
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWS FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

AI Bulletin Vol 7 No. 5, 12 March 2004
AI Index: ACT 84/005/2004

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Summary

- AI reports & statements
- Children
- Death penalty
- HIV/AIDS
- Medical discussion and protest
- Organ trade
- Right to health
- Torture
- Violence against women
- Conferences
- Vacancies
- Publications

Amnesty International reports & statements

See the following recent AI news releases [dates given in day/month/year format].
These and other links can be found at: <http://web.amnesty.org/news/engindex>

12/03/2004 [Syria: Punished for using the internet](#) MDE 24/017/2004
11/03/2004 [Algeria: "Disappearances" must be on presidential election agenda](#) MDE 28/004/2004
11/03/2004 [Spain: Amnesty International condemns massacre in Madrid](#) EUR 41/003/2004
10/03/2004 [Amnesty International 2004 UN Commission on Human Rights Mission: to promote and protect human rights](#) IOR 41/007/2004
10/03/2004 [Indonesia: Amnesty International's Asia & Pacific Section Directors appeal to political parties to make human rights a priority](#) ASA 21/011/2004
10/03/2004 [UN Commission on Human Rights must reform itself or risk irrelevance](#) IOR 41/008/2004
09/03/2004 [EU-Russia foreign ministers meeting Thursday: first test for the EU's "new" approach to Russia says Amnesty](#) EUR 46/009/2004
09/03/2004 [Nepal: AI seeks guarantees for the safety of security forces personnel captured by the Communist Party of Nepal \(CPN\) \(Maoist\)](#) ASA 31/064/2004
09/03/2004 [Special Court for Sierra Leone: Challenges remain as new court-house is officially opened](#) AFR 51/005/2004
09/03/2004 [UK v M: UK authorities' refusal to accept yesterday's judgement amounts to persecution](#) EUR 45/010/2004
08/03/2004 [Amnesty International: Disturbances in Eastern Slovakia](#) EUR 72/002/2004
08/03/2004 [Syria: 41 years of the State of Emergency - Amnesty International reiterates its concerns over a catalogue of human rights violations](#) MDE 24/016/2004
05/03/2004 [Amnesty International launches global campaign to stop violence against women - A cancer and human rights atrocity](#) ACT 77/021/2004
05/03/2004 [Making Violence against Women Count, Facts and Figures - a Summary](#) ACT 77/034/2004
05/03/2004 [Media summary: "It's in our hands - Stop Violence Against Women"](#) ACT 77/020/2004

04/03/2004 [Bangladesh: Attack on Dr Humayun Azad -- government should bring to justice those responsible](#) ASA 13/002/2004

Children

UK. Doctors play a key role in investigating child abuse. Doctors involved in child protection work are receiving death threats and hate mail, *The BBC* has learned. A Royal College of Paediatricians report suggested many doctors had doubts about continuing with the work. (8 March) See: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/3536019.stm>

UK. Parents who take their daughters abroad to undergo female circumcision will face up to 14 years in jail under new measures that have come into force, reported *The BBC*. (3 March) See: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/3528095.stm>

Death penalty

Belarus. Text of report by Belarusian TV on 11 March. The Belarusian Constitutional Court has recommended that the government introduce a moratorium on the death penalty and abolish capital punishment. (no link)

China says it is considering rescinding the right of lower courts to have the final say on death penalty cases. *AbcNews*(10 March) See: http://www.abc.net.au/ra/newstories/RANewsStories_1063315.htm

Singapore. The government has pledged to make maximum efforts to provide legal protection for five Indonesian migrant workers who may face the death penalty in Singapore. *The Jakarta New* (12 March) <http://www.thejakartapost.com/yesterdaydetail.asp?fileid=20040311.C01>

USA. Shortly before the scheduled execution of Hung Thanh Le, a Vietnamese foreign national on Oklahoma's death row, Governor Brad Henry granted a stay of execution. In North Carolina, the execution of George Page set for Friday, Feb. 27, was also stayed in light of his challenge to the lethal injection procedure used in that state. *Death Penalty Information Centre* See: <http://www.deathpenaltyinfo.org/article.php?did=909&scid=64>

USA. In response to the U.S. Supreme Court's recent reversal of Delma Banks' death sentence in Texas because of prosecutorial misconduct, the *Dallas Morning News* has called for a halt to executions while state officials review serious problems in the system. (27 February) See: <http://www.deathpenaltyinfo.org/article.php?did=914&scid=64>

USA Juvenile death penalty. Human Rights Watch reports that two states have raised the age of execution to 18 in conformity with international standards. International treaties and customary international law forbid capital punishment for offenders under the age of 18 at the time of the offense for which they were convicted. See: <http://www.hrw.org/campaigns/deathpenalty/docs/update030404.htm>

see also: <http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGACTION500012004> and <http://web.amnesty.org/pages/deathpenalty-children-background-eng>

HIV/AIDS

China. Xinhua, Wuhan, Hubei will organize 30 medical workers and form 10 AIDS expert control brigades who will go to stay in 21 hard-hit epidemic areas to begin treatment work. According to explanations, HIV infections have been increasing continuously since 1988, when Hubei found its first case of HIV-infection. By December 2003, there were 1301 registered cases of HIV/AIDS in the province. At present, Hubei has entered a period of rapid increase of infection and high number of full-

blown AIDS cases, and the state of AIDS prevention and control is severe. *China Aids Info* (9 March)
See: <http://www.china-aids.org/english/News/News334.htm>

South Africa's government is not giving rape victims drugs to combat HIV/Aids, as it promised, lobby group Human Rights Watch says. South Africa has the highest number of HIV positive people in the world - some 5 million - and also a high incidence of rape. Women are more likely to be raped than to learn how to read, statistics show. Human Rights Watch says that children, who represent 40% of rape victims in the country, are particularly badly affected since they need parental permission to get drug treatment. *The BBC* (4 March) <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/3532071.stm>

Worldwide. UN warns women face Aids threat. Women are becoming the main victims of the global HIV/Aids epidemic, United Nations chief Kofi Annan has warned, reports *The BBC*
See:<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/3545157.stm>

Medical discussion and protest

Canada. A new law that would make it mandatory for doctors in Ontario to report gunshot wounds to police is stirring up debate within Canada's emergency medicine community. If approved by the legislature this spring, the controversial law will become the first of its kind in the country. Currently hospital staff are not legally required to inform police when they treat a patient who has been injured by a firearm. But physicians are obligated to respect the confidentiality requests of their patients despite any demands for information from police. *CMAJ*(2 March)

See:<http://www.cmaj.ca/cgi/content/full/170/5/780>

China - doctor criticises 1989 army action. *The BBC* reports that a Chinese doctor has publicly criticised the Chinese army action in Tianenman Square in June 1989 (8 March) See:
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/3542049.stm>

Germany. Authorities in Germany on 5 March arrested a respected hospital physician in what is being called the biggest criminal medical investigation in post-war German history possibly involving 1,500 morphine deaths. Her lawyer said she just wanted to help ease her patients' pain. *Expatica* (March)http://www.expatica.com/source/site_article.asp?subchannel_id=26&story_id=5321

Organ trade

Taiwan. Lawmakers push to legalize organ trade. A proposed amendment to the health insurance law would cover kidney transplants in foreign hospitals if a donor cannot be found in this country. *Taipei Times* (2 March) See: <http://www.taipetimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2004/03/02/2003100806>

Mozambique. A Brazilian nun responsible for exposing a human organ trafficking ring in Mozambique has been murdered. The traffickers are said to harvest sex organs from children to be sold as charms for the practice of witchcraft in ceremonies said to increase wealth or sexual vigour. Authorities claimed they had found no evidence of the human organ trade; the sisters, on the other hand, said they have spoken to victims who had escaped, and have photos of dead children with their organs missing. *LifeSiteNews* (1 March) See: <http://www.lifesite.net/ldn/2004/mar/040301.html>

Right to health

Nepal. Maoists have set ablaze two vehicles carrying a medical team and medicines in Dailekh district, reports *Kantipu Online*.(8 March)
See:<http://www.kantipuronline.com/php/kolnews.php?&nid=8697>

USA. A pregnant woman who allegedly ignored medical warnings to have a Caesarean section to save her twins was charged today with murder after one of the babies was stillborn, reported *SMH.com.au* (12 March) See:

<http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2004/03/12/1078594547149.html> see also:
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/3504720.stm>

Torture

Israel. Honed against Arab suspects in Israel and decried widely as "torture lite," such interrogation methods are now a prevalent part of the U.S.-led war on terror, human rights groups say, reported *Reuters*. (3 March)

See: <http://www.reuters.com/newsArticle.jhtml?type=ourWorldNews&storyID=4487610>

Spain. Theo Van Boven, the United Nations Rapporteur on Torture, has concluded in his report based on interviews and investigations conducted in the Basque Country and in Spain last October that torture is inflicted more frequently than occasionally in Spain. *berria.info* (10 March) See: <http://www.berria.info/english/ikusi.php?id=309>

Zimbabwe. President Robert Mugabe's government has set up secret camps across the country in which thousands of youths are taught how to torture and kill, the BBC has learned.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/3493958.stm> see also: Hilary Andersson spent months interviewing young rapists and torturers for a BBC investigation which revealed the brutal secrets of Zimbabwe's training

[campshttp://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/from_our_own_correspondent/3537511.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/from_our_own_correspondent/3537511.stm)

Violence against women

Kenya - female genital cutting. Following seminars conducted by NGOs to mark International Women's Day (8 March), 200 female circumcisers from Rift Valley Province have said that they will now oppose the practice, reports *Irinnews.org*. <http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=39965>

Saudi Arabia. Not enough doctors in the Kingdom are interested in women's health, an expert has warned. *ArabNews*(10 March) See:

<http://www.arabnews.com/?page=9§ion=0&article=40926&d=10&m=3&y=2004&pix=community.jpg&category=Features%22>

Warzones. Girls have been part of government militia or opposition fighting forces in more than 50 countries over recent years, a Canadian human rights organisation has said in a new report. *The BBC* See: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/3531641.stm>

Worldwide. The failure by governments across the Islamic world to respect women's rights is hampering even hesitant steps toward political change, Nobel laureate Shirin Ebadi said yesterday as the United Nations observed International Women's Day. (9 March) *Gulf Daily News*

See:http://www.gulf-daily-news.com/arc_Articles.asp?Article=76190&Sn=WORL&IssueID=26355

Awards

The shoe manufacturer Reebok has named three women from Nigeria, Brazil and the United States, as well as one man who has been a leading advocate for women's rights in Afghanistan, as recipients of the 2004 Reebok Human Rights Award. See the press release (8 March):

<http://www.prnewswire.co.uk/cgi/news/release?id=118751>

Vacancies

American Refugee Committee. Thailand - Mental Health Coordinator/ Psychiatrist or Psychologist (Immediate Opening)

Those interested in applying should please submit a formal resume and cover letter to Nancy Miller by e-mail to nancym@archq.org Please list "Thailand: Mental Health Coordinator" in the subject line of your email. For more information, see ARC's web site: <http://www.archq.org>

Publications

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<http://bmj.bmjournals.com/cgi/content/full/328/7440/595>,

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<http://bmj.bmjournals.com/cgi/content/full/328/7440/621>

Human Rights Watch. U.S. forces operating in Afghanistan have arbitrarily detained civilians, used excessive force during arrests of non-combatants, and mistreated detainees, Human Rights Watch said in a new [report](http://hrw.org/english/docs/2004/03/08/afghan8073.htm) released on 8 March.<http://hrw.org/english/docs/2004/03/08/afghan8073.htm> and <http://hrw.org/reports/2004/afghanistan0304/>

Human Rights Watch. South Africa -- HIV/AIDS. Human Rights Watch has published a report: Deadly Delay: South Africa's Efforts to Prevent HIV in Survivors of Sexual Violence (4 March). Available online at: <http://hrw.org/reports/2004/southafrica0304/>

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