



Geneva, July 2014

Dear colleagues,

I hope this email finds you well.

I write to you with a few updates from Geneva, particularly concerning the Human Rights Council: its 26th session; the recent 21st special session; the upcoming 27th session; as well as other activities (in particular the Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty and events relating to the Committee on the Rights of the Child).

Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty:

I am sure you are all aware of the work DCI has taken on, since last autumn, in calling for a Global Study on children deprived of liberty to be carried by the United Nations in collaboration with civil society, states and other stakeholders. So far, our efforts are proving successful: the **official launch** took place in March (Geneva) with the support of the SRSV/VAC, members of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, as well as a number of States. An **Expert Consultation** took place in June (Geneva) with the participation of many experts, to discuss the strategy in lobbying for the Study and the eventual methodology which would be followed. Immediately following the Consultation, DCI went on an advocacy mission to New York to lobby governments in light of the **United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) child rights resolution**. This resolution, to be adopted in October, will (depending on States' negotiations) formally request that the Study be carried out.

If you have not done so already, please take a look at the official website to learn more about this major initiative of the movement: <http://www.childrendeprivedofliberty.info/> - and feel free to contact me for any further details or queries.

26th session of the Human Rights Council (10-27 June):

Please note that all reports are available online (in English, French, Spanish and Arabic), at the following link: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session26/Pages/ListReports.aspx>

During this session the following issues of interest were addressed:

❖ Family

The Council adopted a **resolution on the 'protection of the family'** (26 June), which undermines children's rights and ignores the reality that various forms of families exist. NGOs, including DCI, released a position paper highlighting that all children, whether they live in a family environment or not, remain rights-holders whose rights cannot be overlooked, limited or negated. The position paper is available here:



<http://www.childrightsconnect.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Joint-paper-Protection-of-FamilyEng.pdf>

❖ **Women & Girls**

Focus of the June session was - as always - on women & girls: the **Annual full-day discussion on Women's Rights** (17 June); the **Special Rapporteur on violence against women** (Rashida Manjoo) and the **Working Group on discrimination against women** presented their reports (A/HRC/26/38; A/HRC/26/39). In addition, there was a **High-level panel on the identification of good practices in combatting Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**, which stressed that tradition, culture, religion or superstition must never be used to justify FGM, and recommended that States institute a total ban on the practice in law, and work with traditional and religious leaders to prevent it. A side-event on "Advancing action on Female Genital Mutilation" was also held following an initiative from the Inter-African Committee (IAC) on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children.

A **panel discussion on child, early and forced marriage** took place (23 June), where Deputy High Commissioner clearly stated that "This abusive practice cannot be characterized as marriage" and that if trends continue, approximately 142 million girls would be 'married' before their 18th birthday by 2020 - that's 39,000 every day - despite the UN clearly articulating that both parties to a marriage must be at least 18 years old and giving free and full consent to the marriage.

❖ **Extrajudicial executions**

The **Special Rapporteur (SR) on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions** presented his report (A/HRC/26/36, Add.1-2), making the case for the need of ongoing legal reform in States across the world, in order to bring domestic laws on the use of force into conformity with international law. DCI-IS presented an oral statement on behalf of DCI-Palestine, to denounce Israeli authorities' for the use of excessive force against Palestinians in peaceful demonstrations, including children, as well as Israel's consistent failure to conduct impartial and independent investigations. The statement (delivered by Théo Aiolfi, advocacy intern at the International Secretariat) called on the SR to conduct an impartial investigation on the case of the extrajudicial killing of two Palestinian children and bring the perpetrators of such violence to justice. You can watch the webcast at the following link: <http://webtv.un.org/meetings-events/human-rights-council/watch/clustered-id-contd-sr-on-executions-and-sr-on-idps-10th-meeting-26th-regular-session-of-human-rights-council/3620694689001>

❖ **Syria**

During the presentation of the report (A/HRC/24/46) of the **Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic**, it was said that the Government had continued its relentless campaign of air bombardment and artillery shelling across the country, and that it must take steps to release children from detention or to transfer them to a juvenile justice system consistent with both fair trial and



children's rights. The report stated increase in the number of attacks on functioning schools resulting in the killing and maiming of children, as well as the fact children are also suffering post-traumatic stress disorder because of what they have experienced and witnessed. Children are also denied their right to education because they and their parents are too afraid of schools - going to school is a choice "about life and death"; and it was also noted that children continue to be recruited to participate in conflict. "The international community, and specifically the Security Council, has yet to demand accountability for the crimes that are being committed daily against the Syrian people" stated Paulo Pinheiro (chair of the Commission of Inquiry on Syria).

❖ **Right to health**

The report (A/HRC/26/31), presented by the **Special Rapporteur on the right to everyone on the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health** (Anand Grover), draws links between unhealthy foods, advertising and non-communicable diseases (NCDs) (such as heart disease, diabetes etc.). States were urged to implement their obligations regarding children's right to health, which requires States to address obesity in children, limit children's exposure to fast foods and drinks high in sugar and caffeine and other harmful substances, regulate the advertising and marketing of such foods and control their availability in schools and other places frequented by children.

21st special session of the Human Rights Council (23 July):

On 23 July an extraordinary debate was convoked at the Human Rights Council (HRC) adopting a resolution condemning the widespread, systematic and gross violations of international human rights and fundamental freedoms arising from the **Israeli military operations carried out in the Occupied Palestinian Territory** since 13 June; resulting in the killing of more than 650 Palestinians, most of them civilians and more than 170 of whom were children. The resolution adopted establishes an independent, **international commission of inquiry to investigate all violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law**. DCI submitted a written statement and also an oral statement, delivered by our intern Abir Ben Salah, during the debate: <http://webtv.un.org/watch/2nd-meeting-21st-special-session-of-human-rights-council/3692914516001/> (Minute: 01:51:30) For more details on the resolution and the debate, visit the official webpage: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/SpecialSessions/Session21/Pages/21stSpecialSession.aspx>

It is with great sadness I reiterate, on behalf of the International Secretariat, the heartbreak and pain felt with the **loss of our dear colleague Hashem Khader Abu Maria**, who was killed on 25 July 2014 by Israeli forces while peacefully participating in a solidarity march with Gaza. Please read the full press release on



this terrible event here: <http://www.dci-palestine.org/documents/dci-palestine-mourns-loss-hashem-abu-maria-colleague-and-friend-killed-israeli-forces>

27th session of the Human Rights Council (08-26 September):

The programme of work for the 27th session is not yet available. However the list of reports is online: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session27/Pages/ListReports.aspx>

If you would like to respond / compliment any of these items please note that you can submit a written statement (1,500 words maximum) to the Secretariat by 25 August 2014. You may also wish to have an oral statement delivered, by the DCI-IS: deadline is 05 September 2014.

Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC Committee):

Nine **new members** were elected by the UN General Assembly to serve on the Committee on the Rights of the Child on 25 June. The following are the successful nine candidates who have won a seat on the Committee and will officially begin their term on 1 March 2015:

- ✓ Ms. Suzanne Aho Assouma (Togo)
- ✓ Ms. Hynd Ayoubi Idrissi (Morocco)
- ✓ Mr. Jorge Cardona Llorens (Spain) – second term
- ✓ Mr. Joseph Clarence Nelson (Samoa)
- ✓ Mr. Bernard Gastaud (Monaco) – second term
- ✓ Mr. Hatem Kotrane (Tunisia) – second term
- ✓ Mr. Gehad Madi (Egypt) – second term
- ✓ Mr. José Ángel Rodríguez Reyes (Venezuela)
- ✓ Ms. Kirsten Sandberg (Norway) – second term

The full list of members and their curricula vitae are available here: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRC/Pages/Membership.aspx>

The **66th session** of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) took place from 26 May - 13 June, with India, Indonesia, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Saint Lucia and the United Kingdom under review. Relevant documents are available online: http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/SessionDetails1.aspx?SessionID=843&Lang=en

During the next **67th session** (which will take place from 1 to 19 September 2014), Croatia, Fiji, Hungary, Morocco, Venezuela, Singapore will be examined by the Committee. During the pre-session of its 69th session (taking place from 22-26 September), the following countries will be examined: Ethiopia, Ghana, Mexico, Nepal and the Netherlands. DCI-Netherlands will be attending the pre-session and presenting an alternative report to the CRC Committee.

During its 67th session, the CRC Committee will hold its **Day of General discussion** on 12 September, this year's theme being: **Digital media and**



children's rights. More information & relevant documentation is available on the [official webpage:](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRC/Pages/Discussion2014.aspx)
<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRC/Pages/Discussion2014.aspx>

In light of its **25th anniversary**, the CRC will hold a special event on **24 September** 2014 the CRC Committee will dedicate a day to speak with children from 16 different countries. For more information for submissions and virtual participation in this event please visit the official webpage for details:
<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRC/Pages/CRC25thAnniversary.aspx>

Please feel free to contact me if you would like to receive further information on the aforementioned documents and activities – I remain at your disposal.

All the very best from Geneva,
Anna D. Tomasi
Advocacy Officer