

4 Designing Child-friendly Justice Pathways in Egypt

This chapter focuses on the design of child-friendly justice pathways and services in Egypt. It provides a succinct account of the legal needs experienced by children across different legal spheres and maps existing services by type of service, including access to legal information and representation, psychosocial assistance, specialised child justice institutions, care institutions and medical referrals. It formulates policy recommendations to expand and improve the ability of these services to address the key legal needs of children.

For children to feature at the centre of a child-friendly justice system, the first step is to understand their most common legal needs in various situations and what services are available to meet those needs. This chapter will provide a limited account of the legal needs experienced by children, including: across the different legal spheres; as offenders, victims and witnesses of crime; when they are at risk; in the context of civil and administrative processes; and mapping existing legal services in Egypt. Building on these, it makes policy recommendations to expand and improve the ability of these services to address the key legal needs of children.

4.1. Understanding the legal needs of children in Egypt

A child-friendly justice system should seek to understand the legal problems experienced on a day-to-day basis by children and young people, what impact these problems have on them, and how they go about addressing them. This understanding needs to consider the legal needs as the child or the young person experiences them. Research to identify these legal needs must be regular and ongoing, as these needs will change over time. The rise of mobile technology, with a multitude of online social, commercial and other applications, has affected the lives of young people more than many other age groups. This has brought a range of new legal issues that did not exist even a decade ago and yet disproportionately impact children and young people. However, to date, out of more than 60 national-level legal needs surveys (LNSs) conducted around the globe, only a few countries have conducted LNSs with a specific focus on children (see Box 4.1) (OECD, 2019^[1]). The difficulties lie in the fact that the questions (and legal problems) of concern for a 10-year-old are very different from those relevant to an adult. As such, while an LNS may well be appropriate for children and young people, it will likely differ markedly from an adult survey and between the age and maturity levels of children. Importantly, the findings of adult LNSs can also be relevant for children. In this regard, Egypt may consider committing to evidence-based planning for child justice services by collecting quality data and information about children's legal needs across different socio-economic backgrounds and locations alongside its adult LNS data collection.

Box 4.1. Examples of children's legal needs assessments

Florida Bar's Commission on the Legal Needs of Children Survey, 2001

In 2001, the Commission on the Legal Needs of Children of the Florida Bar surveyed children's views regarding legal issues relevant to them. Results from that survey showed a great desire for independent legal representation for children in divorce, custody and care proceedings, and in relation to school expulsions and police questioning. Issues identified included bullying from classmates, unfair discipline from school administrators and harassment from the police.

Northern Ireland's Department of Justice Study on Legal Needs of Children, 2013

In 2013, Northern Ireland's Department of Justice commissioned a study on the legal needs of children and young people in the region, following a survey of legal needs exclusively focused on adults.

The survey questionnaire was developed based on the key themes emerging from focus groups with children and young people. Findings included: lack of knowledge as a crucial barrier to young people's legal needs being met; the wide range of legal issues faced by them, from bullying to buying faulty goods or being spoken to by the police; and their need to be recognised as right-holders.

Republic of Moldova's Needs Assessment of Legal Empowerment of Youth, 2017

In 2017, the Soros Foundation Moldova, in co-operation with the Moldovan Ministry of Justice, conducted a legal needs survey of young people aged 14-23 with a particular emphasis on vulnerable

groups. The study revealed that one in four young people had experienced legal issues in the last 12 months. In most cases, young people turned to family, friends or colleagues for help. Other issues included discrimination, particularly of Roma youths, reluctance to seek police help, especially for sex workers, employment and health issues.

France's Multi-year Consultation Process of Youth

In 2019, the French Constitutional entity *Défenseur des droits* (Defender of Rights) launched a consultation process with young people called *J'ai des droits, entends-moi* ('I have rights, listen to me') regarding the right of children to participate in issues that affect them. The three editions of this consultation are:

- **2019:** enabled 2 200 children aged between 4-17 years to learn and reflect on their rights
- **2021:** enabled nearly 600 children aged between 3-18 years to express their reflections and recommendations on their rights, with a particular focus on the mental health of children and young people
- **2022:** roundtable discussions, participatory workshops and meetings with professionals planned with a particular focus on children's right to privacy.

Sources: (The Florida Bar Commission on the Legal Needs of Children, 2002^[2]; Emerson et al., 2014^[3]; Soros Foundation-Moldova, 2017^[4]; Défenseur des droits, 2019^[5]; Défenseur des droits, n.d.^[6]; OECD forthcoming, 2023^[7]).

4.1.1. Legal needs in the criminal sphere for offenders, victims and witnesses

Children's justice needs globally, as in Egypt, relate to their status in proceedings, whether as offenders, victims or witnesses of a crime, and they arise from the first contact with the authority when being charged with or reporting the crime and endure throughout the whole process, to the post-trial and recovery phases. Children need legal and psychosocial support and assistance in each of these phases. While as an offender, the child will need to be legally represented by defence attorneys before, during and possibly after the trial, as victims or witnesses their legal needs are for access to basic protection, services and psychological support. For children at risk, child protection issues such as placement into residential care and other issues related to alternative care, guardianship, foster care, including kafala¹, referral of the child to medical or psychiatric or residential substance abuse treatment, protection from violence or child neglect and other related problems are all prevalent needs in Egypt.

In Egypt, generally, according to the NCCM Helpline lawyers, the majority of requests for assistance from children stem from cases in which they are victims of crime and need protection. Physical violence in various contexts, including at home and school, is the most often reported problem in calls to the Child Helpline, followed by sexual violence and cyber-extortion. The prosecution emphasises child abuse in the online sphere as a relatively new type of crime, growing in prevalence, and that necessitates the development of ad hoc approaches, potentially including new legislation to deal with its unique characteristics. In addition to the above, cases of female genital mutilation (FGM) and child marriage are also prevalent in rural governorates, and child labour is an issue in some specific areas, such as Assiut.

In Alexandria, the general Child Protection Committee (CPC) conducted an evidence-based study to assess the main types of problems experienced by children and deliver services accordingly. In the context of the study, violence in all its forms also arose as the number one problem experienced by children, followed by child marriage.

The focus group results with 12 representatives from the Egyptian Child Forum – which represents children on a nationwide scale – showed that children stated bullying and lack of appropriate education as key problems and issues affecting them in the school setting (8 and 7 children, respectively). Physical and

verbal violence were reported as problems in the domestic sphere, public settings and recreational contexts by at least 1 child in the group. With regards to courts and social care institutions, 6 children said that a lack of channels for children to be heard would be the most acute problem they would face. While the results are not representative for all children in Egypt, they offer important insights into the experiences children face and their respective legal needs.

In view of initial data collected through this project regarding the most prevalent legal needs of children who call the NCCM Child Helpline and receive support from the Alexandria CPC, prioritisation could be considered for protection services for children suffering violence in different contexts, such as appropriate care facilities and shelters, medical and psychological attention and legal aid for child victims. Specialised training and peer exchanges with other countries could also be considered as a means of strengthening prosecutors' capacities in cyberbullying and cyber-extortion, as this is an increasingly prevalent type of crime affecting children and one that is complex to tackle. In addition, increasing the availability of psychologists at school, as highlighted by Egyptian Child Forum members, could be an important avenue to detect and prevent legal problems for children. Finally, valuable support could be offered by providing the Child Helpline with lawyers specialising in the particular types of crimes that most often affect children in Egypt, including violence, sexual abuse, child marriage, FGM, child labour and abuse in the online sphere.

4.1.2. Legal and justice needs in the administrative sphere

Globally, children may also be subject to a range of issues in administrative proceedings or access to public services, such as:

- birth registration and issues with nationality
- asylum and migration procedures, e.g., when a child is denied access to a territory at the border or does not meet the requirements for immigration
- education, e.g., expulsion from school or in relation to other disciplinary measures, access to services related to inclusive education and assistance in learning
- health, e.g., access to medical care or a specific legal issue in relation to a medical intervention
- alternative care, e.g., placement in a foster care family or care institution
- administrative sanctions
- social welfare, e.g., benefits
- child protection, e.g., when a child below the age of criminal responsibility is in conflict with the law and exposed to certain interventions related to rehabilitation
- Employment (under specific circumstances and only if the law permits children to work), e.g., insurance.

These also seem to be pressing problems for children in Egypt, at least in some regions. The above-mentioned study in Alexandria found that the third most prevalent administrative issue experienced by children in the territory was dropping out of school, followed by lack of identification documentation or papers, and by homelessness and begging. The ability of children to redress these issues hinges on their potential agency in administrative procedures.

As highlighted, children cannot bring forward cases in the administrative sphere until the age of 21, except through their guardians. It may be helpful for the Egyptian authorities to gather information on their legal needs in this area and to consider strengthening their agency in these procedures.

4.2. Towards evidence-based planning

Reliable, disaggregated, regularly collected, and published data are essential for effective and efficient policy making, programming and service delivery, especially concerning at-risk populations such as children. Under fiscal constraints, data also enable effective evidence-based decisions to be made about where to allocate resources for the development of child-friendly justice.

Evidence-based planning: *People-centred legal and justice services are based on and respond to an empirical understanding of the legal needs and legal capabilities of those who require or seek assistance.*

Egypt has made strides in improving its public data collection² in an effort to take advantage of the abundant policy opportunities brought by open governance and evidence-based policy making³. Despite these advances, reliable and easily accessible data on the number of children participating in judicial and administrative proceedings, their profiles, the reasons for their participation and the outcomes of their cases are relatively limited.⁴ The *Survey of Young People in Egypt* was halted in 2015. This two-decade nationwide data collection exercise backed by the UN and USAID aimed explicitly at ascertaining the circumstances, needs, and outlook of the young people of Egypt provided researchers and policy makers alike with precious information.⁵ Similarly, information about policy evaluation of Egypt's child-friendly justice system remains scarce.

In this regard, the CPC in Alexandria has provided a good practice example by regularly collecting data that are reported quarterly to its leadership and then using a bottom-up design approach for its Executive Plan, which is underpinned by an analysis of the five most prevalent problems reported by children in the governorate.

In 2009, ENCRO was established under the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM) to monitor the situation of children at the national and strategic level and to track the national budget allocated and expenditures incurred for them (see Box 4.2). Although ENCRO appears to have been relatively active in producing policy recommendations and supporting data collection,⁶ the current status and implementation of ENCRO in practice remains unclear. If activated meaningfully, it could be relevant in providing systematic collection and analysis of data disaggregated by age, sex, geographical location and socio-economic background and in implementing children's rights. ENCRO could carry out this task in close co-ordination with the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS) and with meaningful participation and co-operation with civil society actors in the field of children's rights.

Box 4.2. “Egypt fit for children” under the National Child Rights Observatory (ENCRO)

Egypt’s National Child Rights Observatory (ENCRO) aims to contribute to an “Egypt Fit for Children”. Efforts are focused on promoting child rights and evidence-based legislation, public policies, programmes and budget allocation, and monitoring their implementation and impact. The project adopted four overarching strategies to achieve these outcomes related to the different stages of evidence-based policy making:

- producing scientifically sound evidence through its Research and Data Management Unit, which collects, manages and analyses primary and secondary data on the status of children and their families
- translating evidence, through its Policy and Planning Unit, into a National Action Plan for Children in accordance with the CRC
- monitoring policy implementation and measuring their impacts through its Monitoring and Evaluation Unit
- disseminating knowledge and information to raise awareness within the general public of child rights.

The implementation of these objectives in practice is still ongoing.

Source: (CRIN, n.d.^[8]), Egypt National Child Rights Observatory, <https://archive.crin.org/en/library/organisations/egypt-national-child-rights-observatory.html>.

With regard to their legal needs, it is critical to empower children to indicate whether they feel that their voices are being heard. Participation and empowerment of children allows for their specific legal needs to be better accounted for and addressed by countries when designing and implementing evidence-based reforms. In line with the findings in Chapter 5, section 5.2, further empowerment and collection of data about children’s needs could support Egypt in moving towards a more child-centred justice system. The OECD has published methodological guidance on conducting LNSs, which represent an established method of identifying legal needs from a societal perspective and a key tool that could be considered for use in Egypt. Data from LNSs could be complemented by a range of other evidence, including evaluations and research studies in the field of child-friendly justice and administrative data (OECD/Open Society Foundations, 2019^[9]).

Finally, Egypt may consider establishing collaborations with research institutes to strengthen internal capacities and the annual publication of reports on the state of children’s rights throughout the country, which are valuable to raise awareness of their importance. Publication and wide dissemination of such reports, which can fuel debates, including in parliament, can provide a focus for broad public engagement in implementation.

4.2.1. Recommendations for evidence-based policy making and planning

- Strengthen data collection practices by collecting data on existing child cases, the steps these cases take and their outcomes. Investment in digital data collection would make this data-collection process easier and facilitate data analysis, ideally through a platform where data can be shared across different ministries and NCCM to facilitate the co-ordination of child case management.
- Consider empowering and operationalising the ENCRO as a key instrument that could provide systematic collection and analysis of data.

- Consider analysing the legal needs of children in Egypt to ensure that the best interest of the child is respected.
- Establish collaborations with research institutes to strengthen internal capacities and the annual publication of reports on the state of children's rights throughout the country.

4.3. Delivering child-friendly justice services in Egypt: opportunities and challenges

The potential of people-centred justice approaches to enhance access to justice is increasingly recognised worldwide. The concept of child-friendly services within a people-centred justice system demands a broader vision that recognises the fundamental role of courts in sustaining the rule of law. Still, it goes beyond that to provide access to justice that meets people's legal and justice needs from their own perspective. Traditional approaches to delivering legal and justice services must be reconsidered to ensure that no child is left behind when accessing justice. Such a system must focus, first and foremost, on responding to children's needs. Services need to be "personalised" and responsive to the individual child and the situation. Child-friendly justice systems involve a range of appropriate services along a continuum to support children in different circumstances and at different age and maturity levels (OECD, 2019^[11]). A child-friendly justice system would provide a range of justice and related services from the most local and informal through to formal judicial processes. Such processes should be adapted to the range of different and evolving advanced maturity levels of developing children and young people. This is only possible if there is a sound knowledge of the strategies, interventions and services that are most effective (and cost-effective) at addressing children's particular legal needs, taking into account the best use of the pathways to meet these needs. In this context, health, social, protection and other service providers that work with children play pivotal roles in justice systems' efficiency, effectiveness and child-friendliness. This wider vision takes account of evidence from legal needs surveys (LNS) that illustrate that children's inability to access justice can be both a result and a cause of disadvantage, and that there are close inter-relationships between children's legal, health and broader social needs (OECD/Open Society Foundations, 2019^[9]).

Legal and justice services must be fully accessible to children, both in physical location and psychological appropriateness. To actively overcome the barriers children face in accessing help, age-appropriate entry points and procedures for children is essential. Age-appropriate entry points and procedures are especially important for children to be able to fully access services that have not been explicitly designed for them. The need for accessibility extends throughout the child's justice pathway, from providing information, early advice and complaint procedures to legal advice services and court proceedings.

Comprehensive data on existing services, and in particular on how they are used and by whom, is limited. However, some accounts were found through the instructions of the Public Prosecution Office (PPO) in its Circular of 2018, stakeholder interviews, and the focus group discussion (FGD) with the Egyptian Child Forum. According to OECD findings, the availability of services can vary depending on the region, with better availability and quality in urban governorates with large or coastal cities, such as Cairo, Giza and Alexandria, than in central and upper Egypt. Border governorates and the North Sinai region are also identified as areas presenting difficulties in providing services. Below is a summary of the main services identified, as well as the main opportunities and challenges to strengthening them.

4.3.1. Access to early information, advice and support

Providing children with understandable information and early advice is key to the accessibility of justice. To actively overcome the barriers children face in accessing help and information, age-appropriate entry points to all-age services should be developed, and separate services designed explicitly around children's

needs should be available. Box 4.3 outlines some key international good practices to ensure accessibility of the justice system through early entry points.

Box 4.3. International good practices: access to early information, advice and support

- All children and young people should be taught about rights and the law, including the framework of children's rights and the justice system.
- Child-friendly materials containing information on children's rights should be made available and widely distributed, and special information services for children, such as dedicated websites established (Council of Europe, 2010^[10]).
- Child-friendly printed information on children's rights should be made available to children in police stations, courts, victim support services, residential institutions, places of detention and other venues frequented by children at high risk of experiencing violations of their rights.
- A wide range of services and professionals that could act as critical first points of contact for children requiring help (e.g. the police, health practitioners, teachers and youth workers) should be accessible to and capable of building trust with children and young people.
- Free helplines for children should be established and facilitate easy access by providing a choice of contact methods (Child Helpline International, n.d.^[11]).
- Drop-in centres for young people offering information, advice, counselling and support on a wide range of legal, social, emotional and health issues should be established in community settings (European Youth Information and Counselling Agency (ERYICA), n.d.^[12]).
- Children should have free access to specialist lawyers in all areas related to children and young people in places they feel comfortable. Such advice should be available not only when children have already entered the justice system but also for early intervention advice.
- Authorities should endeavour to ensure that children are aware of the services that are available to them.

Note: Child Helpline International co-ordinates a network of Child Helplines in 140 countries and territories around the world.

The European Youth Information and Counselling Agency (ERYICA) is the membership body for national and regional youth information, advice and counselling co-ordination bodies and networks in Europe. Services typically target young people aged 13-25.

Sources: (Child Helpline International, n.d.^[11]; European Youth Information and Counselling Agency (ERYICA), n.d.^[12]; Council of Europe, 2010^[10]).

Initial points of contact for support

Children in Egypt can reach out for help when they have an issue with a legal problem in several ways. The first and most utilised is the Child Helpline under the NCCM, which covers the whole country. As mentioned in Chapter 3 under section 3.2.2, the NCCM Child Helpline is a 24-hour, free telephone line, also accessible via e-mail and WhatsApp, administered by the NCCM that receives and follows up on reports of violations of children's rights. In order to provide children with basic advice and counselling, the Child Helpline may refer to a number of in-house lawyers and psychologists and a network of legal and social assistance from non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The Helpline can receive reports from children as well as adults, although adults make the vast majority of calls. Helplines are widely used around the world as the first point of contact for children, including, for instance, in France⁷ and the United Kingdom.⁸

Stakeholders indicated that the Child Helpline has achieved considerable success as the main point of contact between children, their families, and governmental services for children across the whole national

territory. Its ability to co-ordinate daily on case management with the Child Protection Bureau (CPB) at the PPO, as well as with operative CPCs and local NGOs, has enhanced its capacities to protect children at risk quickly and reliably. However, it is also clear that resources allocated to the Child Helpline are limited and that it could benefit from further efforts to strengthen social awareness of its services. It has relied almost entirely on funding external to the national budget, with most of its staff being funded by international co-operation efforts and experiencing high turnover and uncertainty.

The NCCM also used to run various hotlines, including a specific hotline for children with disabilities and one for consultancy services.⁹ All hotlines for children were merged together under the NCCM Child helpline 16000 in 2018 to have one hotline for all services provided to children, help reduce operational cost and maintain one data base with all information. MoSS currently has a general helpline that children may use to flag their issues and get connected with the relevant services. The PPO's CPB has established an online complaint mechanism that operates directly under the supervision of the PPO. It includes, for instance, reporting crimes via WhatsApp. They may also identify potentially dangerous situations for children online, such as cyberbullying or posts that record abuse. Stakeholders have flagged that there is room to improve children's and families' awareness of these mechanisms to ensure they truly reach those who need them. A communications campaign is underway for this purpose.

In addition to hotlines, children may arrive at a police station, and, in rare cases, CPCs receive complaints directly. NGOs may also become aware of certain cases autonomously.

As is the case in many countries around the world, few children and young people, acting independently from their parents, turn to professional services for advice and assistance. Common barriers preventing children from approaching services include: lack of services or lack of awareness of services; fear of what will happen if the other party finds out; stigma, shame or guilt about their situation; and a lack of trust in adult services and professionals to listen to them, take them seriously and be fair. To address this issue, France, for example, has established the JADE programme (*Jeunes ambassadeurs des droits des enfants* [Young ambassadors for children's rights]), composed of young people who work with the Rights Defender and act as young ambassadors – they visit schools, vocational training institutions, detention centres, hospitals, institutions, unaccompanied minors and advise children on their rights in an interactive manner.

The outcomes of the FGD within the Egyptian Child Forum confirmed that a comprehensive system designed to support the child in the early stages of the justice pathway is yet to be realised. For instance, children mentioned that sources for general child-related information are the Child Helpline, internet resources, staff or administration at school, parents or trusted friends or relatives. When a child faces ill-treatment at home or thinks about running away from home, the children could not think of appropriate sources of information or assistance to seek. “[T]he problem is that there is no awareness about the things that the state can provide, such as the Child Helpline or other things, so we don't know where to go,” one child mentioned.

Similarly, bad treatment or bullying at school or work seemed a prevalent problem without uniform, systematic responses. One child said they would seek help from “*the Sheikh of the mosque, or someone from the administration (of school, for instance)*”. Another group of children thought it would be important to: “*ensure social workers and officials dealing with children are trained and able to help us*”, “*ensure numbers of psychologists at school is sufficient*”, and that “The social worker and psychologist at schools must be of an effective role, not just a formality.”

Children's reluctance to approach professionals for help in Egypt is of concern, as it limits the opportunities for violations of children's rights to be identified and referred to appropriate authorities at an early point. When children in Egypt need help or advice, they will usually turn to an informal source, such as a parent, carer, extended family member or a friend in the first instance. Occasionally they may also turn to a community leader, such as a religious figure, a tribal leader or someone with political authority, particularly where these people are blood relations of the child's family.¹⁰

Stakeholders have also noted that the availability of local outreach services can vary significantly from region to region. Stakeholders reported a scarcity of services specifically for children and young people offering early help and advice on a range of personal, social and health matters, such as youth information, advice, counselling and support centres in local communities in Egypt (Youth Access, n.d.^[13]).¹¹

If they do not first go through the Child Helpline or CPC, children will need to report crimes to the police. In view of this, the police are most likely to represent children's first contact with the authorities in Egypt. Whether the child is a victim, a witness or an offender, they are required to be heard first at a police station. In general terms, there are efforts to ensure that police stations have female social workers as the first point of contact for child victims. In relation to implementation and due to limited resources, stakeholders report that these practices are uneven, and the child may not receive child-specific treatment.

Understandable information about child rights

The National Human Rights Strategy has an objective to raise the level of awareness of child rights and to encourage rights-related initiatives and activities. Also, the NCCM strives to raise awareness of child rights and encourages actions to straighten relevant information. However, government initiatives or websites providing child-friendly information concerning children's rights remain limited. While international organisations, CSOs and NGOs maintain active social media channels, including Facebook pages, which can provide initial information in Arabic or direct children to sources of help, there is much scope to improve children's access to information on their rights. Box 4.4 provides some examples of child-friendly materials developed in the United States and Canada to inform children of their rights online.

Box 4.4. Easy to understand legal support materials for children

United States

The US Department of Justice has developed the Child Victims and Witnesses Support Materials to support children and young people during their involvement with the justice system as victims or witnesses to a crime. These materials were specifically designed to appeal to children of different age groups (ages 2-6, 7-12, and 13-18 years). For each age group, there are materials about the criminal justice system and the child welfare system and a guide for caregivers and practitioners on how to use them. The goal of these materials is to provide effective, trauma-informed, developmentally appropriate information and support to children in a way that they can more easily understand so that they can feel informed, supported and empowered.

Canada

Canada has developed a child-friendly booklet about separation and divorce entitled "What Happens Next? Information for kids about separation and divorce". It contains illustrations, short sentences and definitions to facilitate children's understanding of divorce and separation as a legal concept and what steps will take place in their parents' situation in a child-friendly manner.

Source: (Office for Victims of Crime, n.d.^[14]), Office for Victims of Crime, Department of Justice USA, <https://ovc.ojp.gov/child-victims-and-witnesses-support>; (Department of Justice Canada, n.d.^[15]), What happens next? Information for kids about separation and divorce, www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/fl-lf/famil/book-livre/pdf/what-happens-next-eng.pdf.

Recommendations to enhance access to early information, advice and support

- Consider supporting efforts to develop data analysis capabilities that enable the assessment of the existing child assistance mechanisms' ability to identify and receive children's legal complaints.
- Strengthen efforts to raise awareness and legal literacy among the population regarding children's rights and available protection services in Egypt, including through proactive outreach to vulnerable populations.
- Work towards further developing avenues for children and their families to reach out and receive help across the national territory and beyond large cities, especially in rural areas and border governorates.
- Improve safe access to child-friendly information about children's rights and avenues to reach help online through a dedicated platform, under the NCCM in collaboration with the Ministry of Communication and Information technology and with the involvement of CSOs.
- Work towards establishing community support centres where children and young people can get early legal advice alongside support for broader social, health and well-being issues in their local communities.

4.3.2. Access to complaint mechanisms

Access to complaint mechanisms includes the right to access child-friendly, independent and effective complaints mechanisms when services and institutions have violated children's rights. The effective enjoyment of rights requires that effective complaint procedures are provided by law and operate effectively in practice to redress violations. Under Article 4 of the UNCRC, the State has primary responsibility for realising children's rights. In addition to taking all appropriate measures to implement children's rights, the State and its actors must establish mechanisms to provide remedies when violations of those rights occur. Among these remedies are independent, accessible, safe, effective and child-centred complaints mechanisms for children and their representatives.

In Egypt, the Child Helpline of the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood is considered to be the principal mechanism that plays a major role in receiving complaints. Other specific mechanisms exist such as the Ministry of Social Solidarity's Helpline created for complaints from care institutions. In addition, Egypt's National Council for Human Rights receives complaints from citizens of all ages, refers these to the relevant authorities and follows up on them to ensure the implementation of best practices. It also has the competence to raise awareness of rights and the legal procedures to be followed in cases of a breach (Egypt's National Council for Human Rights, n.d.^[16]).

The NCCM has highlighted plans to strengthen its ability to co-ordinate, develop, monitor and advocate for more accountable, transparent and participatory public policies for children by establishing the Egypt National Child Rights Observatory (ENCRO) (NCCM Egypt, n.d.^[17]). However, as mentioned in Chapter 3 and according to the findings of OECD interviews in 2022, it is not yet functioning. In view of this, there is further room to enhance the complaint mechanism for the different institutions in contact with children, by co-ordinating all mechanisms under the NCCM Child Helpline.

Recommendations to strengthen access to complaint mechanisms

- Consider strengthening the availability of complaint mechanisms for children by establishing complaint mechanisms within the different services available for children and ensuring appropriate co-ordination with the NCCM Helpline and other relevant stakeholders.
- Develop national guidelines and requirements for child-friendly and confidential complaints mechanisms within care, health care and educational institutions in order to enable children to raise issues about their care and treatment safely.

4.3.3. Legal advice, assistance and representation

According to the CRC, children have the right to legal aid free of charge in any judicial or administrative proceedings that concern them, which is high quality, state-funded and available at all stages of the legal process. Governments must ensure that the legal aid provided is child-friendly, accessible, age-appropriate, multidisciplinary, effective and responsive to children's specific legal and social needs. In Egypt, free access to the justice system and legal aid are constitutional rights (Mohamed M. Youssef, 2017^[18]). The Constitution specifies that an “investigation may not start with the person unless his/her lawyer is present. A lawyer shall be seconded for persons who do not have one.” In relation to parties to civil and administrative disputes, if either of the parties is a child, no legal aid schemes have been identified for children.

According to Article 125 of the Child Law, the child has the right to legal assistance: “(s)he shall be represented in criminal and misdemeanour cases by a lawyer to defend him in both the investigation and trial phases. If no lawyer has been selected by the child, the PPO or the Court shall appoint one, in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Criminal Procedure Code.” In practice, as described in Chapter 3, prosecutors in charge of child cases, particularly those in Cairo and Alexandria, tend to reach out to NGOs or the Child Helpline when a child offender does not have a lawyer. Depending on the circumstances, the social workers who answer calls at the NCCM Child Helpline may refer the child or parents to lawyers. Lawyers provide legal advice, most frequently in relation to family matters. Child Helpline lawyers, where needed, may provide direct legal assistance, such as legal representation, and undertaking necessary legal and administrative work, including, for example, applying for and obtaining registration documents for children at risk and child victims. Box 4.5. highlights the key international good practice standards in relation to legal advice and representation for children.

Box 4.5. International good practices: access to legal advice, assistance and representation in judicial proceedings

- States should facilitate access to a lawyer or another institution or entity, which, according to national law, is responsible for defending children’s rights. Children should be represented in their own name, including where there is, or could be, a conflict of interest between the child and the parents or other involved parties. Adequate representation and the right to be represented independently from their parents should be guaranteed, especially in proceedings where there is a conflict of interest between the child and the parents or other involved parties (guidelines 37 and 43), (Council of Europe, 2010^[10]).
- An effective legal aid system is central to the rule of law. In the field of administrative law, it ensures accountability if public bodies breach the law, including those laws which breach children’s rights, by allowing people to complain to the courts. Legal aid is crucial to ensuring that children can access the court to challenge breaches of their rights. Children should have access to free legal aid under the same or more lenient conditions as adults (guideline 38), (Council of Europe, 2010^[10]), (UNICEF, 2018^[19]).
- Lawyers representing children should be trained in and knowledgeable on children’s rights and related issues, receive ongoing and in-depth training and be capable of communicating with children at their level of understanding (guideline 39), (Council of Europe, 2010^[10]). A system of specialised youth lawyers is recommended; while respecting the child’s free choice of a lawyer (explanatory memorandum, guideline 39), (Council of Europe, 2010^[10]). Children should be considered fully-fledged clients with their own rights, and lawyers representing children should bring forward the child’s opinion (Council of Europe, 2010^[10]).

Source : (Council of Europe, 2010^[10]), Guidelines of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on child-friendly justice, <https://rm.coe.int/16804b2cf3>; (UNICEF, 2018^[19]), Guidelines on Child-friendly Legal Aid, <https://www.unicef.org/eca/media/5171/file>.

It has not been possible to establish what practical steps a child would need to follow to receive legal aid, such as, for example, making an official request. It is further notable that there is no institutional mechanism to ensure the presence of a lawyer with children. Identifying stable partnerships that can systematically provide legal counsel for children, such as re-establishing the prior partnership with the Bar Association, may be helpful avenues to consider expanding the coverage of the legal aid system in practice. Meanwhile, there is room to develop specialised education opportunities for dedicated child affairs lawyers or to include child justice as part of the law school curriculums to ensure the quality of representation. This measure aims to reduce reliance on interrogating children in certain situations without the presence of lawyers. This is done to ensure that children are not left waiting for extended periods of time during the initial stages of investigations by the authorities.

To enable expedited processing of cases when lawyers are not readily available, some stakeholders have reported interrogation of children in the early phases of investigations without a legal representative present to avoid any loss of evidence, in accordance with article 124 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. Efforts should be made to minimise the occurrence of this practice in order to comply with the Child Law and international standards.

It is not just child offenders who require representation; child victims, children at risk and child witnesses all require legal assistance. Although the staff of the Child Helpline includes lawyers, the Child Helpline is short-staffed and faces difficulties operating under such circumstances. In addition, further awareness is necessary due to the Child Helpline's limited visibility within society. Outreach and communication efforts would significantly sensibilise people and impact their ability and willingness to access this service. The recommendations voiced by the child representatives who participated in the FGD included the "provision of free and 24 hour-available helplines to receive complaints from children, assist them, and explain to them all procedures that might happen if things escalate and reach the legal authorities (...) accessing free legal advice to children".

The Department of Child Judicial Protection within the Ministry of Justice's Unit for Human Rights and Women and Children has a mandate to work in co-ordination with bodies concerned with childhood and to ensure the availability of legal support for children in accordance with the provisions of Egyptian legislation and international conventions applicable in Egypt. Considering this mandate, there may be room to strengthen the Ministry's role in this regard, in partnership with the concerned authorities, to ensure improvements in the availability of high-quality legal representation and guidance for children in coordination with NCCM and other relevant stakeholders.

Recommendations to strengthen legal advice, assistance and representation

- In line with findings in previous sections, continue to ensure children are appropriately represented at all times along their legal pathway, right from the beginning when they are first found to be in conflict with the law.
- Work towards developing a systematic channel and structured partnerships to provide children with legal assistance as soon as they need it, for example, by re-establishing partnerships with Bar Associations.
- Consider expanding the coverage of free legal aid for children to cover additional legal areas, such as in civil matters, and clarifying the process to claim free legal assistance.
- Work towards promoting the development of education opportunities to foster the specialisation of child affairs lawyers and ensure the quality of representation.

4.3.4. Psychosocial assistance

Social workers are present across many child justice processes in Egypt, which is considered a good practice. Ideally, social workers accompany the child from their arrival at the CPO; however, in practice,

this may only happen at offices specialising in children's cases, such as the prosecution in Cairo and Alexandria. Social workers produce a report that can guide the prosecution's actions regarding the child, considering the child's social situation and identifying if the offender is also a child at risk. Social workers also inform the development of trials involving child offenders by providing a report that supports the judge's decision. The NCCM Child Helpline and CPCs also count on members specialising in social work. NGOs are also reportedly often formed by social workers. Finally, social work staff oversee the care facilities under MoSS supervision. It must be noted that social workers of MoSS are divided into two independent groups: social workers of the social defence/observation offices and social workers who work at the care facilities under MoSS supervision.

Stakeholders have highlighted that the quality of these reports could be improved, possibly through strengthened capabilities to visit the child's environment and additional training for social workers. Further, it seems that there is a need for more social workers. The social workers of MoSS amount to approximately 350 across all offices of social observation. With regards to the social workers of the Child Helpline, although the exact number is not confirmed, the stakeholders reported insufficient capacity to deal with the overwhelming number of communications they receive.

In relation to psychological help, this is reportedly a growing need across the territory for which more psychologists are required, particularly professionals specialising in certain types of traumas. The NCCM has a limited number of psychologists within its Child Helpline staff, but this service is rarely available in rural locations away from urban centres. Children of the Egyptian Child Forum underscored the need to ensure that "social workers and officials dealing with children are trained and able to help us" and that "social workers and psychologists at schools must be of an effective role, not just a formality." Many families consider psychological help a luxury, and therefore children in need are not treated regularly unless the state or NGOs can provide this service.

Recommendations to further develop psychosocial assistance

- Consider reinforcing the capacities of social workers and other relevant psychosocial assistance providers. Specific attention could be given to the strengthening of social workers' specialised training and support in order to enhance the quality of reports received by NCCM staff, prosecutors and judges in child cases.
- Consider increasing the availability of psychologists in the Child Helpline and other public institutions, particularly schools, given the growing demand for this service by children and their families.

4.3.5. Child offenders placed in custody

Children in custody due to conflict with the law, are placed in care institutions overseen by the MoSS. The Marg Punitive Institution¹² is the only closed institution for children in Egypt. It is for boys only and was established by virtue of the Juvenile Act No. 31 of 1974 mainly to receive boys who reach the age of 15 years old and who are serving imprisonment sentences.¹³ In addition to the facility mentioned above, children between 12 and 17 years old may be sent to social care institutions that fall under the supervision of the MoSS. These institutions may be of two types: semi-closed and open. There are two semi-closed facilities located in Cairo and Alexandria, and they are reserved for serious crimes. Children housed in these two institutions may only leave with the permission of the PPO. In practice, based on the feedback received during OECD interviews, the permission ultimately depends on the criteria used by each prosecutor. All remaining institutions, meaning the large majority, are open. They house children of all ages, including those that have committed some offence and have been placed in a care institution as an alternative to imprisonment.

Analysis and recommendations concerning the time children spend in custody before and after trial, and the quality and inspection of these facilities are provided in Chapter 5 under section 5.3.3.

4.3.6. Access to remedies, courts and the judicial process

As bearers of rights, the legal framework in Egypt provides children with recourse and remedies upon violations of their rights. By global standards, domestic law should facilitate, where appropriate, the possibility of access to court for children who have a sufficient understanding of their rights and the use of remedies to protect these rights based on sound legal advice (Council of Europe, 2010^[10]). In this regard, OECD analysis has identified some barriers relating to children’s legal status and procedural rights.

With regards to international human rights complaints, provided all available domestic remedies have been exhausted, individuals, groups, or non-governmental organisations (NGOs) may submit complaints (known as “communications”) to the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights about violations of the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights .¹⁴ This option is legally well-established but may be restricted in practice due to the other barriers to participation and the accessibility of remedies, as identified throughout this report.

The Council of Europe Guidelines for Child-friendly Justice encourage countries to review their statutes of limitations, ensuring that no violence against children is unaddressed.¹⁵ In a positive step, the statute of limitations governing the period within which the courts can address a criminal case of sexual violence against a child was, in 2015, increased to 20 years.¹⁶ In civil proceedings, a claim must be brought within a year of the violation, which is considered limited compared to other judicial systems globally. An administrative claim should be filed within 60 days from the date of notification of the decision, which may also be restrictive.¹⁷ In addition, these civil and administrative periods do not consider whether the affected party is a minor. As identified elsewhere in the report, there is room to strengthen the treatment of children under civil and administrative processes by specifying adaptations in procedural rules for children.

The cumulative effect of these obstacles is that, for many children, their access to legal proceedings can be restricted.

Importantly and as mentioned previously, specialised Child Courts and CPOs exist in urban centres such as Cairo, Giza and Alexandria. Across the rest of the country, general courts and prosecutors attend to children’s cases through dedicated days in court and communication with central entities. The same facilities and staff are employed as for adult cases. The CRC Committee highlighted serious concerns in its 2011 Concluding Observations about “the slow progress in establishing special Child Courts and specialised child prosecution offices”¹⁸, which, as of 2022, seems to remain an area for progress. Box 4.6 illustrates the French Juvenile Justice System, which comprises specialised judges and courts.

Box 4.6. The specialised French juvenile justice system

The French juvenile justice system comprises specialised judges and courts that deal with children in civil and criminal matters, as well as specialised support staff with social work, education and medical backgrounds who work for the Ministry of Justice and support the implementation of judicial decisions. Three types of judicial entities oversee child cases:

1. **Child Judges** exist across civil, criminal and administrative legal areas. They can protect children from risks in the civil sphere, such as malnutrition, violence or dropping out of school. They can also adopt protection measures. With regards to criminal justice, the judge can hear minors prosecuted for less serious offences in the judge’s office and can order educational punitive measures to their actions.

2. **Child Courts** have jurisdiction to try the most serious offences committed by minors and crimes committed by minors under the age of 16. They are composed of a juvenile judge and two counsellors.
3. **Special Criminal Courts** try minors above the age of 16 who have committed crimes. They are tried by a Child Assize Court composed of three professional magistrates, two of whom are child judges.

France adopted a new law for juvenile justice on 30 September 2021, entitled *Code de la justice pénale des mineurs* (Juvenile Criminal Justice Code), which applies reforms related to the specialisation of child justice, in particular, to strengthen rehabilitation and accelerate rulings.

Sources: (Ministère de la Justice de la France, 2023^[20]; République Française, n.d.^[21])

Therefore, there is room to make additional specialised services available, especially beyond the main urban centres in Egypt. In addition, the training and tenure of child affairs judges could be lengthened in order to enhance the capacities of specialised justice services for children. The need for additional training and specialisation for justice stakeholders is analysed in Chapter 5 under section 5.3.1.

Recommendations on specialised justice services for children

- Provide support to continue accelerating the establishment of specialised Child Courts and prosecution offices across the country, especially outside of large urban centres and strengthening child-friendly procedures, tools and facilities throughout the judicial process.
- Consider strengthening specialised training and capacity-building opportunities for judges, in addition to extending the tenure of child affairs judges to enable specialisation, as currently envisaged for other areas of the law.

4.3.7. Protection and alternative care

Children at risk are provided with protection services by the state. These include placement in care facilities or foster families when they do not have a suitable place or family to live with and prosecuting those who may have committed a crime against them. The prosecution has a role in enforcing direct protection measures in co-ordination with MoSS. The Office of the Prosecutor General houses a specialised bureau dedicated to child judicial protection within the Judicial Inspection Department. It has significant capacities to deal with child offenders, child victims and children at risk in general.

According to the Guidelines on Procedural Rights of Child Victims of Crime and Child Witnesses to Crime, MoSS currently oversees 37 institutions spread across 19 governorates (25 institutions for boys and 12 for girls). However, it should be noted that the OECD Team found through its interviews with stakeholders that some of these institutions are not, in fact, operational.

In Alexandria, the deployment of mobile units led by MoSS to address homelessness was reported to be a successful service that dramatically decreased the number of children without shelter and in begging situations.

However, it has been identified that the infrastructure of the child justice system is limited in relation to children at risk. The numbers and capacities of lawyers, social workers and psychologists available at the NCCM Child Helpline are limited. The option to implement alternative measures to custody in practice is very limited, leading many children into care institutions. The limited option for judges to implement alternative measures, lessens the impact of the training that they receive on the existence of these measures. The fact that there are no separate institutions to hold children convicted of an offence from those who are at risk, unaccompanied or abandoned means that neither group of children has their needs

fully met. In addition, there is room to enhance activities for children within care institutions, such as providing classes and sports activities.

In this vein, Egyptian stakeholders have identified room to enhance the coverage of the protection system for children. The Committee currently considering amendments to the Child Law aims to create a comprehensive system of alternative care for unaccompanied children and children at risk. The MoSS is considering proposing a separate law regulating alternative care for these at-risk children. Addressing their specific needs, which often do not match those of the child offenders placed in the same care facilities, can make services more appropriate and responsive. This is particularly relevant given the finding that the main legal issue experienced by children in Egypt is as victims of various forms of violence, sexual abuse, child marriage and child labour, all of which put children at risk.

Recommendations on protection and alternative care

- Strengthen services for children at risk, in particular by increasing the numbers and capacity of lawyers, social workers and psychologists.
- Consider separating children at risk from child offenders placed in custody by dedicating specific facilities for children at risk, supported by adequate legislation, case management staff and funding.

4.3.8. Diversion, alternative measures and restorative mechanisms for child offenders

As mentioned in Chapter 2 under section 2.3.5, Egyptian law does not currently recognise the diversion of children away from formal justice authorities and does not adopt the concept of restorative justice. However, a pilot to implement diversion measures with a restorative justice approach has been implemented in Alexandria since 2018. The pilot project's success has motivated the government to work on institutionalising diversion measures.

Since 2020, various government committees have been discussing a draft law, introducing amendments to the Child Law in this regard. The governmental bodies involved in this task are the Ministry of Justice, the PPO, the MoSS and the NCCM. Legislative amendments are being considered, pertaining to Chapter 8 of the Child Law, to encourage the use and implementation of non-custodial punishments against child offenders (referred to in the Child Law as “alternative measures”). As mentioned above, proposed legislative amendments currently being considered include provisions allowing courts to apply “alternative measures” for children, including: enrolment into training and rehabilitation programmes; an obligation to undertake certain duties; being put under judicial probation; or the obligation to undertake other community services. To make this possible in practice, the necessary infrastructure and human resources will need to be in place to accommodate children complying with orders for alternative measures, such as expert facilitators for restorative meetings, community service opportunities and the availability of training.

Recommendations on diversion, alternative measures and restorative mechanisms for child offenders

- Continue working towards developing legislation to support diversion and alternative measures for child offenders in the Egyptian system.
- Work towards enhancing existing infrastructure and available resources to implement diversion and alternative measures effectively.

4.3.9. Medical referrals

The NCCM Child Helpline and the CPCs reported the possibility of directing children to medical services in hospitals through co-ordination with the Ministry of Health and Population as part of the services provided to children. They can be referred for physical health issues as well as for psychiatric treatment. The NCCM

Child Helpline also has the ability to refer to rehabilitation facilities specialised in cases of substance abuse and addiction. It was highlighted by stakeholders that, on occasion, rotation of personnel in the Ministry of Health made it difficult to connect with this institution. Therefore, as flagged in the previous chapter, it would be beneficial to systematise the medical referrals process across regions to ensure the system's sustainability and that good practices are not affected by staff rotation.

The guidelines jointly released in 2019 by the Ministry of Justice and UNICEF provide child affairs judges with a list of available mental health services provided by the General Secretariat of Mental Health and Addiction Treatment affiliated to the Ministry of Health and Population.¹⁹ Child affairs judges are encouraged to refer children, where necessary, to mental health institutions through the Hotline of the General Secretariat of Mental Health and Addiction Treatment. There are 11 such institutions located in the governorates of Assiout, Banha, Bani Swaif, Daqahliyya, Helwan, Minya, and Port Said.

Key recommendations

- Strengthen data collection practices and commit to evidence-based planning for child justice by collecting quality data and information about children's legal needs and the availability of services, including existing child cases, the steps these cases take and their outcomes. Investment in digital data collection may help make this process easier and aid data analysis, ideally through a platform where data can be shared across different ministries and the NCCM to facilitate the co-ordination of child case management.
- Consider empowering and operationalising ENCRO as a key instrument that could systematically collect and analyse relevant data.
- Based on the evidence, design and deliver child-friendly justice services tailored to the legal needs of children, adapted to their age and level of development, as well as to children from different communities across the whole national territory. In order to do this, child participation and engagement in the creation of policies are paramount.
- Strengthen efforts to monitor the impact of child justice initiatives to improve their responsiveness and efficiency and ensure that they are appropriately resourced, sustainable, and inclusive, with particular attention to vulnerable children.
- Consider conducting outreach initiatives and campaigns to raise awareness of existing mechanisms for children and families that can assist them in order to empower children and their guardians in legal processes.
- Strengthen prevention and early intervention services that address the root causes of children's exposure to dangerous situations and their involvement in unlawful acts, including mental health and child protection services.
- Improve access to child-friendly information about children's rights through a dedicated platform under the NCCM possibly in collaboration with civil society organisations (CSOs).
- Accelerate the establishment of specialised Child Courts and justice services across the national territory based on existing needs, going beyond Cairo and Alexandria to other cities, as well as rural and border governorates.
- Continue to ensure children in conflict with the law are legally represented at all times from the beginning of the process. Consider developing structured partnerships, with volunteer lawyers or civil society organisations, to provide children with legal assistance.
- Continue efforts aimed at ensuring the inclusion of all children in Egypt, including those in vulnerable situations, into all relevant services, specifically access to child-friendly justice systems and legal assistance for both child victims and child offenders, as well as inclusion in systems for child protection interventions for children-at-risk.

- Consider reinforcing the NCCM's capacities, including child helpline staff, lawyers, and social workers, by developing a clear and up-to-date training curriculum. Training should also target new trends based on child-helpline data and statistics, including but not limited to bullying and cyber-extortion
- Consider strengthening the availability of legal aid for children beyond child offenders, such as to cover child protection and civil cases.
- Consider providing legal aid services at all stages of children's pathways when in contact with the law and building the capacity of care institutions to provide the necessary legal support for children.
- Explore opportunities to enhance the quality and availability of social and psychological support available for children.
- Consider dedicating particular care institutions to children at risk so they can receive specific services and support that may differ from those needed by children in placement.
- Continue working towards developing diversion mechanisms and sound alternative measures that can be offered to child offenders, underpinned by the necessary legal structures and resource allocation.
- Consider strengthening the availability and accessibility of the NCCM Child-helpline and accelerating the establishment of complaints mechanisms, under the coordination the Child-helpline, within the different services available for children as well as Child Courts and prosecution offices in every governorate.
- Explore opportunities to enhance co-ordination and transfer of relevant information between the NCCM and other institutions and service providers in contact with children. Also, seek to institutionalise co-ordination channels with relevant actors of the child justice system, including the National Council for Human Rights and Women's Ombudsman Office of the National Council for Women, and the National Council for Disability Affairs.
- Develop national guidelines and requirements for health and mental care as well as educational institutions to implement child-friendly and safe complaints mechanisms.
- Consider promulgating a government-wide "No Wrong Door" policy for children seeking to issue a complaint in order to ensure that no children are be turned away when filing a complaint.

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Notes

¹ Foster families - Kafala is similar to (long-term) foster care in the conferment of some (not full) parental rights and responsibilities for a child's upbringing in respect of both the child and their property. For further information, see: <http://www.saflii.org/za/journals/AHRLJ/2014/18.pdf>.

² <http://www.internationalbudget.org/open-budget-survey/country-results/2019/egypt>.

³ The Egyptian Open Data initiative serves as an example of Egypt's recent efforts aimed at improving transparency, accountability and citizen participation.

⁴ www.unicef-irc.org/portfolios/documents/377_egypt.htm.

⁵ See for example : Liu, Jenny and Modrek, Sepideh and Sieverding, Maia. (2017). The mental health of youth and young adults during the transition to adulthood in Egypt. *Demographic Research*. 36. 1721-1758. 10.4054/demres.2017.36.56.

⁶ See for example : UNICEF Egypt, Policy brief: NCCM launches the "Policies for Change" series with a policy paper entitled "Ending Early Marriage", 26 June 2018, available in Arabic at: www.unicef.org/egypt/ar/press-releases/national-council-childhood-motherhood-launches-policy-action-series-policy-brief.

⁷ CRIP helpline, national special number 119 which is free of charge and available 24/7 all days of the week. More information can be found at www.allo119.gouv.fr.

⁸ UK Childline is a helpline that addresses a multiplicity of issues through trained counsellors, available by phone, e-mail or an online chat function, www.childline.org.uk/.

⁹ More information can be found at www.nccm-egypt.org/e5/e211/index_eng.html.

¹⁰ The role of community leaders tends to be greater outside of big cities.

¹¹ For an example of a well-developed youth information, advice and counselling service model, see the Youth Access' 'YIACS' model in the United Kingdom.

¹² The Marg Punitive Institution is a detention facility operated by the Ministry of Interior and supervised by the Ministry of Social Solidarity where boys between the age of 15 and 18 who are sentenced to prison are placed (as per Art.111 of the Child Law). it serves as the only closed institution in Egypt that holds boys in detention and is located in Cairo's Marg district. For further information, refer to the Glossary in the Annex.

¹³ Decree of the Ministry of Insurance and Social Affairs No. 321/1981 Concerning the Regulation of the Marg Punitive Institution, available at: www.cc.gov.eg/legislation_single?id=163881.

¹⁴ Access To Justice For Children: Arab Republic Of Egypt, CRIN, 2014.

¹⁵ Council of Europe, Guidelines of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on child-friendly justice, 2010. <https://rm.coe.int/16804b2cf3>.

¹⁶ Law on Criminal Procedure, Section 56, Part 1.

¹⁷ Access To Justice For Children: Arab Republic Of Egypt, CRIN, 2014.

¹⁸ CRC/C/EGY/CO/3-4, https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC/C/EGY/CO/3-4&Lang=En.

¹⁹ Guidelines for Procedural Rights of Child Victims of Crime and Witnesses to Crime, 2019, p. 64-66, available in Arabic at: www.unicef.org/egypt/media/6581/file/MoJ.pdf.



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