
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWS FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

AI Bulletin Vol 7 No. No.8, 23 April 2004
AI Index: ACT 84/008/2004

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Amnesty International reports & statements

See the following recent AI news releases [dates given in day/month/year format].

Amnesty International and the 60th session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights (15 March - 23 April)

22/04/2004 [UN Commission on Human Rights: Where is the reform agenda?](#) IOR 41/026/2004

22/04/2004 [United Nations Commission on Human Rights Overview of developments and trends at the 60th session](#) IOR 41/027/2004

21/04/2004 [UN Commission on Human Rights: Sexual rights are human rights](#) POL 30/020/2004

20/04/2004 [UN Commission on Human Rights, Corporate responsibility breakthrough](#) IOR 41/025/2004

20/04/2004 [UN Commission on Human Rights, The human rights scandal of Guantanamo Bay](#) IOR 41/024/2004

20/04/2004 [UN Commission on Human Rights: Weakening commitment to its own Procedures - Joint statement](#) IOR 41/023/2004

19/04/2004 [Commission on Human Rights, Agenda item 17: Promotion and protection of human rights](#) IOR 41/020/2004

19/04/2004 [Commission on Human Rights, Agenda item 19: Advisory services and technical cooperation in the field of human rights](#) IOR 41/021/2004

Other news

21/04/2004 [Iraq: Children must not be made to pay the price of conflict](#) MDE 14/015/2004

21/04/2004 [Turkey: Injustice continues despite welcome reforms](#) EUR 44/014/2004

20/04/2004 [Colombia: Laboratory of war -- violence soars in Arauca](#) AMR 23/019/2004

20/04/2004 [USA: Supreme Court must end lawlessness in Guantánamo Bay](#) AMR 51/063/2004

19/04/2004 [Israel/Occupied Territories: No restrictions or conditions must be imposed on Mordechai Vanunu upon his release](#) MDE 15/041/2004
19/04/2004 [Journalists under threat](#) POL 30/019/2004

These and other links to news and reports can be found at: <http://web.amnesty.org/news/engindex>

Death penalty

Philippines. In the run up to the presidential election in the Philippines, the Pope has urged politicians to oppose the death penalty. *ekkklesia* 19 April
http://www.ekkklesia.co.uk/content/news_syndication/article_040419phil.shtml

UN Commission on Human Rights vote on DP. The CHR called upon States parties to the ICCPR to consider acceding to or ratifying the second optional protocol to the Covenant, aimed at abolition of the death penalty; urged all retentionist States not to impose it for crimes committed by persons below 18 years of age; to exclude from execution pregnant women and mothers with dependent infants; not to impose the death penalty on a person suffering from any form of mental disorder; and not to impose it for any but the most serious crimes. The resolution was opposed by USA, China, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Pakistan, and 15 other states. See the UN press release:
<http://www.unhchr.ch/hurricane/hurricane.nsf/view01/503F1FBD9E4F6E27C1256E7E002CAEC0>

USA (Massachusetts). After months of research and deliberation, a panel appointed by the governor has come up with a way that capital punishment can be instituted in Massachusetts without the risk that an innocent person could be executed reports the *Boston Globe* (22 April.) It will detail how scientific evidence, such as DNA, can provide what the aides insisted is foolproof evidence of guilt but others are sceptical.
http://www.boston.com/news/local/articles/2004/04/22/report_to_back_death_penalty/

USA (Ohio). Resolution 18-04 to the Ohio State Medical Association (OSMA) house of delegates, meeting on 14-16 May 2004, calls on the OSMA to ask the American Medical Association (AMA) to call for a moratorium on lethal injection executions in the USA. The full text of the resolution is available at:
<http://www.osma.org/meetings/loader.cfm?url=/commonspot/security/getfile.cfm&PageID=22108>
(PDF file). Scroll down to resolution 18-04.

HIV/AIDS

Interview -- Chidi Achebe. Dr Chidi Achebe is medical director of Whittier Street Health Center, Boston. He spoke at length with the *Daily Champion*, Nigeria (22 April). See:
<http://allafrica.com/stories/200404220767.html>

Speeches -- Stephen Lewis: Speaking at the Microbicides conference, London, 30 March:
<http://www.aegis.com/news/un aids/2004/UN040308.html>; and on Swaziland in New York 1 April:
<http://allafrica.com/stories/200404060161.html> and

Human Rights

Guatemala - killing of Myrna Mack. 'In the name of the state, I ask for the forgiveness of the Mack family and of the people of Guatemala for the murder of this young anthropologist,' Guatemalan President Berger said at a ceremony in her memory. Myrna Mack was stabbed 27 times outside her Guatemala City office on 11 September 1990 after her critical reporting on government anti-insurgency campaigns.
See: *San Diego Union Tribune* (23 April) <http://www.signonsandiego.com/news/world/20040422-1457-guatemala-slainactivist.html>

Sudan - Darfur. Sudan has granted permission for United Nations human rights investigators to visit Darfur amid charges of ethnic cleansing. (*Reuters*, 20 April)
<http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/L20622113.htm>

World Economic Forum report. The world's governments are failing miserably to meet goals they have set themselves to reduce poverty, war and hunger, a leading business group says. The World Economic Forum (WEF), in an unusually scathing report, said not enough was being done to raise standards of education and health, the basic "building blocks of global stability", as agreed by 189 countries at the United Nations in 2000. *New Zealand Herald* (21 April)
<http://www.nzherald.co.nz/latestnewsstory.cfm?storyID=3561780> The World Economic Forum report, *Global Governance Initiative*, and related materials are available at:
<http://www.weforum.org/site/homepublic.nsf/Content/Global+Governance+Initiative>

Mental health

Conference on women's mental health. Women's mental health is highly impacted by their access to employment, food, education, health care, and resources for economic development, said an international group of women's health experts at the second World Congress on Women's Mental Health in Washington DC last month. See the report in *Psychiatric News* (16 April):
<http://pn.psychiatryonline.org/cgi/content/full/39/8/26>.

UK - release of suspected "terrorist". The first of the Muslim detainees released from a London high security prison after being held on suspicion of terrorism has told the *Guardian* his fellow prisoners are suffering such severe mental problems that they constantly consider suicide. The Government says that detainees have full access to health care. See the *Guardian* (23 April):
<http://politics.guardian.co.uk/homeaffairs/story/0,11026,1201519,00.html>

Organ trade

USA - UCLA. The willed body program at the University of California, Los Angeles, is under scrutiny for the second time in nearly a decade, following charges that the director of the program allegedly sold hundreds of cadavers and body parts for personal gain. See the report in *American Medical News* (dated 26 April): <http://www.ama-assn.org/amednews/2004/04/26/pr120426.htm>. See also USA Today (7 April): 'There's money in the business of body parts'
http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2004-04-06-body-parts_x.htm

Prisoners

Brazil - prison riot. A five-day riot at a Brazilian prison in the state of Rondonia, in which at least nine inmates were killed, ended on 22 April, reports Reuters
http://www.reuters.com/locales/newsArticle.jsp?type=worldNews&locale=en_IN&storyID=4915325.

USA: Guantanamo - Supreme Court hearing. The US Supreme Court is reviewing the rights of the hundreds of prisoners held without charge, trial or access to lawyers and family by the US authorities at their Cuban naval base. See the *Boston Globe* report (21 April):
http://www.boston.com/news/nation/articles/2004/04/21/high_court_weighs_jurisdiction_in_guantanamo_detainee_cases/

Refugees

UK. The Home Office has confirmed that it had abandoned plans to create "transit processing centres" in East Africa for asylum seekers in the face of opposition in Tanzania and criticism from the EU reports the *Guardian* (22 April)
<http://society.guardian.co.uk/asylumseekers/story/0,7991,1200410,00.html>

Torture

Repatriation to torture. The governments of Austria, Canada, Georgia, Germany, Sweden, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States have all sought to return terrorist or national security suspects to countries where torture is a widespread or systematic problem, including Egypt, the Philippines, Russia, Sri Lanka, Syria and Uzbekistan reports Human Rights Watch. Some individuals returned have been tortured or seriously ill-treated upon return, and Human Rights Watch said there is real concern for the safety of many more. *Human Rights Watch* (15 April) <http://www.hrw.org/english/docs/2004/04/15/eu8432.htm>

Violence against women

Afghanistan -- women and education. Forced marriages, beatings, suicides persist despite the Taliban's fall reports the *San Francisco Chronicle* (16 April). As many as 1 million girls between 7 and 13 do not attend school, it says, citing the United Nations' Children's Fund (UNICEF). Parents continue to sell their daughters, often as young as 8, into marriages that often resemble imprisonment, turning girls into housewives who rarely, if ever, are allowed to step outside their husbands' mud-brick compounds. <http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2004/04/16/MNGQN668FP1.DTL>

China - spouse abuse. Violence against women -- beatings, kickings, punches, slaps, verbal aggression, rapes -- is common, according to activists, who are attempting to change laws to allow a woman to charge her abusive husband with a crime. Violence is prevalent in remote villages, rural towns and large cities, among the poor and the new middle class, in farming families and new elites. See *Newsday* (12 April) <http://www.newsday.com/news/nationworld/world/ny-wochin0412,0,6863132.story>

Indonesia -- health care workers and VAW. Health workers remain unqualified to deal with cases of violence against women due to their lack of education and an absence of a proper referral system, reports the *Jakarta Post* (23 April). See: <http://www.thejakartapost.com/detailnational.asp?fileid=20040423.C03&irec=2>

Japan. A special research group on violence against women, set up by the government's Council for Gender Equality, has compiled a report calling for further countermeasures, including tougher penalties, to deter rape and other sex crimes, which are on the increase. *Japan Times* 5 April <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/geted.pl5?ed20040405a1.htm>

Jordan - honor crimes. The Jordanian government imprisons women threatened with "honour" crimes rather than the male relatives who threaten them, Human Rights Watch said in a new report, *Honoring the Killers: Justice Denied for 'Honor' Crimes in Jordan* (20 April). In cases where women are killed, the perpetrators receive minimal punishment. See the press release at: <http://hrw.org/english/docs/2004/04/16/jordan8465.htm> . The report is available at: <http://hrw.org/reports/2004/jordan0404/>

Nigeria's 'respectable' slave trade. The view of trafficking in Nigeria is that it is an everyday part of West African life reports a BBC Africa correspondent.. *BBC* (17 April) http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/from_our_own_correspondent/3632203.stm

Pakistan - women prisoners. Human rights activists in Pakistan have called for an improvement in the conditions faced by women prisoners and an overhaul of the entire justice system, reports *Irinnews* (12 April): See: <http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=40520>

Saudi Arabia - TV presenter beaten. A well-known TV presenter in Saudi Arabia says her husband has surrendered to police to face charges of attempting to kill her, according to a BBC report (23 April). http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/3645551.stm

UN Commission on Human Rights. The UNCHR adopted resolutions on economic, social, and cultural rights, civil and political rights, and rights of women during its 60th session in Geneva. It appointed a Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, especially women and children. For summaries of discussions and decisions see the UN press release (19 April) available at: <http://www.unhcr.ch/hurricane/hurricane.nsf/view01/2BFFCF0B6E232768C1256E7C0030BFE3>

Uzbekistan - domestic violence. There are no statistics on levels of domestic violence in Uzbekistan, and no legislation protecting women from it reports Irinnews (22 April): <http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=40635>

War on terror

An exchange between the international lawyer Ruth Wedgwood and Kenneth Roth, Director of Human Rights Watch, appears in *Foreign Affairs* (May/June 2004 cover date). See: <http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20040501faresponse83312/ruth-wedgwood-kenneth-roth/combatants-or-criminals-how-washington-should-handle-terrorists.html>. Roth's earlier piece which provoked this exchange is at: <http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20040101facomment83101/kenneth-roth/the-law-of-war-in-the-war-on-terror.html>

Vacancies

IRCT seeks new Secretary General

The International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT), based in Copenhagen, is seeking a new Secretary General. Further details are available at the IRCT web-site: <http://www.irct.org>. Applications should be sent to Mercuri Urval A/S at mui@mercuri-urval.com, or to Mercuri Urval International, Philip Heymans Allé 5, DK 2900 Hellerup, Denmark, fax: +45 39 45 65 78. Deadline for applications: 6 May 2004.

Courses

The 3rd Eremo Training Seminar, Italy

Eremo dei Frati Bianchi, Cupramontana, Italy, August-September 2004

The Vivo Foundation is offering training on "Psychological Consequences of Organized Violence and Terror: Psychotrauma - from latest scientific knowledge to practical field work." The dates are 26 August to 1 September inclusive and further information can be found at Vivo's website:

http://www.vivofoundation.net/eremo_training_2004/inglese/index.htm or by contacting Claudia Catani by phone at: +49-7531-883151 [Germany] or by email at: claudia.catani@vivo.org

Meetings

Health professions symposium

An international conference bringing together for the first time the three world bodies representing nurses, physicians and pharmacists is to be held in Geneva on 15-16 May 2004. Full details of the Symposium programme are available online at <http://www.whpa.org>. For further information, contact Linda Carrier-Walker at carrwalk@icn.ch (tel.+41 22 908-0100).

Publications

The Lancet publishes its health and human rights section in this week's issue:

http://www.thelancet.com/journal/vol363/iss9418/health_and_human_rights

See articles by: Singh (Health research and human rights in South Africa); Q Abdool Karim (HIV treatment in South Africa: overcoming impediments to get started) and SS Abdool Karim (Medical education after the first decade of democracy in South Africa) .

The following articles in the latest *Canadian Medical Association Journal* address the issue of mandatory reporting by physicians of gunshot wounds in Canada.

Pauls MA, Downie J. Shooting ourselves in the foot: why mandatory reporting of gunshot wounds is a bad idea. *CMAJ* 2004;170 1255-1256, <http://www.cmaj.ca/cgi/content/full/170/8/1255>
Ovens H. Why mandatory reporting of gunshot wounds is necessary: A response from the OMA's Executive of the Section on Emergency Medicine. *CMAJ* 2004;170 1256-1257, <http://www.cmaj.ca/cgi/content/full/170/8/1256>
Pauls MA, Downie J. Mandatory reporting of gunshot wounds: rebuttal. *CMAJ* 2004;170 1258, <http://www.cmaj.ca/cgi/content/full/170/8/1258>

See also:

Aceves WJ. Consular notification and the death penalty: The ICJ's Judgement in *Avena*. *ASIL Insights*, April 2004 Available at: <http://www.asil.org/insights/insigh130.htm>.
Coker RJ, Atun RA, McKee M. Health-care system frailties and public health control of communicable disease on the European Union's new eastern border. *Lancet* 2004; **363**: 1389-92; http://www.thelancet.com/journal/vol363/iss9418/full/llan.363.9418.editorial_and_review.29403.1
Fidler DP. Revision of the World Health Organization's International Health Regulations. *ASIL Insights*, April 2004, <http://www.asil.org/insights/insigh132.htm>
Farmer P. Political violence and public health in Haiti. *NEJM* 2004; 350:1483-1486. See extract at: <http://content.nejm.org/cgi/content/extract/350/15/1483>
Grounds A.T. Psychological consequences of wrongful conviction and imprisonment. *Canadian Journal of Criminology and Criminal Justice* 2004; 46: 165-182. (The January 2004 edition of this journal focuses on wrongful convictions. See the contents lists at: <http://www.cjca-acjp.ca/en/cjc46s2.html>)
Hilsum L. Rwandan genocide survivors denied AIDS treatment. *BMJ* 2004;328:913 (17 April), <http://bmj.bmjournals.com/cgi/content/full/328/7445/913>
Kondro W. Doctors with HIV need not tell patients, says report. *Lancet*, 363, 9417, 17April <http://www.thelancet.com/journal/vol363/iss9417/full/llan.363.9417.news.29346.1>
McNally RJ. Psychological debriefing does not prevent Posttraumatic Stress Disorder. *Psychiatric Times* April 2004 Vol. XXI Issue 4 <http://www.psychiatrictimes.com/p040471.html>
Navarro V. The world situation and WHO. *Lancet* 2004; 363: 1321-23 http://www.thelancet.com/journal/vol363/iss9417/full/llan.363.9417.editorial_and_review.29333.1
Slowther A et al. Development of clinical ethics committees. *BMJ* 2004;328:950-952 (17 April) <http://bmj.bmjournals.com/cgi/content/full/328/7445/950>

Two JAMA articles reporting on PHR studies in Iraq which were mentioned in the newsletter of 26 March can be downloaded at the PHR site: http://www.phrusa.org/research/iraq/release_032304c.pdf and http://www.phrusa.org/research/iraq/release_032304d.pdf

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Health team
Amnesty International - International Secretariat
Tel: +44 20 7413 5522
Fax: +44 20 7956 1157

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