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**AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL**  
**NEWS FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS**

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**Summary:**

AI reports & statements  
Asylum seekers/refugees  
Children  
Death Penalty  
HIV/AIDS  
Human Rights  
Mental Health  
Organ Transplants  
Prisoners  
Right to health  
Torture  
Violence Against Women  
Women's health  
Employment opportunities  
Meetings/Events  
Publications

**Amnesty International reports & statements:**

See the following recent AI reports and press statements [dates given in day/month/year format].

These and other press releases and reports are accessible at:  
<http://web.amnesty.org/library/eng-recent/index>

06/03/07 [Brazil: Irene Khan urges government collaboration to end violence](#) AMR 19/008/2007  
06/03/07 [Algeria: Growing fears for safety of two men held by intelligence agency](#) MDE 28/008/2007  
05/03/07 [Iran: Arrests of women may be an attempt to prevent International Women's Day calls for equality](#). MDE 13/022/2007  
02/03/07 [USA: US army medic facing 7 years in prison](#) AMR 51/037/2007  
01/03/07 [China: The human cost of the economic 'miracle'](#) ASA 17/009/2007  
01/03/07 [EU Fundamental Rights: A Long Way to Go](#) IOR 61/009/2007  
27/02/07 [EU: Flawed regulations not enough to stop trade in tools of torture](#) EUR 01/003/2007  
27/02/07 [Cambodia: Bring killers of trade unionist to justice](#) ASA 23/003/2007  
27/02/07 [Colombia: Amnesty International welcomes apparent advances in the investigations into the 2005 San José de Apartadó massacre](#) AMR 23/004/2007  
27/02/07 [Estonia: Language police gets more powers to harass](#) EUR 51/001/2007  
27/02/07 [Sudan: Application for summonses for two war crimes suspects a small but significant step towards justice in Darfur](#) IOR 10/002/2007  
27/02/07 [Rwanda: Freedom of expression under attack](#) AFR 47/002/2007  
26/02/07 [15th Anniversary of the "Erased": time for EU to ensure Slovenia complies with obligations](#) IOR 61/007/2007  
26/02/07 [United Kingdom/Jordan: 'National security suspect' facing prospect of torture in Jordan](#) EUR 45/002/2007  
26/02/07 [Iran: Ethnic minorities facing new wave of human rights violations](#) MDE 13/020/2007  
23/02/07 [Philippines: All parties must act on political killings ahead of elections](#) ASA 35/001/2007  
23/02/07 [Bosnia & Herzegovina: AI calls for impartial investigation into death of human rights defender](#) EUR 63/001/2007

## Asylum seekers/refugees:

**Mozambique:** An estimated 2000 flood victims per day are pouring into crowded refugee camps in central Mozambique, straining relief efforts and prompting worries of a food crisis, whilst fears of disease rise as sanitary conditions deteriorate. Approximately 50,000 people are living in the makeshift camps, where there is particular worry about the outbreak of cholera and dysentery. See *CNN News* (28 February):

<http://www.cnn.com/2007/WORLD/africa/02/26/mozambique.reut/index.html>

**USA:** Twelve North Koreans, the largest group in recent times, have arrived in the USA seeking asylum. They are aged from 17 to 55, and one of them has reportedly been living in South Korea's Embassy in Beijing for about a year. Thousands of North Koreans are currently believed to be living in China, where they are treated as economic migrants and returned home to imprisonment and likely torture when they are discovered. See *The Guardian* (1 March):

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/worldlatest/story/0,-6448848,00.html>

## Children:

**The Philippines:** The UN's Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Jean Ziegler, has said he is appalled by the current media campaign organised by the Pharmaceutical Healthcare Association of the Philippines (PHAP) which supports breastmilk substitutes, and is 'misleading, deceptive and malicious in intent'. He also expressed his disappointment about the irresponsible and unethical behaviour of some medical practitioners and organizations, which have supported the milk companies. See the UN press release (26 February):

<http://www.unhchr.ch/hurricane/hurricane.nsf/view01/3035D668F9E92329C125728F00294A69>

**India:** The number of baby girls in care in India is growing. India's minister of state for women and child development, Renuka Chowdhury, has been pleading with parents to place their children in state care rather than kill unwanted female babies or foetuses. India has almost 8% more men than women as the sex-ratios continue to increase. India now has 930,000 "missing" girls per year. See *The Guardian* (28 February):

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/india/story/0,,2022983,00.html?gusrc=rss&feed=1>

**UK:** An obese 8 year old boy, weighing 89 kg, has been allowed to remain with his family after a child protection hearing to determine whether he should be taken into local authority care. His weight puts him at high risk from diabetes and coronary illness. See the *BBC* (27 February): <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/health/6402113.stm>

**Nepal:** There are up to 20 000 'kamlaris', indentured domestic servants, working in Western Nepal. In slave-like conditions, they are vulnerable to sexual and physical abuse at the hands of their employers. The girls receive no payment for their services; the money goes to the middleman who arranges the transaction between the employer and the girl's family. Many of the girls involved are children of the Tharu ethnic group who until recently were bonded servants themselves. See the *BBC* (2 March):

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south\\_asia/6405373.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/6405373.stm)

## Death Penalty:

**Iraq:** The US National Lawyers Guild International Committee has protested against the death sentence being given to three Iraqi women who were denied legal counsel, and one of whom is a recent mother. See *New Zealand Scoop* (27 February):

<http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/WO0702/S00406.htm>

and Hands Off Cain: <http://www.handsoffcain.info/news/index.php?iddocumento=9308109>

**Zambia:** The death penalty is to stay on the statute books despite the Prime Minister not signing any death warrants. 41 people have been sentenced to death since 2001 although so far none of them have been executed. See *Hands off Cain* website (23 February):

<http://www.handsoffcain.info/news/index.php?iddocumento=9309043&srcday=0&srcmonth=0&srcyear=0&mover=>

**USA (North Carolina).** A judge has delayed the execution of Allen Holman, arranged for this week, because doctors refused to risk losing their medical licences by participating. Earlier the medical board had introduced a policy banning doctors from participating in executions. In a related development, state prison officials filed a lawsuit seeking to prohibit the N.C. Medical Board from disciplining doctors under the board's new mandate that they may only observe, not monitor, executions. The State's protocol requires that a doctor monitor the vital signs of the condemned inmate. See the *News Observer* (7 March):  
<http://www.newsobserver.com/1509/story/550589.html>

**France:** Although the death penalty has been outlawed since 1981, the French Parliament has voted to amend the country's Constitution to include an explicit ban. See *Death Penalty Information Center* (19 February):  
<http://www.deathpenaltyinfo.org/article.php?did=2265&scid=64>

## **HIV/AIDS:**

**Botswana:** After a deadly outbreak of diarrhoea among children last year, HIV-positive mothers in Botswana are to be encouraged to return to breast-feeding their newborns, rather than bottle-feeding, as a means of protecting them from a range of potentially deadly gastrointestinal diseases after floodwaters caused widespread contamination of water supplies. See *The San Francisco Chronicle* (27 February):

<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/c/a/2007/02/27/MNG82OBL0Q1.DTL> (On infant feeding and HIV see the editorial in the *BMJ* (10 March) Infant feeding and HIV: Avoiding transmission is not enough. (Rollins NC: <http://www.bmj.com/cgi/content/full/334/7592/487>))

**Mexico:** The Supreme Court has ruled that the Armed Forces cannot kick out HIV-positive members because to do so is discriminatory and unconstitutional. The military had argued that the soldiers were 'useless' but have been ordered, in an 8-3 vote, to return to duty the four soldiers who appealed the Defence Department's decision. See *Associated Press* (2 March):  
<http://uk.gay.com/headlines/11147>

**Malawi:** A two day debate took place on whether to adopt male circumcision as a strategy of reducing HIV/AIDS infection rates. Recent trials in Uganda, Kenya and South Africa found that men who were uncircumcised were twice as likely to contract the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) compared with circumcised counterparts. See AFP article (28 February):

[http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20070228/hl\\_afp/malawihealthaids:\\_ylt=A0WTcVofieVFcmkAhx7VJRIF](http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20070228/hl_afp/malawihealthaids:_ylt=A0WTcVofieVFcmkAhx7VJRIF)

Listen to The Lancet's Til Barnighausen from the Africa Centre for Health and Population Studies discussion of the implications from two randomised trials: *The Lancet* (24 February):  
<http://www.thelancet.com/audio> and further comment in *The Lancet's* editorial:  
<http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140673607602852/fulltext>

**India:** A widow with a fever is beaten to death by her in-laws who suspected she had AIDS and feared she would infect the rest of the family. Her husband had died three years earlier of a liver-related disease. Health activists say that a lack of awareness combined with widespread discrimination has led to paranoia about the virus. Read more at The Khaleej Times (26 February):  
[http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticleNew.asp?xfile=data/subcontinent/2007/February/subcontinent\\_February979.xml&section=subcontinent&col=](http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticleNew.asp?xfile=data/subcontinent/2007/February/subcontinent_February979.xml&section=subcontinent&col=)

## **Human rights:**

**Uzbekistan:** EU foreign ministers postpone a review into the possibility of lifting sanctions against Uzbekistan until May. Sanctions were imposed after government troops brutally suppressed a demonstration in the eastern Uzbek city of Andijon in 2005. Possible Uzbek

concessions that might lead to lifting sanctions include granting the International Committee of the Red Cross access to prisons and initiating dialogue over treatment of human rights activists. See *Radio Liberty's report* (28 February):

<http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2007/02/a4496ac9-cfa6-46a0-a379-bd65a611d776.html>

### **Mental Health:**

**Northern Ireland:** As suicide rates in Northern Ireland continue to rise sharply, taxi drivers at one of its most notorious death spots, the two bridges over the Foyle in Derry, are being trained to help save lives, as local people become fed up with waiting for the statutory bodies to act. One explanation for the soaring rate of suicides may be a direct result of the disintegration of the social bonds that people formed when confronted with civil unrest. See *The Guardian* (February 28):

<http://society.guardian.co.uk/socialcare/story/0,,2022485,00.html>

**Somalia:** One of the hidden stories of the khat trade, a mild stimulant, imported from Kenya to Somalia. Prolonged usage of khat has been linked to mental illness and increased violence, but many of the sellers of khat are women, often widows, who risk their own safety selling to the local militiamen who are often addicted to the drug. See *BBC* (27 February):

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/6398311.stm>

### **Organ Transplants:**

**India:** The Observer publishes its findings about women, mostly in their twenties, who are selling their kidneys in order to pay off post-tsunami debts, as fishing is no longer a viable source of income. Despite laws to regulate the organ trade, a hospital needs only a blood supply, dialysis machine and post-operative care facilities to carry out a transplant; the surgery can leave the donors in large amounts of pain and at risk from further complications. See *The Observer* (18 February):

<http://observer.guardian.co.uk/world/story/0,,2015595,00.html>

**USA:** In a proposed bill before the South Carolina state Senate, prison inmates could get up to six months shaved off their sentences if they donated a kidney or their bone marrow. See *Los Angeles Times* (9 March)

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/nation/la-na-organs9mar09,1,1200679.story?ctrack=1&cset=true>

### **Prisoners:**

**USA:** Thirty eight people believed to have been held in secret CIA prisons are still missing, according to a Human Rights Watch report 'Ghost Prisoner', published 27 February. The report documents the torture, including beating, stress positions and burning, undergone by a previous detainee, Marwan Jabour.

<http://hrw.org/reports/2007/us0207/>

**Iran:** A group of Iranian women activists have been on hunger strike in jail, objecting to the continued detention of at least seven of their younger colleagues. Thirty three women were arrested on Sunday outside a courthouse in Tehran whilst taking part in a protest to show solidarity with five women who are on trial for organising an anti-discrimination against women rally in 2006. The women believe that the authorities are trying to intimidate them into avoiding any kind of confrontation on International Women's Day. See the *BBC* (8 March):

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/6429319.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/6429319.stm)

**Botswana:** The Botswana Network on Ethics, Law and HIV/AIDS (BONELA) is arguing that denying prisoners access to condoms is denying them their right to health. The criminalization of homosexuality means that officials would be against the law in supplying condoms and thus condoning men having sex with men. "In prison, men should not be getting infected with HIV but they are. When prisoners go to jail, they lose their right to health". See *The Voice* (6 March):

<http://allafrica.com/stories/200703060705.html>

### **Right to health:**

**Nigeria:** Health professionals, as part of the Nigerian Medical Association, blaming the current health crisis on lack of professionals, have embarked on industrial action in opposition to the fact that a non-medical practitioner fills the role of headship of the Ministry of Health, and demand the creation of the post of Surgeon-General. See *AllAfrica.com* (28 February):

<http://allafrica.com/stories/200702280167.html>

**Paraguay:** Doctors working in state-run hospitals hold a demonstration outside the health ministry, in protest at what they describe as government inefficiency in dealing with an outbreak of dengue fever which has led to the declaration of a sixty day state emergency and has seen ten deaths in the past two months. See *BBC* (1 March):

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/6407287.stm>

**Guyana:** Inadequately controlled gold mining in Guyana's interior Amazon region has resulted in severe human rights abuses and devastating environmental damage, the International Human Rights Clinic (IHRC) of Harvard Law School's Human Rights Program has said. Mercury deposits in rivers from mining are reported to be causing severe public health problems, including childhood deformities, muscle wasting, and mysterious skin rashes. Mercury has also contaminated the local fish population, a primary source of food for Amerindians. See *Caribbean Net News* (7 March):

<http://www.caribbeanetnews.com/news-304--13-13--.html>

### **Torture:**

**Bangladesh:** The army and police in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh, have arrested at least nine Jumma tribal leaders this month after planting firearms in their homes. Some of those arrested have also been tortured. A state of emergency was declared in Bangladesh in January, and observers have suggested that the army and police are using this as an excuse to increase military oppression in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. See *Survival International* (6 March):

<http://www.survivalfrance.org/news.php?id=2257>

**India:** Physically handicapped pupils from Ahmedabad allege torture against several different teachers, who deny the substance of the allegations. See *Express India* (27 February):

<http://cities.expressindia.com/fullstory.php?newsid=224262>

**Russia (Chechnya):** The Council of Europe's human rights head has accused the authorities in Chechnya of systematically using torture and forced confessions. See *BBC* (1 March):

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/6407051.stm>

### **Violence against women:**

**Japan.** Japanese Prime Minister, Shinzo Abe, said last week there was "no evidence" to prove that Korean women were coerced into becoming sex slaves during the Second World War. See *Independent* (9 March):

<http://news.independent.co.uk/world/asia/article2341358.ece>

### **Women's health:**

**World:** On the occasion of International Women's Day (8 March), this article reflects on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which highlight the global areas of concern which link women to a health context. An estimated 90% of deaths from unsafe abortions and 20% of obstetric mortality could be avoided with improved access to contraception, but in many countries only a tiny minority of women have access to contraceptive methods. See *Medical News Today* (2 March) (reproducing a *Lancet* editorial):

<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/medicalnews.php?newsid=64165>

## Employment opportunities:

**Ford Foundation - International Fellowships Programme (IFP):** The International Fellowships Program provides support for up to three years of formal graduate-level study leading to a masters or doctoral degree. Fellows are selected from countries in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Latin America, and Russia, where the Ford Foundation maintains active overseas programs. To ensure that Fellows are drawn from diverse backgrounds, IFP actively seeks candidates from social groups and communities that lack systematic access to higher education.

<http://www.fordfound.org/news/more/11272000ifp/index.cfm>

## Events/Meetings:

**International Centre for Nursing Ethics Summer School** at the University of Surrey, Guildford, UK on the 17, 18 & 19 July 2007.

Contact Penny Robinson or Claire White, Tel: +44 (0) 1483 683120 Fax: +44 (0) 1483 686711 E-mail: [centre-rnme@surrey.ac.uk](mailto:centre-rnme@surrey.ac.uk)

**6th Singapore Congress of Obstetrics and Gynaecology 2007**, Conrad Hotel Singapore, Singapore 21-25 March.

*Details:* Unit 8K38 Women's Tower, Level 8, KK Women's & Children's Hospital, 100 Bukit Timah Road Singapore 229899. *Tel:* +65 629 51383 *Fax:* +65 629 91969

*E-mail:* [6scog@orlent-explorer.com](mailto:6scog@orlent-explorer.com)

*Website:* <http://www.6scog2007.com/>

## Publications:

Basoglu, Metin. Livanou, Maria. Crnobaric, Cvetana. 'Torture vs. other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment'. *Archives of General Psychiatry*. March 2007; Volume 4; Issue 3. pp 277-285.

<http://archpsyc.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/full/64/3/277>

Campbell, T.A. 'Psychological Assessment, Diagnosis, and Treatment of Torture Survivors: A Review'. *Clinical Psychology Review*. 7 February 2007. Epublication ahead of print.

[http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?db=pubmed&cmd=Retrieve&dopt=AbstractPlus&list\\_uids=17316939&query\\_hl=1&itool=pubmed\\_docsum](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?db=pubmed&cmd=Retrieve&dopt=AbstractPlus&list_uids=17316939&query_hl=1&itool=pubmed_docsum)

Delahanty, Douglas L. 'Are We Prepared to Handle the Mental Health Consequences of Terrorism?'. Editorial. *The American Journal of Psychiatry*. February 2007; Volume 164; Issue 2. pp189-191.

<http://ajp.psychiatryonline.org/cgi/reprint/164/2/189>

Homes D, Perron A. Violating ethics: unlawful combatants, national security and health professionals. *Journal of Medical Ethics* (March). See extract at: <http://jme.bmj.com/cgi/content/extract/33/3/143>

Murray R, Viljoen F. Towards Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Sexual Orientation: The Normative Basis and Procedural Possibilities before the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and the African Union. *Human Rights Quarterly* February 2007.

[http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/human\\_rights\\_quarterly/v029/29.1murray.html](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/human_rights_quarterly/v029/29.1murray.html) [requires subscription]

Taneja, Preti 'Assimilation, Exodus, Eradication: Iraq's Minority Communities since 2003'. *Minority Rights Group International*, February 2007.

<http://www.minorityrights.org/admin/Download/pdf/MRGIraqReport.pdf>

Wu, Z, Sullivan, SG, Wang Y, Rotherham-Borus, M-J, Detels R. Evolution of China's Response to HIV/AIDS. *The Lancet*. 24 February, 2007; Volume 369, Issue 9562. pp 679-690. [registration required]

<http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140673607603158/fulltext>

"Keep Your Head Down" Unprotected Migrants in South Africa'. Human Rights Watch, 27 February 2007.

<http://hrw.org/reports/2007/southafrica0207/>

UNHCR-UNAIDS Policy Brief into HIV and refugees.

[http://data.unaids.org/pub/BriefingNote/2007/Policy\\_Brief\\_Refugees.pdf](http://data.unaids.org/pub/BriefingNote/2007/Policy_Brief_Refugees.pdf)

'Practical Guidelines for Intensifying HIV Prevention', to assist policy makers and planners in countries to strengthen their national HIV prevention response, with the aim of reducing the number of new HIV infections per year. UNAIDS, 6 March 2007.

[http://data.unaids.org/pub/Guidelines/2007/20070306\\_Prevention\\_Guidelines\\_Towards\\_Universal\\_Access%5d.pdf](http://data.unaids.org/pub/Guidelines/2007/20070306_Prevention_Guidelines_Towards_Universal_Access%5d.pdf)

'Programming to Address Violence Against Women' UNFPA report offers 10 case studies that show how carefully targeted and planned interventions can reduce gender-based violence (26 February):

[http://www.unfpa.org/upload/lib\\_pub\\_file/678\\_filename\\_vaw.pdf](http://www.unfpa.org/upload/lib_pub_file/678_filename_vaw.pdf)

'Their Future in Our Hands'. World Vision report, from December 2006, which shows that half of the children living in camps for refugees and internally displaced people in Africa's Great Lakes Region are sexually abused. Presented in Kampala, Uganda by Tarsis Kabwegyere, Uganda's Minister for Relief, Disaster Preparedness and Refugees on 26 February.

[http://www.worldvision.org/resources.nsf/main/greatlakes\\_conflicts\\_200702.pdf/\\$file/greatlakes\\_conflicts\\_200702.pdf?open&lid=greatlakes&lpos=main](http://www.worldvision.org/resources.nsf/main/greatlakes_conflicts_200702.pdf/$file/greatlakes_conflicts_200702.pdf?open&lid=greatlakes&lpos=main)

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