Family Affairs also developed a computerized follow-up system for cases of violence in institutions.</p> <p>Bahrain: The National Committee for Childhood is responsible for establishing a detailed database on all child-related matters in coordination with the Ministries of Health, Education, Development, Interior, and Justice based on the DevInfo database.</p> <p>United Arab Emirates: The Supreme Council for Motherhood and Childhood, in collaboration with UNICEF, established a database on children to strengthen policies and strategies.</p> <p>Saudi Arabia: The Ministry of Health established a computerized observatory, which records cases of child abuse and neglect received by the health sector. It also collects data from protection centres in different provinces. Several studies have been conducted on violence, its forms and its effects within the family and at school.</p> <p>Iraq: The Central Agency for Statistics and Information Technology at the Ministry of Planning has undertaken the task of conducting research, development of indicators and analysis of results.</p> <p>Qatar: The Qatar Foundation for the Protection of Women and Children maintains a database on cases of abuse using indicators that are periodically updated. The Supreme Council for Family Affairs is seeking a mechanism and uniform standards on domestic violence. Also, the Ministry of Planning is monitoring other demographic factors.</p> <p>Lebanon: While there is no national database to maintain records on cases of child abuse, such records are kept at the Ministry of Justice on cases it receives.</p> <p>Egypt: The Child Rights Observatory at the National Council for Motherhood and Childhood was established in Egypt.</p> <p>Yemen: Special data collection systems exist for each governmental agency. The Supreme Council for Motherhood and Childhood, in collaboration with the Ministry of Human Rights and the Coordinating Body for NGOs for Protection of Children's Rights, is working on the establishment of a National Observatory for the Rights of the Child.</p>
Providing psychological recovery and social integration services		
<p>Rehabilitation and psychological support programs for child victims and their families.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop multidisciplinary units. • Develop and increase the level of specialisation of rehabilitation and psychological recovery programmes. • Programmes to provide free legal counselling and assistance for children and their families. 	<p>Jordan: Through its family helpline, the Jordan River Foundation seeks to provide legal assistance for children and their families in partnership with legal authorities. "Dar AlAman" (Safe Home), is a therapeutic centre for child protection that provides rehabilitation services for children exposed to violence, through a multidisciplinary team. The juvenile and protection centres of the Ministry of Social Development provide services for abused children and their families.</p> <p>Bahrain: The Child Protection Centre provides rehabilitation and psychotherapy services for abused children and their families. It also receives cases transferred from courts in coordination with the Office of Family Counselling.</p> <p>Saudi Arabia: The Ministry of Health established 41 centres for child protection in all provinces and sectors, each staffed by a multidisciplinary team.</p> <p>Sudan: Police units for the protection of family and children provide rehabilitation, psychological support and reintegration services for child victims and offenders and their families.</p>

		<p>Palestine: Two child protection centres are in operation: one receives males, aged 5-18, and transferred from child protection counsellors and police departments, with the aim of temporary and emergency protection. A package of psychological services in coordination with psychological and social support institutions. The second centre receives girls aged 12-18 who are victims of violence, and provides social and psychological services in coordination with partners from governmental and civil society. The Ministry of Health also provides psychological services. The Palestinian Counselling Centre offers psychological support and guidance services for children and family.</p> <p>Qatar: The Qatar Foundation for the Protection of Women and Children provides mental health and therapeutic rehabilitation services for child victims of violence.</p> <p>Lebanon: The Ministry of Justice contracted an NGO to provide psychological support for child victims of violence and sexual exploitation.</p> <p>Morocco: Units for the care of women and child victims of violence operate in public and university hospitals. Services are also provided by child psychological support units.</p> <p>Yemen: Children affected by war and victims of trafficking receive support and psychosocial rehabilitation services.</p> <p>Iraq: Mental health counsellors have been established in the Ministry of Health, as well as in many specialised rehabilitation centres and institutions for psychological support. "Social Research Committees" have been established in courts dealing with family and personal status issues.</p>
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Article 19.1 of the CRC defines VAC as: "all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse". The UNSG Report on VAC uses this definition, combined with that of the Who World Report on Violence and Health (2002): the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against a child, by an individual or group, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity. The child is defined in line with article 1 of the CRC as "[e]very human being below the age of eighteen years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier".

Chapter Three:

The General Legal Framework for the Protection of Children from All Forms of Violence

In the case of Arab states several legal factors help to strengthen the role of laws and legislations in ensuring effective protection for children from all forms of violence:

1. The presence of the principle of "protection and care of children" in most Arab constitutions, which provides clear recognition of including the protection of children in public policies. For example:
 - Article 29 of the Palestinian constitution states that: "...children have the right to protection and comprehensive care, and not be exploited for any purpose. They are not allowed to undertake action that harms their safety, health or education. They have the right to protection from harm and cruel treatment. By law it is prohibited to expose children to beatings and cruel treatment by their relatives..."
 - The preamble of the constitution of Comoros states that: "Children and youth have the right to protection by public authorities from any form of exclusion, exploitation or violence."
 - Article 34 of the Algerian constitution states that: "The state guarantees the non-violation of human sanctity and prohibits any form of physical or psychological violence or any breach of dignity."
 - Article 10 of the Egyptian constitution emphasises the importance of the protection of motherhood and childhood.
 - Article 9 of the Kuwaiti constitution includes a general text on the protection of motherhood and childhood.
 - The Qatari constitution considered family the basis of society, and highlights the importance of protecting youth and safeguarding them from corruption, as well as protecting them from exploitation and neglect (articles 21 and 22).
 - Article 30 of the Yemeni constitution stipulates the duty of the state in protecting motherhood and childhood, and caring for youth⁸.
2. The distinctive position of children in the religious value system in Arab countries, which many Arab laws and legislations are based upon. These values provide for the principle of protection, give the family a preferential position and attend to marginalised children and the necessity of social solidarity.
3. In the past decade a noticeable legislative effort was undertaken as several Arab countries issued laws on the rights of the child (e.g. Bahrain, Sudan, Palestine, Egypt, Yemen). This reflected a desire to harmonise national legislation with international and regional conventions, in order to strengthen and consolidate the rights of the child. Some countries focussed on drafting new laws or amending existing ones for the protection of children and to include clear mechanisms for complaints and reporting.
4. The accession of the majority of Arab countries to international and regional treaties and conventions relevant to the rights of the child, combating torture and non-discrimination, indicates a clear commitment to the principles and values of the rights of the child, particularly the protection of children from violations to their rights.
5. The Arab dynamic in the field of childhood over the past decade, coupled with the openness towards all that which benefits Arab children, such as successful methodologies and approaches that can reliably enhance professional performance, planning and programming.

Nevertheless, these positive factors should not obscure the fact that continued presence of intentional and non-intentional violent actions against children, by either relatives or non-relatives, in educational and residential institutions, by those responsible for the care of children and by the systems and policies which, in some cases, do not constitute a protective environment that guarantees the rights of the child.

8- Rights of the Child in Arab Constitutions. Secretariat General of the League of Arab States (LAS), Women, Family and Childhood Department – Social Affairs Section. League of Arab States. Al Awamleh, D.A.

In its concluding observations following the discussion of most periodic reports by Arab states, the Committee on the Rights of the Child expressed its concern regarding the incompatibility of certain legislations with the provisions of the CRC, especially: the definition of a child, the general principles of the rights of the child, civil rights and freedom of children, and the position of the rights of the child within the context of family relationships. These include family laws, legislations for the protection of children from all forms of violence, abuse and exploitation, and the penal code on "children in conflict with the law"⁹.

The committee also noted deficiencies in Arab legislations on children, either due to the absence of one single comprehensive law for children, or because laws reflected a welfare rather than a rights approach.

A study on "Child Law in Arab Countries: Reality and Hope"¹⁰ identified some difficulties and challenges which hinder the legislative process in regards to children's rights:

- Weakness of the culture of human rights in general, and the narrow interpretation of many of the principles adopted by joining the convention, as well as the position of children in society that sees them as weak persons requiring special care and not as full rights holders who have full right to demand, defend or advocate their own rights.
- Lack of comprehensive reviews of national legislation to assess compatibility with the principles of the CRC.
- The slowness of the legislative process.
- The failure of civil society to make comprehensive plans to defend and advocate for the rights of the child.
- The direct impact of religious and cultural background on legislation, its tools and its mechanisms.
- The absence of serious social dialogue based on the participation of all key sectors, particularly those affected by its provisions such as civil society, legislative bodies, the judiciary and, importantly, children.
- Lack of expertise and training amongst judges, lawyers and legislators in general on topics related to the rights of the child.

I. The prohibition of violence in the general laws of Arab Countries

In 2008 Jordan drafted a Child Rights Act, which was later withdrawn from the National Assembly. A new draft is currently being prepared in cooperation with all organisations concerned with children's rights and UNICEF. Article 62 of the penal code was amended with the stipulation that no harm should be caused by parents disciplining their children, in addition to the condition of what general custom permits. Amendments of the penal code also included increasing punishment for crimes against family, women and children. The age of protection for sexual offences and crimes against public ethics and morals has also been raised to 18 years of age for the girl child in accordance with international conventions, and punishments for perpetrators have been intensified.

The United Arab Emirates has completed the drafting of its Child Rights Act prepared by the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Interior.

Bahrain passed a Child Act in 2012, which includes a special chapter on the protection of children from abuse. Abuse is defined as: "Any act or omission that would lead to direct or indirect harm to the child (thus) preventing the proper, safe and healthy upbringing of the child, including physical, psychological or sexual abuse, neglect or economic exploitation". The law also provides definitions for each type of abuse addressed.

9- Encyclopaedia on the Rights of the Child. Kotran, Dr. H, Page 112.

10- Child Law in Arab States: Reality and Hope, Mikhael, Dr. E., Khalil, Dr., KM, Ghorbal, Dr. A. League of Arab States (2010).

Since 1995, the Tunisian Child Protection Code has prohibited all forms of violence against children in their various settings, and has made it compulsory all professionals and citizens to report on threats to children to Child Protection Delegates.

Algeria's government is currently reviewing a draft Child Protection Act in the context of strengthening the legal system related to the rights of the child.

Sudan's constitution, state constitutions and the Child Act of 2010 have all prohibited the practice of torture, abuse or neglect. The Child Act includes strong penalties and comprehensive solutions for dealing with the abuse of children and protecting them from violence. It obligates any person who believes that a child's right has been violated to notify the authorities. In addition, several states have successfully issued laws to banning and criminalising female genital mutilation.

In Iraq, the regional government of Kurdistan approved a law against domestic violence in 2011. The government of Iraq also issued Law 28/2012, which prevents the manufacturing and importing of children's toys that incite violence. It has also sought to issue a set of bills including the Draft Law on Child Protection in Iraq, the Draft Law on a Parliament for Children, the Draft Law on the Child Welfare Authority and the Anti-trafficking Law.

Oman has drafted a Child Act, now awaiting release, which includes a special section on the protection of children. In addition, several laws were enacted to prohibit all forms of physical and psychological violence, including corporal punishment, humiliation, neglect and exploitation within the family and residential institutions.

In 2012, the State of Palestine ratified the amendments made on the 2004 Child Act. Article 68 of the amended law stipulates that: "No child may be subject to physical or psychological torture or to any treatment that is cruel or degrading to human dignity." The law also obliges professionals and child carers to report abuse to the Child Protection Guide. Draft laws were also prepared for family protection and the protection of juveniles as well as the establishment of the National Council for Childhood under the umbrella of the Ministry of Social Affairs.

Qatar continues efforts to revise its Draft Child Act and promulgate it. In 2010 two decrees were issued to amend certain provisions of Qatar's accession to the CRC and the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography and give these instruments the force of law.

Lebanon completed a draft law, currently under consideration by parliament, to amend the law on the protection of juvenile offenders and those at risk, strengthening social protection, establishing national mechanisms, prohibiting all forms of VAC in all settings, and mandating the reporting of child abuse. Also, proposals were made to amend some articles in the penal code to stiffen penalties on aggressors, to impose remedial measures and to eliminate Article 186 which allows parents and educators use corporal punishment as a form of customarily acceptable discipline.

The Egyptian Child Act (2008) considers the child to be at risk if found in a situation that threatens her/his safety, upbringing, and morals, or if s/he is subject to neglect, abuse, violence, exploitation, or homelessness. This law prohibits violence, requires mandatory reporting, bans female genital mutilation, and specifies a minimum age of 18 for the marriage of men and women. Nevertheless, Egypt has not modified the articles of the penal code that allow parents and educators to exercise corporal punishment in the context of general custom.

Morocco completed the amendment of several laws including those concerning the legal protection of children from all forms of abuse and sexual assault, as well as the penal code, which punishes carers who abandon children without protection and those who place children at risk. Also, the comprehensive family code was changed to set

the age of marriage for both women and men at 18.

In 2012, Yemen undertook a comprehensive legal review of national legislations and regulations on children, followed by drafting a set of laws on the rights of the child, to be integrated into a single law. It also indicated that in 2007 amendments were proposed to parliament on the Child Rights Act and the Penal Code particularly crimes of child exploitation (sexual exploitation, child trafficking, begging)¹¹.

II. Summary and Recommendations

State responses indicate considerable progress with regards amending penal codes and child protection acts, and the enactment of new laws to ensure effective protection for children. Nevertheless, these laws share common constraints, as they:

- Are not based on a comprehensive review of all domestic legislation in against the CRC and other relevant international conventions.
- Include general human rights without sufficient details or clarification to avoid misinterpretation (e.g. Palestine Act of 2004 amended in 2009).
- Are based on the CRC without reference to the principles and provisions of the Optional Protocols on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography and on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict.
- Did not clearly express the concept of the best interests of the child, which is often included as a separate article without addressing its implications for various aspects of economic, social and civil rights.
- Do not address the child's right to express his/her opinion, and to participate in decision making on subjects related to his/her concerns.
- Included ideas whose proper location is executive regulations due to their procedural and technical nature.
- State responses do not include data allowing analysis on the basis of the various settings where violence occurs although; deductions can be drawn from data on the nature of violence.

Physical violence:

Child laws in Arab countries do not cover the complete prohibition of violence, particularly in schools, where stronger legal action is required beyond existing ministerial decrees and circulars. Current legislation does not address all forms of violence, especially among children themselves and committed by children against adults. Also, present laws do not ensure the rights of a child to physical and psychological rehabilitation together with reintegration in society, nor do they spare children unnecessary legal procedures, especially direct confrontation with the aggressor. So far, legislation does not ensure the protection of whistle-blowers, nor does it guarantee respect to the privacy of victims and access to social and legal guidance services. Furthermore, most laws do not impose deterrent penalties on aggressors in cases where they represent the government, police, or media.

Sexual violence:

Most laws do not clearly prohibit all forms of sexual violence against girls and boys below 18 years of age, nor do they protect victims from the requirements of multiple testimonies, or eliminate all possibilities for impunity in cases of sexual offences occurring within the family. There are no explicit articles disallowing the dropping of charges and discontinuing lawsuits in cases where the aggressor marries the victim. These laws have failed to provide medical

11- Of the proposed articles to be added to these draft laws is an article on the right to discipline, as follows: The right to discipline does not justify any of the following acts: Severe beating leading to disability or injury; Mutilation or amputation of body parts; Burning or use of substances which are harmful to the body; Deprivation of food or drink; Expulsion from the home.

and psychological recovery services for victims. In some cases, legislation has failed to prohibit the acquisition, production, dissemination, and distribution of documents and materials containing child pornography. Laws have not provided for allowing complaints without the permission of the victim's parents, nor have they ensured that child victims of sexual exploitation will not be considered criminals or delinquents.

Psychological violence:

Clearly, there is a gap in legislation criminalizing this form of violence, due to a lack of clarity on its shape and content, which includes insult and disgraceful treatment disrespectful of the child's intrinsic dignity.

Here are some suggestions that may help achieving the ultimate goal of Arab countries of making their laws and legislations an effective framework that guarantees the rights of the child and enhances protection from all forms of violence. These proposals cover two areas: both legislative reform and the content of protection.

Topic 1: Mechanisms of legislative reform

- There is a need to ensure an adequate level of harmony between laws covering the child, family, and personal status issues because of their interdependence and due to the fact that there are some differences between religious and civil courts when dealing with the rights of the child. This needs a serious national social dialogue, together with public education and awareness raising activities reaching all spectrums of society in order to identify areas of contradiction and propose necessary amendments to ensure harmony with both the rights of the child and the right to protection.
- Work on the compilation of principles and provisions related to children's issues currently distributed among several laws and integrating them into a single Child Protection Act or Child Act, thus facilitating legal procedures by ensuring the clarity and consistency of law.
- Working on withdrawing reservations entered by several Arab countries on some articles of the CRC and its Optional Protocols.
- The presence of certain social beliefs and common practices which some laws neither expose nor punish, or even go as far as ensuring impunity for their perpetrators. This necessitates the need for the legislative reform process to be accompanied by a consultative environment and a serious social dialogue, not only among those in the legal profession but also with various sectors of society including children.
- The necessity of placing clear and practical legal definitions that include all forms of violence and that can be invoked in various Arab countries. (General observation 13 annex 6).
- Ensuring that the legislative environment is merely one of the elements of the child protection system. A comprehensive legal framework for this system is required to provide protection for all children by covering:
 1. The cultural and social environment.
 2. Mechanisms for monitoring and reporting.
 3. Determining the responsible structures and bodies at the central and local levels (national and local committees, a social worker or guide, a helpline, an ombudsman or a national institution for human rights).
 4. Services based on criteria of quality and protection (the law may include the need to adhere to these standards and identify the agency responsible for periodic monitoring and follow-up to

ensure maintaining levels of efficiency in performance and compatibility with the rights of the child).

5. Specialised and trained human resources (judges, lawyers, police, professionals, social workers, educators, etc.). Legislation needs to ensure the protection of involved professionals and to determine appropriate punishment if their ethical and professional duties are violated.
- Provide the necessary financial and human resources for the implementation of laws and to conduct studies on the impact of existing legislation to assess its application and to identify gaps.

Topic 2: Content of child protection

- Annex 6 contains a checklist of principles that should be included in childhood laws to ensure comprehensive and effective protection from all forms of violence and abuse. Following are some suggestions:
- In addition to violence by and against children in educational institutions there is a need for a legal framework on VAC in residential institutions, places of detention, and in alternative and foster care settings. This framework needs to also include violence against refugee children, children of migrant workers, unaccompanied children, children with disabilities and children in conflict with the law (actions include raising the age of criminal responsibility, providing child-friendly justice, introducing alternative measures and restorative judiciary, etc.).
- The institutions, departments, and facilities responsible for the care and protection of children need to abide by protection policies and codes of conduct, and establish sanctions for their violation.
- Combating violence based on gender to ensure the principle of non-discrimination, work on raising the legal age of marriage to 18 years for males and females, and the prohibiting female genital mutilation.
- Encouraging reporting by children and citizens, and making it compulsory for professionals working with children while ensuring the principle of privacy of the child victim.
- The right of the child victim of neglect, abuse, violence, or exploitation to compensation for damages suffered together with the right to physical and psychological recovery and reintegration services.
- Clarify the boundaries between social and judicial protection and strengthen the role of social protection (decentralised structures, counselling services, safety nets, etc.) and ensure the protection and support of professionals involved in prevention programmes, avoiding the criminalization of child victims and placing them in shelters except as a last resort and for the shortest time possible.
- Focus on the protection of children from political violence through their use in political expressions such as demonstrations, and to ensure their protection from violence and maltreatment in emergency situations.
- Protection of children from the abuse of modern means of communication that may expose them to violence, exploitation, and lure them to sites or situations that put them at risk.

Chapter Four:
**Protecting Children from
Violence in Schools.**

Violence in schools deprives children of their rights: the right to protection and growth in a safe and supportive environment that supports their personal development and growth, as well as the right to quality education which respects human dignity and safeguards their physical safety.

Ensuring that children receive good quality education is a key Millennium Development Goal as well as a central objective of the Dakar Framework for Action on Education for All (EFA).

Violence in schools is related to violence prevalent in society outside school. Confronting violence in one setting requires coordination with the efforts against it in the other. Thus, national strategies and plans to prevent and protect against violence need to recognize the need for a sectoral plan on violence within schools.

Schools occupy a unique position allowing them to break the patterns of violence by providing children, parents and communities with the knowledge and skills enabling them to communicate, negotiate, and resolve disputes. Violence in schools takes different forms: corporal punishment or physical violence, psychological violence that includes cruel, offensive and humiliating treatment, as well as sexual violence and bullying (Appendix No.7, the definitions present in the General Comment of the International Committee on the Rights of the Child No.13: The right of the child to freedom from all forms of Violence).

In 2001 the International Committee on the Rights of the Child The Committee "urge(d) States parties, as a matter of urgency, to enact or repeal their legislation as necessary in order to prohibit all forms of violence, however slight, within the family and in schools, including as a form of discipline, as required by the provisions of the Convention and in particular articles 19, 28 and 37 (a) and taking into account articles 2, 3, 6 and 12, as well as articles 4, 5, 9, 18, 24, 27, 29 and 39."

In its General Comment No.8 for 2006 on the right of the child to protection from physical violence and other forms of cruel or humiliating punishment, " the Committee has noted that in many States there are explicit legal provisions in criminal and/or civil (family) codes that provide parents and other carers with a defence or justification for using some degree of violence in "disciplining" children. But in the view of the Committee, given the traditional acceptance of corporal punishment, it is essential that the applicable sectoral legislation - e.g. family law, education law, law relating to all forms of alternative care and justice systems, employment law - clearly prohibits its use in the relevant settings.¹²"

In the Arab region, corporal punishment is regarded as a form of chastising rather than a form of violence from which the child should be protected. In the 2010 Beirut workshop held by the LAS Women, Family and Childhood Department, in cooperation with the Supreme Council for Childhood in Lebanon and the Save the Children (Sweden), participants defined a number of challenges to the prohibition of corporal punishment against children, and to its implementation within different settings. These challenges included the absence of data and lack of experience as well as insufficient financial resources. Other challenges were posited by public attitudes and the prevalent acceptance of corporal punishment as a means for disciplining and educating the child. There was also a deficiency in knowledge of the alternatives to corporal punishment, as well as the existence of a culture of violence and a gap in anger-management skills. This is made more complicated due to the obscurity and lack of agreement regarding positions towards authority in the context of interpersonal and societal relations at large, together with the lack of media support and the utilization of religious justifications to obstruct banning corporal punishment.

At the workshop, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General (SRSG) on VAC Ms. Marta Santos Pais focused on the fact that "legislation is the fundamental element in any comprehensive strategy to curtail all forms of VAC and to counter them within all contexts and at all times". Ms. Santos Pais asserted that legislations are the

12- The Committee of the Rights of the Child: Day of general discussion on VAC in the family and at school. (2001)

one serious manifestation of a country's commitment to work towards limiting violence, confronting it and protecting the dignity of children and their physical well-being. She also asserted that legislations must enable the positive upbringing and rearing of children through non-violent approaches. Ms. Santos Pais added that legislation provides a framework for guaranteeing the safety of victims and for helping them recover and re-assimilate within society.

In their comments on national strategic projects to combat VAC, international experts Peter Noel and Paulo Pinheiro also indicated that:

- Legislative reform must be explicit and cover all contexts.
- The law must be clear on the fact that any form or degree of corporal punishment is not legal and not acceptable.

Corporal and Psychological Violence in Schools in the Arab Region:

Existing studies indicate a rise in the levels of physical and psychological violence in Arab schools. In contrast, data on the prevalence of sexual abuse is insufficient while the issue of bullying is not covered in the literature produced by researchers and educational and social policy-makers.

Some figures clearly indicate continued infliction of corporal punishment on children in schools, despite efforts exerted by some countries and notwithstanding the fact that most countries have prohibited this form of punishment on several legislative levels whether by laws, ministerial decrees, or the internal procedures of professional organizations (Table No.5 Annex No.8: The Condition of the Legal Status of Prohibiting Corporal Punishment in Home and School in Arab states)

Jordan: 57% of children admitted that they had been exposed to physical violence on the part of teachers or administrative staff. 71% said they were exposed to verbal violence by teachers and members of the school administration.¹³

Iraq: 85% of children in the aged 2-14 years were exposed to physical and psychological violence in the home in 2005-2006.¹⁴

Palestine: More than 20% of children in the age group of 7-12 years of age were exposed to psychological violence in educational institutions, 21.4% were exposed to physical violence from their teachers, and 14.2% from relatives.¹⁵

Kuwait: Reports by the Ministry of Education record 26,000 cases of corporal punishment by teachers in the six governorates.¹⁶

Lebanon: Only 24% of students did not mention that they were excessively exposed to physical violence at school during 2008. Only 19% of children totally denied that they had been exposed to any form of verbal violence at school. On the other hand, 20% of children asserted that they had been exposed to significant verbal violence.¹⁷

Egypt: 42% of teachers resorted to violence as a means of controlling the educational process.¹⁸

Morocco: There were at least 1,000 cases of physical violence recorded in 2009; most were in the form of corporal punishment.¹⁹

13- The Jordanian Ministry of Education. UNICEF (2007).

14- "The Nature and Scale of Corporal Punishment in the Middle East and North Africa Region, 2011" The Global Initiative to Stop All Corporal Punishment (July 2011)

15- The Palestinian Central Bureau for Statistics (2011)

16- Akhbar Al-Khaleej Newspaper, "The Education Ministry takes steps to stop violence in schools", www.gulfnews.com/news/gulf/kuwait

17- School VAC in Lebanon, The Supreme Council for Childhood, Save the Child Fund, Global Vision Organisation, St. Joseph University, (December 2009).

18- Al-Sharq Al-Awsat Newspaper, "Egypt's Schools: a conflict zone" (January 2009).

19- Akhbar AlMaghreeb newspaper, "Violence in schools reaches dangerous levels." (October 2010)

UNICEF statistics (Table No.6) show that the percentage of children aged 2 to 4 exposed to at least one form of psychological or corporal punishment at the hands of their mothers or caretakers or one of their live-in families is as follows:

Table No.6: Chastising Children

Disciplining of children	Yemen	Egypt	Lebanon	Palestine	Iraq	Syria	Djibouti	Algeria	Tunisia	Jordan
Percentage of children ages 2-14 who have experienced any form of violent discipline	95	92	81,9 88,2 (of Palestinians)	92,8	79	89	72	88	94	53 (Children ages 8-17)

Source: Data Sheet 2012 UNICEF CHILD PROTECTON IN THE MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA

The same source refers to the fact that mandatory reporting and follow-up are non-existent in most of Arab states, except for Jordan, Syria, Iraq, Oman and Palestine.

There is also a distinguished experience in Yemen, where a survey on VAC in schools was conducted by a group of children aged 12- 18 years, affiliated to a local council for children. Conducted in 22 schools in the capital Sana'a, the survey comprised of questions on physical and psychological violence and aggression. The results of the survey were discussed in a workshop that included school staff and community leaders.²⁰

Tunisia is the only Arab state that undertook steps to remove from its laws any justification for corporal punishment at home and at school.

Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Iraq, Qatar, Lebanon, Egypt and Morocco do not prohibit corporal punishment in their laws.²¹

(Table No.5 Annex No.8 on the status of the legal framework for prohibiting corporal punishment at home and in the school, in Arab states).

The continued practice of corporal punishment in schools, even in countries that have legislated to clearly prohibit it, reflects laxity in implementing laws, and in mechanisms for follow-up, implementation and evaluation. In some laws and procedures, as in the case of Yemen, there is no punishment stipulated for the perpetrator of violence. In other instances, there are no mechanisms that allow child victims to complain.²²

Sexual Violence:

In the Arab region, there is only limited reporting on the occurrence of sexual violence in schools as the subject remains a social taboo and child friendly reporting mechanism are absent. Yet there is evidence to suggest its presence. A study in Yemen on a sample of 267 children showed that 31.4% were exposed to sexual harassment (in 56.2% of the cases, the aggressor was either a peer or a neighbour and in 13.7% of the cases it was one of the teachers)²³

In Morocco, it was observed that 8 out of 40 cases of violence reported to the Child Rights Observatory were classified as sexual harassment (6 boys and 2 girls)²⁴.

In Lebanon, a recent study showed that 16% of children were exposed to sexual harassment with 6% of these cases occurring in a school setting. The study showed that the incidence of sexual harassment was higher in the case of girls than boys (12 girls vs. one boy)²⁵.

20- Child and Youth Protection Initiative, Arab Institute for Urban Development, Sana'a (2008).

21- Some countries issued ministerial decrees or circulars that prohibit physical punishment: Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, and Saudi Arabia.

22- Save the Children Sweden and International Bureau for Children's Rights, Violence Against Schools: a Regional Analysis of Lebanon, Morocco and Yemen, 2011.

23- Yemen National Council for Childhood and Motherhood, Violence Against Children: a Social Study in Some Yemeni Regions, 2005.

24- Save the Children interview with "Beity" society and the Child Rights Observatory, Rabat, 10 October, 2010.

25- Higher Council for Childhood, Save the Children (Sweden), Kafa Society, Sexual Harassment in Lebanon, 2008.

I. Legal Prohibition of Violence in Schools in Arab states

Legal approaches to prohibiting of violence in schools have varied:

In Jordan, the civil service system was modified. In 2007, instructions were issued on disciplining students in government and private schools, with the objective for schools to utilize both preventive and therapeutic methods to correct student behaviour. These instructions comprise specific permitted punishments for behavioural transgressions, starting with the seventh grade upwards, in addition to a mechanism for dealing with them by school councils.

In the United Arab Emirates, it is expected that the forthcoming Child Law will include articles that protect the child at school. Also, several by-laws and internal regulations prohibiting violence in schools have been issued by the Ministry of Education, the Abu Dhabi Education Council, and the Knowledge and Human Development Authority.

In Bahrain, the Child Law prohibits all forms of violence in the family and at school. A general injunction was also issued that prohibits corporal and psychological punishment in all schools and educational institutions, based on the 2010 civil service law and its executive regulations and table of violations. According to the Child Law and its executive regulations, teacher or responsible official in a school are liable for investigation in the event of utilizing violence, or inflicting corporal or psychological punishment on a student.

In Tunisia, the Child Protection Law assigns to school directors the responsibility of setting ethical rules for concerned parties based on respect to others and rejecting immoral behaviour, and all forms of violence and laxity.

In 1992 Algeria issued an ordinance prohibiting corporal punishment and all forms of violence against students. It considered punishment to be a professional and personal transgression carried by teachers, as opposed to school management. Students, at the same time, are expected to follow good behaviour towards others.

Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Education has taken action to prohibit the mistreatment of children in all stages of general education. This includes legislation specifying sanctions for cases where teachers practice any form of beat or mistreating students.

In Sudan, the Child Law issued in 2010 stipulated against inflicting cruel punishment, humiliating verbal abuse, depriving students from attending class, or expulsion from school. Penalties on violators to this article were to be determined by the Ministry of Education.

In Iraq, there is no specific law that includes legal articles penalizing and prohibiting violence in schools. Nevertheless, a draft law for protection of the child includes special articles prohibiting and penalizing violence.

The Palestinian Child Law of 2012 has established a the requirement of "preserving the dignity of the child when making decisions or designing programmes which aim at prohibiting all forms of violence in schools, whatever its source".

Qatar, like some other Arab countries, prohibited punishment in schools in a decree issued by its Minister of Education. Strict punishments are specified for violators, including expulsion.

Lebanon issued a ministerial decree in 2001 prohibiting teachers and caregivers from chastising children in schools, which was reinforced by several internal directives banning VAC.

In Egypt, a ministerial decree was issued in 1998, followed by the more recent Child Law, prohibiting the physical harming of students, and asserting the use of modern educational methods.

In Yemen, a 2012 decree by the Minister of Education prohibited the use of psychological and corporal punishments against students, and referring all violators to investigation.

II. Legal Procedures Adopted to Prohibit Corporal Punishment and Sexual Violence and Intimidation.

Jordan modified the civil service system to strengthen penalties on those working with children who use physical violence against them. Violators are barred from further employment in any department where children are present. In 2007, instructions were issued to regulate student discipline in government schools.

Bahrain's Council of Ministers issued a decree setting a common framework for reviewing the performance of schools and kindergartens. The National Authority of Qualifications and Quality Assurance and Training is designated to monitor and evaluate the educational performance of students and the presence of a safe and violence-free environment in schools.

Tunisia reviewed its penal law in 2010 adding a section on corporal punishment of children prohibiting individuals with authority over children from exercising violent behaviour towards them whatever the reason and requiring the use of alternative measures for child upbringing. However, there is no explicit text that punishes parents for committing violence against their children, except in cases where this violence is excessive, results in a fall, or leads to death²⁶.

Algeria, since 1994, considers violence to be a crime punishable by law. Legal measures were taken to prohibit the practice of all forms of VAC, whether verbal or physical, through ordinances that were further reinforced by a 2008 trend setting law on education that prohibits inflicting physical violence against students.

In 2011 Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Education in 2011 prepared guidelines for schools aimed at eliminating the use of violence against children and containing the harm this inflicts on children, through forming school based teams to provide guidance and ensure a safe and healthy educational environment.

Sudan implemented a prohibition of corporal punishment in Khartoum schools through ministerial directives. Administrative staff and educational guides monitor compliance and, in cases where violations are committed, a legal and administrative inquiry is held. In the event of harm being inflicted, police units intervene to protect the family and child.

In Iraq strict instructions are issued by the Ministry of Education, prohibiting violence in all forms against children in schools. The school carries the responsibility for any physical or psychological harm that befalls a child while at school.

In Oman, the Ministry of Education undertook several steps intended to limit the exposure of children to harm, including the revision of regulations and legislations related to education, updating guidelines for student and parent-teacher associations, referring cases of sexual or physical assault to the concerned authorities, and holding perpetrators accountable.

In the State of Palestine, suggested modifications to the Child Law include alterations to the executive regulations, which would upgrade the current referral and follow-up systems being applied through child protection networks. A Child Protection Guide is responsible for initiating complaints against persons threatening the child and total confidentiality is ensured in all cases.

In Qatar, the Supreme Education Council has introduced a number of measures to prohibit corporal punishment

26- Tunisian Penal Code, Chapters 210, 218 and 219

is schools. Also, in 2001, a decree was issued by the Minister of Education barring school staff from inflicting psychological harm, offences and personal humiliation while guiding the student. The Ministry is implementing strict penalties on those violators, including possible expulsion from work.

Lebanon issued ministerial decrees prohibiting violence in schools, but these are non-binding to the private sector.

III. Safe Monitoring and Complaint Mechanisms Available for Children.

Answers to the questionnaire did not present sufficient data on the mechanisms for monitoring violence in schools. They were as follows:

The UAE enumerated the mechanisms that are available to make complaints, such as the Committee for Protecting the Child, Centres for Social Support, and Sharjah Social Development Department (the Child Helpline). They also include shelters for women and children, and the Dubai Foundation for Women and Children.

In Jordan the Ministry of Education, through the Guidance Directorate provides a hotline service as well as free calls by which the ministry receives the complaints of students and their families regarding violence inflicted upon children.

In Bahrain, the delegate of the Ministry of Education is present in the Centre for Child Protection and undertakes follow-up with all schools regarding cases of VAC. The delegate receives complaints from schools and the Centre frequently organizes lectures and outreach activities to introduce the child helpline and its services.

In Tunisia, monitoring is completed by the Ministry of Education.

In Sudan, monitoring of cases of violence is the responsibility of school administrators. Legal proceedings are initiated by police units for the protection of family and child.

In Saudi Arabia, the National Committee for Childhood cooperates with the Ministry of Education to train teachers in skills of detection and early intervention in cases of abuse.

In Iraq, school administrations receive most complaints. This is in addition to the Child Department in the Ministry of Human Rights.

In Oman, a reconstitution of the work team studied and followed up on cases of VAC according to a 2012 ministerial decree.

In Palestine, teachers and school staff investigate cases of violence against children in a confidential and supportive manner. Cases discussed only with the school director, and in extreme cases, with the guidance department in the Education Department. Additional follow up is provided by the Guide for Child Protection in the Ministry of Social Affairs as part of a national referral system and in accordance with the Child Law.

The Qatar Foundation for Protecting Women and Children works to monitor cases of violence and abuse in schools. This is according to an agreement that was concluded between the Foundation and the Supreme Council for Education in 2010.

Egypt highlighted the presence of a social and psychological specialist in schools, as well as a child helpline to monitor violence in schools.

The responses of states regarding the protection of children from violence in schools did not differentiate between

mechanisms at the national and local levels. However, Tunisia, Sudan, Palestine, Lebanon and Egypt have national mechanisms for dealing with the most extreme cases of VAC.

In Yemen, a complaints box exists in a number of schools in some areas. This allows children to raise complaints with protection committees and school officials. Committees for the protection of children from violence and exploitation have also been formed in some schools. These committees submit monthly reports on the complaints submitted and follow-up with relevant ministries concerned. In Aden, five monitoring rooms were also designated in schools for private follow up.

IV. Existing Documentation System.

The available data on VAC in schools suggests that documenting systems are frequently established within the school framework. Schools may then interact with national monitoring systems on appropriate cases.

In Jordan, a hotline and website are maintained by the Ministry of Education. In addition to this, there is a mechanized follow-up system between all institutions operating in the field of child protection.

In the UAE, the Department for Social Service, psychological professionals, and councils of parents work together to document cases of abuse.

In Bahrain, the Centre for Child Protection undertakes the task of documenting the complaints it receives, as well as those it receives from Ministry of Education delegates.

In Saudi Arabia, the National Committee for Childhood partners with the Ministry of Education and other actors to investigate and respond to cases of neglect and abuse. A project for comprehensive national procedures has been launched, and is implemented through a comprehensive guide for internal procedures intended to guide activities across sectors. It aims to provide suitable preventive, security, organisational, rehabilitative and health services to each child, according to his or her conditions and needs.

In Sudan, documentation of abuse takes place in central police units and in national investigation agencies.

Egypt's system is similar, with documentation on the national level of information received through the Child Helpline.

In the State of Palestine, reports and complaints are documented in educational institutions. This is done through a process approved by the Ministry of Education, in which teachers and administrators document and investigate allegations of abuse. Administrators are connected to a national apparatus and a formal agreement with the Ministry for Social Affairs. A database is also present in every educational institution. The administrative structure supporting central statistics is also involved through the preparation of a national database.

The Guide for Child Protection in the Palestinian Ministry of Social Affairs authenticates cases being investigated and ensures adequate protection. This is done through the national computerized database, paper files and reports. The data is classified according to age, gender, the source of abuse and its kind, and the region in which it occurred. The Ministry of Social Affairs has recently introduced modifications to the database so that it will reflect all of the national indices for child protection, and for children with unknown parents, illegitimate children, and those in emergency child protection centres.

The Qatar Foundation for Protecting Women and Children coordinates cooperation between several agencies including the Qatar Foundation for Combating Human Trafficking, The Supreme Council for Education, the Qatar Centre for Family Counselling and others. Cases of violence are received and disseminated to the appropriate

specialised partner. The department for protection services in the Qatar Foundation for Protecting Women and Children documents the reports received from schools and the child helpline. Cases are also documented inside schools.

V. Introducing Children to Mechanisms Available in the Educational System.

Various media outlets are most often used to publicise the issues of child protection. This includes visual, oral and written media alike. This widespread use of technology to promote the rights of the child was agreed upon by the Arab states participating in this survey. Media services convene and organise interviews and information gathering from relevant specialists, with the aim of informing public opinion on the field of child rights and protection.

In Jordan, all of the institutions concerned with child protection depend on advertising activities through various media platforms, and also hold awareness sessions in schools in order to acquaint children with protection helplines.

In Bahrain, the Centre for Child Protection regularly implements media campaigns and distributes booklets and pamphlets. It also gives lectures in schools introducing audiences to services provided by the centre, including the helpline, child protection mechanisms, and abuse prevention tips. Workshops are also provided for teachers on prevention and dealing with cases of abuse.

Algeria has prepared a "policy of communication promoting child rights", which sends informational messages to relevant parties and organizes seminars with civil society and children and adolescents themselves. It aims to promote the value of non-violence and to implement principles that safeguard the rights of the child.

In Sudan, the free complaints phone line has distributed guidance regarding the rights of the child, by means of posters and school radio.

In Palestine, child protection networks have targeted children through direct communication as well as publications with simplified and easy language, as well as electronic websites.

Qatar has undertaken several measures for awareness raising, educating and introducing the mechanisms for receiving reports and complaints.

Lebanon has also organized a media and advertising campaign to encourage children to use its Child Helpline.

Egypt has announced the services of its Child Helpline by printing the number on school books and making announcements on television.

In Yemen, a number of students were trained in the mechanisms of protection and complaints in their schools.

VI. Measures, Procedures and Internal Mechanisms to Counter Violence in Schools

The survey covered a number of measures and mechanisms provided by states to prevent violence in schools, in an attempt to understand the steps currently being undertaken and the achievements of Arab states in this domain.

Jordan highlighted its national campaign, which has been implemented with the Ministry of Education in public schools, and pertains to teachers adopting of educational approaches to guide and modify students' behaviour and prevent physical and psychological violence. A training guide was issued to this effect.

In Bahrain, the national strategy for childhood includes mechanisms for training employees in the official educational institutions.

Plan of Action to Counter Violence in Schools in Palestine

The plan that was set by the Ministry of Education in the State Palestine with the support of UNICEF:

- Creates a partnership between families, the Ministry of Education and children themselves.
- Focused on prevention
- Established special units: a disciplinary council in the school, the management of disciplinary councils in schools, and a ministerial committee to counter violence.
- Defined the roles and responsibilities of the newly-created units, in addition to the roles of the parties who are concerned with countering violence: the child, the school, teachers, educational guide, family, NGO's, disciplinary council boards, ministry of education.
- Clearly specified the reporting mechanisms to be adopted within the school.
- Delineated a list of measures to be imposed according to the form of abuse and school grade, and defined the quarter responsible for implementing these measures, while specifying the appropriate educational intervention.
- Classified aggression according to several levels (four, increasing incrementally from low to excessive)
- Set guidelines to define violations and measures to be imposed upon the school employee.

Tunisia referred to educational laws emphasising the role and purpose of education, which includes parenting support and instructions on appropriate parenting and discipline techniques. These laws also stipulated the establishment of an advisory body, whose task is to formulate the school project and to evaluate and modify it when needed.

This council is composed of the school director, teacher representatives, students and elected parents. It can also include representatives of cultural, educational, social, and sports societies active in the school domain.

Algeria established disciplinary councils headed by directors of educational institutions, whose aim is to preserve public order in schools and prevent behaviour that promotes violence.

The principles of the CRC were also incorporated in school syllabuses in the subject of civil education. Regarding the health services tailored to respond to children's special needs and help to protect them from violence, units for detection and follow-up were installed on the scale of educational institutions, in order to provide health and psychological support to children.

Sudan has implemented national policies aimed at protecting children in schools. In particular, it has organized a "campaign for the alternatives to corporal punishment". Through this campaign, teachers and educational councils have been trained on the alternatives to corporal punishment. Sudan referred to the fact that parents participate in the educational councils, and that the executive regulations of the Child Law will afford these councils a more effective role.

Palestine prepared a plan of action to curtail violence in schools in 2010. Emphasis was placed on the role of parents as partners on all levels, and the policy was executed with clear measures and instructions. A charter of ethics for the educational guide was put in place, and parents' boards participated with educational institutions to discuss all that pertains to the students' and the schools' needs.

In Qatar the Supreme Council for Education prepared a policy for students' behavioural evaluation. This stipulates a number of preventive and disciplinary measures and the reinforcement of positive behaviours. It also institutes binding controls for employees, which prohibit any form of physical harm as a form of punishment.

The use of abusive language is also prohibited. The Qatar Foundation for Protecting Women and Children is training, rehabilitating and developing teachers' skills to detect cases of abuse and violence toward children, and utilize the mechanism for reporting and complaints. It has prepared a reference guide in this respect.

A complete portfolio of training programmes pertaining to integrating the concepts of human rights in preliminary, preparatory and secondary stages has been prepared by the National Committee for Human Rights, in cooperation with the Supreme Council for Education.

Lebanon's Ministry of Education, in cooperation with the civil sector, has prepared a training programme for teachers on protection. Work is being undertaken to include educational syllabuses to protect children, and there are also special initiatives to approve a policy for child protection in some private sector schools.

In Egypt the role of civil councils (trustees boards) was activated through a decree of the Minister of Education in 2011. The National Council for Childhood and Motherhood is undertaking the training of teachers on the concepts of the rights of the child protection.

Yemen has issued a number of training guides, including guides on alternative methods to corporal punishment, child rights, and conflict management, in addition to training parents' boards and children themselves.

Some Arab states have taken the initiative to prohibit violence on children in schools, through either modification to the penal law (e.g. Tunisia, 2010) or by developing specific laws concerning child protection (e.g. Sudan 2010, Palestine 2012, and Bahrain). The Palestinian law was distinguished by including clear mechanisms, which tie the monitoring of violence in schools, with the system of referral and follow-up through child protection networks.

In other countries, the prohibition of violence was included in the internal regulations and systems in the educational domain. The responsibility of school officials was clarified, and the professional conduct of the teacher as well punitive measures in the case of abuse (e.g. the UAE and Oman).

In Qatar, Lebanon, Egypt, and Yemen, the prohibition was manifest through a ministerial decree, which prohibited violence but did not specify the mechanisms for follow-up and implementation, nor determine a penalty.

VII. Summary and Recommendations

The prohibition of violence has also been included in laws for civil service (e.g. Jordan, Bahrain) and stipulated in laws, regulations and ministerial decrees.

In some cases, violence is discussed only with regard to violence inflicted by adults upon children, instead of referencing also violence among peers. Sudan, as an exception, does address peer violence through its Child Law.

The reactions of states indicate that the mechanisms of monitoring and complaints are the same as those present in the components of the national child protection system. Others mentioned the existence of clear mechanisms

that determine referential persons in the school, and follow-up mechanisms for referral from the educational guide to the director, and then on to the specialized department in the ministry of education. In extreme cases the referral is to the child protection monitor in the ministry of social affairs (e.g. Palestine).

Yemen is the only state that mentioned having complaints boxes in schools, and that committees for protection were formed in some schools to afford the children the chance to make complaints.

Regarding the documentation of cases and complaints, it was mentioned that this lies within the jurisdiction of the components of the protection system (such as the police in Sudan, and the Child Helpline in Egypt), and not inside the educational system. On the other hand, some countries' educational systems adopt a component of child protection, and have elucidated the presence of models that are followed by the ministry of education, in cooperation with other ministries (e.g. Palestine).

Most countries said that they had applied a special effort to raise awareness and provide education on the issue of VAC. Some countries organized meeting with children (e.g. Jordan, Lebanon, Algeria, Qatar) with the aim of enabling and educating children on the mechanisms available (e.g. Yemen, Palestine). Some stated that VAC is taking little priority in schools, and that they had designated national campaigns, strategies and comprehensive plans to improve this situation (e.g. Palestine, Jordan). Other countries simply referring to the fact that they had included plans for childhood, protection and defence against violence in general, in connection with violence in schools.

The presence of comprehensive measures and policies on the school level was not notable, except in a few cases, including: Lebanon's experiment in Mabarrat schools of a policy of child protection within the school, Tunisia's Council of the Educational Institution, whose jurisdiction includes ensuring controls and child safety, and Algeria, which has formed a disciplinary council headed by the school director, with the purpose of preserving order.

Child Protection Policy- Mabarrat Charitable Foundation- The Republic of Lebanon

Training within institutions:

- Training on the Child Protection Policy Programme was transferred to educational institutions (19 educational institutions, with approximately 21,000 students). The training resulted in the formation of a committee in each educational institution to follow up on child protection policy procedures. Committees consisted of representatives of all employees: teachers, administrators, health and education counsellors, and are headed by the director of the institution so as to ensure the administration's adoption of the project.
- Categories covered by the training: administrators, teachers, all workers (cleaning staff, maintenance staff, cafeteria staff, nannies, bus drivers and guards), and new employees are annually monitored for training.

Workflow of the Child Protection Policy Programme- It included 6 stages as follows:

1. Setting the stage: Informing and educating employees on the Child Protection Policy Programme in institutions and on the concepts of abuse and protection, intentional and non-intentional harm, and conducting polls on employees' position on the policy.
2. Conducting a survey on the risks in each institution, to be renewed each academic year, in order to remove them and ensure a safe environment.
3. The six cornerstones (awareness on the basic necessary conditions before the development

4. of child protection policies and procedures).
5. Development of policies and procedures, which included: employment, training and qualification, management structures, behaviour protocols, communication guidelines, reporting guidelines, and forms of misconduct.
6. The application of policies and procedures.
7. Facing of obstacles.
8. Evaluation Of the basic and important achievements is the Code of Conduct (behaviour protocols)

A code of conduct was developed, which represents one of the basic elements in the Child Protection Policy. It is composed of written guidelines for all employees describing appropriate behaviour when dealing with students, and proper behaviour when students are dealing with each other. It includes all facilities where students are present including: classrooms, hallways, stairs, playgrounds, buses, and places of lineup, libraries and computer science labs. It also includes a communication hub.

Model Code of Conduct:

My rights	My responsibilities		Repetition	Compensation when responsibilities are not completed
I have the right to be an active participant in class and for my opinion to be heard.	Student	I listen to others, respect their opinions, and ask permission before participation	1	The teacher guides the student as to the responsibility expected from him and the behaviour is written down.
			2	The student is deprived of 10 minutes of participation and the behaviour is written down.
			3	The teacher assigns the student an activity on the importance of listening to others due the following day and the behaviour is written down.
			4	The student receives a red card
	Teacher	I listen carefully to my students, respect their opinions and give equal opportunities for participation to all students. I am committed to the code of conduct.		

Recommendations

General Policies:

There are steps that render schools in Arab states in compliance with the principles of the Rights of the Child, and which would make them integrative, non-discriminatory, safe and safe-guarding an effective educational environment.

We cite here some recommendations that help attain this objective:

1. The importance of a clear national policy that will counter violence in schools under the leadership of the national education ministry, in cooperation with the ministries of social affairs, health and interior. This is in addition to international organizations and NGO's (one can refer here to the experiences of Palestine and Jordan).

2. The necessity of establishing an effective national protection system that enables dealing with and interacting with mechanisms in the school, with the aim of follow-up, referral, and ensuring needed services.
3. Building an effective partnership that includes parents, administration and representatives of students and societies, thus guaranteeing transparency in dealing with the cases of violence and as well, the school's openness to the experiences of the local community.
4. The importance of specifying financial resources in the general budget, and on the part of donors for implementation of activities and programmes, and creation of units that will facilitate the process of supervision, coordination and follow-up.
5. Including the topic of confronting violence in schools in all educational, social and development policies.
6. Reinforcing the system of educational guidance by widening its jurisdictions to include giving counsel or listening to children, by increasing the number of guides in the schools.
7. Building safety networks that include: school, family, children and NGO's and organizing local events that contribute to raising awareness, and receiving complaints. The experience of Yemen with the support of Save the Children Organization could be considered in this regard.
8. In more than one Arab state there are actors responsible for educational inspection, but their jurisdiction does not include supervising and following up on the internal procedures and measures undertaken to prevent and protect from violence in all of its forms. It is thus necessary to work with these actors to ensure that clear mechanisms for reporting, complaints and accountability become an integral part of their jurisdiction, and that the process of monitoring VAC is incorporated within a systematic policy based on the rights of the child.
9. Activating the role of committees and parent councils and undertaking constant consultations with them, and including them in different planning and programme activities, as well as guidance meetings and training that includes child rights and protection.
10. Reinforcing the participation of children in scholastic life.
11. Including the rights of the child in the school syllabus and extra-curricular activities, and adopting effective educational methods, which give emphasis to the child.
12. Integrating child rights and protection in the basic syllabus for preparing teachers and education officials.

Legal Protection:

1. Laws, whether general or sectoral, should stipulate a clear prohibition of violence in all its forms, especially corporal punishment in the home and school, as well as psychological and sexual violence, and that they should be based on the General Comment No.13 defining the forms of violence, and tightening the penalty on the transgressor and ensuring means of the victims' recovery.
2. Laws and internal regulations must include clear mechanisms for complaints and reporting, as well as specify the appointment of a party or employees delegated to follow up on the laws' implementation and on making the perpetrators accountable.
3. Laws and internal regulations should include prevention and protection from bullying through the Internet and from peer violence.
4. The inclusion in schools' internal systems of criteria that will curb intimidation and hold the perpetrators accountable.

5. Guaranteeing the resources needed to implement and disseminate these legislations and monitor the degree of adherence to them.
6. Disseminating and promoting the mechanisms of protection and monitoring, and the content of the codes of conduct in various forms, including in meetings with parents and encounters with children.

Prevention and Awareness

1. Terminating the causes for violence in schools by combating discrimination in all its forms, including gender, authoritarian relationships, culture and beliefs.
2. Raising the awareness of parents, students and teachers regarding the dangers of cyber-bullying.
3. Employing teachers of high calibre, and especially women, and affording them appropriate salaries and work conditions.
4. Monitoring spaces within the school and outside to ensure their safety and freedom from danger to children.
5. Raising awareness in the community, especially children and family, regarding the existence of laws protecting from violence, and the mechanisms available for complaints and reporting.

Procedural mechanisms and measures:

1. Establishing child-friendly mechanisms for complaints and reporting inside and outside the school.
2. Adopting a protocol, or formal agreement, between the school and all components of the national child protection system, in a manner that will clarify the frameworks for referral, especially in critical cases of violence.
3. Setting a policy for child protection that includes internal organizational measures, mechanisms of accountability and codes of conduct.
4. Establishing a code of conduct for teachers, children and the rest of the school employees, propagating it, and appointing a person responsible for its implementation and follow-up.
5. Reinforcing the mechanisms for counselling and complaint available to children such as hearing units and complaints boxes at school. Also strengthening the available national mechanisms such as hotlines, the national organization for human rights, the NGOs. Promoting children's awareness regarding the presence of these mechanisms, and how to reach them.
6. Adopting alternative measures to violence as a form of punishment, and ensuring that the school syllabus and teaching methods are devoid of violence and instead promote tolerance and positive values.
7. Taking into account the issue of gender, and ensuring that syllabi, methods and tools of teaching promote equality between the sexes, and ensuring that life-skills classes take account of the gender dimension.
8. Facilitating children's acquiring of social psychological support services and legal guidance and assistance.
9. Asserting the importance of social assistance at all stages of monitoring, reporting complaints and referral, and communicating with parents and the actors responsible for providing services.

Training:

1. Enabling teachers and technical and administrative employees to detect early, the cases of violence, and training them in the methods of documentation and referral.
2. Building the capabilities of children in conflict-resolution, accountability and child rights, and organizing educative campaigns on child protection from violence.
3. Training teachers and professionals in methods of protection and intervention, and countering gender-based discrimination and violence, as well as training in the methods of affirmative discipline.
4. The continual development of training in the rights of the child and the methods of child protection.

Research and data collection:

1. Building a database that includes unified indices to monitor the violence inflicted upon children inside the school and outside it, and utilizing it in setting policies and follow-up. Training to school officials on the use of such databases should also be provided.
2. Promoting research focused on the impact of violence in schools on quality of education, and on the scale of violence affecting marginalized categories of children, including: children with physical or learning disabilities, refugee children, and children living in poverty. Patterns and scale of cases of sexual and gender based violence should also be considered.
3. Encouraging research that studies the levels of intimidation and bullying among children.

Chapter Five:
**Protection of Children in
Emergency Situations**

Many Arab states are suffering from the devastating effects of political conflicts, occupation and wars within the region, and particularly in the last three years of disturbances. The region also faces challenges of decades-long political conflicts, including the on-going Arab-Israeli conflict, which have resulted in multiple occupations and wars and left the Arab region in a state of instability.

The lack of accurate statistical information on the number of child fatalities, amount of displacement, and number of injured or refugee children as a result of these conflicts does not limit the clear truth reflected by the media, child rights organisations and humanitarian aid, which is that children in Arab countries are targeted, being arrested, suffering and dying. They are also being exploited through participation in demonstrations and actions that have political dimensions, and are used as tools to fuel conflicts and divisions rather than being raised in a non-violent and accepting culture.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), in its concluding observations for the year 2011 on Bahrain, expressed its concerns about inadequate protection for children during the period of political turmoil experienced by the country, and demanded that the state develop a legal and institutional system for the protection of children.

The CRC also urged the Egypt to strengthen the protection of children during its phase of political transition.²³ The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for VAC demanded that Syria secure the protection of children from violence and keep its commitment to the CRC and the 2010 Marrakesh Declaration of the Fourth High Level Conference on the Rights of the Child.

UNICEF has also demanded that all parties respect their obligations towards the CRC, as well as International Humanitarian Law, by taking necessary steps to protect children from the direct and indirect effects of violence.²⁷

Children in the Arab region remain prone to serious rights violations as a result of the significant existing gaps related to their protection. Their participation in armed conflict is an additional risk factor, as highlighted by the annual report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict issued in 2013, which covers the period from January 2012 to December 2012.

Libya: In Libya, children suffered harm, and were widely involved in armed conflict. Attacks took place against schools and damage was incurred by health facilities.

Palestine: In the period the report covers, 50 Palestinian children were killed and 665 wounded in the occupied Palestinian territories. In the West Bank, four Palestinian children were killed and 552 wounded, while 46 were affected in Gaza. The arrest and detention of Palestinian children by Israeli forces continued in 2012, on the basis that they had committed security violations for which they were to be tried in martial courts for juveniles.

Somalia: In 2012, the Qatari Task Force for Monitoring and Reporting documented 4660 cases of violations against children in Somalia. 2051 cases were related to the recruitment and use of children in armed actions and 213 cases of sexual violence against 210 girls and 3 boys were attributed to the National Armed Forces and various armed groups.

Sudan and South Sudan: Widespread violations of children in South Sudan and Darfur also continue.

Syria: Children in Syria continue to be killed, wounded and maimed as a result of heavy artillery, air raids and war remnants such as explosives. This was a result of the on-going conflict between government and opposition forces. A number of children were tortured and sexually abused, while others aged 15 to 17 were recruited for fighting or support. Hospitals and schools were also targeted within the conflict.

27- UNICEF statement issued by Executive Director Anthony Lake on the status of children in the Middle East and North Africa, 20 April 2011.

Yemen: The recruitment of children for combat purposes has continued. In 2012, 53 children aged 13 to 17 were recruited to combat. The report also showed that 50 children were killed and 165 were maimed in 2012. Many casualties among children were the result of land mines, unexploded ammunition and remnants of war explosives. In the same period, 165 cases were recorded of attacks on schools and 11 cases of attacks on hospitals.

Iraq: In 2012, regional working teams reported 355 major violations against children; these included 178 cases of killing and maiming of children. Children aged 14 to 17 were also recruited to battle.

Lebanon: The UN documented 24 violations against children, most of which were comprised of killing children and maiming them. The UN also received reports of the participation of children in the armed confrontations that took place between opposing political factions in Lebanon.

Table 6 in the annual report of the UN Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflicts for 2012 demonstrates the major violations inflicted upon children.

Table 6: Grave violations against children in armed conflicts

Country	Deprivation of humanitarian aid	Attacks on schools and hospitals	Kidnapping	Rape/sexual abuse	Killing/maiming	Drafting
Sudan	×	×	×	×	×	×
Syria		×	×	×	×	×
Iraq		×	×		×	×
Palestine	×	×			×	×
Lebanon					×	
Libya	×	×			×	×
Yemen	×	×			×	×

Source: Report of the UN Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflicts (A/66/782-s/2012/261)

I. National and Local Mechanisms Adopted for the Protection of Children in Emergency Situations

The responses of Arab countries have revealed a scarcity of existing mechanisms available on the national level to protect children in cases of emergency. One notable exception to this lack can be found in countries existing in an on-going state of emergency.

Jordan referred to the memorandum of understanding it signed with the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) in 1998. The National Council for Family Affairs in cooperation with UNICEF and UNHCR also sought to improve procedures for protecting children in times of crisis and emergency, and pursued their ratification by all of the international and national institutions working with Syrian and Iraqi refugees.

Bahrain's Ministerial Council issued a resolution establishing a national committee whose role would be to propose detailed plans and programmes focusing on crisis management and mitigation 2000. The national committee would also put in place safety guidelines and mechanisms for coordination, and would delineate ministries' tasks. It would also put forward suggestions for modification and development, and raise reports to concerned parties. The

Bahraini Child Law also stipulates "the child would be given priority in receiving protection and assistance, in case of disasters whether natural, man-made or resulting from warfare".

In Saudi Arabia, the Ministry of Interior, in cooperation with several actors, is currently implementing a work-mechanism that will guarantee the establishment of a national plan for crisis management. This endeavour is being undertaken with the aim of offering the full range of assistance services to different social groups discrimination. In 2012 the Saudi Ministry of Education also launched a programme of safety from fire inside schools, whose aim was to protect and educate students regarding the risks of fire accidents, and how to curtail them.

Sudan: The National Council for Childhood in Sudan is coordinating between national mechanisms and international organisations working in the field of child protection in emergencies (e.g. the Unit for Child Rights in the Armed Forces, the Consultative Council for Human Rights, the National Commission for Voluntary Return and Displacement, local child protection groups, and local police units for the protection of family and children). UN Security Council Resolution 1612 on Children in Armed Conflict also established an assistance committee. These mechanisms are all linked to a national protection service. With regard to displaced children the National Council for Childhood in collaboration with international organisations established a programme for the reunification of families and unaccompanied children, to provide them with care and protection, to search for their families and integrate them into society. This was begun after the separation of South Sudan in July 2011, through a memorandum of understanding to bring families together, establish a database for children, and undertake steps for familial screening.

Oman: The Ministry of Social Development established a plan for rescue operations in cooperation with concerned ministries and quarters, the National Centre for Managing Emergencies and the National Committee for Civil Defence. The plan would thus cover natural, industrial and environmental threats, and aims to rescue those afflicted, provide refuge centres and secure basic needs, guidance and psychological support.

Palestine highlighted its existing national and local mechanisms, which were recorded by the Palestinian Child Act for the year 2011 and are concerned with cases of emergency. A national committee was formed to follow up on children who are the victims of violence under the occupation, and they are all connected to the child protection system for referrals and on-going follow up.

Qatar: The Qatari cabinet issued a decree in 2011 stipulating the formation of a permanent committee for emergencies in the Ministry of the Interior. Headed by the General Director of Public Security, the committee would be composed of concerned ministries and councils. In addition to this, a special decree was issued, ratifying a memorandum of cooperation in the field of prevention, and facing emergencies and catastrophes between Qatar and Belarus in 2011. A committee for international humanitarian law was also formed.

In Lebanon there is no ready plan or any clear and definite official framework for dealing with emergency cases. There are, however, government initiatives that are still being examined but have not yet been officially ratified. Through available national mechanisms, work is done on evolving the model that is applicable to protecting children in cases of emergency. This applies specifically to displaced Syrian and Iraqi children. A number of measures and procedures have been undertaken regarding them. These necessitate non-deportation or removal and extending their periods of stay.

Yemen, with the support of UNICEF, has prepared an emergency preparedness plan for protecting children in cases of emergency. This covered a number of areas related to children, including undertaking quick surveys of afflicted areas, training and rehabilitation, and capacity building. The plan also included providing recuperation

services and psychological and social rehabilitation, as well as health and educational services. Social committees for the protection of children have also been suggested.

II. Applicable Laws and Legislation Intended to Prohibit the Participation of Children in Armed Conflicts

In Jordan, the Military Service Law of 1972 stipulates the inadmissibility of recruiting children under the age of sixteen to military service. The Law of Service for Officers of 1966 similarly prohibits children under the age of 17 to be recruited to the position of officer. Only persons above the age of 18 may participate in military operations.

Bahrain's Child Act of 2012 forbids the exploitation of children in "conglomerations, marches and demonstrations that have a political purpose". The minister of interior also issued a decree in the same year regarding the code of conduct for the police. This affords the greatest degree of protection and justice to children in society.

Tunisia: The National Service Law of 2004 stipulates that the military draft will be implemented only for persons 20 years or older. Children under the age of 18 are also forbidden from voluntarily entering military training.

Sudan: Legislation has prohibited the drafting of children under the age of 18. This is according to the Law of the Armed Forces of 2007 and the Police Law and Child Act for the year 2010. The Law of Armed Forces stipulates penalization, which can include life imprisonment and execution, in cases of violation of the rights of citizens to protection. The punitive measures also include five-year prison sentences on any party that recruits children into the armed forces.

Iraq's mandatory draft legislation forbids those under the age of 18 to join any of the ranks or formations of the military.

The Palestinian Child Act prohibits the involvement of children in armed conflicts.

Qatar's Armed Forces do not recruit persons under the age of 18, nor does it have a system for compulsory recruitment. The recruitment system relies on volunteering and the instructions pertaining to defining the age of voluntary recruitment.

In Lebanon, the Armed Forces Act issued by Legislative Decree 83/102 set the minimum age for voluntary recruitment in military service at 18 years.

Egyptian legislation prevents the use and recruitment of children in armed conflicts. Specifically, the Recruitment Act of 1980 stipulates that: "Military service is obligatory for every Egyptian male who has reached 18 years of age, in accordance with the provisions of this law."

Yemen: The text of the Child Rights Act states that children are banned from carrying arms, that they should be protected from the effects of armed violence, and that they should not be directly involved in war below the age of 18. A circular was issued by the Minister of Defence ordaining the discharge of recruits who are under 18 and the referral of minors recruited to legal services. In the year 2012 the Paris Commitments to Protect Children from Unlawful Recruitment or Use of Children by Armed Forces or Armed groups were approved.

III. Services Available to Children in Emergency Situations

Jordan hosts thousands of refugees, including Palestinians and Iraqis. Palestinian refugees are served by United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), which provides them with

education and health services. Other refugees, including Iraqis, are given education in Jordanian public schools and health services in public hospitals. In addition, several national and international organisations provide health, education and welfare services for Syrian children on Jordanian territories.

Tunisia addressed in its response to the questionnaire its experience with the influx of a number of Libyans to its border during the Libyan revolution, including many accompanied and unaccompanied minors. In the absence of an emergency law or a law for refugees, it applied the provisions of the Child Protection Code and provided the necessary health, educational, social and psychological services in cooperation with relevant international organisations, including UNHCR in particular.

In Sudan, services are available for all children in emergency situations without discrimination. The Child Welfare Council coordinates specialised programmes with international organisations working in Sudan, aimed at the reintegration of children who were parties in armed conflicts. The Office of Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration assisted more than 2100 children associated with armed groups to be reintegrated into society and enrol in schools, universities and vocational training. It also provided assistance with livelihood projects and psychosocial support.

Palestine referred to the challenges facing the protection of children in emergency situations, including Israeli barriers that hinder the movement of Palestinians, administrative divisions of areas, security control and the scarcity of human and financial resources.

Lebanon: As a result of the crisis in Syria, large numbers of Syrians have been displaced around the region, including to Lebanon. International organisations have coordinated with the Lebanese government to provide assistance and support. However, these services remain unable to provide a minimum of basic supplies due to the scarcity of human and financial resources.

Yemen: Several governmental and non-governmental organisations in Yemen, together with the UN, are seeking to provide health, education, welfare and protection services for children. A group for the protection of children in emergency situations has been formed, which functions in coordination with UNICEF, and whose membership includes various governmental and non-governmental agencies. Together they have prepared a national action plan and are working toward its implementation.

IV. Monitoring and Follow-up Mechanisms and their Relationship to National Mechanisms

Jordan mentioned several mechanisms for monitoring and following up on VAC in emergency situations, including the Child Protection Committee formed by the National Council for Family Affairs whose membership includes governmental agencies, civil society and international organisations. This body monitors abuses against children in areas where Syrian and Iraqi refugees are present.

Sudan reported that mechanisms for monitoring and following up on VAC in emergency situations are present, such as "protection groups" formed by the Child Welfare Council in states affected by emergencies. Its membership is composed of governmental agencies and civil society and international organisations working in the field. There are also groups composed of joint African and International forces, which monitor violations against children in areas of armed conflict in Darfur.

In Palestine, existing monitoring mechanisms include child protection networks, a child helpline, teams for psychosocial support and international organisations.

Qatar indicated the absence of a clear mechanism to monitor VAC in emergency situations, but it has adopted awareness-raising and educational programmes on International Humanitarian Law, and the rehabilitation of cadres in this field.

In Lebanon, the monitoring and follow up process is linked to the child protection system, and a work team was formed by the Ministry of Social Affairs in cooperation with relevant international organisations. UNHCR, in particular, is following up on issues of persons displaced from Syria to Lebanon.

In Egypt, the process of monitoring and following up on VAC in emergency situations takes place through communications on a national child helpline.

In Yemen, communal committees formed by the Ministry of Social Affairs monitor cases of abuse of children affected by armed conflict in the provinces of the country.

V. Participation of Children

It is clear that more work is needed in the region to ensure meaningful participation of children.

One country that has addressed this aspect is Sudan, which mentioned that the implementation of interviews and surveys with children is limited due to the nature of its emergency circumstances. On the other hand, many training meetings in states are held with child welfare councils on how to deal with children in emergency situations.

Egypt mentioned the limited discussion sessions held by civil society in this regard.

Yemen's Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour has prepared a survey on the condition of children in emergency situations in provinces that have experienced emergencies. Children participated in the process of analysing their situations during the preparation of these surveys.

VI. Summary and Recommendations

The Arab region is experiencing multiple types of armed conflict and political turmoil, which reflect negatively on the rights of the child. The right to protection and the right to live in a safe environment away from violence, death and exploitation are particularly affected. The presence of such conflicts and turmoil necessitates the organisation of appropriate national responses in a coherent formal institutional framework with child protection at its core.

The responses of countries in this regard, shown by their answers in the questionnaire, are limited to some initiatives taken by international organisations. Governmental government commitment is nearly non-existent. In countries witnessing armed conflicts there is a need to adopt a monitoring and reporting system for cases of children who are affected or at risk of being affected by the conflict. This requires a clear political decision, supported by the allocation of other resources. In countries where there is turmoil, preventive legislative methods are necessary to limit the suffering of children. Exploitation within activities and events that are not age-appropriate and cause harm to child development, personalities, and behaviour in social life must be stopped. The Bahrain initiative to include an article in its Child Act highlighting the inadmissibility of the use of children in demonstrations and political acts is a positive example of such legislation.

Some Arab countries witnessing armed conflicts insisted, with the technical help of UN agencies and international organisations, on creating communal and central protection mechanisms for the protection of children. They also initiated programmes of rehabilitation and reintegration for recruits and family screening programmes, and introduced specialised units in this regard.

As for the other Arab countries to which children have been displaced by war and conflict, responses were limited as to the level of available assistance and services. Priority has not been given to the protection of children from sexual violence, early marriage, trafficking and child labour. Governments have not taken the initiative to enable their child protection systems to incorporate a human rights framework ensuring the right of the child to protection from violence and exploitation. This makes it necessary to reconsider legal and legislative frameworks in order to ensure the rights of refugee children (most of these countries have not ratified the 1951 Refugee Convention) and ensure readiness through national plans for prevention, intervention and rehabilitation.

There is some encouraging presence of successful partnerships between public and civil sectors, governments and international organisations on the topic of the protection of children during armed conflicts. However, governments in the Arab region need to bolster child protection capacity, skills, techniques, and methodologies. Specialised international organisations and NGOs can offer technical support and training in this area.

The partnership of civil society is important and necessary, but it is also important for long-term sustainability that states are primarily charged with child protection functions.

The following recommendations are suggested for the improved effectiveness of child protection in emergency situations.

Recommendations:

1. Development of a national strategy to reduce risks of emergency situations, based on developmental and human rights dimensions and ensuring the inclusion of the component of child protection in this strategy, and the establishment of related social services (e.g. health and education)
2. Development of a national plan for the protection of children in emergency situations, or the inclusion emergency protection plans within national strategies for the prevention of violence and abuse. These principles should include readiness and planning based on the analysis of the effects of hazards and violations, creation of a culture that encourages accountability of the state as the primarily responsible party, work within broad partnerships on the central and local levels, the participation of children in various stages, and non-discrimination. These principles must also ensure the inclusion of all children in the support and defence of the rights of the child, without discrimination, with priority being given to those who are vulnerable and marginalised.
3. Review of legislations and harmonising them with international legal frameworks (See Annex 9: The CRC as a Framework for Intervention in Armed Conflict). In particular, the CRC and its Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict should be incorporated into national legislation. Pertaining to the rights of the child in emergency situations, this should include the right to non-discrimination in order to obtain all services, the right not to be used in political demonstrations and movements and the right to physical and psychological recovery from the effects of armed conflict. (See Annex 10: International Treaties and Conventions on Reducing Risk in Emergency Situations).
4. Building a comprehensive and integrated national system for the protection of children based on the principles of the rights of the child, training of its cadres and ensuring that it is supplied with data on violations and risks.
5. Creating a mechanism for societal protection associated with the national system for the protection of children that is reliable and acceptable to the local community and includes representatives from many sectors. It should be given legitimacy and sustainability through a clear legal and institutional framework that defines its jurisdiction on monitoring, reporting and delivery of services.

6. Creating a system for monitoring and reporting on various violations, particularly those specified by UN Security Council Resolution No. 1612, that has clear mechanisms, which the state has the main duty of adopting and announcing, as well as ensuring the participation of NGOs and civil society.
7. Creating an action plan for readiness to provide social and psychological support, and including psychosocial support services in various health and education services, and the referral of difficult cases to specialised centres and the establishment of safe child-friendly centres.
8. Building the capabilities of government officials and civil society organisations working in the field of child protection in emergency situations, through training on the tracking and reunification of families system.
9. Creating a system for the detection of children who have been separated from their families, searching for these families and reunifying them. Developing a protocol on temporary foster care for separated children.
10. Providing recovery and rehabilitation services for children who have been involved in battle and armed conflict.
11. Raising awareness on the danger of landmines and other unexploded material.
12. Organisation of information and media campaigns on the non-exploitation of children in political demonstrations and movements.
13. Coverage of national reports submitted to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child regarding measures and steps taken to ensure the protection of the rights of the child in emergency situations.

Chapter Six:

Independent National Institutions for the Rights of the Child

In its concluding observations on the periodic reports of the Arab states, the Committee on the Rights of the Child has repeatedly urged the establishment of an independent monitoring mechanism to monitor the implementation of the convention, address complaints from children on rights violations in a swift and appropriate manner, and provide remedies for such violations. Such a mechanism could be either part of a national institution for human rights that includes a unit for childhood, or an independent mechanism (an ombudsman for children).

An independent monitoring mechanism is a necessity in order to guarantee the implementation of rights mentioned in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Article 4 stipulates that: "States Parties shall undertake all appropriate legislative, administrative and other measures for the implementation of the rights recognized in the present Convention".

The Committee on the Rights of the Child General Comment No. 2(2002) on 'The role of independent human rights violations' has also emphasized the importance of the role of independent human rights organisations as a mechanism for guaranteeing the protection and protection of said rights. The presence of these organisations in a state gives a clear signal of its commitment to the protection, dissemination and promotion of child rights.

These institutions must be established based on the Paris Principles adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1993, which are the minimum standards for the guidance of national bodies.

Among the responsibilities of the independent national organisation:

- Reviewing existing laws and draft laws relating to the rights of the child to ensure that they comply with international standards, proposing necessary amendments and following up on their implementation
- Monitoring the protection of the rights of the child within the state as well as specific issues that may be a source of concern

National institutions have the authority to gather information and evidence required for effective performance of its task, as well as the authority to request evidence and ask witnesses to appear before regulatory bodies. They also have the authority to visit places of arrest, detention and sheltering of children. These visits must be comprehensive, and include all children who are deprived of their liberty. Independent national institutions may monitor the commitment of public and private child rights bodies and the performance of relevant authorities and law enforcement agencies. Police, military, intelligence and other security bodies should be particularly subject to the monitoring and auditing of such institutions. Institutions also have the authority to conduct and publish results of investigations, and to publish general reports containing recommendations for action addressed to the relevant authorities.

- Monitoring and advising on compliance with national standards and cooperation with regional and international bodies

National monitoring institutions should not submit reports to national bodies on behalf of the government, but instead can contribute to the production of parallel reports on the state's fulfilment of its obligations towards international conventions. National institutions can also encourage the government to ratify all international conventions on human rights without reservations.

- Media and education in the field of human rights

Institutions may undertake education campaigns for concerned members of the public and professionals, and offer training courses for officials who have an impact on the protection of the rights of the child, or those who are in a position to protect children from rights violations, such as law enforcement officials. Responsibilities

also include organizing general educational campaigns for marginalised groups in cooperation with the formal education system, so that these activities include education on the rights of the child.

- Receiving complaints and petitions from individuals or groups

When appropriate, independent national institutions are authorized to receive complaints against governmental and private bodies responsible for providing basic health and educational services or law enforcement activities. Rapid responses to complaints must be ensured, and investigations into grave violations must be conducted within specific time frames. Also, these bodies need to be empowered to protect witnesses and to oblige authorities to respond to recommendations within a certain time frame. These institutions should also have the authority to recommend compensation for victims of violations of the rights of the child and submit such recommendations to courts for enforcement. They may also refer complaints that do not fall within their jurisdiction to other authorities.

- Monitoring of the government's adherence to the guidelines and recommendations of the institution

The national institution must have the authority to monitor the adoption of authorities to its recommendations. The government must be obliged to respond to national institutions' guidance and requests, and to specify the time frame and manner in which it has complied with their recommendations. National institutions for human rights strive to monitor governments' compliance to their advice and recommendations, and provide governmental bodies with reports, which can be used to hold governments accountable. State legislators are considered useful channels of communication between national institutions and governments, and can help ensure that recommendations are studied and acted upon by public authorities.

- Independent national institutions play a role in protecting the human rights of all individuals. However, they are particularly important protective mechanisms for children who are frequently more vulnerable to rights violations as a result of their lack of influence on the formation of political decisions. The opinions of children are rarely taken into account and they often face significant difficulties accessing judicial systems to protect their rights.

The Committee on the Rights of the Child General Comment No. 12 (2009) on 'The right of the child to be heard' states, "The child's right to be heard imposes the obligation on States parties to review or amend their legislation in order to introduce mechanisms providing children with access to appropriate information, adequate support, if necessary, feedback on the weight given to their views, and procedures for complaints, remedies or redress".²⁸

General Comment No. 12 (2009) also states that: "Children should have the possibility of addressing an ombudsman or a person of a comparable role in all children's institutions, inter alia, in schools and day-care centres, in order to voice their complaints. Children should know who these persons are and how to access them".²⁹

In addition, the same comment advises states to "Establish independent human rights institutions, such as children's ombudsmen or commissioners with a broad child rights mandate"³⁰ in order to fulfil their obligations.

The recommendations of the UN Secretary-General's Study on Violence Against Children (VAC) (2006) included the necessity of establishing an ombudsman or an independent mechanism for monitoring, complaint and reporting.³¹ Although the Comparative Arab Report on Implementing the Recommendations of the UN Secretary-General's Study on VAC (2010) concluded that there is an absence of an ombudsman or high commissioner for children in all Arab states where it monitors child rights, it also documented that in some Arab states such as Tunisia, Oman and Mauritania there are similar entities that work on specific issues of child rights during their routine work.³² In addition, the Arab Plan of Action for the Rights of the Child (2005-2014) includes a clear objective for establishing

28- Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment No. 12(2009) on 'The right of the child to be heard.' Paragraph 48.

29- Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment No. 12(2009) on 'The right of the child to be heard.' Paragraph 46.

30- Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment No. 12(2009) on 'The right of the child to be heard.' Paragraph 49.

31- 'Report of the independent expert for the United Nations study on violence against children', United Nations General Assembly (2006). Paragraph 118.

32- The Comparative Arab Report on Implementing the Recommendations of the UN Secretary-General's Study on Violence Against Children (2010)

an ombudsman for children.³³ The LAS Women, Family and Childhood Department has raised this issue in several meetings of the Committee on Arab Childhood.

The existence of these mechanisms in Arab states has coincided with the increasing acceptance of a culture of human rights and the frequent establishment of private monitoring institutions. Most Arab states have national institutions or councils for human rights whose mission is to ensure human rights, pursue violators of rights and compensate victims.

Yet the increasing commitment of Arab states to the enforcement of child rights in terms of legislation, programmes, activities and policies remains incomplete and unsustainable if it is not followed by permanent and fixed mechanisms and structures committed to independence, transparency and accountability.

I. Status of Existing Independent Monitoring Structures in Arab States: Legal Frameworks and Implementation Mechanisms

Most of the responses of Arab states revealed a lack of independent institutions for child rights established in accordance with the Paris Principles.

United Arab Emirates: The Supreme Council for Motherhood and Childhood monitors and documents VAC in different places of occurrence and follows up with relevant competent authorities.

Tunisia has acknowledged that it does not have an independent institution for child rights, and mentioned the role and jurisdiction of Child Protection Delegates as the legally commissioned body to protect children from all threats according to its Code of Child Protection (1995, amended 2006). The child protection delegate is subject to the supervision of the Ministry of Women and Family Affairs, and is funded by the state budget. One of its functions is to monitor the conditions of childhood and take the necessary measures to put an end to all that threatens the physical and psychological safety of children, based on notices from citizens or professionals. The child protection delegate can intervene after the approval of the family court.

Algeria pointed to the existence of a network of cells on the national level, in the National Security Directorate and the National Gendarmerie, which ensures the protection of children, listens to them, and documents cases of violence and abuse. This is in addition to interventions by NGOs.

Djibouti created The National Commission for Human Rights according to the Paris Principles in 2010, and a national body for the monitoring of child rights in 2011.

Jordan: The National Centre for Human Rights in Jordan was established in late 2002 as a national independent institution for human rights that contributes to the monitoring and evaluation of the progress made in the implementation of the CRC.

Saudi Arabia: The National Childhood Committee in Saudi Arabia coordinates between all governmental and civil entities related to childhood through several mechanisms. It proposes public policies and strategic plans in the field of child protection and follows up on the implementation of commitments made by relevant agencies.

Sudan considers its National Council for Child Welfare and state-level child welfare councils to be national coordination mechanisms for monitoring and following up on the implementation of the CRC. The Independent National Commission for Human Rights also has a special section for child protection issues. These institutions have been established by law and are funded by the government.

33- The Plan of Action (2004-2015) identifies strategies for achieving the Millennium Development Goals and improving the situation of children in the region. The plan was issued at the Arab Summit in Tunis in March, 2004.

Iraq established the High Commission for Human Rights in 2008, which receives complaints from individuals, groups and civil society organisations on human rights violations. It conducts preliminary investigations to make certain of the validity of these complaints and initiates the appropriate legal action.

Oman: The Committee on Human Rights was established in 2008 with the responsibility for monitoring human rights violations including those related to children, and helping to resolve violations. It proposes an annual plan for spreading human rights culture, receives complaints and conducts field visits. It is currently working on the preparation of a draft guide for monitoring and receiving complaints that will specify the procedure to be followed when receiving complaints.

Palestine: At the end of 2012 the Ministry of Justice formed a human rights unit and entrusted it with the task of monitoring the implementation of the rights of the child within the justice system. The Ministry of Social Affairs also follows up on complaints that it receives. Also in 2012 The Independent Commission for Human Rights established an ombudsman for children to investigate, monitor, and receive complaints on violations against children, and to ensure that trained staff addresses these complaints. Staff receive complaints from children themselves, individuals and organisations, and documents these complaints before following up on them with relevant authorities. There are other monitoring mechanisms, including: child protection networks working in the national monitoring system, the Global Movement for Children and the Family Protection Unit in the Ministry of Interior which refers cases to the Child Protection Counsellor in the Ministry of Social Affairs for follow up.

The National Centre for Human Rights- Jordan

- Its jurisdiction is comprehensive and does not only address the security and military aspects, according to its founding act No.51/2006
- It works on achieving its goals by addressing any violations or abuses and following up on them with the competent executive or legislative authority or the judicial authority which has the jurisdiction to stop it and remove its effects (Article 5).
- Its authority and principles are derived from the Paris Principles, it enjoys complete independence in the exercise of its intellectual, political and humanitarian activities related to human rights (Article 6/1)
- The centre has the right to request any information, data or statistics that it deems necessary to achieve its goals from the relevant authorities, which have to respond to this request without delay.
- It has the right to visit detention and juvenile welfare centres and any public place where it has been reported that human rights violations are taking or have taken place.
- A specialised unit for women's and children's rights was established on the 1st of May 2010, which receives complaints of children directly from them or from their representatives, investigates and follows up on them.
- Spreading and promoting a culture of human and children's rights and its integration in school curricula.

Among the obstacles faced is inadequate staff in the unit due to a lack of financial resources. A network of civil society organisations was established to follow up on children's complaints.

Programme for Complaints and Monitoring of Children's Rights- Palestine

The role of the programme is to maintain the rights of the child by ensuring the application of these rights in laws and regulations, state functions, and Palestinian bodies and institutions.

Legislations, Policies, and Programmes:

- Revision of legislations, laws, policies, and programmes, and making the necessary adjustments so that they support children's rights.
- Support, development and monitoring of policies which ensure the enforcement of children's rights and children's active participation.
- Monitoring of programmes and services and the extent of their compliance with national and international laws and conventions on children's rights.
- Monitoring, Supervision and Coordination:

Monitoring and supervising organisations dealing with children.

- Coordination with various local and international human rights organisations to monitor violations of children's rights.
- Regular presentation, distribution and circulation of reports on the work of the programme and the government to the Legislative Council.

Dealing with Issues of Children's Rights Violations and Following up on Complaints Submitted:

- Following up on complaints made on children's rights violations especially at the state level and initiating investigations.
- Resolving complaints through official and unofficial channels and ensuring that the views of the child are taken into account.

Education on and Promotion of Children's Rights (in regards to certain issues, particularly for marginalised groups) and Conducting the Necessary Research:

- Starting advocacy actions on the national and regional levels to raise awareness on children's rights, the development of programmes that promote the well being of children and the realisation of their rights, and working on ensuring their continuity.
- The representation of children in forums, national councils and committees, and monitoring the conformity of policies and action plans with children's rights.

Qatar amended the functions of its National Committee for Human Rights in 2010 so that it now includes the responsibility for investigating human rights violations, following up on complaints with the competent authorities, proposing appropriate ways to address complaints and submitting reports to the Council of Ministers. The Committee also receives children's complaints, investigates them, follows up on them, communicates with authorities and provides legal assistance to address any violations on child rights. Other organisations working in the

field of protection of women and children from violence and abuse such as the Qatar Foundation for the Protection of Women and Children and the Qatar Foundation for Combating Human Trafficking also propose policies and programmes and provide various services.

Lebanon: The Lebanese Parliament launched the National Plan for Human Rights on the 10th of December 2012, with the support of the United Nations Development Programme and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. A draft law was also prepared to establish the Independent National Commission for Human Rights.

Egypt highlighted the coordinating role of its National Council for Motherhood and Childhood to propose policies, develop programmes and services, review legislations, collect data and conduct research and assessment on the rights of the child in Egypt.

Morocco introduced the National Council for Human Rights and the Ministerial Delegation in charge of Human Rights in 2011 as governmental structures responsible for ensuring coordination between governmental sectors on the issue of child protection.

Yemen's Council of Ministers approved the establishment of an independent national institution for Human Rights in 2011. The team in charge of its establishment is seeking to develop a preliminary draft for that purpose.

Proposed Draft Law on the Establishment of the National Independent Institution for Human Rights- Yemen

General Principles, which the Project is based on:

1. Full independence, and non-interference in its affairs.
2. Guaranteed and easy receipt of complaints and allegations of human rights violations and making decisions regarding them.
3. Equality, transparency, and openness in the exercise of its functions.
4. Giving primary consideration to children's best interest in all procedures taken related to them.
5. Active and effective partnership with civil society organisations concerned with human rights.
6. Confidentiality of sources of data, information and documents obtained by it.
7. Ensuring the safety and protection of witnesses and those making complaints.
8. Non-use of information, data and documents except in the purposes for which they were collected.

Functions of the Administrative Unit Specialised in Children's Rights at the Independent National Institution:

1. Monitoring and supervising violations and abuses committed against children's rights, receiving of complaints and conducting the necessary follow-up.
2. Work to ending cases of violations on children's rights through various means.

3. Follow up on complaints and cases of violations of children's rights until a final decision is made regarding them, informing the child or party to the case of what decision was made, documenting and including it in the institution's annual report, instructing children through various means of communication on their rights guaranteed by the constitution, laws, and international charters and conventions, and helping them take actions that would safeguard these rights in the case of an attack on them, including making child advocates or parties to these cases familiar with methods of legal appeal and review.
4. Monitor and follow up on the progress made in the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the final recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the UN Human Rights Council.
5. Contribute with civil society organisations for child welfare in the preparation of the shadow report on the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the progress made regarding it.

The regulation for this law specifies the criteria for selecting staff for this unit, their qualifications, mechanisms of work, and child-friendly procedures to be followed in working with children in the context of the application of provisions of the law. It also stipulated the appointment of an advisory council for the institution composed of experienced and competent individuals

II. Existing Initiatives Establishing Independent Child Rights Institutions

It seems from most of the responses received that there are no serious initiatives being taken to promote and establish independent human rights mechanisms, though some States indicated having made plans for the future.

Tunisia is considering a government initiative for the establishment of an independent institution for child rights in coordination and cooperation with UNICEF.

Algeria has indicated that it will seek this year to establish an observatory for child rights.

Palestine: In Palestine, work is underway to establish a National Council for Human Rights, which would develop and monitor the implementation of policies related to child rights based on the Palestinian Child Law (2004).

Qatar: In 2010 The Chairman of the National Committee for Child rights issued a decision establishing a "Women, Children, and Disabled Rights Unit", which is responsible to look into complaints about violations against women, children and persons with disabilities.

Lebanon: During the Universal Periodic Review at the UN Human Rights Council in 2010, The National Plan for Human Rights (2013-2019) referred to the establishment of a national independent institution for human rights in accordance with the Paris Principles.

Yemen's National Observatory for the Rights of the Child is currently being established as a partnership between governmental and civil agencies. Seminars have been held on the basic components of the observatory's role.

III. Summary and Recommendations

Responses of states have shown that there are currently no independent institutions for child rights that are autonomous, effective, and accountable, based on the Paris Principles. There are, instead, several initiatives undertaken by human rights organisations in the region, which have in some cases successfully advocated for the creation of special units or bodies focused on childhood and the rights of the child.

Some of these initiatives receive complaints, raise awareness on human rights and train individuals working with children (e.g. Jordan), but are not able to supervise or hold governments or private sector agencies accountable or pursue legislative reviews.

Most Arab states have established national organisations or institutions for human rights under the law based on the Paris Principles, but have not allocated special units for the protection of children, with the exception of Palestine.

States' reference to national councils or bodies that are not independent, rather than to independent institutions, reinforces the conclusion that states are not well-acquainted with the concept of independent institutions to protect the rights of the child. They are unfamiliar with the idea of an independent entity tasked with monitoring, managing complaints, ensuring compliance with international laws and standards, reviewing legislation, investigating violations, and securing remedies (See Annex 11: List of Tasks as Specified by the Comments of the UN Committee for the Rights of the Child No.2 on the Role of National Independent Institutions in the Protection and Promotion of Child rights). Still, some of these non-independent institutions do carry out tasks that would be central to the mission of an independent institution, such as raising awareness on child rights, training of professionals, and reviewing national legislation.

The establishment of an independent institution to monitor and supervise the implementation of child rights is a comprehensive process that requires political will supported by law, including the following provisions:

First, the institution should be based on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and its general principles, and particularly on securing children's best interest.

Second, institutions should be independent from the government, and should request absolute cooperation from all official units. These bodies should also be held accountable if they do not respond, and governments must take the recommendations of independent institutions very seriously. Institutions should determine transparent mechanisms of employment based on efficiency, provide funding from the general budget, and be transparent in receiving and spending funds and donations.

Third, institutions must have authorisation to investigate cases, follow up on complaints through securing access to all sites and documents and monitoring government and private institutions.

Fourth, the participation of children should be ensured through the adoption of easy mechanisms to allow them to either reach the place of the institution or to contact it through several methods, or for the institution to reach them. It is important to make available this access and communication to various categories of children, and especially those who are marginalised (including children with disabilities, unaccompanied children and youth, the homeless, children of minorities, and children of immigrant workers and refugees).

The issuance of the Third Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the subsequent discussions by states regarding ratification may be an opportunity to advocate for the establishment of independent monitoring structures. In particular, their interdependence and unity of objectives, monitoring of violations and

identification of remedies for victims and holding perpetrators accountable, make institutions uniquely positioned to ensure enactment of the Third Optional Protocol.

As the first line of communication with children themselves, independent institutions for child rights can conduct a preliminary assessment about the legitimacy of complaints and their consistency with the provisions of the Third Protocol, and can also refer communications files and provide the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child with documents and information. They can also monitor the extent of the commitment of states to the implementation of recommendations regarding reported cases in context of the Third Protocol.

Independent institutions for child rights play an important role in informing children of the existence of an international mechanism for protection, and are more easily able to identify vulnerable categories of children.

Recommendations:

- The organisation of a comprehensive social discussion between various active bodies that are influential in children's lives, with the participation of children and their families, political leaders, parliament, and the media about the importance of the establishment of an independent institution to monitor child rights. What determines the course of this discussion is the format of the institution according to the desires of the state, either a national institution for human rights including a special structure such as a high commissioner for children or a specialised unit or department dedicated to child rights, or an institution focusing solely on the protection of child rights and which has an ombudsman.
- Arab states should revise national legislation in order to conform to the provisions and principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international conventions. It is necessary that this revision ensure that an independent institution is assigned authorities as mentioned previously.
- They should review the situation of national institutions for human rights and some structures of bodies that partially provide some of the tasks of the independent institution, in order to identify opportunities to amend their laws and include in their authority the minimum standards that should be present.
- Legislative bodies will benefit from the expertise and recommendations of independent institutions with regard to the adoption or amendment of childhood laws, supporting open and transparent mechanisms for its members, and reviewing annual reports and other reports on the occurrence of violations.
- Ensure close cooperation between civil society and independent institutions, including: exchange of information, advocacy campaigns, lobbying for the institution's recommendations, participating in discussions and counselling sessions organised by the institution and supporting children in providing opinions. Universities can also provide such institutions with research that provides scientific evidence and proof on the existence of general trends and cases on specific topics.
- Institutions must be held accountable, and should prepare reports on different aspects of its work, such as: complaints, investigations, supervision and advice provided to government, and disseminate these reports to the general public and children. The institution should prepare regular financial reports and budgets on its sources of income, which show the costs of management, operation and implementation of programmes and activities. They shall also regularly consult with civil society, and particularly children.

Chapter Seven:
Safe Reporting Mechanisms
(Child Helplines)

Child helplines are considered to be an appropriate medium to help children face their problems and enable them to report and express what they consider to be abusive. Helplines often provide guidance and advice children are unable to find at home, at school and in society.

These lines receive children's calls and provide guidance, and refer them when needed to other organizations specialising in child protection. Child helplines enable children to talk openly and confidentially. Child helplines also promote awareness of children's problems and reinforce cooperation with the communications sector, child protection entities and other partners.³⁴

The number of calls to child helplines has increased at the global level, which indicates that this service serves as an important channel to support children and help to ensure the rights of the child in a continuously changing world.

In 2011 child helplines across the world received approximately 13.8 million calls from both children and adults (this does not include visits to similar websites). Children voluntarily and directly call child helplines in order to speak about the problems they face.

Child helplines can contribute to ensuring the protection of children who are in danger or abused, when they are part of a comprehensive child protection system that is capable of responding to the caller's needs and able to assist him or her with service. It is thus necessary before establishing a line to make sure that there exists the capacity to respond in the country concerned (i.e. specialized rehabilitative institutions, shelters, law-implementation authorities trained in child rights, and clear criteria for operating and referral among various actors in the national child protection system).

Improving children's ability to report violence requires helplines to take into account the critical position of the child. It is therefore necessary for communication channels with children to be acceptable, attractive and varied (e.g. telephone call, email, and websites). Contact numbers should also be easy to remember (e.g. made up of four digits), and freely accessible.

The deficiency in reporting cases of violations against children is one of the problems that challenge the Arab region's efforts to safeguard the rights of the child.

The reasons for this deficiency may be attributed to cultural and social considerations that render it difficult to publicly expose aggressors, especially if an abuser is a family member or a relative. Another factor is ignorance of the nature of these violations and of acceptable behavioural boundaries related to the rights of the child. In particular, some measures that are accepted based on the idea that "violence that does not hurt" are considered to be norms of social control.

The culture of reporting and bringing perpetrators to justice necessitates a level of awareness of rights, and confidence in the ability of the party receiving complaints to ensure justice for victims and enforce punishments. Several studies refer to the fact that a large number of victims of violence did not report what had happened to them, even in countries that possess effective protection systems. This is may have several causes, including: ignorance, the lack of available or reliable services, and a fear of retribution by the exposed transgressor.

Child protection systems in most of the Arab states are incomplete and poorly supported financially, in addition to suffering a lack of standardized responses to rights violations.

Raising the level of reporting of violence by children and adults is a key strategy in an attempt to raise the efficacy of protection. In its concluding observations, The Committee for Child Protection has stated that providing mechanisms for reporting and receiving complaints is necessary and should take priority. In particular, child-friendly mechanisms

34- Annual Report, Child Helpline International (2010).

that take into account the sensitivity of the child's situation should be provided. The Committee has called for the establishment of free support lines, which should be effectively advertised to reach children in various locations.

In this respect, the global study on VAC recommended, and the Marrakech Declaration reiterated, the necessity of establishing national mechanisms for follow-up and reporting be established with the aim of preventing problems faced by children and their families. The most important of such mechanisms may include child helplines, protection committees, child-protection deputies and others.

The cooperation of the Arab League's Women, Family and Childhood Department and Child Helpline International (CHI) also constituted an effective framework to encourage a large number of Arab states to establish child helplines.

However, these helplines are not the only mechanism of receiving complaints and reporting abuses. Some countries established networks for protection in the form of committees or associations that raise awareness regarding the importance of reporting and receiving complaints. Others innovated special mechanisms such as a child protection deputy and child rights observatory.

I. State Safe Mechanisms available to children to report Violence.

The data provided by the Arab states demonstrated an increasing emphasis given to the creation of mechanisms that will enable both children and their advocates to report abuses to which they are exposed with complete confidentiality.

Jordan's Family Protection Department, which is affiliated with the General Security Department, provides a free hotline (911) to receive calls reporting VAC, as part of a system of work and procedures that ensure full confidentiality.

A confidential support line hosted by the River Jordan Foundation also receives telephone calls on family issues in general and on family violence in particular, and also provides support to the helpline.

The Jordanian Ministry of Education also manages a hotline and website designed to monitor and report cases of abuse. Follow-up on reports received by the ministry from students and parents is then conducted to identify and provide suitable responses.

Bahrain established free helpline for child support (998) in 2011 to receive complaints and reports.

United Arab Emirates: The Social Development Department in the UAE, along with centres for family support within the Ministry of Interior, follows-up on family disputes and violence, and promotes awareness and provides support to children and families.

Algeria has also created several safe mechanisms for reporting VAC. The "I'm listening to you" helpline enables children to express their problems to psychological and social experts. It has also established juvenile protection units on the national and state levels, as well as child protection bureaus affiliated to the judicial police and complaint mechanisms at youth and sports institutions. This is in addition to medical and hospital facilities, which are also required to report incidents of violence.

Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Social Affairs facilitates a centre for receiving reports of VAC. A child helpline is affiliated with the centre, which employs several trained specialists.

Sudan established a phone line (9696) in 2009 as part of the family and child protection police units, in cooperation with the National Council for Child Welfare.

Iraq has child protection mechanisms, which include: a family protection programme operated by the police, national and local directorates for the protection of families and children from familial violence, and helplines established in some governorates. This is in addition to activities of the country's Ministry for Human Rights.

Oman: Since 2008, the Ministry of Social Development has operated a phone family consultancy line, which receives calls from the general public including abused children.

Palestine provides a child protection network and police family protection units as well as a national free phone line (121), run by the non-profit civil society organisation called Sawa. This helpline covers the Palestinian territories including the West Bank, Gaza and Jerusalem, which provides guidance and psychological support services to children, youth and girls who are exposed to violence, abuse or neglect.

Work is not restricted to providing support and guidance over the phone but also provides guidance through email to those whose circumstances forbid them from using a phone for communication.

Qatar reviewed the various mechanisms for receiving complaints, which include a helpline to support women and children (919). It also established the Qatar Foundation for Child Protection in 2010.

Lebanon: On September 19, 2012, the Ministry for Social Affairs launched a hotline (1714) with the aim of receiving complaints on child abuse. The ministry is currently developing the hotline to become a national line.

Egypt considers its child helpline (16000) to be the most prominent mechanism for reporting VAC.

Morocco has launched a designated "green line" that receives reports of VAC within its National Observatory for the Rights of the Child. It has also created a directorate for the protection of families, children and the elderly within the Ministry of Solidarity, Women, Family and Social Development.

In addition, it has established child protection units and mobile social ambulance units in some Moroccan cities. Units were also established in the general hospitals and university health centres with the purpose of assisting and providing psychological support to women and children victims of violence.

Yemen does not currently have a child helpline but it is expected that the National Observatory for Child Rights will include a line for complaints in cases of violence and abuse of children. Several NGOs, including the Arab Organization for Human Rights that have a phone guidance line providing psychological and social help to children subjected to violence, perform protective and supportive functions. An electronic and paper-based observatory unit was also established in order to monitor the cases of violation and crimes against children, including those occurring during armed conflict.

II. Legal Frameworks and the Functioning of Existing Hotlines.

The operation and functions of existing helplines is often similar across the region, but have been established on the basis of different legal framework by which they were established. Some hotlines were established according to the law; while others according to administrative measures.

The UAE: The child helpline in the Emirate of Sharjah provides psychological counselling and social services, and refers cases to protective services by means of phone communications, complaint boxes in schools, and by email.

Bahrain's Child Law stipulates that the centre for child protection affiliated with the Ministry of Social Development must establish a hotline to receive all cases and complaints of mistreatment.

Tunisia: A free Tunisian helpline is managed by the Bureau of the Deputy General for Child Protection, which is under the supervision of the Ministry of Women's and Children's Affairs.

Saudi Arabia established a national programme for family safety as a mechanism to prevent family violence. Within this program a child helpline receives complaints related to children under the age of eighteen, and presents them with advice and referrals to actors concerned with follow-up.

Sudan: A helpline was established in Sudan within The Child Act legislation (2010) as part of the police units for the protection of family and child, and in order to provide children and families with psychological and legal counsel in cases of VAC.

Iraq: Two lines have been created within the Family Protection Police in Baghdad.

Palestine: As supported in the Palestine Child Law, a free national helpline (121) is managed by the non-profit civil society organization Sawa, which aims at providing support, counsel and guidance, and assist children and youth exposed to violence, mistreatment and neglect. In particular, measures are taken to accompany victims to health and police facilities, provide referrals to specialized institutions and monitor emails received from persons who are unable to utilize the phone line.

Qatar: The Qatar Foundation for Child Protection established a safety line to support children women in 2010. The line receives complaints of violence and provides counselling, guidance and referrals to specialized services. Coordination is also undertaken between the other established phone lines in the Qatar Foundation for Combating Human Trafficking, and the Social Rehabilitation Centre. The Ministry of Social Affairs coordinates the helpline for social counselling, issues pertaining to juvenile delinquents and those who along with their family are at risk of delinquency.

Lebanon's proposed amendment to Law 422 (2002) which addresses the protection of at-risk children or children violating the law, suggests the establishment of a child helpline.

Egypt established a helpline under the provisions of The Child Law (2008), which receives complaints and intervenes in cases of extreme violence, together with partners distributed in an almost complete geographical coverage. Electronic chat rooms are currently being developed.

III. Accessibility for Children: Advertising and Communication Channels.

According to responses to the questionnaire, most Arab states depend on visual and audio media to advertise existing mechanisms. This was confirmed by Jordan, the UAE, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and Sudan, which referred to utilizing television, radio, newspapers and other print media to inform children of available protective services.

The effectiveness of these mediums was demonstrated in the calls that came through the phone line and subsequent responses.

Saudi Arabia undertakes distributing educative, informative, and awareness campaigns through electronic websites.

Sudan's family and child protection police units within The National Council for Child Welfare advertise the line through media campaigns, posters and publications, workshops and lectures.

Palestine: Advertising is done through media outlets, electronic websites, and direct meetings.

Qatar: The Qatar Foundation for the Protection of Women and Children is advertising the helpline through media

campaigns and by printing helpline numbers on publications and posters. It also distributes it in schools, health centres, trade groups, workshops and lectures.

Lebanon's helpline was originally launched through a media and advertising campaign, which included both television and print notifications.

Egypt: The National Council for Childhood and Motherhood also undertakes several efforts from to inform all categories of children its complaint mechanisms through television notifications, seminars and pictorial advertisements in places where groups of children are present.

IV. Documentation, Analysis and Dissemination of Data.

Tunisia's Bureau of the Deputy General for Child Protection prepares an annual report comprised of all complaints received through phone calls, in writing, and through a the child protection deputy.

Sudan: The police unit for child protection documents complaints received by the helpline and submits reports to the National Council for Child Welfare.

Palestine: In 2011 the Sawa Foundation issued a report entitled "Reality and Challenges—Child Protection Helpline Palestine 121", which was an analytical documentation of incoming calls to the communications centre between 2009 and mid-2011. The report analysed the data documented by the foundation. In 2011 the PRI system was introduced, which is comprised of one phone line including simultaneously 30 lines. This system is able to receive more than one call, without causing the lines to become occupied. This has contributed to a rise in the cases documented to more than 2000 calls a month.

In the first quarter of 2012 the Foundation documented 6754 incoming calls from children below the age of eighteen, constituting 60% of these calls. The helpline staff documents incoming calls and analyses them.

Qatar: The helpline "Aman" that is affiliated to the Qatar Foundation for the Protection of Women and Children also prepares annual reports of its work, which are made available to governmental and non-governmental organizations. They are also available on these organisations' websites.

V. Child Helplines dealing with Child Helpline International

In 2011 the telephone was the main communication medium in the Middle East and North Africa region, in addition to some visits to child support centres and some service delivery activities. Electronic websites of child helplines have also become increasingly popular. In addition, there have been requests to obtain general information and most calls in the region were related to abuse and violence, family relations, and social, psychological, mental and scholastic topics.

Child Helpline International started its work in the region eight years ago, with the launch of child helplines in areas where there was a scarcity of helplines for women and families. Because of family patterns and the culture prevalent in the region, a large number of phone calls were made by adults, such as parents and family members, teachers and caregivers. With the current increase in child helplines in the region, these lines have gained the trust of families and children in local communities. This is in addition to awareness campaigns directly targeting children with the aim of encouraging them to contact the child helpline when needed.

According to the data provided by Child Helpline International in this report, several features characterise the Middle East and North Africa region, including:

- More girls contact the child helplines than boys
- Most calls are undertaken by adults on behalf of children; children constituted just 6.04% of total calls (See Table 7). This could be attributed to disparities in cultural and social values, in addition to the differences in ability between adults and children to attain different media.
- Children between the ages of 13 and 15 years were the most frequent callers (See Table 8).
- All countries said that lines were available to all countries free and without discrimination (except for the formal line in Lebanon currently being established) and that all lines were undertaking an advertising and media campaign with the aim of raising the awareness of children and society on the importance of reporting.
- Regarding reporting mechanisms, most helplines utilize the electronic method to receive phone calls and reports (approved by Child Helpline International), issue annual reports clarifying the number and kind of reports and distribute them according to age group and gender.
- The helplines also referred to the fact that secrecy was ensured during all stages of communication with the helpline.
- As indicated in Table 9, abuse and violence are the primary reason for calling, accounting for 37.28% of all total calls. This is followed by reasons related to psychological and social well being, accounting for 17.73% of total callers, followed by problems related to school, accounting for 10.60%. All of this can be interpreted as an indicator on the existence of violence and abuse to children in the Arab region, as a pressing social phenomenon on children.
- Table 10 demonstrates that physical abuse is the foremost reason for children calling within the category of reporting abuse and violence, constituting 41.48%, followed by negligence, 12.6%, emotional abuse, 12; 7%, while 10.44% of children call to report their being bullied.
- The topic that remains absent from policies and programmes despite its tangible existence is that of sexual abuse (9.57%), despite what surrounds the topic of cultural and social beliefs, which make it difficult to divulge. The data provided by Child Helpline International however, did not reveal the number and scale of calls that were referred and followed up on by specialized actors in the rest of the protection system's components.

Table 7:

Callers to Child Helplines	
Calls from adults on behalf of children	37.81%
Calls from children on behalf of children	2.56%
Calls from children not residing with family, but in shelters or with friends	1.24%
Calls from children with special needs	2.24%
Referrals	0.52%
Optional communication	55.63%
TOTAL	100%

Table 8:

Age Groups of Children Concerned							
	0-6	7-9	10-12	13-15	16-17	18-25	25+
Male	5.8%	3.75%	6.07%	7.62%	6.49%	8.52%	2.11%
Female	10.46%	6.62%	7.26%	10.18%	9.58%	11.53%	4.03%
TOTAL	16.26%	10.37%	13.33%	17.79%	16.07%	20.05%	6.14%

Table 9:

Reasons for Calling	
Violence and Abuse	37.28%
Peer relationships	4.75%
Psychological, social and mental health	17.73%
Family relationships	10.28%
Sex and sexual awareness	1.64%
School-related issues	10.60%
Homelessness/Runaways/Basic needs	5.66%
Abuse and addiction to narcotic substances	0.51%
Physical health	4.47%
Legal issues	2.04%
Commercial exploitation	2.17%
Children infected or affected by HIV/AIDS	0.02%
Discrimination	2.84%
TOTAL	100%

Table 10:

Types of Violence and Abuse Reported	
Domestic Violence	11.11%
Emotional Abuse	12.07%
Negligence	12.06%
Physical Abuse	41.81%
Sexual Abuse	9.57%
Witness to Violence	2.93%
Cyber-Bullying	0.00%
TOTAL	100%

VI. Summary and Recommendations

In an attempt to become acquainted with the nature and work of these helplines and in coordination with Child Helpline International, information was gathered by means of a form to be filled, by fifteen helplines operating in 13 Arab states (Appendix No. 12 Table No. 11)

The table shows that some of the lines followed government management (7 lines) while others were operated by civil societies specialized in child protection (7 lines).

The coverage range of lines also varied between those operating at local and national levels, respectively.

The table indicates that the percentage of children benefiting from using the helpline varied: from 50% of children in Sharjah and in Sudan to 6% in Egypt.

Only two countries (Egypt and Sudan) said that they had established a helpline based on the law. The rest of the lines were established by government or ministerial decree or a resolution from the civil society supervising the helpline's operation.

Most helplines did not mention any problems in coordination and referral to other protection services, but a lack was registered in the absorptive capacity of psychological shelter and support services, and in the amount of social assistance given in some countries. There was a lack of various protection services in both Iraq and Yemen.

Recommendations:

I. Supporting countries' investment in building an effective child protection system based on child rights.

- Undertaking a mapping exercise on prevention, intervention and rehabilitation services, which shows the type of service and its location, and how to benefit from it
- Setting criteria for the institutions and services covered by the child protection system.
- Setting standardised operating procedures, which clarify different responsibilities and roles of the various actors constituting the child protection system, including the helpline.
- Training employees in formal institutions and civil societies in methods of detection, intervention and rehabilitation.
- Reinforcing child-protection systems: through informational documentation, standardised operating procedures, for instance, and working to ensure suitable services which reinforce the trust of the victim as to the ability to attain a reasonable solution to his complaint.
- Widening the scope of building mechanisms for reporting, and promoting them must be accompanied by working to ensure opportunities of benefitting from appropriate services, and ensuring their capacity for absorbing different cases.

II. Promoting awareness and reinforcing the culture of child rights in children, families and individuals working with and for children, so that they become able to define the actions and practices that are considered to be VAC.

- To know the actors entrusted with receiving reports and complaints (while taking care to deliver the information in a manner that is friendly, easy and understood by children).
- Finding mechanisms and structures that are suitable to institutionalizing children's participation, and widening the scope of their participation, taking their advice, and reinforcing their capabilities and life skills.
- Including the statutes of the rights of the child and protection in the syllabuses of basic preparation and training during service, of professional employees working with children.
- Building protection committees, associations and networks and encouraging them to promote their activities, and readiness to receive complaints through various mediums, such as the media, and religious and social venues.
- Enacting a plan to promote the existing methods of complaint, such as the child protection deputy, protection networks, and child helpline, so that the plan utilizes different activities, and reaches all segments of society, and children, in locations which they frequent, such as school, home and community. The plan must also envisage working with national and local media to ensure their effective participation in propagation campaigns, as well as advertising the existence of this mechanism, and the manner of contacting it. The mechanism for complaint should be an integral part of a comprehensive child protection system.
- Working to provide mechanisms for reporting that are easy to utilize, and which children can reach.
- The methods of reporting should be child-friendly and respectful of the child's private life, such as respecting the principle of secrecy and privacy.
- In different locations in which they are found, access should be given to marginalized children, street children, children of migrant labour, child labour and children placed in social or judicial institutions, as well as children with special needs.
- Advertising rescue services for emergency cases in different place where there are children, so that the child, its family and those responsible for its care can file complaints.
- Working to make children participate in formulating the form, place, and method of communication for filing complaints.
- Care to design methods of reporting that are attractive to children and that do not disturb them or place them in an embarrassing situation (the importance arises here of training caregivers to listen carefully and to give advice in a manner appropriate to the child's psychological and social development)
- Encouraging different mechanisms of centralized and decentralized reporting, government or civil, to issue reports on the amount of complaints and reporting they get.
- Proposing legal amendments with the aim of: Affirming the mandatory nature of reporting, to professionals working for children, protecting those reporting abuse from the risks and pressures to which they might be exposed, and asserting the non-mandatory nature of the approval of parents or caregivers to the complaint being made.

The Child Helpline (110 for Family and Child)-Jordan

"110 for Family and Child" is the free helpline established in 2007. It is a member of the Global Network for Child Helplines, and aims at enabling children and families to obtain protection. The helpline is based on principles of secrecy and preserving the caller's privacy, effective listening and non-conditional acceptance. A trained team of volunteers and university students from the departments of psychology and psychological guidance respond to the calls. This is under constant supervision from the helpline supervisor, who gives importance to every caller, whether child or adult.

"The child helpline is secret (it does not make the number of the caller appear, nor does it require that the persons calling give their name), it is free on all communications networks, and works at the rate of ten hours every day, five days a week. Since its inception until the end of 2012 it has dealt with 25226 real phone calls.

Services:

- Psychological support and guidance
- Providing the caller with the names of the specialized quarter that can provide the needed service.
- Referring and connecting the caller with the service providers, and following up with the latter, and/or the caller.

Objectives:

- Enabling the caller, whether child or adult, to attain the child's best interest.
- Preserving the safety and well being of the family by working to curtail all forms of child abuse, and decreasing the impact of social problems on the child and family.
- Working to provide a healthy and loving environment for the child, which will promote its social, psychological, physical and mental aspects.
- Developing sound parent skills and raising awareness of all the issues pertaining to the child's sound upbringing.
- Connecting children and families with the child services provided, and activating their role so as to respond to families' needs.
- Providing psychological support and help to the caller (child, adult)
- Introducing all categories of society with the helpline service and working on making this service available to all children and adults.

Partners:

- From the governmental sector: Ministries of Interior, Labour, Education, Social Development and Health, and the Department of Family Protection.
- From the non-governmental sector: the Hashemite Jordanian Fund for Human Development, Cerebral Palsy Care Association, Jordanian Women's Union, International Institute for Women's Solidarity and the Family Justice Centre.

Chapter Eight:

Violence-Related Information Management Systems

The Marrakech Declaration (2010) emphasises the “importance of updating and developing the database on indicators on the situation of children in Arab states as a reference for planning, policy formulation and programme design, while emphasising the importance of conducting periodic studies on the situation of children in the Arab region in cooperation with relevant regional and international organisations”.³⁵

In its concluding observations on the reports of most Arab states, the CRC highlighted the limited progress made in the establishment of a comprehensive centralised system for data collection covering all areas of the convention, and particularly information related to groups of marginalised children. It noted that data documented and produced based on scientific methodologies is almost non-existent. In particular, data on cases of violence, abuse and exploitation is missing, and this certainly hinders the development of effective policies, plans and programmes that can ensure the rights of the child.

Gathering data according to gender, age, geographical location and marital status would provide policy makers and programme planners with more realistic and scientific knowledge. It would enable more effective and realistic follow-up, monitoring and evaluation.

The Comparative Arab Report on Implementing the Recommendations of the UN Secretary-General’s Study on VAC (2010) noted the lack of available data indicating the extent, nature and patterns of violence in the region. Reporting of sexual violence is particularly missing, as the topic is still frequently considered a social taboo that is difficult to detect and report. This is particularly true if the sexual violence occurs within the child’s family or community.

The absence of available and accessible monitoring and reporting mechanisms on the local and national levels, and the absence of an integrated system for the protection of children is a key current priority. A lack of quantitative and qualitative information must not hinder programming and policy-making processes, nor make programmes and activities related to prevention and protection from violence isolated from a cumulative systematic context. Furthermore, existing assessment processes that frequently lack clear checklists and indicators must be improved.

Institutes and universities in Arab states may provide actors involved in safeguarding the rights of the child with the required scientific competencies and research methodologies. They can also contribute to raising awareness about violence, in all its forms, through making it a topic of social discussion and research material in multiple forums. It is noticeable however that Arab universities and academic institutes are not adequately familiar with children’s issues in general and issues of violence and abuse in particular.

It should be noted that within the region there are no certificates of specialisation in child protection or the rights of the child. In some cases, the rights of the child is incorporated into other specialties. Attempts to strengthen research capacity have been noted in some academic institutions through the establishment of a network on the initiative of Child Watch. This network held a training workshop on research methodologies for researchers from Jordan, Syria, Oman, Palestine, Lebanon and Yemen.³⁶

The small numbers of studies that do exist have been funded primarily by outside donors, since states in the region have not allocated dedicated research budgets. A few additional studies have been disseminated by associations or research centres around the world, and are not part of a research plan designed to shape national decisions and policies.

On the regional level there is no attention given to the production of data on the situation of children. The Arab Council for Childhood and Development stopped issuing its annual report in 2007, which previously contained development indicators for Arab children. Furthermore, even this report did not contain adequate child protection indicators.

35- Marrakech Declaration (2010), Fourth Arab High Level Conference on the Rights of the Child, Marrakech, 19-21 December 2010, Page 4. Available at: <http://www.childsrights.org/html/site_fr/cnews/userfiles/file/Marrakech_Declaration%20English%20final%20version.pdf>

36- See <www.childwatch.uio-no/projects/regional-networks>

The Pan Arab Project for Family Health, backed by the Arab Gulf Programme for Development, has established a database gathering demographic, health and social data, but it excludes data pertaining to violence and its patterns and frequency of occurrence. Also, UNICEF is following the effort that has been made in the past few years to train on the DevInfo statistical programme with the purpose of its adoption as a programming and planning tool.³⁷

However, some models exist which may be expanded and replicated. Save the Children and UNICEF, for instance, identified the characteristics of VAC in Iraq in 2009, and produced data on its prevalence and causes. This project was based on scientific methodology and included both quantitative and qualitative data. It also integrated the feedback of multiple stakeholders, including professionals, policy makers and parents. Children themselves also participated in assessing the reality of violence in developing and proposing solutions. This experience also complied with best practices in research ethics and obtained ethics approval for the implementation of the study.

The Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey carried out by UNICEF in some Arab states (Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon, Sudan, Iraq, Tunisia) provides useful data including birth registration, child labour, controlling behaviour of children (discipline through violence), early marriage, female genital mutilation and domestic violence.³⁸

The Manara Programme, a regional programme carried out by Save the Children, included in one of its components data collection led by children. Children collected data on their conditions and discussed it among themselves and with childhood officials across multiple Arab countries. 500 child researchers from the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Lebanon, Morocco and Yemen participated in the data collection process. UNICEF also supported several studies on the subject of violence in schools in several Arab states (referenced further in the chapter on violence in schools).

Multiple states in the region, including Saudi Arabia, Syria, Iraq and Lebanon, relied on research tools published by UNICEF on child protection from violence, exploitation and abuse. These tools were adapted by a regional child abuse and violence association, and include:

- A questionnaire on violence and abuse: a special sample for children, implemented with children ages 11-18 to learn about their experiences with discipline and punishment in the family.
- A questionnaire on violence and abuse: a special sample for children, implemented with children ages 11-18, applied to them in groups to learn about their experiences in schools and other institutions.
- A questionnaire about exposure to violence and abuse before the age of 18 including questions addressed to young people aged between 18 and 24.
- A questionnaire addressed to parents about the use of certain methods of teaching children proper behaviour or dealing with behavioural problems in children.

I. National and Sectoral Information Gathering Systems in Arab States

Responses to the questionnaire show that some Arab states depend on information provided by general statistical systems or the data of governmental institutions related to childhood for data on children's vulnerability to exposure to risk and violence.

In many states, individual governmental ministries gather information within its own area of focus, without the coordination of a national mechanism. This is the case in The United Arab Emirates, Djibouti, Oman, Palestine, Lebanon, Egypt and Yemen. Bahrain, Tunisia and Yemen referred utilising UNICEF's ChildInfo database, which is a statistical mechanism that helps in data collection from different concerned ministries and structures on childhood indicators.

37- DevInfo is a database system developed by the UN and for the purpose of monitoring human development and particularly the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It is an expansion of the earlier UNICEF database system ChildInfo. See <www.devinfo.org> ,

38- See <www.unicef.org/statistics/index_24302.html>

The United Arab Emirates depends on the Fourth Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey in collaboration with UNICEF for the collection of data on childhood and family, and also on the DevInfo system and the Information on Women of the United Arab Emirates System. This latter database collects information related to women, mothers and children.

In Bahrain, the establishment of a detailed information database on childhood and lies within the jurisdiction of the National Committee for Childhood, in collaboration with all concerned governmental and civil bodies. The National Strategy for Childhood commissioned the development of an information system, and called for the monitoring and building of an information database on children that includes comprehensive indicators in the areas of health, education and social protection.

Algeria has several available collection systems for monitoring the conditions of marginalised groups and VAC, including The Multiple Indicator Investigation on Women and Children and the Institutional Information System for Data on Women and Children. This is in addition to general population census information.

In Djibouti the National Bureau of Statistics is responsible for all national statistics based on the Cluster Survey and others.

In Saudi Arabia the National Information Centre in the Ministry of Education was established in 2011, which is linked to the office of the minister. The electronic observatory in the Ministry of Health was also established, which serves as the national registry for cases of child abuse in the health sector, and data is introduced through the registry on cases of child protection centres.

In Sudan, the National Centre for Information, Training and Research at the National Council for Child Welfare adopted a database based on statistics received by police child protection units, the Ministry of Interior and through statistics departments at the Ministries of Health, Education and Social Welfare.

In Iraq, the Central Bureau of Statistics is the competent authority on everything related to census operations.

Oman: The National Centre for Statistics and Information was established by decree in 2012 and is responsible for providing national statistics in various fields. Each ministry handles the monitoring and analysis of data, often relating to child protection issues. The Ministry of Health, for instance, created a committee for the protection of children at the level of the Sultan Qaboos University Hospital that receives and treats cases transferred from all specialised units in the hospital.

Palestine is also exerting effort with the help of international organisations to build a unified system for data collection, and the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics issues annual reports that showcase the conditions of Palestinian children.

Qatar has several governmental and non-governmental organisations dealing with children, which are considered the main source for the collection of data on children and their status. However, there are vigorous efforts being made to standardise data collection systems on VAC, including an initiative launched by the Supreme Council for Family Affairs forming a special committee to develop mechanisms for monitoring indicators of domestic violence. There is also an exchange of information initiative, which aims to coordinate and unify mechanisms for issuing information in government institutions and agencies.

In Egypt, qualitative and quantitative surveys are used to collect data and information on the conditions of disadvantaged groups of children, with the implementation of the Central Agency for Public Mobilisation and Statistics (CAPMAS) and other research bodies.

Yemen expects the National Observatory for Child rights to collect, manage and analyse information and data on children, prepare reports and make them available to public opinion and decision makers.

II. Indicators applied to data collection and classification

Jordan relies on mechanisms to save data and records the conditions of marginalised groups and all forms of VAC in all institutions working in the field of family and child protection. Among these institutions are the Family Protection Department, National Institute of Forensic Medicine, Ministry of Social Development and civil society organisations. In addition, an electronic system was recently implemented, which aims to create a national database linking all stakeholders in order to unify national data and prevent redundancy and duplication of data on the protection of children from abuse.

Sudan's data collection is based on the introductory guide for child indicators prepared by the National Council for Child Welfare and includes specific indicators on rates of child mortality, education and protection (including child workers, refugees and displaced children, participants in armed conflict, those in conflict with the law, victims of sexual exploitation and persons with disabilities).

Saudi Arabia classifies data according to a monitoring and verification mechanism, age, family characteristics, academic level, causes of violence and spatial distribution.

Oman depends on a form prepared for the purpose of data collection and analysis called: "A Case Study of Children Exposed to Abuse." The Ministry of Health also documents cases of child mortality and the cause of death is mentioned in the death certificate.

In Palestine, data is collected according to national indicators agreed upon by all parties concerned on the basis of The Child Act and international standards.

The Qatar Foundation for the Protection of Women and Children is working on classifying data on children according to gender, age group, and relationship with aggressor, types of available services and protection areas. The Supreme Council for Health in Qatar monitors child deaths resulting from the exercise of violence.

In Egypt, the process of updating data is based on a list of scientific indicators, not agreed upon between sectors, but based on international standards, which includes classification based on gender, age group and relationship with aggressor.

In Yemen, a special database for juvenile justice was created according to international indicators and linked to the competent ministries as part of an electronic programme. Data on children in difficult circumstances is also classified according to gender, age and condition.

III. Completed and forthcoming studies, research and surveys

Very little information was received from states on this topic.

Jordan carried out a study on "Children Working in Agriculture" in 2013, and a study on the social and economic characteristics of cases of domestic abuse based on cases received by the Family Protection Department in 2012. It concluded with several recommendations, the most important of which was to review and evaluate interventions and services provided to cases of domestic violence. There was another study on "Implications of Child Labour in Jordan", and one on "VAC in Jordan" in 2007.

Algeria carried out several studies on VAC, violence in schools, child labour and a bibliographic study on young people.

Saudi Arabia carried out several studies including "Domestic Violence", "The Causes of Domestic Violence" and a study on "Harming Students Inside Schools". The participation of children was ensured through the use of research questionnaires for children.

Sudan: In 2012 The National Council for Childhood conducted a study on child marriage in six states in order to identify the reasons behind and attitudes toward early marriage. The study revealed a high percentage of underage marriage, which prompted the design of programmes and activities to address this issue. The results of the study are still unpublished. What was interesting is the participation of children who filled out the questionnaires regarding them and specifically girls who were married before the age of 18.

Several scientific and academic bodies in Oman implemented specialised studies within projects related to the abuse of children.

In Palestine, a general survey was carried out in 2010 to monitor the extent of the application of CRC, with a report that included several recommendations. The Central Bureau of Statistics also conducted a survey in 2011-2012 on domestic violence. At the beginning of 2013, UNICEF analysed the current situation of children in Palestine. The Centre for Democracy and Workers' Rights carried out a study on child labour and the exploitation of children in Palestine, also in 2013.

Qatar: The Supreme Council for Family Affairs in Qatar issued a study in 2013 on abuse and VAC. The Qatar Foundation for the Protection of Women and Children will soon be complete a study on "Measuring the Extent of Children's Awareness of their Rights" as part of its programmes for the years 2012-2013 in order to identify children's perceptions of the violence and abuse to which they are exposed. Children participated in this study by answering a simplified questionnaire. A study on child legislations and laws was also implemented that concluded the importance of raising awareness about laws.

In Lebanon in 2012 two studies were completed. First, UNESCO conducted a report on "Violence on Schools based on Gender" in cooperation with the Ministry of Education. Second, UNICEF conducted "The Child Protection System in Lebanon" in collaboration with the Supreme Council for Childhood. Preparations are currently underway for a study on sexual violence carried out by the Supreme Council for Childhood in collaboration with Dar Al Amal Association.

Morocco completed field research on homeless children, the employment of girls as maids in homes, and violence in schools.

Yemen prepared a series of studies related to children's issues, including "The Multifaceted Rapid Assessment of the Protection of Children in Several Governorates" (2012), "Harm of Early Marriage and Pregnancy" (2011), "Reality of Early Childhood Programmes", "Comprehensive Survey on the Protection of Children in Areas Affected by Armed Conflict" (2010), "Poverty and Deprivation in Children" and "Conditions of Child Protection Institutions and Homes".

IV. Summary and recommendations

The process of collecting data on VAC should be an absolute priority in an area where social and cultural determinants hinder acknowledging the topic in public discussion. The UN Study on VAC has encouraged many Arab states to respond by implementing some of its recommendations in order to formulate policies, design assistance

programmes, and amend legislation. However, the responses of states remain unsystematic and are not based on facts or data proven by national studies or research on the prevalence, causes and patterns of violence. The exposure of specific populations to increased risk is therefore unknown, resulting in lack of suitable development programmes and preventive interventions.

In addition, information on cases requiring specialised services is incomplete and is not exchanged through a uniform case management system. This hinders the evaluation and monitoring process as well as the use of data to improve services according to ethical and scientific standards.

The following recommendations should be considered to assist states to build national methodological responses supported by documented evidence and data, rather than relying simply on the adoption of international trends:

1. Confirmation of political will on the importance of data collection and monitoring of cases of violence, which is represented in the adoption of a special agenda for management, organisation and analysis of data, and the allocation of financial resources to propose comprehensive research and studies in various locations.
2. Specifying or creating a body or entity at the national level that is responsible for the data collection process from various agencies, ministries, research centres, universities and NGOs on a clear basis and specific methodology. This entity should be associated with national structures responsible for the development of strategies and plans to ensure the development of programmes and interventions that are priorities and to prevent the recurrence of programmes that proved not to be effective. It should also issue periodic reports which highlight general trends and progress made in various sectors, identifies gaps that hinder the data collection process, are given to decision-makers, and is made available to children through the use of easy and understandable language.
3. Secure requests for information from children, media and universities. Establish connections and cooperation protocols with several sectors that produce information or data, especially departments or centres for national statistics.
4. Ensure that information-gathering processes are unified and consistent within a scientific methodology, and works on transferring it and training various parties on it.
5. Collect information from administrative records and proposes and implements periodic national surveys.
6. Develops a list of qualitative and quantitative indicators on the subject of child protection.
7. Monitor progress made, identify gaps, and determine the categories not covered by prevention, intervention, or rehabilitation programmes.
8. Build a comprehensive system for the registration of marriages, birth and filing.
9. Build a system for monitoring deaths, including a system for legal and medical examination for the collection of documented deaths and mentioning the cause of death in death registries.³⁹
10. Build a management system for cases in medical care facilities, child protection.
11. services and other facilities at the national level, to allow the continued availability of information on individual cases and planning the service-provision process.
12. Document information at the sectoral levels of education, health and law enforcement, and categorise data according to age, gender, and type of violence, geographic region and family characteristics.
13. Train responsible personnel on documentation and analysis methodologies and on ethics of

39- Failure to exchange information between various agencies may lead to unnecessary suffering or even death.

respecting privacy by not revealing the identity of child victims.

14. Familiarise universities and institutes with children's issues in general and violence and abuse in particular, in order to provide personnel and institutions related to childhood with the required scientific competencies and research methodologies, and making it a subject of social discussion and research material in more than one university specialty.
15. Strengthening community monitoring mechanisms and documenting of cases on the national level through parents, children, NGOs and municipalities. Local observatories can also be established to be in constant contact with the national observatory.
16. Ensure children's access to information and participation in its provision, analysis and dissemination.

Criteria of good indicators

- Indicators built on the basis of child rights.
- Linked to national and sectoral strategies and plans.
- Able to identify those who don't have access to appropriate services, early detection and identification of trends in the groups most vulnerable to violence (promotion of preventive intervention).
- Clear measurement methodology: determining the definition and method of measurement, target group and time frame.
- Capable of assessing interventions and measuring their impact.
- Developed in multi-sectoral partnership, especially with children.
- Allows classification of information and facilitates comparison.

Recommendations for Further Research

- Studies on the regional, national and local levels.
- Surveys as a prelude to the development of any strategy or plan.
- Inclusion of ethical research practices for the party intervening to help children to ensure that the condition of the child answering the questionnaire does not become worse.
- Inclusion of measuring the extent of proliferation, causes of violence and interdependence between its various forms.
- Inclusion of the cost of VAC on society.
- Studies covering the effectiveness of protection programmes and measurement of flexibility of children.
- Research includes interviews with parents and children.
- Research to identify the types of prevention programmes and services of governmental agencies and NGOs.

Chapter Nine:
General Recommendations

It is clear from the data provided in this report that the Arab states have undertaken significant steps toward ensuring effective and comprehensive protection for children.

Several states have implemented national plans and strategies for the prevention and protection of children from violence and mistreatment. Sectoral plans must now be prepared according to the type of violence and location of its occurrence within each state.

Several Arab states have also embarked on reviews of existing laws and legislation, and have shown a notable dynamism in legislating or amending child protection laws, as well as sectoral laws with the aim of safeguarding the rights of the child as described in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and related international conventions.

What remains is the development of mechanisms for execution, follow-up and assessment. This will require specialised and autonomous structures and organizations, and criteria and operational mechanisms based on the rights of the child.

The report indicates that reaching this stage requires technical support and experience that are not sufficiently available at present. This has induced countries to ask this assistance from the LAS's Women, Family and Childhood Department.

This chapter includes recommendations for programmes and activities that can be implemented at the regional level and contribute to improving national initiatives in ensuring effective child protection in the Arab states.

Although these recommendations are specifically restricted to the topics dealt with in the report, it is impossible to neglect the importance of establishing holistic child protection systems based on the rights of the child.

Such systems are not currently present, and require additional support and evolution. Acknowledging this gap and at the request of some Arab states, UNICEF has begun an initiative to undertake a comprehensive survey of child protection services, policies, and mechanisms.

It is useful for states to participate in this survey, as it will support them to build and sustain an integrated and comprehensive child protection system.

The responses of some states also reflected limited knowledge of a number of concepts, protection mechanisms and their validity. Monitoring and evaluation is particularly lacking.

It is therefore necessary for different events to be organized, focusing on the topics included in this report, with the aim of raising awareness and reinforcing the importance of the rights of the child.

The following recommendations pertain to the topics included in this second edition of the Comparative Arab Report on Implementing the Recommendations of the UN Secretary-General's Study on Violence Against Children (VAC):

First, address the issue of violence in schools:

1. A regional conference to highlight the importance of the subject of violence in schools and its connection with realizing the rights of the child should be convened. Topics to be discussed include the quality of education, limiting school dropout rates, and building the child's personality as a proactive and productive individual.
2. Exchanging successful experiences of national policies countering violence in schools, as well as protection and intervention programmes.

3. Communicating with international organizations and parties that have developed campaigns and strategies countering violence in schools (e.g. the European Council, Plan International) with the aim of learning from their experiences and resources.
4. Proposing violence-free guiding principles for the Arab school, based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child and all other related international conventions and instruments. Such principles would be used as a guideline by organizations concerned with child rights as well as ministries of education drawing national plans to counter violence within schools.
5. Building the capacities of leading education officials and those in positions of responsibility in childhood organizations, by means of training seminars and Arabic language guides. Training topics would include programming in child rights, child protection policy in schools and affirmative rather than abusive disciplinary techniques. For this, guidance can be drawn from guides and resources produced by UNESCO, UNICEF, and the child-friendly school initiative.

Second, protect the rights of the child in emergency settings:

There is a sizeable global effort to establish policies and strategies that curtail rights violations in emergency contexts, and to design methodologies and tools to develop and build emergency responders. It would be useful for Arab states to interact with specialised international agencies in this regard and to draw on available international experience. The Women, Family and Childhood Department, with its connections to international community organisations, can contribute to the development of national plans and strategies for child protection in emergency situations. The department has begun practical steps to realize this by adopting the document for "Guiding Principles on Guaranteeing Children's Rights in Cases of Emergency" in cooperation with Save the Children.

In particular, the following steps are recommended to ensure the rights of the child in emergency settings:

1. Forming an Arab working group comprised of experts and specialized organizations within the framework of the Arab Childhood Committee. This group would be responsible for follow-up and implementation of supporting activities with policy-makers and local authorities, so as to ensure the inclusion of topics related to the curtailing of risks during emergencies based on child rights, in relevant policies.
2. Ensuring the availability of resources needed to establish a prevention programme and alleviate the impact of emergency situations on the realization of child rights, especially protection. Designing intervention programmes that support and assist children and families who are negatively affected, and ensure their swift recovery.
3. Providing training for the cadres working in the domain of curtailing risks and intervention in cases of emergency on:
 - a. Relevant national and international legal frameworks
 - b. Methodologies of child protection and management of cases and psychosocial support
 - c. The international, national and local mechanisms for monitoring and reporting
 - d. Preparing ready-to-implement work plans
 - e. Documenting national and societal protection mechanisms as well as successful models of children's participation in Arab and foreign states, in order to benefit from global experience.

Third, create and strengthen independent national institutions on the rights of the child:

1. Organizing a workshop in cooperation with UNICEF and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, bringing together national human rights organizations and associations concerned with monitoring child rights in the Arab world, in order to introduce their experiences and compare them with the minimal criteria, and with successful experiments worldwide.
2. Issuing a guide comprised of general principles, best practices and lessons learnt from establishing independent national child rights associations.
3. Cooperation and coordination with the Arab inter-parliamentary union and the Arab parliament in supporting the process of establishing autonomous national associations, simultaneously with support campaigns to encourage Arab countries to ratify the third optional protocol on procedures of reporting.
4. Organizing academic visits to countries that have successful experiences and cooperating with them in exchanging experiences, training and resources.

Fourth, strengthen safe reporting mechanisms:

1. Encouraging Arab countries that have not yet taken the initiative to establish a child helpline to do so, in addition to making use of the experiences, training and planning guides provided by Child Helpline International.
2. Undertaking an analytical study of the report mechanisms currently available in Arab countries in order to become better acquainted with the successes and challenges, and deduce the requirements that make them more attractive and acceptable to children.
3. Setting up workshops and visits to exchange experiences and become familiar with internationally successful experiences.

Fifth, establish a system for managing data on violence:

1. Establishing an Arab monitor to collect and analyse data related to VAC. Initiating an orientation for national monitors and research centres concerning successful scientifically-proven methodologies and experiences so that in an incremental manner a network is established bringing together all monitors and research centres, with the aim of exchanging experiences.
2. Placing a table of indices on child protection and training in methodologies of their realization and of research of an epidemic nature, as well as systems for case management.
3. Creating a mechanism for childhood to be established should include a unit for administering research and surveys, and expanding the database of the LAS's project for family health to include detailed data on child protection.
4. Undertaking an Arab study to assess the scale of VAC in all of its forms and in different locations. Methodology used by UNICEF and Save the Children in Iraq can be adopted.
5. Designating a session of the Arab Parliament for Children on data collection involving the participation of children
6. Encouraging countries to adopt the child protection indices provided by the multiple indicators clusters survey undertaken by UNICEF in several states.
7. Continuing to work with the Arab Union for Managements of National Statistics, in coordinating the data on VAC, and including it in national surveys.
8. Encouraging examination of the forms of violence not conventionally covered such as violence on the Internet, violence among peers and sexual violence. Issuing guiding principles on methodologies to be used in implementing and training in such studies.

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Annexes

Annex 1: Questionnaire on the Preparation of the Comparative Arab Report on the Implementation of the Recommendations of the UN Report on VAC- Version 2: 2010-2012

Part One: International Commitment

First: UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and Optional Protocols

1. What is the position of the state on the ratification of:
 - The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
 - Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflicts.
 - Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography.
 - Optional Protocol on a Communications Procedure.
 - Convention for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women.
2. Please indicate the steps that have been made by the state during the past three years to implement the provisions of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, its Optional Protocols, and the Convention for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women to protect children from violence.
3. Indicate the most prominent measures taken by the state in the past three years to implement the recommendations of the UN Secretary-General's Study on VAC (with focus on the practical recommendations of the Comparative Arab Report on the Implementation of the Recommendations of the UN Report on VAC).
4. If your state has made reservations on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, its Optional Protocols, or CEDAW, have any of these reservations been withdrawn in the past three years? When? Has there been any attempt made to review the reservations with the aim of withdrawing them?
5. Are any steps currently being undertaken by the state to withdraw these reservations?
6. Please indicate the steps intended to be undertaken to ratify the protocols that have not been ratified. In your opinion, what are the main difficulties hindering this ratification?
7. In your opinion, how can the LAS provide support to the state to help overcome the difficulties that are preventing ratification, to withdraw reservations, or to include the provisions of these conventions in national laws, with respect to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, CEDAW, the Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography and the Optional Protocol on a Communications Procedure?

Second: Periodic National Reports to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women

8. 1) Is the state currently preparing for the presentation of any national reports on: the Convention on the Rights of the Child, CEDAW, the Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict or the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography?
9. 2) Please specify the due date, preparation mechanisms, and extent of children's participation.
10. 3) What are the measures that have been adopted or will be adopted by the state to implement the

observations of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child on the national level, particularly those relating to violence against children?

11. 4) What are the measures taken by the state to implement the recommendations of the General Comments of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in 2011 on freedom from all forms of violence (prevention, monitoring, documentation, referral, treatment and follow-up)?
12. 5) What form of support do you expect from the LAS and the UN in the process of preparation of national reports on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, CEDAW, and on the implementation of the Concluding Observations of the UN committee on the Rights of the Child and the Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women?

Part Two: Legal Framework for the Protection of Children – Violence in School and Emergency Situations

Do national legislations include a clear ban on all forms of violence against children in their various settings (home, school, community, workplace and welfare and judicial institutions)? Do these legislations stipulate mandatory reporting for professionals and those working with children?

First: Violence in Schools

1. Are there clear and specific national laws to prevent all forms of violence in schools?
2. Please clarify the legal framework for the prevention of violence in schools (national laws, decrees, ordinances, or bylaws), and whether this legal framework includes protection of victims, recovery, and punishment of the aggressor?
3. Does the prohibition of violence in schools, within these laws and regulations, include corporal punishment, psychological violence and bullying, in a clear and specific manner?
4. Please indicate clearly the measures that have been taken in the past three years or that the state intends to take to ban corporal punishment, sexual violence and bullying of children.
5. Is there a difference between the procedures and measures that prohibit violence in schools in the public and private sectors?
6. Are there mechanisms to monitor violence in schools? Please identify these mechanisms and the party responsible for the monitoring process. What is the legal framework which governs these mechanisms?
7. Please refer to the safe child-sensitive mechanisms available in schools.
8. Do other complaints mechanisms at the national level include violence in schools?
9. Is there a system for documenting reports and complaints in schools? Which entity is responsible for the documentation process? Is it available to the public? How can it benefited from? Is it linked to a database at the national level? How does coordination with other available reporting mechanisms at the national level take place?
10. What are the efforts made by the state or parties responsible for the available complaint and communications mechanisms to inform children of their existence and to encourage them to use them?
11. Are there any initiatives carried out by the state or schools to adopt and implement codes of conduct for teachers and school staff in the public and private sectors?
12. Does the employment system of teachers and staff observe the protection of children from violence in schools? Do they have the necessary capabilities and training to respond to and prevent violence against children?

13. Is there a policy for the protection of children in public or private schools? What are the measures you are undertaking to protect children in educational institutions (Child Protection Policy)?⁴⁰
14. Does the legal framework for the prohibition of violence in schools include a role for parents' committees? Describe this role.
15. What kind of assistance is expected from the LAS and from the United Nations to prevent and prohibit all forms of violence in schools under the law?

Second: Protection of Children in Emergency Situations

1. Please specify the existing plans (including preparedness plans), laws, and national and local mechanisms related to the protection of children in emergency situations (e.g. asylum, displacement, armed violence, and political unrest)?
2. Are these mechanisms linked to a national protection system? What are the difficulties and challenges that obstruct child protection in emergency situations?
3. Are the laws, procedures, and measures adopted by the state to prevent and protect children from violence in emergency situations inclusive of all children without discrimination (refugees, displaced children, those without papers, or unaccompanied children)? Please attach the document, law policy or measure.
4. What are the legislations that prevent the use and recruitment of children in armed conflicts?
5. Are all services (reporting and complaint (communications), educational and health services, rehabilitation and social integration) available by law and in practice to all children without any discrimination?
6. Please indicate the mechanisms for monitoring and follow-up of cases of violence against children in emergency situations.
7. Please refer to the efforts made by the state or concerned authorities to ensure the participation of children in the analysis of their situations and provision of suggestions during and after emergency situations.
8. Is there specific assistance that you request from the LAS or the United Nations to provide better protection for children from the violence against them in emergency situations?

Part Three: Independent National Institutions for the Rights of the Child

First: Independent Institutions for the Rights of the Child

1. Does your state have an independent national institution for the rights of the child, or does the national institution for human rights have a special commission for childhood?
2. In the absence of such an institution, is there any effort or initiative that the state is planning to undertake to establish an independent institution for the rights of the child?
3. Please specify the role and jurisdiction given to the existing institution. What is the legal framework for its establishment?
4. Please clarify whether the role and jurisdiction of the institution includes:
5. Review of legislations and proposal of amendments to laws in order to prohibit all forms of violence against children. If yes, specify the steps taken in this area.
6. Monitoring and documentation of violence against children in various places of existence, and following up with the competent authorities.
7. Conducting investigations and monitoring of public institutions concerned with the care and rehabilitation

40- Child protection policy within institutions includes a series of procedures and measures that are supposed to be adopted by this institution to safeguard the rights of the child, which should be translated in its internal or administrative systems and its methodology of work within a framework of principles, standards, guidelines and protocols that determine individual and institutional practice.

of children. If yes, are there any examples that took place in the past three years?

8. Receiving complaints of individuals or professional groups, follow-up mechanisms, and whether complainants usually get equity (give examples).
9. Raising public awareness on the importance of prevention and protection of children from all forms of violence (give examples of steps that have been carried out during the past three years).
10. Does the institution aim to publish periodic reports on its work (complaints, legal review and promotion of child rights) and are they made accessible to the media and general public?
11. What kind of assistance do you expect to receive from the LAS and the United Nations to establish an independent national institute for child rights or to activate what is already present?

Second: Child Helplines

1. Please refer to the safe mechanisms provided by the state to children to report violence.
2. Has a child helpline been established, or is it still in the process of being established? What is the start date? What entity is operating the line (governmental or civil)?
3. What is the legal mechanism that the child helpline has been established according to? What are its roles and jurisdictions? What are the mechanisms for coordination with concerned authorities?
4. Please specify the mechanism of work of this line? Referral and follow-up? Report documentation system?
5. Are there other existing lines in the state? What are the services they provide? What is the method of coordination with the national line?
6. What are the efforts you are undertaking to inform children of the existence of the child helpline? What is the percentage of children who use this service?
7. What is the extent of availability of this service to all categories of children, especially those who are marginalised, including children affected by emergency situations?
8. How available are reports to the general public? How frequently are they published?
9. Is there a clear mechanism for the evaluation and follow-up of communications, and to what extent are these communications responded to (Possibility of presenting some models)?

Part Four: National System for Information Management/ Data Collection

1. Please specify the type of system available to the state for data and information gathering on children and specifically children exposed to violence and danger.
2. Is the information system related to violence against children a unified system managed by a specific authority subject to formal administrative systems or is it of a special character? What is the nature of data collected by it? What are its sources?
3. Are there sectoral databases managed by administrative units related to health, education and social affairs? What are the data-gathering and coordination mechanisms? What is the nature of the relationship with the national information system?
4. Is data collection based on a list of clear and scientific indicators agreed upon by all sectors and based on international standards? Please specify these indicators.
5. Is data categorised according to gender, age group, family characteristics, educational level, geographic distribution and relationship with the aggressor?

6. Please indicate whether the state has available data systems that document cases of child mortality and take note of causes of death, especially death due to violence against children? Are reports on these cases published?
7. Does the information system publish periodic reports that are presented to public opinion or decision makers?
8. How does the state benefit from these reports? Is there any concerned authority that analyses this data and makes proposals for the development of public policy?
9. Since the year 2010 to the present time, what studies, research or surveys have been carried out that address the issue of violence against children? Please indicate the subject of the study, the purpose, the party conducting the research, research year and total general results. Please attach the study or provide an electronic link.
10. Does the state and concerned institutions plan on conducting new studies and research that address specific issues of violence against children? What is the subject, party conducting the research and source of funding?
11. What kind of assistance do you expect from the LAS and the United Nations to establish a national information-management system for violence against children?

General note: Please attach all supporting documents to the questionnaire or attach an electronic link.

Annex 2: Table 1, Status of Ratification by Arab States of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Two Optional Protocols⁴¹

Country	Convention on the Rights of the Child			Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography			Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflicts		
	Status	Signature	Ratification	Status	Signature	Ratification	Status	Signature	Ratification
The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan	Ratified	29/8/1990	24/5/1991	Ratified	6/9/2000	12/4/2006	Ratified	6/9/2000	23/5/2007
The United Arab Emirates	Joined	--	3/1/1997	-	--	--	--	--	--
The Kingdom of Bahrain	Joined	--	13/2/1992	Joined	--	21/9/2004	Joined	--	21/9/2004
Republic of Tunisia	Ratified	26/2/1990	1991/11/29	Joined			Joined		
The People's Democratic Republic of Algeria		Joined	22/4/2002	Joined	Joined	22/4/2002	Joined	22/4/2002	2002/5/7
The Republic of Djibouti	Ratified	26/1/1990	16/4/1993	Ratified	--	27/12/2006	Ratified		
The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia		--		Joined			Joined		
The Republic of Sudan		Joined	--	Joined	--	6/5/2009	Ratified		
The Arab Republic of Syria	Ratified	30/9/1990	6/12/1990	Joined	14/6/2006	2011/4/27	Joined	14/6/2006	2011/4/27
The Republic of Somalia	Joined	--	26/1/1996	--	--	18/8/2010	Signed	--	10/6/2011
The Republic of Iraq	Ratified	24/7/1990	3/8/1990	Joined	--	2/11/2004	Joined	9/5/2002	26/7/2005
The Sultanate of Oman	Ratified	18/9/1990	15/7/1993	Joined	--	15/5/2003	Joined	17/10/2003	2003/10/17
The State of Palestine	Signed	9/5/2002	--	--	--	--	--	16/9/2005	--

41- The data included in the Comparative Arab Report on the Implementation of the Recommendations of the UN Secretary-General's Study on VAC has been updated through its revision on the website of the OHCHR and also through the data received from Arab states regarding the questionnaire.

The State of Qatar	Joined	--	15/6/1994	Joined	--	24/6/2008	Joined	--	24/6/2008
The Union of the Comoros	Joined	--	9/12/1996	Joined	--	17/9/2004	--	--	17/9/2004
The State of Kuwait	Ratified	--	1/4/1995	Joined	--	--	Joined	--	--
The Republic of Lebanon	Ratified	8/12/1992	1995/7/12	Ratified	10/10/2001	8/11/2004	Signed	11/2/2002	--
The State of Libya		Joined	--	Joined	--	2003/7/20	Joined	--	29/10/2004
The Arab Republic of Egypt		Joined	--	Joined	--	2002/5/8	Joined	--	2002/2/23
The Kingdom of Morocco		26/1/1990		Ratified	8/9/2000	2/10/2001	Ratified	8/9/2000	22/5/2002
The Islamic Republic of Mauritania	Ratified	30/9/1990	22/6/1993	Joined	--	23/2/2007	--	--	--
The Republic of Yemen	Ratified	7/6/1990	21/10/1991	Joined	--	26/8/2004	Joined	--	26/8/2004

Annex 3: Table 2: Reservations by some Arab states on the Convention of the Rights of the Child; reasons and current status⁴²

State	Reservations on articles	Reasons for reservations	Current status
The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan	14, 20, 21	Conflict with Islamic Shari'a Law	
The United Arab Emirates	7, 14, 17, 21	Legislations regarding nationality, conflict with Islamic Shari'a Law عدم الاخلال بالقيم	
The Kingdom of Bahrain	No reservations		
The Republic of Tunisia	Preamble 2, 4, 6, 7, 40	In the implementation of this convention no legislative or regulatory decision that is in conflict with the Tunisian Constitution may be taken.	During the years 2003 and 2008, withdrew its reservations on articles 2, 7, and 40, and kept articles 2 and 6.
The People's Democratic Republic of Algeria	13, 14, 16, 17	Conflict with Islamic Shari'a Law.	
The Republic of Djibouti	General	Implementation of the measures and articles oppose religion and traditional values.	withdrew its reservations on 7/12/2009
The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	General	Conflict with Islamic Shari'a Law.	
The Republic of Sudan	No reservations		
The Arab Republic of Syria	14, 20, 21	Conflict with Islamic Shari'a Law.	Lifted its reservations on articles 20 and 21 under Legislative Decree 12/2007. Kept its reservations on article 14.
The Republic of Somalia			Signed the treaty on 9/3/2002 and has not yet ratified.
The Republic of Iraq	14	Conflict with Islamic Shari'a Law.	
The Sultanate of Oman	7, 9, 14, 21, 30	Conflict with the teachings of Islamic religion and local customs.	On January 9th, 2011 withdrew its reservations on Articles 7, 9, 21 and 30. Kept its reservations on Article 14, particularly paragraph 1.
The State of Palestine			

42- Table 2 was prepared based on data received by various sources, which include: The Comparative Report on the Reservations of Arab States on the Conventions on the Rights of the Child and its two Optional Protocols (Department of Family and Childhood at LAS, 8 November 2012), Child Law in Arab States: Reality and Hope (Family and Childhood Department at LAS, December 2010), Website of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (www.ohchr.org)

The State of Qatar	General 2, 14	The provisions of the two Articles are in conflict with Islamic Shari'a Law.	Issued on 1/4/2009 a partial withdrawal document on the general reservation on any provisions in conflict with the provisions of Islamic Shari'a Law, while keeping reservations on articles 2 and 14.
The Union of the Comoros	No reservations		
The State of Kuwait	7, 21	Conflict with Islamic Shari'a Law and national laws.	
The Republic of Lebanon	No reservations		
The State of Libya	No reservations		
The Arab Republic of Egypt	20, 21	Conflict with Islamic Shari'a Law	Withdrew these reservations under Presidential Decree No.145 for the year 2003
The Kingdom of Morocco	14, 21 ⁹	Islam is the religion of the state	Withdrew its reservations on article 14 on October 17th, 2006 but replaced it with an interpretive declaration. Kept its reservation on Article 21 due to conflict with Islamic Shari'a Law.
The Islamic Republic of Mauritania	No reservations.		
The Republic of Yemen	No reservations.		

Annex 4: Table 3, Status of Arab states reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the CRC and the two Optional Protocols.

National Reports	States Reports on CRC			The first report Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography		The first report Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict	
	State	Last completed reports	Effective date of submission	Due date of the next report	Anticipated date of submission	Actual date of submission	Anticipated date of submission
The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan	Combined fourth and fifth	22/8/2008	sixth 22/6/2018	4 /1/2009	31/1/2011	23 /6/2009	31/1/2011
The United Arab Emirates	First	15/4/2000	Has not submitted its reports starting from the second 1/2/2004 until the fourth 1/2/2014 ⁴³	--	--	--	--
The Kingdom of Bahrain	Combined second and third	12/2/2009	Combined fourth until sixth to be submitted before 14/9/2017 ⁴⁴	21/10/2006	--	21/10/2006	--
The Republic of Tunisia	Third	6/6/2008	Combined fourth until sixth to be submitted before 28/8/2018	13/10/2004	--	2 /2/ 2005	13 /7/ 2007
The People's Democratic Republic of Algeria	Combined third and fourth	25/6/2009	Combined fifth and sixth to be submitted before 15/11/2018 ⁴⁵	27 /1/2009	--	9/6/2011	--
The Republic of Djibouti	Second	26/10/2007	Combined third until fifth to be submitted before 31/10/2012	27 /5/ 2013	--	27 /5/ 2013	--

43- The United Arab Emirates indicated that it submitted its second report at the end of the year 2012.

44- The due date of the fourth until sixth reports was confirmed based on the concluding observations on Bahrain's report- Committee on the Rights of the Child- Session 57- between 30th May till the 17th of June, 2011.

45- The due date of the fifth and sixth reports was confirmed based on the concluding observations on Algeria's report- Committee on the Rights of the Child- Session 60- between 29th May till 15th June, 2012.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	Second	12/11/2003	Combined third and fourth to be submitted before 24/8/2011 ⁴⁶	18 /9/ 2012	--	Not included on the list despite having joined on 10/6/2011	--
The Republic of Sudan	Combined third and fourth	27/6/2008	Combined fifth and sixth to be submitted before 1/10/2015	2 /9/ 2004	3 /3/2006	26 /8/2007	12 /8/2008
The Arab Republic of Syria	Combined third and fourth	4/3/2009	Fifth 13/8/2015 ⁴⁷	15/6/ 2005	29/8/2005	17/11/2005	20/10/2006
The Republic of Somalia	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
The Republic of Iraq	First	6/8/1996	Has not submitted its reports from the second till the fourth 14/7/2001 14/7/2011 ⁴⁸	24/7/ 2010	28/5/2013*	24 /8/2010	9 /5/ 2012
The Sultanate of Oman	Second	28/4/2005	Combined third and fourth May 2013 ⁴⁹	17/10/2006	11/10/2007	17/10/2006	11/10/2007
The State of Palestine	First	December 2010 ⁵⁰	--	--	--	--	--
The State of Qatar	Second	10/1/2008	Combined third and fourth to be submitted before 2/5/2013	18 /1/2004	9/2/2004	25 /8/2004	12 /5/ 2006
The Union of the Comoros	First	21/7/1995	Has not submitted its reports from the second 21/7/2000 to the fifth 21/7/2014	23 /3/2009		--	--
The State of Kuwait	Second	30/7/2010	Has not submitted its reports from the third 19/11/2003 to the fourth 9/11/2013	26 /9/ 2006	16 /1/2007	26 /9/2006	16 /1/ 2007
The Republic of Lebanon	Third	15/11/2004	Combined fourth and fifth to be submitted before 12/12/2011	8 /12/2006	--	--	--
The State of Libya	Combined third and fourth	1/9/2009	fifth 14/5/2015	18 /7/ 2006	--	29/11/2006	--
The Arab Republic of Egypt	Combined third and fourth	24/11/2008	Combined fifth and sixth to be submitted before 2/3/2016 ⁵¹	12 /8/2004	5 /2/ 2010	6 /3/2009	5 /2/2010
The Kingdom of Morocco	Combined third and fourth	30/5/2012	fifth 20/7/2015	18 /1/2004	28 /6/ 2004	22 /6/ 2004	19 /2/ 2010
The Islamic Republic of Mauritania	Second	26/11/2007	Combined third till fifth to be submitted before 14/6/2013	23/5/2009	--	12 /3/ 2011	--
The Republic of Yemen	Fourth	21/5/2010	Fifth 30/5/2013	15 /1/2007	15/2/2008	2 /4/2009	19 /1/2012

Source: The official website of the OHCHR, Document 262, 4/12/2012

46- Saudi Arabia indicated that it is about to complete the submission of its third and fourth periodic reports, and is also working on preparing the preliminary reports on the Optional Protocols.

47- The due date on the fifth report was confirmed based on the concluding observations on Syria's report – Committee on the Rights of the Child, Session 58, between 19 September and 7 October, 2011.

48- Iraq indicated that the state's report on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in its final version is being presented for approval at the Iraqi Council of Ministers in order to be submitted to the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

49- The Sultanate of Oman indicated that it had submitted its third and fourth reports in May 2013.

50- This date was listed based on the response given to the questionnaire of the State of Palestine, Memorandum of the Permanent Commission, Number 1170, 19 April 2013.

51- The due date of the fifth and sixth reports were confirmed based on the concluding observations on Egypt's report, Committee on the Rights of the Child Session 57, from 30 May – 17 June 2011.

Annex 5: Table 4, Status of ratification and reservations by Arab states on the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

Withdrawal of reservation	Reservation	Date of ratification	Status	State
Year 2009 reservation on paragraph 4 of Article 15 was withdrawn.	Articles 9 (2), 15 (4), 16(1 :g,d,z)	1992 / 7 / 1	Ratified	The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
	Articles 2(w), 9 , 15(2) , 29(1)	2004 / 10 / 6	Joined	The United Arab Emirates
	Articles 2, 9 (2), 15 (4), 16, 29(1)	2002 / 6 / 18	Joined	The Kingdom of Bahrain
	Articles 9 (2), 16(1 :g,h,d,o,z) , 29(1)	1985 / 9 / 20	Ratified	The Republic of Tunisia
On 15th July, 2009 withdrew its reservation on Article 9 (2).	Articles 2, 9 (2), 15 (4), 16, 29(1)	1996 / 5 / 22	Joined	The Democratic Republic of Algeria
	--	1998 / 12 / 2	Joined	The Republic of Djibouti
	Articles 9 (2), 29(1)	2000 / 9 / 7	Ratified	The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
	--	--	--	The Republic of Sudan
	Articles 2, 9 (2), 15 (4), 16(1.2:h,d,o,z), 29(1)	2003 / 3 / 28	Joined	The Arab Republic of Syria
				The Republic of Somalia
	Articles 2(w,z), 9 (1.2), 16, 29(1)	1986 / 8 / 13	Joined	The Republic of Iraq
	Articles 9 (2), 15 (4), 29(1)	2006 / 2 / 7	Joined	The Sultanate of Oman
	--	2009/3/8	Decree رئاسي	The State of Palestine
	Articles 2 (1), 9 (2), 15 (4), 16(1:ج,و,أ)	2009	Joined	The State of Qatar
	--	1994/10 / 31	Joined	The Union of the Comors
December 9th, 2005, withdrew its reservation on Article 7 (1).	Articles 7(1) ,9 (2), 29(1)	1994 / 9 / 2	Joined	The State of Kuwait
	Articles 9 (2), 16(1 :g,d,o,z)	1997 / 4 / 21	Joined	The Republic of Lebanon
5th of July, 1995, submitted an interpretive declaration on its reservations stipulating "that the ratification does not conflict with personal status law derived from Islamic Shari'a".	Articles 2, 16(1 :g,d)	1989 / 5 / 16	Joined	The State of Libya
4th January, 2008 withdrew its reservation on Article 9 (2).	Articles 2, 9 (2), 16, 29(1)	1981/10 / 18	Ratified	The Arab Republic of Egypt
	Articles 9 (2), 16(1 :g,h,d,o,z), 29(1)	1993 / 6 / 21	Joined	The Kingdom of Morocco
	--	2001 / 5 / 10	Joined	The Islamic Republic of Mauritania
	Article 29 (1)	1984 / 5 / 30	Joined	The Republic of Yemen

Source: Quantitative and qualitative indicators of CEDAW, Dr. Haifa Abu Ghazaleh, Arab Women Organisation, 2009.

Annex 6: General principles for a model framework of legislation for the prevention of and protection from all kinds of VAC.⁵²

- The necessity of building this framework on the foundations and principles of the rights of the child in a comprehensive and holistic manner: guaranteeing the right to survival and development, the child's best interest, the right of participation (the right of the child to be heard) and non-discrimination based on gender, nationality or age. All of these principles must be included in a law in order to ensure the recognition of the dignity of the child and the recognition of the child as a rights holder, and a unique and valuable individual instead of a victim.
- Prohibition of torture and other forms of cruel, inhumane, or degrading treatment of the child.⁵³

52- Child Law in Arab States: Reality and Hope, Dr. Elie Mikhael and Dr. Khalil Mostafa Khalil, LAS 2010.

53- This principle is ensured in Arab states with the exception of degrading treatment (the concept of psychological violence needs to be clarified in legal texts to ensure the protection of children from the consequences of treatment degrading to their inherent dignity).

- Application of criminal law in a fair manner on all children regardless of the perpetrator of the crime.⁵⁴
- Non-justification of any forms of violence against children including the use of violence as a means of discipline and control. The importance of clarity and accuracy in the content of the legal text is highlighted here in order to prevent any misinterpretation, to guarantee effective protection and to prevent any contradiction- often in the text of the same article, and often between various laws (Penal Code, Personal Status Law and Family Law). The deletion should include every justifying argument in the laws and internal regulations that govern all locations which children live in or frequent: Family Law, the education system, the judicial system and institutions and systems of alternative care.
- Preventing negligence or negligent treatment, and here the importance of clarifying concepts of human rights is also highlighted in order to guarantee the principle of clarity in the law.⁵⁵
- Highlighting the administrative and legislative requirements necessary to ensure the registration of all children, and establishing an independent review process for internal systems and levels of intervention in foster and alternative institutions periodically by trained professionals with weight given to the opinion of the child by listening to him directly during this process.
- The importance of monitoring and reporting all cases of violence that take place in all locations according to clear, specific, and declared mechanisms, and ensuring the protection of those who lodge complaints.
- The placement of children in closed institutions (documentation, care.) should be subject to periodic review. The opinion of the child should be taken into account, and the decision should be based on a number of factors including that the measure is for the shortest period possible, as a last resort, and for the child's best interest. The decision should be issued by a judicial authority supported by a detailed social investigation.
- Mandatory reporting for professional groups along with necessary verification and research.
- The necessity of declaring the results of independent investigations related to child deaths or serious injuries as a result of violence.
- Determining the legal age of sexual consent without discrimination according to gender (ensuring that children above this age aren't incriminated for having sexual relations).
- Determining the age of 18 as the legal age of marriage for males and females, and preventing the arrangement of, application for, or coercion of underage marriage.
- Subjecting the child to any sexual exploitation including through the use of modern means of communication, and the necessity of prevention of possession, production, or distribution of child pornography.
- Guaranteeing that children who are victims of violence or witnesses to it, or their representatives have clear, public and accessible means of facing all forms of violence using suitable complaint mechanisms and direct communication with the courts when necessary.
- The family's approval is not necessary to file a complaint against violence or make a claim.
- Guaranteeing measures of recovery, support and help for children victims of violence with the aim of ensuring their natural integration into public life.

54- Most laws still provide an excuse if the aggressor is a family member (dropping of public right if the complainant drops charges, hesitation to report or complain to ensure the cohesion of the family.)

55- Negligence includes failure to meet basic needs necessary to ensure the survival and development of the child in all forms (educational, health, cultural, psychological.).

- Not holding children who are victims of violence under any circumstance responsible for violations committed against them.
- Imposing suitable penalties against perpetrators of VAC and maximizing the penalties when the perpetrator is a member of the child's immediate environment.
- Legislations should permit the pursuit and punishment of perpetrators of VAC even outside national borders.

Annex 7: Definitions included in the general comment of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, Number 13: the right of the child to freedom from all forms of violence.

Negligence or implicitly negligent treatment: Negligence is meant the lack of response to a child's physical and psychological needs and abstaining from protecting it from danger or providing it with health services, registering birth, or other services when caregivers have the means, knowledge and opportunity to obtain these services.⁵⁶

Negligence includes the following:

- a. Physical negligence: Not protecting a child from harm* for reasons such as lack of supervision or lack of provision of basic needs such as sufficient food, shelter, clothing and medical care to the child.
- b. Psychological or emotional negligence: This includes not manifesting any emotional support to or surrounding the child, with love, showing total indifference to the child and, the lack of "presence of psychological caregivers" an outcome of which is not observing the signs emanating from the child, being subjected to relatives' violence, and addiction to drugs and alcohol.
- c. Neglecting the child's physical and mental health: Deprivation from basic medical care.
- d. Negligence in the domain of education: not complying with the laws which oblige caregivers to ensure that their children receive an education by attending school or through other means.
- e. Abandoning children: this is a practice that is cause for great concern, and which can affect children more than others, especially children who are born out of wedlock, and disabled children in some communities.⁵⁷

Mental Violence:

"Mental violence" is frequently described, as referred to in the Convention, as psychological abuse, mental abuse, verbal or emotional abuse or carelessness. This may include:

- a. All forms of interaction with the child which are habitually harmful such as making him feel inadequate, unloved or unwanted or that he is exposed to danger, or is of no value except insofar as he complies to the needs of other people.
- b. Terrorizing, intimidating and threatening, exploitation and corrupting, scorn and rejection, ignoring and prejudice.
- c. Shunning, and negligence of mental health and of medical and educational needs.
- d. Insulting, rejection, degradation, scorn, ridicule and hurting the child's feelings.
- e. Exposure to domestic violence.

⁵⁶- Member states are also committed to support caregivers in protection from accidents (Article 19 and paragraph 2E of Article 24)

⁵⁷- Parents and caregivers who do not have sufficient means to support their children often abandon them, in many countries. The abandonment meant in the definition is that which is denoted when parents who have the means to meet their children's needs abstain from doing so. The committee has often urged member-states to "render appropriate assistance to parents and legal guardians in the performance of their child-bearing responsibilities" (Paragraph 2 of Article 18 of the Convention).

- f. Placing in solitary confinement, isolating, or detaining in degrading or offensive circumstances.
- g. Psychological bullying by adults or other children and abuse^{58*}, including through information technology and means of communications, such as mobile phones and the internet (known as "cyber-bullying").

Physical violence:

This includes lethal and non-lethal physical violence. The Committee prescribes physical violence as including the following:

- a. All forms of corporal punishment and all other forms of torture or cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment.
- b. Physical bullying and harassment by adults or other children.

Disabled children may be subjected to specific forms of physical violence such as:

- a. Forced sterilization, especially for girls
- b. Violence on the pretext of treatment (such as treating with electrical shocks and utilizing the latter as a form of repulsing treatment so as to monitor the child's behaviour).
- c. Deliberately maiming the child with the objective of exploiting it in begging in the streets or in other venues.

Corporal punishment:

The Committee in General Comment Number 8 (Paragraph 11) defined "corporal" or "physical" punishment as punishment in which physical force is used with the intent of inflicting a certain degree of pain or harm however minimal. Most forms of this type of punishment involve beating children ("slapping", "pummeling" or "beating on the buttocks") by hand or using an instrument like a whip, stick, belt, shoe or wooden spoon etc. This type of punishment may also include kicking, shaking or throwing the child or scratching, pinching, biting, plucking the hair, boxing the ears, beating with a stick, or forcing the child to remain in an uncomfortable position. Punishment may also include burning or cauterizing with a hot iron, or forcing the child to 'imbibe' certain substances.

The Committee sees that corporal punishment is degrading in all cases. Other specific forms of corporal punishment are cited in the report of the independent expert for the UN SG's Study on VAC. (A/61/299, paragraphs 56,60 and 62)

Sexual Assault and Sexual Exploitation:

Sexual assault and sexual exploitation include the following:

- a. Forcing or coercing the child to partake of any illegal or psychologically detrimental sexual activity^{59*}.
- b. Sexually exploiting children for commercial purposes.
- c. Exploiting children by making audio or visual recordings of cases in which they are sexually assaulted.
- d. Child prostitution, sexual slavery, sexual exploitation in travel and tourism, trafficking of children (inside countries and between them) and selling them for sexual purposes or for forced marriage. Many children experience sexual harm that does not involve physical force but that still constitutes an assault on the self, is based on exploitation, and can lead to trauma/shock.

58- "Abuse" refers to rituals or other activities involving harassment, violence or humiliation, utilized to initiate a person into a certain group

59- Sexual assault includes any sexual activities imposed by an adult on a child, and from which the child has the right to be protected by virtue of criminal law. Sexual activities are also considered a form of aggression when practiced by one child on another, if the age of the culpable child by far exceeds the victim, and if the culpable child implements force, threats or any other form of pressure, to this purpose. Sexual activity between children is not considered sexual assault if their age exceeds the legal age set by the member-state as the age of sexual consent.

Torture and Inhumane or Degrading Treatment:

This includes all forms of VAC imposed with the aim of extracting a confession, punishing children extra-judicially for illegal or unacceptable behaviour, or forcing children to partake of activities against their will. This approach is usually adopted by policemen and law-enforcement officials and employees in home institutions and other institutions and individuals who wield an authority over children including effective non-state armed parties.

Victims are often marginalised or deprived children or those subjected to discrimination, or lacking the protection of responsible adults who will defend their rights and best interests. This category of children also includes those who have broken the law, street children, children belonging to minorities and aboriginal peoples, and unaccompanied children. The savagery of such acts often leads to life-long physical and psychological harm, and to social tension.

Violence Among Children:

This category includes physical, psychological and sexual violence, which usually occurs during some children's bullying of others: it is a violence that is not only immediately detrimental when it happens, to the child's safety and physical and psychological welfare, but, as well, it usually also severely impacts the child's development, education, and integration in society in the medium and long terms. The violence that ensues from youth gangs is also severely harmful to children whether they are its victims or are partaking of it. And even though children are the perpetrators, the role of adults responsible for those children is decisive in any endeavour to respond appropriately, and prevent this violence and ensure that measures adoption do not adopt a punitive approach, or counter violence with violence.

Self-inflicted harm:

This category includes eating disorders, drug abuse and addiction, self-imposed wounds, suicidal thoughts, and actual suicide. The Committee expressed particular concern regarding suicide among adolescents.

Harmful practices:

This category includes as examples, the following:

- a. Corporal punishment and all other forms of cruel and degrading treatment.
- b. Female genital mutilation.
- c. Amputating of limbs, shackling, wounding, burning and cauterizing.
- d. Adopting violent and degrading rituals in order to initiate an individual into a certain group, force-feeding children, fattening, and virginity tests (inspecting girls' genital organs).
- e. Forced marriage and early marriage.
- f. "Honour" crimes and acts of violence in the name of "retribution" (when conflict between different groups expands to include aggression against the children of certain parties) and incidents of death or violence in connection with dowries.
- g. Accusations of "magic" and related harmful practices such as "charms/fetishes".
- h. Cutting out the tongue and pulling out the teeth.

Violence in Mass Media:

Mass media, especially sensational newspapers and the yellow press give prominence to horrific news, thus creating a prejudiced and stereotypical image of children especially deprived children and adolescents. These are usually described as being violent and wayward, only because their behaviour or clothing might be different. This sensational and stereotypical image paves the way for the adoption of government policies that are based upon a punitive approach, which could include violence as a reaction to supposed or actual felonies committed by children or youth.

Violence through information technology and communications:

The risks to children entailed in information technology and media cover the following interrelated areas:

- a. Sexual assault on children performed with the purpose of producing visual and audio recordings is facilitated by the internet and other information technology and communications media.
- b. Taking photographs or fake photographs (photo-shop) and morally offensive video tapes of children, or of people mocking children or a group of children, producing such photographs or allowing them to be taken, distributing or displaying them, having them in one's possession, or advertising them.

Children as users of information technology and communications.

- a. Children, as receivers of information may be exposed to commercial ads, spam email, promotional ads, personal information, aggressive or violent content, incitement to hatred, prejudice, racism, pornography⁶⁰ or undesired or deceptive content that is actually or potentially harmful.
- b. Children while communicating with others through information technology and media can be exposed to bullying or harassment, "seduction" and/or coercion, deception or persuasion that induces them to meet persons outside of the internet, and "luring" them to perform sex and/or provide personal information.
- c. Children may become involved as perpetrators in bullying others or harassing them, playing games adversely affect their psychological development, producing and downloading inappropriate sexual content, or providing misleading information and advice, and/or illegally downloading content, committing piracy or gambling or financial fraud and/or terrorism.⁶¹

See also the Rio de Janeiro Declaration and Call for Action to Prevent and Stop Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents, available at:

<http://iicongressomundial.net/congresso/arquivos/Rio/20Declaration/20and/20Call/20for/20Action/20-20FINAL/20Version.pdf>

60- The exposure to some pornographic content can lead to an increase in the sexual assault of one child on the other, because children who are exposed to pornographic material "try" what they see on younger children or others, to whom they may have easy access and control.

61- Adapted from a table prepared by EUKids Online, p.6 AUPs in Context: Establishing Safe and Responsible Online Behaviours (Becta,2009).

Annex 8: Table 5, Status of the legal framework to ban corporal punishment in homes and schools in Arab states

State	Prohibited in homes	Prohibited in schools
Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan	Not prohibited	
United Arab Emirates	Not prohibited	Prohibited
Kingdom of Bahrain	Not prohibited	Prohibited
Republic of Tunisia	Prohibited	Prohibited
Algerian Democratic People's Republic	Not prohibited	Prohibited
Republic of Djibouti	Not prohibited	Prohibited
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	Not prohibited	Not prohibited
Sudanese Republic	Not prohibited	Partially prohibited
Syrian Arab Republic	Not prohibited	Not prohibited
Somali Republic	--	--
Republic of Iraq	Not prohibited	Not prohibited
Sultanate of Oman	Not prohibited	Prohibited
State of Palestine ⁶²	Not prohibited	Prohibited
State of Qatar	Not prohibited	Prohibited
Federal Republic of Comoros	--	--
State of Kuwait	Not prohibited	Prohibited
Lebanese Republic	Not prohibited	Not prohibited
The State of Libya	Not prohibited	Prohibited
Arab Republic of Egypt	Not prohibited	Not prohibited
Kingdom of Morocco	Not prohibited	Not prohibited
Islamic Republic of Mauritania	--	--
Republic of Yemen	Not prohibited	Prohibited

Source: Progress attained in the prohibition of corporal punishment in MENA- the Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment Of Children-April 2013

Annex 9: The Convention on the Rights of the Child as a framework for intervention in armed conflicts

The Convention on Child Rights constitutes a legal and ethical framework specifying the methods of working with children in ordinary circumstances as well as during emergencies. The Convention includes clear articles that underscore states' obligations as regards adopting administrative, legislative measures to protect children from the risks to which they might be exposed in emergency cases, it also underscores the obligation to ensure opportunities for psychosocial recovery of children who are exploited, abused, and affected by armed conflicts.

Article 39: States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to promote physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of a child victim of: any form of neglect, exploitation, or abuse; torture or any other form of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; or armed conflicts. Such recovery and reintegration shall take place in an environment, which fosters the health, self-respect and dignity of the child.

There are also several articles in the Convention related to emergency situations:

Article 9: Ensuring that the child is not separated from his or her parents against their will.

Article 10: Ensuring entry or departure from a specific country with the aim of reuniting the family.

62- The State of Palestine's report mentioned that laws prohibit violence in schools (Articles 38 and 39 of the Child Law, and the policy of confronting violence in schools issued by the Ministry of Education)

Article 19: Protecting and safeguarding the child from mistreatment and all forms of violence.

Article 20: The right of the child who is deprived from his or her family environment to obtain special protection and help.

Article 22: The right of the child who is seeking refugee status or who is considered a refugee to enjoy various rights set forth in the Convention.

Article 28: The right to education.

Article 34: Protecting the child from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.

Article 38 and the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed interventions: the non-involvement of children under the age of eighteen in armed conflicts.

Annex 10: International treaties and conventions related to alleviating the risks of emergency situations

- The Universal Declaration for Human Rights (1948)
- The International Convention on Civil and Political Rights 1966.
- The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966).
- The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1969).
- The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflicts (2002).
- The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006).
- Millenium Development Goals (8 goals to be achieved in 2015).
- The Dakar Framework for Action on Education For All (2000-2015).
- International Labour Organization Convention C182 Concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worse Forms of Child Labour(1999).
- International Labour Organization Convention C138 Minimum Age Convention (2000).
- The Fourth Geneva Convention for 1949 on Protecting Civilian Persons in Times of War.
- Convention relating to the Status of Refugees 1951.
- Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989.
- Convention to End All Forms of Discrimination Against Women 1979.
- EU Guidelines on Children and Armed Conflict (2000).
- UN Security Council Resolution 1612 for 2005.
- UN Security Council Resolutions 1820, 1882,1888,1889 for 2008,2009.

Annex 11: Activities specified by the Committee on the Rights of the Child General Comment Number 2 on the roles of independent national human rights institutions in the promotion and protection of the rights of the child.

Recommended activities:

The activities mentioned below are an example of activities, which national institutions can adopt in order to promote child rights in view of the Convention's general principles, although this is not a comprehensive list.

Institutions should adopt the following:

- Investigation of cases of child right violations based on complaints received, or their own initiatives within their jurisdictions.
- Investigation of cases related to child rights.
- Preparing and publishing opinions/views, recommendations and reports based on the request of national authorities or on their own initiative, regarding a number of issues related to reinforcing and protecting child rights.
- Reviewing the sufficiency and effectiveness of the law and of practices related to child protection.
- Reinforcing the complementarity between national legislation, systems and practices, with the Convention on Rights of the Child and its optional protocols and other human rights conventions on children, and ensuring their effective implementation. This includes providing advice to public and private institutions regarding implementation of the articles of the Convention.
- Ensuring that national policy-makers take into account child rights in formulating and rectifying national economic policies and development plans.
- Reviewing governments' implementation of the provisions related to child rights, and supervising them so as to ensure that statistics and other data are systematically detailed so as to specify the measures that must be adopted to ensure respect of child rights.
- Ensuring the ratification of and joining of all international human rights conventions.
- Ensuring the study of the impact of laws and policies on children, from the phase of their formulation up until their implementation and afterwards, so as to conform with ARTICLE 3 of the Convention which sets forth the necessity safeguarding children's well-being as a fundamental consideration in all activities pertaining to them.
- Ensuring the ability of children to express their views and be heard in matters pertaining to human rights, and in defining the issues related to their rights in view of ARTICLE 12.
- Supporting the facilitation of purposeful involvement of NGO's
- Evolving international laws and conventions related to issues that affect children, including organisations formed by children themselves.
- Reinforcing public understanding and awareness of the importance of children's rights, working closely with the media, and sponsoring research and educational activities in this domain. "
- Acquainting government, public agencies and the general public with provisions of the Convention on Rights of the Child and supervising methods by which the state complies with its obligations in this

respect and in accordance with Article No.42 of the Convention with obliges member states to "undertake to make the principles and provisions of the Convention widely known, by appropriate and active means, to adults and children alike."

- Assisting in formulating programmes for teaching child rights and undertaking researches relevant to them, and including them in school and university curricula and professional circles.
- Educating on human rights with a special emphasis on children (in addition to reinforcing public understanding of the importance of child rights).
- Adopting needed legal measures to support child rights in states, and providing legal assistance to children.
- Involvement in mediation and reconciliation efforts prior to raising a case to the courts, since there is a need to provide to the latter with experiences in the human rights domain in the capacity of a 'friend of the court, or mediator'.
- Visiting juvenile homes (and all places in which children are detained for purposes of reforming or penalizing them, as well as care facilities) with the aim of preparing reports on the statuses of these facilities.
- Presenting recommendations for improvement, in accordance with ARTICLE 3 of the Convention, which obliges member states to "ensure that the institutions, services and facilities responsible for the care or protection of children shall conform with the standards established by competent authorities, particularly in the areas of safety, health, in the number and suitability of their staff, as well as competent supervision."
- Any other news related to the activities above.

Annex 12: Table 11: The status of child helplines dealing with Child Helpline International in Arab States.⁶³

State		Emirate		Bahrain	Tunisia
Operating authority		Dubai Foundation for Woman and Child Care (Non-governmental)	(Governmental)	(Governmental)	The Tunisian Association for the Defense of Children's Rights
Line number		998	998	-	-
Year of establishment		2009	2011	2011	2005
Geographic coverage		National	National	National	-
Number of children covered		165744	165744	None	3 millions
Percentage of children using the lines		-	-	-	Small percentage
Legal mechanism of its establishment		-	Child Law	Child Law	-
Services provided by the line		Enabling the family, promoting awareness	-	-	Coordination with government circles in case of threatened child
Referral to child care services	Social specialist	Referral without a problem	Referral without a problem	Referral without a problem	Limited absorptive capacity
	Psychological mental specialist	Referral without a problem	Referral without a problem	Referral without a problem	
	Health-medical specialist	Referral without a problem	Referral without a problem	Referral without a problem	Referral without a problem
	Alternative care service	Referral without a problem	Referral without a problem	Referral without a problem	Limited absorptive capacity
	Shelter services	Referral without a problem	Referral without a problem	Referral without a problem	Limited absorptive capacity
	Judicial Services	Referral without a problem	Referral without a problem	Referral without a problem	No referral
	Police/Social Police	Referral without a problem	Referral without a problem	Referral without a problem	Referral without a problem
	Hospital	Referral without a problem	Referral without a problem	Referral without a problem	
	Other				
Other Existing Helplines		Emirate of Sharjah	None	None	Ministry of the Family
Services provided by other existing helplines		Receiving complaints and providing services	--	--	Notification
Coordination		Referral of cases when necessary	--	--	With the child representative and Ministry of the Family
Informing the children of the helpline and publicizing it to them		Awareness campaigns and distributing pamphlets	Awareness campaigns and distributing pamphlets	Awareness campaigns and distributing pamphlets	Limited capacity
Making Available to Marginalized Children		Available to all children	Available to all children. No marginalized children.	Free for all	Free for all
Documenting data		Electronic system	Electronic system	There is no complete database recording phone calls	Register for all reports
Preparing the report		Reports on incoming data	Reports on incoming data	Monthly reports to Ministry officials	None
Secrecy		Available	Available	Available	--
Availability to the public		Statistics	Generalities	--	--

63- The data available in the table was compiled based on the responses of child helplines in Arab state and members of the Child Helpline International network.

Algeria	Saudi Arabia	Sudan
Algerian Network for the Defense of Children's Rights	National Family Safety Program	(Governmental)
Green Line 3033	800111	-
2011	2011	2009
Multiple local	National	National
-	Children represent 30% of total population	-
48.51%	18%	-
Child Rights Convention	Agreement of supervisory board of the phone-line	Child Law 2010 ARTICLE 85
-	-	Receiving reports, claims and complaints and awareness-raising.
Limited absorptive capacity during a limited number of hours only	Referral but services are not efficient	Referral without a problem
Limited absorptive capacity during a limited number of hours only	Referral without a problem	Referral without a problem
Referral without a problem	Referral within specific hours	No referral
	No referral	Referral without a problem
Limited absorptive capacity during a limited number of hours only	No referral	Referral without a problem
Referral without a problem	Referral without a problem	Referral without a problem
Referral without a problem	Referral without a problem	Referral without a problem
	Referral during limited hours only	Referral without a problem
National gendarmerie: referral to them without a problem	Referral to national human rights associations during limited hours	
The green line in:	Complaints unit: Ministry of Social Affairs 1919	Port Sudan phone line 9696
Ministry of Social Security -National Security -National gendarmerie	Free national line for domestic violence	Receiving complaints, providing psychological, social, legal support
Hearing and guidance-reporting	--	--
Under preparation	Media and awareness campaigns	Media, promotion and awareness campaigns
Activities with children and families. Media and communication technologies.	Free for all	Free for all
Service of accessing children. Training programmes for child rights and protection	Advanced electronic database	Manual recording of calls. Technically documenting reports
Electronic system and files	Monthly and annual	Reports
Annually in the first of June	Available	Available
--	Available through the media	--

State		Iraq	Palestine	Lebanon	
Operating authority		Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (Governmental)	(Non-governmental)	Developmental Action Without Borders foundation (Non-governmental)	Ministry of Social Affairs (Governmental)
Line number		116	121		1714
Year of establishment		2011	2006	Under foundation	2012
Geographic coverage		Local	National	Local multiple	National
Number of children covered		400,000	Two millions	35,000	--
Percentage of children using the lines		65,000	26,000	Anticipated 17,500	--
Legal mechanism of its establishment		Official ministry declaration	Officially registered in the Ministry of Interior	A society objective	Ministerial decree
Services provided by the line		--		Guidance and coordination with the state and partners to offer the services	Receiving referral calls and providing guidance and support
Referral to child care services	Social specialist	Referral without a problem. Limited Absorptive capacity	Limited absorptive capacity	Referral without a problem	Referral without a problem
	Psychological mental specialist		Referral but services are not good	Referral without a problem	Referral but services are not good
	Health-medical specialist	Limited absorptive capacity at specified hours only	Referral at specified hours only	Referral without a problem	Referral but services are not good
	Alternative care service	Limited absorptive capacity	Referral but services are not good	Referral but services are not good	Limited absorptive capacity
	Shelter services	Limited absorptive capacity	Referral at specific hours only	Referral but services are not good	Limited absorptive capacity
	Judicial Services	Limited absorptive capacity	Referral to them without a problem	Referral to them without a problem	Referral to them without a problem
	Police/Social Police	Limited Absorptive Capacity	Referral to them without a problem	--	--
	Hospital	Limited Absorptive Capacity	Referral during certain hours only	--	Limited Absorptive Capacity
	Other	Limited Absorptive Capacity	-	-	-
Other Existing Helplines		-	None	1714	NGO's (Kafa, Hemaya, Caretas, Amel Organization, Nab'a, High Commission for Refugees)
Services provided by other existing helplines		None	--	--	Guidance and Referral
Coordination		--	--	--	Coordination according to case, and type of service
Informing the children of the helpline and publicizing it to them		--	Awareness campaigns and distributing Pamphlets	Works to establish and Propagate the helpline	Media and advertising campaigns
Making Available to Marginalized Children		Awareness campaigns and Distributing pamphlets.	Available to All	Available in Ain El Halwa	Available to all for a fee
Documenting data		Available to All	Manual registering of phone calls then inputting them electronically	A special programme will be designed	Manual registering of phone calls
Preparing the report		Manual registering of phone calls then inputting them electronically	Reports (analysis)	Will be prepared	Statistical reports
Secrecy		Report (analysis)	Available	Available	--
Availability to the public		Available	--	Made available to persons concerned	--

Qatar	Libya	Egypt	Yemen
Qatar Foundation for Child and Women Protection (Non-governmental)	Society of Child Rights (Non-governmental)	National Council for Motherhood and Childhood (Governmental)	Phone guidance line for psychological, social and legal assistance (Non-governmental)
919		16000	
2010	Under foundation	2005	2002
National	National	National	National
306,402 million people approximately	45%	--	10,000
0.4%	--	6%	10,000
A foundation objective	--	Child Law 2008/ 126	License pertaining to the Arab Organization for Human Rights
Protection	--	Intervention and referring reports to parties concerned	Legal, social and psychological counseling and contacting public security for immediate intervention.
Referral without a problem during specific hours only.	--	Referral without a problem at specific hours only	Limited absorptive capacity
Referral without a problem at specified hours only	--	Referral without a problem at specified hours only	Limited absorptive capacity
Referral without a problem at specified hours only	-	Referral at specific hours only	Limited absorptive capacity
Referral at specified hours only	--	Referral without a problem	Limited absorptive capacity
Referral without a problem	--	Referral without a problem	Limited absorptive capacity
Referral during specific hours	--	Referral to them without problem	Limited Absorptive Capacity
Referral to them without a problem	--	Referral to them without a problem	Limited Absorptive Capacity
Referral to them without a problem	--	Referral to them without a problem. Limited absorptive capacity	Limited Absorptive Capacity
-	-	-	-
None	None	Family counseling line 1602	Hotline in Aden, Complaints line in Ministry of Human Rights
--	--	Providing family counseling and reporting child trafficking	Psychological support. Receiving complaints on the smuggling of children.
--	--	Available with the two lines existing in on organization	Exists
Media outlets and school conglomerations	Launching questionnaire on studying needs and awareness raising, through the line.	Media and Awareness Campaigns	Media and Awareness Campaigns
Available to all	Possible	Available to all free of charge	Available to all
Database	--	Database	--
Monthly and periodic reports	Adherence to international criteria	Periodic reports with data	Reports
Available		Available	Available
Available to those concerned and public opinion		--	At demand

