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Summary

General news: Canada, medical care prisons / FRY, Kosovo, Dr. Brovina remains imprisoned / South Africa, physicians and human rights / USA, schizophrenia and justice

International Women's Day: AI press release / UN Security Council addresses women's day for the first time

Death penalty: USA, Burdine free after 16 years / Illinois moratorium / Pennsylvania hearings moratorium / lethal injection Odell Barnes

Torture: Kenya, national legislation / Russian Federation, Chechnya, CPT visit / Chechnya, AI reports torture / Chechnya, PHR survey / USA, conviction Louima case / USA, alleged torture by Chicago police

Impunity, crimes against humanity, war crimes: Chile, U.K., Pinochet / Netherlands, Blaskic sentenced / Netherlands, detention Dragoljub Prcać / Senegal, arrest former Chad president

Further human rights news: Indonesia, trials East Timor / Nigeria, journalist human rights workshop / South Africa, torturers seek amnesty / South Korea, tear gas halted / Sudan, relief suspended / Venezuela, abuses security forces

Publications

Vacancy: IRCT information officer

TV documentaries

General news

Canada - The level of medical care in prisons is failing to meet community standards in some cases. Prison administrations have not only an opportunity but a moral duty to address the health care issues of a population that might otherwise not access the health care system until their problems are well advanced (Health care problems in prisons, *CMAJ*, vol 162 issue 5).
<http://www.cma.ca/cmaj/vol-162/issue-5/0664.htm>

Former Republic of Yugoslavia, Kosovo - Paediatrician Flora Brovina, a 48-year old Kosovar Albanian paediatrician, poet and woman's activist remains imprisoned. The charge against Brovina specifically accused her of assisting the Kosovo Liberation Army by supplying medicine, treating wounded combatants, and helping to supply soldiers with uniforms (Paediatrician Flora Brovina remains imprisoned in Kosovo, *Lancet*, Vol 355 No 9206).
http://www.thelancet.com/newlancet/sub/issues/vol355no9206/body.news_hhr838.html#paediatricianflorabrovinaremainsimprisonedinkosovo (subscription required)
Amnesty International continues to monitor her case.

South Africa - The Lancet reports that Dr Wouter Basson, a cardiologist and former Major General in the South African Defence Force, is currently on trial for a host of charges ranging from fraud and

possession of drugs to conspiracy to murder. (Will South African physicians build a culture of human rights?, *Lancet*, Vol 355 No 9206).

http://www.thelancet.com/newlancet/sub/issues/vol355no9206/body.news_hhr838.html#willsouthafricanphysiciansbuildacultureofhumanrights

USA, New York - Jury selection is currently under way for the re-trial of Andrew Goldstein on charges that he murdered a woman by pushing her in front of a subway train. In an effort to show the real Andrew Goldstein at this retrial, his lawyers have taken him off the medication that keeps his schizophrenia under control. (Will the Real Andrew Goldstein Take the Stand, *Time* online, 7 March).
<http://www.time.com/time/daily/special/look/0,2633,40257,00.html>

International Women's Day

Amnesty International - The situation of women and girls throughout the world lies in stark contrast with the grand rethoric of the international community, AI said on 8 March. "The continuing failure to protect women's rights reflects many governments' lack of political will to bring about real change in the lives of women"

<http://www.amnesty.org/news/2000/A7700400.htm>

USA, New York - The UN Security Council marked International Women's Day for the first time Wednesday, calling for women to be fully involved in efforts to prevent and end wars.

(For the first time, Security Council marks International Women's Day, *Boston Globe*, 8 March).

http://www.boston.com/dailynews/068/world/For_first_time_Security_Council:.shtml

Death penalty

USA, Houston - Calvin Burdine was set free on 1 March after having spent 16 years on death row. Last year, a U.S. District Judge threw out Burdine's conviction because his lawyer had slept through long stretches of his 1984 trial (Death Row inmate free after 16 years, *Miami Herald*, 3 March).

<http://www.miamiherald.com/content/today/news/national/digdocs/072019.htm>

USA, Illinois - The decision by Illinois Governor George Ryan, announced 31 January 2000, to suspend executions comes in the wake of a string of investigations leading to the release of condemned prisoners from Illinois' death row (Death penalty suspended in Illinois, *Lancet*, Vol 355 No 9206)

http://www.thelancet.com/newlancet/sub/issues/vol355no9206/body.news_hhr838.html#deathpenaltysuspendedinillinois

According to a recent poll by the Chicago Tribune, support for the death penalty among registered voters in Illinois has fallen to 58%, down from 76% in August 1994 and 63% last year (Support for Death Penalty Declining in Illinois, Death Penalty Information Center, 9 March).

<http://www.essential.org/dpic/whatsnew.html>

USA, Pennsylvania - The Pennsylvania Senate Judiciary Committee recently heard testimony on a bill to impose a 2-year moratorium on the state's death penalty. Former Attorney General Praete testified in favor of a moratorium, citing the politicization of the death penalty, and the weakened state and constitutional safeguards against wrongful convictions (Former Attorney General Urges Pennsylvania Moratorium, Death Penalty Information Center, 9 March).

<http://www.essential.org/dpic/whatsnew.html>

USA, Texas - Odell Barnes was executed by lethal injection in Huntsville on 1 March 2000. He was sentenced to death in 1991 for the murder of Helen Bass in Wichita Falls. According to recent investigations by his lawyers, the physical evidence against him has been exposed as unreliable. Amnesty International had sent appeals from its Urgent Action Network and had asked Governor Bush to intervene [Amnesty International Index AMR 51/37/00].

Odell Barnes' case has attracted huge attention in France. Jack Lang, Chairman of the French National Assembly's Foreign Affairs Committee visited Texas and met with Odell Barnes (Jack Lang rend visite a un condamne a mort aux Etats-Unis pour denoncer la peine capitale, *Le Monde*, 18 February). <http://www.lemonde.fr/article/0,2320,seq-2037-43016-,00.html>

Torture

Kenya - The Centre for Human Rights and Democracy based in Kenya said that the provisions of the UN Convention Against Torture should be made part of the country's laws. This would assist in addressing torture in society. (Legislate against torture, govt told, *Daily Nation* online, 9 March). <http://www.nationaudio.com/News/DailyNation/07032000/News/News44.html>

Russian Federation - A delegation of the Council of Europe Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) has just returned from a one week visit to the Russian Federation, during which it visited a number of places of detention in the North Caucasian Region. The delegation focused on the treatment of those detained of suspected offences in the Chechen Republic (*Visit by the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture to the North Caucasian region of the Russian Federation*, CPT, 6 March) <http://www.cpt.coe.int/en/press/20000306en.htm>

The CPT visited Chechnya exactly four years after Russia joined the Council. While the Russian government's apparent willingness to join with the Council of Europe to investigate alleged atrocities committed by Russian troops is a welcome development, the first move toward any investigation must be to allow immediate independent and unimpeded access to all areas of Chechnya for international human rights monitors, said Amnesty International. <http://www.amnesty.org/news/2000/44601100.htm>

Preliminary findings from a randomized survey conducted by Physicians for Human Rights in Ingushetia reveal widespread and systematic abuses of Chechen civilians, including executions, arbitrary detention and torture, the organization reports. In addition, testimonies received by the PHR team show that the Russian Federal Forces troops have violated medical neutrality. http://www.phrusa.org/research/chechen_displaced.html

USA, New York - Three white officers were convicted of a coverup in the attack on Haitian immigrant Abner Louima, who was severely assaulted with a broken broomstick in a stationhouse bathroom. The 3 officers were found guilty of lying to investigators to conceal the role of one of the officers in the 1997 attack on Abner Louima, who suffered severe internal injuries (3 officers convicted in Louima case, *Boston Globe*, 7 March). http://www.boston.com/dailyglobe2/067/nation/3_officers_convicted_in_Louima_case+.shtml

USA, Chicago - a unit of the Chicago Police Department allegedly tortured confessions out of dozens of suspects, including ten who are now on death row. Prisoners have come forward telling of clips attached to their ears, noses, mouths and genitals. Some of these prisoners will be heard again in court (Trial by Torture, *Mother Jones*, 7 March). http://www.mojoines.com/news_wire/chicops.html

Impunity, crimes against humanity, war crimes

Chile / United Kingdom - After more than 16 months in Britain Pinochet left on 2 March after he was ruled medically unfit to stand trial on charges of human rights abuses. Pinochet left for Chile after Jack Straw, Britain's Home Secretary, dismissed the extradition requests of Spain, Belgium, France and Switzerland. See: Pinochet Freed To Return Home, *Washington Post*, 2 March). <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A59532-2000Mar2.html> and: Pinochet flies out of Britain, BBC News, 2 March : http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/uk/newsid_663000/663886.stm

For an overview of the main events (Key dates in case of Gen. Augusto Pinochet, CNN, 2 March):
<http://www.cnn.co.uk/2000/WORLD/europe/03/02/pinochet.chronology.ap/index.html>

On 6 March in Chile, Judge Juan Guzman, asked a Chilean Court to remove Pinochet's congressional immunity so the former dictator could stand trial for the killing and disappearance of 72 dissidents in the days following the 1973 coup that brought him to power (Chilean judge asks for trial of Pinochet, *Boston Globe*, 7 March).

http://www.boston.com/dailyglobe2/067/nation/Chilean_judge_asks_for_trial_of_Pinochet+.shtml A number of victims of Pinochet have started to file lawsuits for alleged human rights abuses (Pinochet now faces 72 human rights lawsuits, CNN, 9 March).

<http://www.cnn.co.uk/2000/WORLD/americas/03/07/chile.pinochet.ap/index.html>

On 8 March Chile's interior minister Raul Troncoso said that he wants to show the world that Pinochet can be tried in Chile, vowing that criminal complaints against the former dictator will be heard out (Chile pledges to show world that Pinochet can be tried at home, *Boston Globe*, 8 March).

http://www.boston.com/dailynews/068/world/Chile_pledges_to_show_world_Pi:.shtml

Comments on the Pinochet case can be found at:

Amnesty International: Pinochet case: no turning back in the global fight against impunity, 2 March

<http://www.amnesty.org/news/2000/12mar00.htm>

Human Rights Watch: Pinochet Case a Milestone, 2 March

<http://www.hrw.org/press/2000/02/pin0302.htm> and: <http://www.hrw.org/press/2000/02/pin0303.htm>

The Economist: The general sneaks away, *Economist*, 8

March <http://www.cnn.co.uk/2000/WORLD/europe/03/02/pinochet.chronology.ap/index.html>

Netherlands The UN War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague has found former Bosnian Croat commander Tihomir Blaskic guilty of war crimes. Blaskic, the highest-ranking military official to be brought before the court so far, was sentenced to 45 years in prison. The court convicted him of planning the systematic persecution of Bosnian Muslims and of trying to ethnically cleanse central Bosnia of Muslims in 1993 (General guilty of Bosnia war crimes, BBC News, 3 March).

http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/world/europe/newsid_664000/664686.stm

See also: War Crimes Tribunal Sentences Croat General to 45 Years, *New York Times*, 3 March:

http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/world/europe/newsid_664000/664686.stm

Amnesty International welcomed the bringing to justice of General Tihomir Blaskic as a milestone in the achievement of justice for the victims of war crimes in Bosnia Hercegovina.

<http://www.amnesty.org/news/2000/46300300.htm>

Thousands of Bosnian Croats protested against the War Crimes Tribunal's decision (Bosnian Croats Protest War Crimes Sentence, *LA Times*, 10 March).

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nation/20000309/t000022692.html>

Netherlands, The Hague - The International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia welcomed the detention of Dragoljub Prcać by UN peacekeeping forces on 5 March. He has been charged with crimes against humanity, war crimes and grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions allegedly committed at Omarska prison camp in north-western Bosnia between May and August 1992.

<http://www.un.org/icty/pressreal/p475-e.htm>

Senegal, Dakar - The former president of Chad, Hissene Habré, is expected to stand trial later this year on charges of torture. Several human rights organizations have collected evidence against Habré, drawing on the legal precedent established in the Pinochet case: that a person can be tried for crimes against humanity in any country and that former heads of state are not immune (In His Place of Refuge, an African Dictator is Facing Trial, *New York Times*, 1 March).

<http://www.nytimes.com/library/world/africa/030100chad-habre.html>

Further human rights news

Indonesia - Indonesia has vowed to begin within 3 months the trials of those accused of being responsible for atrocities in East Timor. The announcement was made after UN Secretary-General Koffi Annan said Indonesia must hold trials or pressure would grow for an international war crimes tribunal (Indonesia promises atrocity trials, BBC News, 1 March 2000).

http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/world/asia-pacific/newsid_644000/644686.stm

Nigeria - Iheany Amutu writes on the activities of a recent Human Right Education Workshop organised for journalists in Calabar to address issues on human rights violations. According to the Post Express, most Nigerians do not know their rights nor the rights of others (Reporting Human Rights in Nigeria, *Post Express* online, 2 March).

<http://www.postexpresswired.com/postexpress.nsf/091581de8c63f6c785256436005d2177/8ed4c12127073e138525687a003e4bc7?OpenDocument>

South Africa, Johannesburg - Eighteen years after the death in detention of trade unionist Dr. Neil Aggett, a group of security policemen is applying for amnesty for torturing him. Aggett was found hanging from the bars of his cell on 5 February 1982 (Aggett torturers to testify, *Mail & Guardian*, 7 March).

<http://www.mg.co.za/mg/news/2000mar1/7mar-torture.html>

South Korea, Seoul - Police have halted the use of tear gas at rallies according to a Los Angeles Times report. Instead of gas, the police used unarmed policewoman from office jobs to the front lines during demonstrations to calm protesters (South Korea: Police halt use of tear gas at rallies, *LA Times*, 7 March).<http://www.latimes.com/news/nation/20000305/t000021375.html>

Sudan - A number of international relief organizations suspended operations in Sudan on 1 March because the Sudan People's Liberation's Army refused to extend the deadline for negotiations with NGOs on working methods. The departure of the aid organizations, which are jointly responsible for the aid that reaches more than 1.5 million people in southern Sudan, could put at risk the lives of tens of thousands of people (Sudan Rebels Leaving Civilians in the Lurch, Human Right Watch, 8 March)

<http://www.hrw.org/press/2000/03/sud0307.htm>

Venezuela, Caraballeda - Some police officers and soldiers face accusations that they committed atrocities and other human right abuses during the recent Venezuelan floods (Venezuelan Secret Police Accused of Atrocities, *Washington Post*, 2 March).

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A64935-2000Mar2.html>

Publications

Heggenhougen H.K. More than just 'interesting!' - anthropology, health and human rights. *Social Science and Medicine*, 2000; 50(9):1171-75. <mailto:kheggenh@hiid.harvard.edu>

Sarkin J. Health and human rights in post-apartheid South Africa. *South African Medical Journal*, 1999; 89(12):1259-63.

Cavadino M. The psychiatrist as gaoler. *Journal of Forensic Psychiatry*, 1999; 10(3):525-37.

Morin K, Miles SH, Snyder L. The health effects of economic sanctions and embargoes: The role of health professionals. *Annals of Internal Medicine*, 2000; 132(2): 158-61.

Vanezis P. Investigation of clandestine graves resulting from human rights abuses. *Journal of Clinical Forensic Medicine*, 1999; 6(4): 238-42. <mailto:P.Vanezis@formed.gla.ac.uk>

The January 2000 issue of *Punishment and Society* - contains information on the death penalty in British history.

<http://www.sagepub.co.uk/frame.html?http%3A//www.sagepub.co.uk/journals/details/issue/j0251v02i01.html>

Vacancy:

The International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT) invites suitable applicant to apply for the position of Information Officer. For more information or to apply, send your application in English, including a detailed CV and references, by Friday 17 March 2000
mailto:suzanne_clark@irct.org or fax: (45) 3376 0500. Website: www.irct.org

Television:

A Well Founded Fear of Persecution, ABC TV, 13 March 20:30hrs (Eastern Australian summer time) (repeated 14 March 13:00 hrs); This documentary "reveals how Australia is downgrading its human rights record through its treatment of asylumseekers".

<http://www.abc.net.au/4corners/comingup.htm>

A BBC documentary on Nato's role in the Kosovo conflict will be screened at 21:00 GMT on Sunday 12 March.

For a review of a recently-screened British television documentary on sanctions on Iraq, see: Some talk of genocide, *BMJ*, 10 March. <http://www.bmj.com/cgi/content/full/320/7236/722>

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