

Report on the 24/09/14 Press conference

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2 PICTURES OF THE EVENT





3 PRESS RELEASE

Press release: 24/09/2014

The UN denounces the fast-paced and unregulated development of private education which reinforces inequalities with regards to the right to education in Morocco

Rabat, 24th September 2014

«Private education is developing very quickly, especially at primary level without the necessary supervision regarding the conditions of enrolment and the quality of education provided, which has led to the reinforcement of inequalities in the enjoyment of the right to education», the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) declared today. The Committee of experts, which monitors the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (ratified by Morocco in 1993), published its written **recommendations** on Morocco today, following the review of the country **conducted** **on** **3rdSeptember.**

“This is a very strong message from the Committee on the Rights of the Child. It clearly links private education with inequalities, and thus with discrimination. The CRC indicates that Morocco’s choice to allow inequality and segregation in the educational system through privatisation is contrary to human rights standards. This demonstrates that the growth of private education, in Morocco and in the **many other countries** where it is taking place, can be questioned under international human rights law” said Sylvain Aubry, the right to education researcher for the Global Initiative, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (**GI-ESCR**).

The Committee also asked the Moroccan government in its written recommendations of today to “Assess and address the consequences of the rapid development of private education [...] and ensure that teachers from the public sector contribute to the improvement of education in Morocco rather than being used by the private sector”.

Khadija Yamllahi, a member of the board of the Moroccan Coalition on Education for All (**CMEPT**) and member of the Moroccan Parliamentary Group on Education summarised the position of the coalition, which represents more than 50 civil society organisations: “The Committee has clearly stated that everyone in Morocco has the right to a free, quality, public education, and it is simply illegal and unacceptable that many families are forced to make financial sacrifices to send their children to private schools simply because the public schools close to their homes are of poor quality. The government must make every effort both to ensure that public schools offer what families are entitled to expect and to effectively regulate private schools, many of which abuse their position of strength.”

The GI-ESCR and the CMEPT have published a **series of reports** in the last 10 months, analysing the impact of privatisation in education on the right to education in Morocco. These reports lead the CRC to **question** the Moroccan government representatives during the examination of the State on 3rdSeptember, in particular after the head of delegation **told the Committee** that the government wants to “promote free competition between schools”.

Ms Yamllahi and Mr Aubry concluded with reflections for the next steps: “These recommendations provide Moroccan society with strong advocacy tools to engage on this issue. What we truly need, in Morocco and in other countries, is an open and transparent debate on the future of the education system and the role of private education. Like many developing countries, Morocco is slipping rapidly towards a model where education is largely regulated by the market, similar to Chile, and experience has shown that such models are highly discriminatory and inefficient. We do not believe that such a move is the wish of Moroccan society. Now we have confirmation from the UN that in some circumstances, the impact of privatisation in education, is likely to constitute a violation of human rights standards.”

The GI-ESCR, together with a number of partners, recently started an **18 month research project** in 7 countries, with the support of the **Privatisation in Education Research Initiative** (PERI) of the Education Support Program of the Open Society Foundations, exploring how human rights standards apply to privatisation in education. This project comes in a context where private, for-profit, fee-paying schools, have been growing at very fast pace in the last years, rapidly changing the education systems and undermining equal rights and social cohesion in many developing countries. The concluding observations on Morocco released today by the CRC are an important step towards advancing a human rights response to this recent phenomenon.

Documents :

- For a visual representation of the reports by GI-ESCR see :
<http://globalinitiative-escr.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Visual-privatisation-in-education-in-Morocco.pdf>
- The latest report from GI-ESCR on Privatisation of Education in Morocco is available here :
http://globalinitiative-escr.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Supplementary-report-reaction-to-the-responses-of-the-government-of-Morocco-July-2014_eng-Final.pdf

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4 THE CRC'S CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS ON THE 3RD AND 4TH PERIODIC REPORTS ON MOROCCO RELATING TO PRIVATIZATION OF EDUCATION

"60. The Committee is concerned that [...] (d) private education is developing very quickly, especially at primary level without the necessary supervision regarding the conditions of enrolment and the quality of education provided, which has led to the reinforcement of inequalities in the enjoyment of the right to education as well as teachers increasingly engaging in private lessons in public schools and giving priority to the work they undertake in private schools;"

"61. The Committee recommends that the State party [...] (c) Assess and address the consequences of the rapid development of private education in the State party and ensure that teachers from the public sector contribute to the improvement of education in Morocco rather than being used by the private sector by effectively enforcing Ministerial Circular No. 109 of 3 September 2008;"

5 REPORT ON THE PRESS CONFERENCE

Held at the National Union of the Moroccan Press, on the 24th of September, this press conference was aimed at expressing reactions from the civil society to the C.R.C.'s recommendations on the privatization of education in Morocco.

Sylvain Aubry exposed the findings and figures of the study conducted in Morocco and presented the CRC's recommendations via video conferencing. Mohamed Qnouch represented the Moroccan

Federation of Parents' Associations (FNAPEM) and discussed the "structural adjustment policies" that contributed to the state's disengagement from public services in Morocco. The Moroccan Coalition for the Right to Education (CMEPT) was represented by its President Ahmed Sehouate and its Board member and Moroccan Parliamentary Group on Education member Khadija Yamlahi, who criticized the government's adoption of the Chilean educational model.

Press document packs were distributed and the conference preceded to a question and answer session. A jurist member of the Parents' Collective against the Private School Abuses which declared that "the parents' are fighting against organized mafia that take their child as hostages, that toss out their child and don't take responsibility. The parents can't pay, and so what? Education is a fundamental right given by constitution [...]. We worked with many collaborators because norms do exist, legal mechanisms that can protect the interests of all parents. We need to know them, mobilize and wake institutions up." Another person asked "if the Structural Adjustment Pact (PAS) was enforced by institutions linked to the U.N., why would they rebound now on what they caused themselves?" answered by Ahmed Sehouate, who explained that "there is no link between human rights institutions and financial institutions". Two students also asked how one could engage in mobilizations on the subjects.

About 60 people were present in the room, and about 20 press publications were issued or are about to be issued on the conference.