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Amnesty International Reports & Statements:


4 February: Nicaragua: UN member states should urge Nicaragua to repeal its ban on abortion following a human rights' review of the country on 8 February. (The revised Penal Code introduces criminal sanctions for doctors and nurses who treat a pregnant woman for medical conditions such as cancer or cardiac emergencies where the treatment may cause injury to or death of the embryo or foetus.) [http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/news/un-urged-condemn-nicaragua-abortion-ban-20100204](http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/news/un-urged-condemn-nicaragua-abortion-ban-20100204)

2 February: Iran: Amnesty International has urged the Iranian authorities not to execute nine people sentenced to death who were arrested in relation to the protests that followed last year's
disputed presidential election. The organization said it fears the Iranian authorities are planning to execute some or all of the nine in public before 11 February, the anniversary of the 1979 Islamic Revolution, when further protests are expected.


2 February: Papua New Guinea: The government of Papua New Guinea must investigate the conduct of police who burnt down homes and threatened people with guns while illegally evicting them from land next to one of the biggest gold mines in the country.


29 January: Haiti: Two weeks after the earthquake that devastated Haiti, its people are confronted with a human rights crisis. Amnesty International has identified some of the country’s biggest human rights challenges and outlined a plan that puts protection of human rights at the core of relief and reconstruction efforts. http://amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/haitis-human-rights-challenge-20100129

27 January: Burkina Faso: Women are dying needlessly during pregnancy and childbirth because discrimination prevents them from accessing sexual and reproductive health services, leaving them unable to make key decisions on their pregnancies.


26 January: Romania: The Romanian authorities must stop the forced eviction of Roma families and immediately relocate those living for years in hazardous conditions next to waste dumps, sewage treatment plants or industrial areas on the outskirts of cities.


Children

Haiti: The smallest survivors of Haiti’s catastrophic earthquake are growing into one of the biggest problems in its aftermath. Many of the countless thousands of children scattered among Port-au-Prince’s makeshift camps of homeless have nobody to care for them, aid workers say, leaving them without protection against disease, child predators and other risks. The Canadian Press (27 January) http://www.google.com/hostednews/canadianpress/article/ALeqM5gIXErAyqB2XoOIMFuwazpatXjfg

International: Vaccinating children in Africa and Mexico against one of the most common causes of diarrhoea -- rotavirus -- has been shown to cut cases of diarrhoea and reduce deaths from diarrhoea-related illness in children. The Guardian (28 January) http://www.guardian.co.uk/lifeandstyle/besttreatments/2010/jan/28/diarrhoea-vaccine-saves-lives-in-developing-countries

Philippines: Over 200,000 Filipino children have experienced abuse and a great majority of them are incest victims, an advocacy group reported on Thursday. But only a few them feel able to report incidents of abuse—sexual, verbal, or physical—to authorities, a study by the Center for the Prevention and Treatment of Child Sexual Abuse (CPTCSA) showed. Inquirer (4 February) http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/breakingnews/nation/view/20100204-251263/Over-200000-Filipino-children-are-victims-of-abuse-says-group
**Somalia:** Somalia has one of the highest levels of malnutrition in the world, with up to 240,000 children under five affected, according to an early warning report published on 1 February by the Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit for Somalia (FAO/FSNAU) and FEWSNET. *IRIN* (2 February) [http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=87962](http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=87962)

**UK:** The number of UK children living in "severe poverty" rose in the four years before the current recession, research from a children's charity suggests. *BBC* (26 January) [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/8479364.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/8479364.stm)

**Death Penalty**


**Uganda:** Uganda's controversial Anti-Homosexuality Bill is likely to be changed, a minister has told the BBC. However, Deputy Foreign Minister Henry Okello Oryem did not give details of how he thought the final bill would be different to the current proposals. Uganda has come under intense international pressure over the bill, which provides for the death penalty for some homosexual acts. *BBC* (5 February) [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/8499798.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/8499798.stm)

**USA:** The state budget crisis has forced Kansas legislators to re-evaluate state spending, leading some lawmakers to review the cost and effectiveness of the Kansas death penalty law. A death penalty prosecution can cost as much as a million dollars, she said, while a life sentence without parole could save taxpayers half a million dollars or more for each case. According to Senate Bill 208, the median cost of a non-death-penalty murder case was approximately 70 percent less than the median cost of a death sentence. *The University Daily Kansas* (27 January) [http://www.kansan.com/news/2010/jan/27/kansas-could-abolish-death-penal...](http://www.kansan.com/news/2010/jan/27/kansas-could-abolish-death-penalty-cut-costs/)

**Food Security and Poverty**

**Mongolia:** The United Nations has warned that more than 200,000 Mongolians are in dire danger of poverty and starvation, as they struggle through an unusually severe winter. Mongolia's freezing conditions have killed more than a million livestock, and authorities fear the extreme weather conditions could worsen food security and deepen poverty. *Radio Australia* (27 January) [http://www.radioaustralia.net.au/connectasia/stories/201001/s2802473.htm](http://www.radioaustralia.net.au/connectasia/stories/201001/s2802473.htm)

**Somalia:** Violence in the central Somali region of Galgadud has made "it hard, if not impossible, for humanitarian workers" to reach those in need of help, the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) says. "Many [displaced people] are reported to be sleeping in the open with dwindling shelter and little water," Roberta Russo, UNHCR Somalia spokeswoman, said on 3 February. *IRIN* (3 February) [http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=87977](http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=87977)

**Sudan:** The number of people needing food aid in south Sudan has quadrupled in a year to more than four million, the UN's World Food Programme says. The WFP wants to ensure the people have enough food to last until their next harvest in October. Southern Sudan's agriculture minister Samson Kwaje blamed the surge on internal conflict and drought. *BBC News* (2 February 2010) [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/8493383.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/8493383.stm)

**Yemen:** The convergence of multiple crises in an already vulnerable environment has left Yemen and aid agencies at a crossroads. The context has become an extremely complex and challenging
one within which to reduce hunger, malnutrition, and fragility. Yet it is precisely because of these challenges that humanitarian intervention is vital to keep struggling populations from tipping into utter disaster. *Eurasia Review* (3 February)


**Health Services**

**Angola:** The government is trying to tackle diseases that have left one of Africa's potentially richest countries with one of the world's highest rates of infant-mortality. But there is a chronic shortage of skills, says UN official, citing hospitals that are unable to open for lack of staff. "They are doing the easy part: building up the infrastructure. The hard part is to ramp up the quality of the services." The authorities have hoped to tempt - through subsidies - private clinics to offer services to the poor. In recent years several hundred Cuban doctors have come to the country. Officials are said to be interested in Brazil's social programmes, which have cut poverty through an income grant dependent on school and clinic attendance. *Financial Times* (29 January)

[http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/0be550c0-0c75-11df-9a41-00144feabdc0.html](http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/0be550c0-0c75-11df-9a41-00144feabdc0.html)

**Namibia:** Health facilities located in Namibia’s remote areas are increasingly finding it hard to attract suitable personnel. Apart from the acute shortage of nurses that already exists, the situation is compounded by health workers that either decline to be posted to outlying areas or resign after serving the communities for a short time due to the remoteness of the areas in which the health facilities are located. *New Era* (28 January)


**Papua New Guinea:** Cholera continues to spread in Papua New Guinea, where government health officials are now describing the disease as a major national public health concern. “Things are going from bad to worse,” Victor Golpak, the government’s national response coordinator for cholera, told IRIN on 5 February. “This is now a national public health concern. We cannot ignore it any longer,” he said. *IRIN* (5 February)


**Uganda:** Civil society organisations are calling upon the government to prioritise construction of staff quarters as a means of attracting and retaining health workers, especially in rural areas where the majority of people live. Uganda is currently facing a health workforce crisis that threatens the quality of care and health rights of the populations because majority of health workers still lack basic accommodation. *The Observer* (27 January)


**HIV and AIDS**

**Kenya:** Some 90,000 men have been circumcised since the government launched the campaign in a bid to contain the spread of HIV. Many of the men were circumcised during a Rapid Results Initiative drive conducted in Nyanza Province at the end of 2009. *Daily Nation* (2 February)


**Sudan:** For the soldiers, the contrast with life in the bush could not be greater - they wear new uniforms, receive a monthly salary and are revered as freedom fighters by the local population. But behind the good times lurks the threat, senior officials of the SPLA warn, of HIV/AIDS. Challenges remain for the SPLA’s HIV programmes -- demand for information continues to outstrip its supply, which is hampered by severe infrastructural handicaps such as poor road networks and limited health services, while delivering information remains a challenge because, according to the
programme manager of Intrahealth, a large percentage of the SPLA is illiterate and therefore only able to take advantage of verbal messages. PlusNews (29 January) http://www.plusnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=87914

Swaziland: The first national survey to chart the scope of sexual and other types of violence perpetrated against women and girls provided an insight into how HIV managed to spread so widely throughout Swaziland. Swazi Observer (27 January) http://www.observer.org.sz/index.php?news=10688

Human Trafficking

Cambodia: Cambodian human trafficking survivors will work with the United Nations Inter-Agency Project on Human Trafficking (UNIAP) and the Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative Against Trafficking (COMMIT) Task Force to eradicate human trafficking. The survivors, part of the Somaly Mam Foundation’s Voices for Change (VFC) program, will train police and government officials on laws and issues related to sex trafficking and forced labor in Cambodia. PRWeb (1 February) http://www.prweb.com/releases/2010/trafficking/prweb3547764.htm

Yemen: Fewer Yemeni children were trafficked to Saudi Arabia in 2009 than in recent years, according to a Yemeni Ministry of Social Affairs official. The reasons for this included awareness campaigns on child trafficking, collaboration between the Yemeni and Saudi authorities and the volatile situation in northern Yemen, according to officials. IRIN (25 January) http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=87859

Malaria, TB and Other Diseases

Africa: Dozens of African leaders met today in Ethiopia to tackle the challenges facing the continent in the effort to meet the United Nations target of ensuring universal access to malaria control measures by the end of this year. UN News Centre (1 February) http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=33642&Cr=malaria&Cr1=

East Timor: East Timor is one of the few remaining countries where leprosy is endemic, and one of only two in Asia where it has yet to be eliminated. The government has declared war on leprosy, and vows to eliminate it this year. Voice of America (30 January) http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/health/East-Timor-Declares-War-on-Leprosy-83164277.html

International: Results from clinical trials conducted in Tanzania show that a new vaccine against tuberculosis, Mycobacterium vaccae (MV), is effective in preventing tuberculosis in people with HIV infection. Findings from the trials, which were conducted by investigators from Dartmouth Medical School in the United States, will be published in the next issue of AIDS, the leading journal in the field of HIV and AIDS research. Medical News Today (29 January) http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/177530.php

Liberia: Many hospitals, health centres and clinics across Liberia are in a battle against what health workers describe as the 'number one killer' that affects every Liberian whether young or old and that is the fight against malaria. The Inquirer (27 January) http://theinquirer.com.lr/story.php?record_id=2222&sub=14

Nigeria: Despite claims by the Bayelsa State Government that it has restricted the recent outbreak of measles in Oweikurogha, from spreading to neighbouring communities, the death toll of those affected had risen to 25. Daily Champion (2 February)
Maternal and Infant Health

Argentina: Some 300 women a year die in Argentina of complications during pregnancy, childbirth or the postpartum period, from largely preventable causes. Many of the deaths result from unsafe abortions. According to different studies, some 460,000 to 600,000 abortions are performed each year in this country of 40 million people, almost one for every birth, even though abortion is illegal. And many poor women who are unable to afford an abortion in a private clinic end their pregnancies in dangerous unhygienic conditions. IPS (26 January)
http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=50109

International: Women who have been raped have much more difficulty in childbirth than their peers who have never suffered sexual abuse or violence, a new study shows. Based on the findings, doctors, midwives and nurses helping women in labour and delivery need to know if that woman has a history of rape, so that they can assist her during labour without re-traumatising her. Health24 (1 February) http://www.health24.com/news/Womans_health/1-956,54491.asp (See also Publications below)

Uganda: The Uganda Demographic and Health Survey (UDHS) 2006 report which says there are 297,000 abortions induced annually, while an estimated 65,000 women experience complications, but receive no treatment. New Vision (3 February)
http://allafrica.com/stories/201002040191.html

Mental Health

Asia: When disaster strikes, acute stress disorders, especially among children, may follow. Yet the need for early psychosocial interventions is often overlooked, if not ignored. The impact of disasters is especially severe on the children, said Aloysius Rego, deputy executive director of the Bangkok-based Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC), which organised an open forum on 'Psychosocial Response to Disasters with Focus on Children in Asia' in this capital on Tuesday with the support of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. IPS (27 January)
http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=50124

Gaza: "There is a significant deterioration in the psychological well-being of Palestinian children who are living in the Gaza Strip, especially after the recent war," Ayesh Samour, director of the Psychiatric Hospital in Gaza, told IRIN. According to a study by NGO Ard al-Insan in Gaza, 73 percent of Gaza children are still suffering from psychological and behavioural disorders, including psychological trauma, nightmares, involuntary urination, high blood pressure and diabetes. IRIN (2 February)

Pakistan: A number of women have been admitted to mental institutions in Pakistan even when their mental state does not require confinement in such a facility. "Women are treated as second-class citizens and lower beings. Hence when they develop any kind of mental illness, they are discarded," said one doctor. IPS (1 February)
http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=50173

USA: The Obama administration issued new rules that promise to improve insurance coverage of mental health care for more than 140 million people insured through their jobs. In general, under the rules, employers and group health plans cannot provide less coverage for mental health

**Prisons**

**USA:** The inadequacy of prison health care in California was one reason for the federal court decisions that will reduce the prison population by 40,000 inmates, starting this year. As the former prisoners, and their illnesses, move back into communities, they will struggle to overcome a new set of obstacles and find a way to better care. *New York Times* (4 February) [http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/05/us/05sfprison.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/05/us/05sfprison.html)

**Refugees and Migrants**


**International:** Millions of people around the world have been forced to leave their homes. Some have been driven out by conflict, some by natural disasters. Some have been displaced in the name of development, others by climate change. *IRIN* (5 February) Here is the link for several videos on displacement: [http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=85512](http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=85512)

**Zambia:** According to UNHCR national HIV/AIDS technical officer Elizabeth Khosa Nhoma, through various awareness programmes that were conducted, refugees now have a better understanding of how one contracts HIV and how to prevent transmission. As a result of this understanding, refugees in Zambia have now become active participants in the fight against HIV/AIDS in the refugee camps and settlements. *The Post Online* (31 January) [http://www.postzambia.com/post-read_article.php?articleId=5197](http://www.postzambia.com/post-read_article.php?articleId=5197)

**Sexual and Reproductive Rights**

**Ireland:** The Irish government actively seeks to restrict access to abortion services and information both within Ireland and for its residents seeking care abroad, Human Rights Watch says in a new report. According to the report there is little legal and policy guidance on when, specifically, an abortion might be legally performed within Ireland. As a result, some doctors are reluctant even to provide pre-natal screening for severe fetal abnormalities, and very few - if any - women have access to legal abortions at home. But women also face more active sabotaging of their health decisions by the state. *Human Rights Watch* (28 January) [http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2010/01/28/ireland-abortion-limits-violate-human-rights](http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2010/01/28/ireland-abortion-limits-violate-human-rights)

**Kenya:** "Unsafe abortions contribute a significant margin to the maternal deaths in this country at 30 percent. It is estimated that 2,000 women die annually from unsafe abortions" said one Kenyan official in an IPS report. Nearly 21,000 women are admitted each year to Kenya's public hospitals for treatment of complications from incomplete abortions, either spontaneous or induced. *IPS* (2 February) [http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=50197](http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=50197)

**USA:** Overall, rates of reproductive coercion among family-planning-clinic patients are surprisingly high: about one in five women report their partner having attempted to coerce them into pregnancy.
This month, Miller published a study in the journal *Contraception* detailing "reproductive coercion," when the male partner pressures the other, through verbal threats, physical aggression, or birth-control sabotage, to become pregnant. According to a new report, about a third of women reporting partner violence experienced reproductive coercion, as did 15 percent of women who had never reported violence. *Newsweek* (26 January) http://www.newsweek.com/id/232542 (See also under Publications below)

**Torture**

**Cambodia:** Human Rights Watch says centres in Cambodia set up to treat drug addicts are instead illegally detaining and ill-treating them. It says many of drug abusers are detained illegally, often through street clean-up campaigns or after their relatives pay authorities to take them for what is supposed to be drug treatment. Instead of receiving therapy to move them off drugs, they are subjected to gross abuses by the Cambodian police and military, which run the centres. *Voice of America* (30 January) http://www1.voa.com/english/news/human-rights/Rights-Group-Says-Cambodias-Drug-Treatment-Centers-Rife-with-Abuse-83161877.html The report itself is available at www.hrw.org

**Thailand:** A group of ethnic Karen refugees sheltering in Thailand are at risk of torture, rape, or death if they are forcibly returned to Myanmar, campaigners have warned. Thailand was expected to begin repatriating the group of 1,700 Karen from its western province of Tak on Friday, but it was unclear whether the operation had begun. *Al Jazeera* (5 February) http://english.aljazeera.net/news/asia-pacific/2010/02/20102545845316106.html

**Violence Against Women**

**Bolivia:** One of the gravest challenges that women are now facing as a result of their increased participation is political gender-based violence against candidates and elected women politicians. Women are often subjected to threats, attacks, intimidation physical and psychological violence and harassment by men just because they dare to speak up publicly in a patriarchal society. *Open Democracy* (26 January) http://www.opendemocracy.net/5050/carolina-gottardo-maria-eugenia-rojas/violence-and-democracy-in-bolivia

**Cyprus:** The government launched a National Action Plan against domestic violence yesterday to develop a national strategy and coordinate the overall approach taken by the state in battling the phenomenon. There were 1,067 recorded incidences of domestic violence in Cyprus last year. *Cyprus Mail* (26 January) http://www.cyprus-mail.com/cyprus/national-action-plan-launched-battle-domestic-violence/20100126

**Mexico:** Human rights organisations in Mexico and the United States sounded the alarm about abuses against women by the Mexican armed forces in the context of the government's all-out offensive against drug trafficking in the border state of Chihuahua. *IPS* (3 February) http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=50211

**Sudan:** Many of the older sex workers in the market said they consistently used condoms and sent away clients who refused to use them, but for child sex workers, who earn significantly less, purchasing condoms can be difficult. *Plus News* (28 January) http://www.plusnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=87900

**Water and Sanitation**
Haiti: Earthquake survivors transformed the church school soccer field, like nearly every open space in Port-au-Prince, into yet another of the city's impromptu survivor camps. But “survivor” -- unless the coming public-health disaster festering in these squalid camps can be staunched -- may become a brutally ironic term. These are potential death camps. Dr. André Vulcain of the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine, back from seven days with the UM medical team in Port-au-Prince, talked about the horrible potential brewing in camps that have become the semi-permanent address for more than a million people. These camps have no sanitation in a city that had a weak sanitation system before the earthquake,“ he said. The settlements have become open depositories of human waste. *Miami Herald* (24 January) [http://www.miamiherald.com/news/5min/story/1442886.html](http://www.miamiherald.com/news/5min/story/1442886.html)

Courses and Conferences

**12th AWID International Forum on Women’s Rights and Development**

Late 2011, Istanbul, Turkey

The Forum will be a key space for women’s movements around the world to strategise, renew, re-energise and develop innovative solutions to pressing women’s rights issues. For more information, visit: [http://www.awid.org/eng/Women-in-Action/Announcements2/Save-the-date%21-12th-AWID-International-Forum-on-Women-s-Rights-and-Development](http://www.awid.org/eng/Women-in-Action/Announcements2/Save-the-date%21-12th-AWID-International-Forum-on-Women-s-Rights-and-Development)

**South African Professional Society on the Abuse of Children Annual Conference**

17-19 May 2010, Pretoria, South Africa

Registration for the 11th Annual National Conference on Child Abuse is now open. Please visit: [http://www.sapsac.co.za/index.html](http://www.sapsac.co.za/index.html)

**UNESCO Chair in Bioethics International Conference on Bioethics Education: Contents, Methods, Trends**

2-5 May, 2010, Zefat, Israel

For the exchange of information and knowledge and to hold discussions, lectures, workshops, as well as an exhibition of programs and databases. Further Info: [http://www.isas.co.il/bioethics2010/](http://www.isas.co.il/bioethics2010/)

Publications


Aina Baslier Vaage, MD, Per Hove Thomsen, MD, PhD, Derrick Silove, FRANZCP, MD, Tore Wentzel-Larsen, MSc, Thong Van Ta, Edvard Hauff, MD, PhD, ‘Long-term mental health of Vietnamese refugees in the aftermath of trauma’, *The British Journal of Psychiatry* (2010) 196: 122-125. Available at: [http://bjp.rcpsych.org/cgi/content/abstract/196/2/122](http://bjp.rcpsych.org/cgi/content/abstract/196/2/122)


Nerum H, Halvorsen L, Øian P, Sørlie T, Straume B, Blix E. Birth outcomes in primiparous women who were raped as adults: a matched controlled study. BJOG 2010;117:288–294. Available online at: [http://www.bjog.org/details/journalArticle/553549/Birth_outcomes_in_primiparous_women_who_were_raped_as_adults_a_matched_controlle.html](http://www.bjog.org/details/journalArticle/553549/Birth_outcomes_in_primiparous_women_who_were_raped_as_adults_a_matched_controlle.html)


Special Issue on E-Health and the Developing World by Health Affairs. February 2010 - Volume 29, Number 2. Available Online at: [http://content.healthaffairs.org/content/vol29/issue2/](http://content.healthaffairs.org/content/vol29/issue2/)

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Health and Human Rights Team
Amnesty International - International Secretariat
Tel: +44 20 7413 5522
Fax: +44 20 7956 1157
AI web-site: [http://www.amnesty.org/](http://www.amnesty.org/)
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