CHILD PROTECTION ISSUES IN THE NEWS

A compilation of clips from major media outlets covering international child protection issues over the previous month. These stories do not necessarily represent UNICEF’s views on the topic; rather they present a variety of perspectives (including those that are controversial, sensitive and highly debated) on current issues in child protection from across the globe.

NYT: After School in Brooklyn, West African Girls Share Memories of a Painful Ritual
A conference on Wednesday at Harlem Hospital, hosted by the hospital and by the Sauti Yetu Center for African Women and Families, a group based in the Bronx that works to end female genital cutting, will focus on the physical and emotional needs of women in the United States who have experienced it. Sauti Yetu and other organizations run peer support groups for African high school students and provide counseling for women who have been cut.

Philadelphia Inquirer: Child brides need world to intervene
One in seven girls in developing countries (excluding China) is married before her 15th birthday. Child marriage is probably the most common, socially approved human-rights abuse in the world - an abuse that directly causes higher-than-necessary maternal mortality, infant mortality, intergenerational poverty, and increasingly the spread of HIV. Children who start having children run serious health risks. UN data from 100 countries show that girls in the poorest 20 percent of households are more likely to get married at an earlier age than those in the wealthiest 20 percent. More than half the girls in Bangladesh, Mali, Mozambique, and Niger are married before 18. In these same countries, more than 75 percent of people live on less than $2 a day.

Washington Post: Pakistani case shows limits of women’s rights
For the past nine years, Mukhtar Mai has lived in the same village where she was allegedly dragged into a house, raped and pushed out naked, while 200 higher-caste tribemen sat in approval nearby and her father was too frightened to save her. This week, after a Supreme Court panel ruled Thursday that it did not believe the prosecution’s version of what happened to Mai on June 22, 2002, and set all but one of the remaining defendants free, she said she still intends to stay there.

Dutch News: Volkskrant -- Asylum policy arbitrary after Sahar
In spite of the signals given off by UNICEF that girls' lives in Afghanistan are far from easy and that corporal punishment is an everyday occurrence. Girls who have lived abroad are even worse off.

VOA: Aid Workers Say Child Soldiers Involved in Escalating Somali Violence
UNICEF estimates that thousands of children as young as 10 years old are involved in the fighting.

Ventura County Star: Counselor brings attention of plight of Ukrainian children
Some 65,000 Ukrainian children live in group boarding homes because of poverty, unemployment, alcoholism and abuse in their families, according to a UNICEF report.

Washington Post: Doctor in Misurata loses his children but works to save others
MISURATA, Libya — “I knew if Gaddafi killed my children, he’s killing other people’s children,” Fanas said as ambulances sped through the parking lot. “What can I do but work? If I stay at home one month, one week, one year, it won’t bring them back.” In the past week, three young children were brought in with bullet wounds to the head, and another was hurt by shrapnel from an artillery attack.
Financial Times: Somali minister hits at anti-piracy policy
He said: "In Somalia, where the consequences of state fragmentation and incapacity have produced two global threats of the first order – religious extremism and piracy – the world has so far responded only with containment. This is not productive, effective, practical or morally defensible."

NYT: In a Medical Tent in Libya, a Grim Procession
Jinan Hussein Jwel, 5, was treated at a triage center in Misurata, Libya, for a serious wound on the right side of her head. An overcrowded tent in the rebel holdout city of Misurata illustrates the grim results of modern weapons on human life.

Reuters: At least 20 children killed in Misrata so far-UNICEF
"Fifty days into the fighting in Misrata, the full picture of the toll on children is emerging -- far worse than we had feared and certain to get worse unless there is a ceasefire," UNICEF spokeswoman Marixie Mercado said.

AFP: At least 26 children killed in Yemen unrest: UNICEF
"Yemen has had the highest number of children being killed or injured due to political unrest in the region," said Marixie Mercado, UNICEF spokeswoman.

VOA: Ban Will Remain on US Adoptions: Ambassador
Marc Vergara, a spokesman for UNICEF, said Cambodia is not ready.

NYT: 2 Palestinian Teens Held in Killing of Israeli Family
Israeli security officials said that the two suspects, ages 17 and 18, had confessed and carried out a reconstruction of the attack that occurred last month in the Jewish settlement of Itamar.

Washington Post: Unseen mental scars of war descend upon Libyan community in the opposition east
It is easy to see the bloody wounds of those injured in attacks in the besieged western city of Misrata and on the eastern front line, but at this sprawling hospital the invisible mental scars run deep and will continue to grow, psychiatrists say.

The psychiatric hospital is already strapped trying to deal with the mental stress of those living in this city, which is the de facto capital of the rebel-held east, according to Ali el-Roey, the hospital’s chief. But its psychologists must also travel throughout the east, from the frontline city of Ajdabiya to as far as the Egyptian border. Across the region, children are dealing with night terrors and bed-wetting, and others develop acute stress disorders, Roey said.

Irish Times: Rights of children key issue in applying best practice to inter-country adoption
In a report commissioned by UNICEF and the Vietnamese government, which led to the suspension of adoptions from Vietnam to Ireland last year, it was found the availability of children who were adoptable abroad corresponded more to the existence of foreign prospective adopters than to the actual needs of “abandoned” and orphaned children.

Washington Post: Libya, Egypt, Yemen, Syria: The ‘littlest protesters’
Watching children protest, it’s hard not to wonder how much they understand what they’re protesting,
or how they will feel about it when they are older. Especially when protests get violent. On Feb. 2, many children were trapped in Tahrir Square in Egypt as Molotov cocktails were hurled into the crowd. Many children have died, been injured, or orphaned since the uprisings spread across the Middle East. International NGO Save the Children has estimated that a million children are in danger in Libya. But in a family-oriented country, in which husband, wife, and children operate as a cohesive unit, it's also hard to imagine Libyan protesters leaving their children at home. 35 percent of Libya's population is also under 18, according to UNICEF.


**VOA: Rape Victims in Congo Call for Justice**

Jennifer Melton, a child protection specialist for UNICEF, said the agency assisted 16,000 rape survivors in Congo in 2010, including women, men, girls and boys.


**The News: 239 women, children raped, molested**

Project Coordinator Zia Ahmed said that Madadgaar helpline was a joint venture of the Lawyers for Human Rights and Legal Aid and UNICEF, working for the rights of women and children in Pakistan for more than a decade.


**Niquash: Iraq unhappy owner of quarter of world's unexploded land mines**

According to information from the UNICEF office in Baghdad 25 percent of the victims of mines now are children under 14 years.

http://www.niqash.org/content.php?contentTypeID=75&id=2820&lang=0

**Philippine Star: There ought to be a law vs. violence against children**

“Most violence that is inflicted upon children is committed in the home and thus tends to be hidden,” asserts Theresa Kilbane, UNICEF, senior advisor, child protection.

http://www.philstar.com/Article.aspx?articleId=675256&publicationSubCategoryId=80

**Daily Mail: The scandal of orphanages in tourist resorts and disaster zones**

Now the Cambodian government has announced an inquiry into the country’s orphanages after UNICEF voiced concerns.


**Ghana News Agency: Only 15 per cent of cases of violence against children are prosecuted**

Dr. Iyabode Olusanmi, UNICEF Representative in Ghana, on Wednesday disclosed that only 15 per cent of cases of violence against children are prosecuted in the country.


**IRIN: BANGLADESH -- Parents still not heeding child marriage warnings**

According to UNICEF's 2011 State of the World's Children report, about a third of women in Bangladesh aged 20-24 are married by the age of 15, and 66 percent of girls will wed before their 18th birthday - up 2 percent from 2009.


**IRIN: YEMEN -- Children killed, traumatized by upsurge in violence**

Children are becoming more aggressive and have a higher tendency to fight,” Jamila al-Mujahid, principal of the Sana’a-based Muadh Ibn Jabel School, told UNICEF.


**IRIN: BURUNDI -- Former child soldiers “languishing in poverty”**

Initially, the World Bank funded the Programme de Déémobilisation et de Réinsertion Transitoire, but this funding ended in July 2010. The programme is currently supported by UNICEF, through local
NGOs.

**AllAfrica: Sudan -- Landmines Still Threaten Food Security Efforts in South**
In 2010, according to UNICEF, more than 80,000 people reportedly received information on protection from mines and the promotion of safe behaviors, while addition 157,000 were reportedly reached with mine risk education through public media.
http://allafrica.com/stories/201104051081.html

**AP: Philippine Muslim rebels discuss with UN how to wean their child soldiers from war**
Nearly 600 minors have been listed as child soldiers by UNICEF-trained personnel in several rebel strongholds in a program that began last year, but the guerrillas regard some of them as mature under Islam, Kabalu said.
http://www.google.com/hostednews/canadianpress/article/ALeqM5ipFAMopMWWuDz4cjPwA26EGo88FA?docId=6468018

**NYT: As China Ages, Birthrate Policy May Prove Difficult to Reverse**
Ms. Wang’s reasoning underscores an argument voiced with growing insistency by demographers who want China to abandon its one-child restrictions: like the couple in Yicheng, they argue, most Chinese want only one child anyway. Perhaps more important, economists contend that China’s low birthrate, once an economic advantage, is now destined to clip the nation’s economic growth.

**IPS: Sierra Leone Facing Facts of Teenage Pregnancy**
UNICEF report, "A Glimpse Into the World of Teenage Pregnancy in Sierra Leone", states that "such importance is given to girls marrying as virgins that the age of marriage often coincides with the first occurrence of female menstruation".
http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=55107

**Gulf Times: Yemen’s children pay high price for conflict**
A UNICEF study showed that there are more than 30,000 street children in Yemen.
http://www.gulftimes.com/site/topics/article.asp?cu_no=2&item_no=425969&version=1&template_id=46&parent_id=26

**IRIN: Desperate measures in times of hunger**
A joint report by UNICEF and the government, A Situational Analysis on the State of Women’s and Children’s Rights in Zimbabwe: 2005-2010, indicates that “between 220 000 and 250 000 rural households in Zimbabwe live in extreme poverty....

**Jamaica Gleaner: Hidden horror - Children scarred by Tivoli incursion**
UNICEF Jamaica representative Robert Fuderich said it was important for a public-education campaign to reduce the stigma associated with mental health in order for parents to see that their children need help.

**Jakarta Globe: In Child Justice, Adult-Sized Shackles**
UNICEF estimates that 84 percent of children sentenced in Indonesia, including for petty crimes, are placed with adult criminals in detention centers and prisons with little or no access to education, health or recreation.

**FT: Poll shows number of MENA youths “thriving” has plummeted**
Forty-three per cent of those surveyed in the Silatech survey conducted by the Gallup Centre for Muslim Studies said economic conditions in their communities were improving, but fewer than a third were satisfied with the availability of affordable housing – down from half in 2009.
Gallup interviewed 36,000 people aged between 15 and 29 in 20 countries across the Arab world and
including the Comoros Islands, Djibouti and Somaliland last year before the regional uprisings.
http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/33415026-5bb9-11e0-b8e7-00144feab49a.html#axzz1KfloSpnk