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Unfortunately, due to Internet problems today, we've been unable to test the links. Apologies...

Summary:

- o AI reports: Brazil
- o Death penalty: USA. Florida. IQ debate / USA. Alabama. Chair working / USA. Arizona. Maturana / USA. Illinois moratorium / USA. Illinois/Uklahoma. Innocent prisoners freed / USA. death row safeguards / USA. Florida / China. Macabre parade / Thailand. Lethal injection
- o General: Pinochet / Bangladesh / Israel - Argentina / Nigeria / Brazil / USA - Rwanda / Iraq / Peru / Turkey / UK - Rwanda / Sri Lanka / Morocco / Israel / Sierra Leone / Kenya / Russia / Brazil - ICC / Russia - Rehabilitation Centre / Spain / FRY - NATO
- o Publications: AI: Gender sensitive research / Documenting sexual violence
- o Bullet points: Vienna University School of Medicine Declaration

-----RECENT AI STATEMENTS AND REPORTS

An extreme right group renewed its threats against Amnesty International's São Paulo staff in a letter to the Folha de São Paulo newspaper on 5 February. The organization has been the target of threats since October 1999 when a bomb was planted in its São Paulo office. The news release (Brazil. "Work as usual" for Amnesty International, following threats from Brazil's extreme right [AMR 19/03/00, 9 February 2000]) can be found at <http://www.amnesty.org/news/2000/21900300.htm>

-----DEATH PENALTY NEWS

USA. Florida. While 12 of the 38 states with capital punishment have laws that ban the execution of mentally retarded people, Florida Governor Jeb Bush created a task force to study the issue. The full article (I.Q. debated for death penalty, Miami Herald, 29 January 2000) can be found at <http://www.herald.com/content/sat/news/florida/digdocs/055049.htm>

USA. Alabama. Prison officials argued Monday that Alabama's electric chair is in "perfect operating order," able to kill an inmate within two minutes without leaving severe burns. "The high voltage wiring ... is still in excellent shape," said the Atmore prison electrician. See the full article (Prison officials say electric chair 'in perfect order', The Birmingham News, 11 Feb) at <http://www.al.com/news/birmingham/Feb2000/1-e365012b.html>

USA. Arizona. In 1999, two doctors concluded that Claude E. Maturana was so delusional that he was unaware of his punishment and crime. Under Arizona law, Mr. Maturana was declared mentally incompetent to be executed. He was moved to a state mental hospital, and his appeals were postponed until his competency could be restored. State hospital officials hired the medical director of the company that provides mental health care to inmates in Georgia's prisons. He had found Maturana competent for execution, although the prisoner was seriously ill. Lawyers are now arguing about the next step. For background see National Law Journal, 1 Nov 1999: http://test01.ljextra.com/na.archive.html/99/10/1999_1024_09.html

USA. Illinois. Gov George Ryan announced 31 January that he will block executions until a state panel examines whether the capital punishment in Illinois is working. The death penalty continues to be the law in Illinois. The Chicago Tribune on 31 Jan 2000 at <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/metro/chicago/article/0,2669,2-41318,FF.html>
Stephen Bright invited Jeb Bush to follow Gov Ryan's example through the New York Times on 7 February 2000: <http://www.nytimes.com/00/02/07/oped/07brig.html>

USA. Illinois. Death row inmate freed. After 8 years on Illinois' Death Row and more than 2 years in various other jails, Ronald Jones walked free last Monday. Jones was convicted and sentenced to death in 1989 for the rape and murder of Debra Smith, a 28-year-old mother of three. New DNA testing had exonerated him. See the full article by Chicago Tribune on 8 February 2000 at <http://chicagotribune.com/news/metro/chicago/article/0,2669,SAV-0002080334,FF.htm>

USA Oklahoma. An account of the Ron Williamson case -- another release from prison because of innocence. See Newsweek 6 February. <http://newsweek.com/nw-srv/printed/us/so/a16201-2000feb6.htm>

USA. Federal. A senior US senator, Patrick Leahy, is putting the final touches on federal legislation to provide new protections for all Death Row inmates. The measures would permit federal and state inmates on death row to introduce DNA evidence in order to try to establish their innocence, and it would set nationwide minimum competency standards for court-appointed defence attorneys in all capital cases. See the Chicago Tribune for the full article (Senator to propose Death Row safeguards) at [:http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/metro/chicago/article/0,2669,ART-41796,FF.html](http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/metro/chicago/article/0,2669,ART-41796,FF.html)

USA. Florida. Condemned inmate hears execution plan. As the first man scheduled to die by lethal injection in Florida sat listening, prison officials described in excruciating detail Wednesday how they'll put him to death -- after they offer him Valium to calm his nerves. The Miami Herald on 10 Feb 2000 at <http://www.herald.com/content/today/news/florida/digdocs/019776.htm>

USA. Florida. Terry Smith, scheduled to be executed on 23 February, is challenging the constitutionality of the lethal injection. Florida lawmakers adopted lethal injection as primary method of execution last month. However, it has been argued that it is impossible to know whether the new method is cruel and unusual because the state has been very secretive. As a result, a judge has ordered state prison officials to reveal what chemicals will be used in lethal injections. Apparently, the department plans to use sodium pentothal; pancuronium bromide and potassium chloride. Source: Tampa Tribune on 9 February 2000.

China. The London Observer reported on death row prisoners sent to execution in a macabre parade, reeling with drink and singing Ricky Martin's 1998 World Cup theme song to show they were not afraid. The scene, the paper said, was reminiscent of execution parades in pre-Communist China when criminals on their way to execution were expected to sing Chinese opera. See the full article dated 30 January 2000 at <http://www.newsunlimited.co.uk/observer/international/story/0,3879,130352,00.html>
Amnesty International compiled information on 2,701 death sentences in China in 1998 and 1,769 confirmed executions. See People's Republic of China: the Death Penalty Log in 1998 [ASA 17/56/99, November 1999] <http://www.amnesty.org/ailib/aipub/1999/ASA/31705699.htm>
The Chinese government reacted to the Amnesty International report saying that it was "irresponsible" and that "the country's judges exercised great prudence over when to enforce the death penalty". The full article by BBC News can be found at http://news2.thls.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/world/asia-pacific/newsid_627000/627293.stm

Thailand. Needle gains backing for death row. Ongoing discussion on whether lethal injection is acceptable to Thai society. See the Nation on 29 Jan 2000 at <http://202.44.251.4/nationnews/2000/200001/20000129/1196.html>

-----PINOCHET CASE

Amnesty International: AI welcomed the decision by the UK Divisional Court to consider leave to see judicial review as having been granted and that the hearing should now continue on the merits of the case. News release dated 8 February at <http://www.amnesty.org/news/2000/44502800.htm>

For background information visit the Pinochet Case webpage at <http://www.amnesty.org/campaign/index.html>

Press: The detention of Gen Pinochet in London, has offered to Chilean victims of torture an unexpected catharsis, which now seems likely to end, says the Chicago Tribune. For the full article (Torture victims tremble at idea of free Pinochet) visit [it may require registration] <http://chicagotribune.com/tools/search/results/1,1780,,00.html?qy=santiago&rw=1>

-----BANGLADESH: ABUSE OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN

The Bangladeshi parliament passed a law clamping down on the widespread torture, mutilation and sale of women and children. It introduced stiff penalties for offences including using flammable chemicals, rape, murder, amputating children's limbs to make them more effective beggars, trafficking and kidnapping. For the full article see

<http://www.cnn.co.uk/2000/ASIANOW/south/01/30/bangladesh.women.reut/index.html>

-----ISRAEL: ARGENTINA TO SEEK BODIES OF JEWISH DISSIDENTS

An Israeli Cabinet minister said that Argentina's new elected president, Fernando de la Rúa, has promised to help locate the bodies of Jewish dissidents killed during the South American nation's 'dirty war'. The Argentine president reportedly made the commitment during the international conference on the Holocaust in Stockholm, but the Latin American government did not confirm Israel's version of the meeting. For the full article see CNN on 2 February 2000 at

<http://www.cnn.co.uk/2000/WORLD/americas/02/01/israel.argentina.ap/index.html>

-----PRISON CONDITIONS IN NIGERIA

The Committee for the Defence of Human Rights has protested at the conditions under which the former chief of staff, General Ishaya Bamaïyi, is being held in prison. The human rights group which was persecuted for criticising Sani Abacha's government, is now standing up for General Bamaïyi's rights. The full article can be found at

http://news2.thls.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/world/africa/newsid_627000/627523.stm

-----BRAZIL: UNEARTHED 36 BODIES, BLAMED DEATH SQUADS

Brazilian officials said that they had unearthed 36 bodies from mass graves on the Goias/ Federal District border (which includes Brasilia, the nation's capital), where they believe death squads are operating with police cooperation. BBC News on 2 February 2000 at

http://news2.thls.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/world/americas/newsid_628000/628337.stm

Amnesty International issued an Urgent Action [AMR 19/06/00, 10 February 2000] expressing dismay for the killing by a Goias death squad of Joao Elizio Lima Pessoa, and concern for two other people involved in denouncing death squad activity. Joao Elizio worked for the Public Security Community Council in Aguas Lindas, Goias State - a locally-elected body mandated to receive denunciations of violence and bring them to the attention of the authorities.

A military police lieutenant, has been moved away from the Federal District (Brasilia) after being accused of sexual torture. See the full article [in Portuguese] at

<http://www.correioweb.com.br/noticias/correio/cidades/pagina1.htm>

-----BRAZIL SIGNS THE ROME STATUTE OF THE ICC

On Monday, February 7th, Brazil became the 94th State to have signed the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. The Coalition for the International Criminal Court home page can be found at <http://www.igc.org/icc/>

-----USA: COURT ALLOWS RWANDAN'S EXTRADITION

The United States Supreme Court has ruled that a Rwandan clergyman and genocide suspect, Elizaphan Ntakirutimana, may be handed over to the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. The final decision on extradition now rests with US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, who must now review whatever humanitarian claims Mr Ntakirutimana makes against his extradition.

See BBC News on 25 January 2000 at

http://news2.thls.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/world/africa/newsid_618000/618078.stm

-----IRAQ: DESPERATE LIFE DUE TO SANCTIONS

"After nine years of trade sanctions...the situation of the civilian population is increasingly desperate", the Red Cross stated in a recent report. According to the report, young children, pregnant women, the elderly, and people suffering from chronic diseases, are the ones suffering the extremes consequences of the economic sanctions. The full article by CNN can be found at

<http://www.cnn.co.uk/2000/WORLD/meast/02/01/iraq.sanctions.reut/index.html>

-----PERU: RIOTS IN HIGH SECURITY PRISON

About 50 convicted Shining Path rebels in Yanamayo Prison (Puno region), were holding guards hostage on 7 February after a riot that left at least two people dead. A Justice Ministry spokesman said that the rebels had been demanding better prison conditions and the opportunity for more frequent family visits. The full article from the Boston Globe can be viewed at

http://www.boston.com/dailyglobe2/039/nation/Guards_held_after_uprising_in_Peru_prison+.shtml

A local paper reported that outbreaks of rioting started on 21 January 2000 when relatives were not allowed to visit the inmates. See the full article from La Republica [in Spanish] at

<http://www3.larepublica.com.pe/2000/FEBRERO/pdf8/policial.htm>

Although President Alberto Fujimori announced an end to the standoff on 8 February, media reports on 9 February suggested that trouble continued at the maximum security site. AFP reported on 10 February 2000.

-----TURKEY AND HUMAN RIGHTS: STILL A LONG WAY TO GO

Despite human rights education in schools and among senior police officers no appreciable improvement in the human rights situation has occurred. Many in Turkey society are asking themselves why, says the Chicago Tribune (3 February 2000). See:

<http://chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/article/0,2669,SAV-0002030068,FF.html>

-----UK / RWANDA: GENOCIDE SUSPECT ARRESTED IN SOUTH LONDON

Tharcisse Muvunyi, 46, a former Rwandan army chief implicated in the slaughter of more than 100,000 people, appeared in a British court on 7 February 2000. Amnesty International said that Mr Muvunyi's arrest "seems to be the Pinochet effect in action". Mr Muvunyi will be kept in custody until he is handed over to a Tanzanian tribunal to face trial. See The Guardian on 7 February 2000 at

http://www.newsunlimited.co.uk/uk_news/story/0,3604,133361,00.html

-----SRI LANKA: TAMIL TIGERS STILL RECRUITING CHILDREN

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) gave a pledge to the UN Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, Olara Otunnu, in May 1998 that they would not recruit fighters under 17. But a report by a respected Sri Lanka non-government organisation, the Jaffna-based University Teachers for Human Rights (UTHR), released 3 February says the LTTE continue to pressure children into joining up. The Independent reported on 4 February 2000 at

http://www.independent.co.uk/news/World/Asia_China/2000-02/tamil040200.shtml

-----MOROCCO: WOMAN'S RIGHTS MEET OPPOSITION

The London Independent (7 February 2000) reports on changes in Morocco since the accession to power of Mohammed VI. Planned changes will give Moroccan women the right to divorce and the legal age for marriage will be raised from 15 to 18. However the changes are provoking opposition. See: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/World/Africa/2000-02/morocco060200.shtml>

-----ISRAEL ADMITS TORTURE

An Israeli government report published on 9 February acknowledged that Israeli agents systematically used illegal force against Palestinian suspects during the intifadah. See Boston Globe

http://www.boston.com/dailyglobe2/041/nation/Agents_maltreatment_of_Palestinians_admitted+.shtml

For an editorial on the report from the Israeli Ha'aretz newspaper (Stop the torture and the lies, 11 February 2000) visit

http://www3.haaretz.co.il/eng/htmls/kat2_3.htm

-----SIERRA LEONE: ATROCITIES CONTINUE

United Nations monitors say former rebels in Sierra Leone are continuing to rape, loot and mutilate civilians in the north, despite a peace accord. BBC News on 2 February 2000 at

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/world/africa/newsid_628000/628419.stm

-----KENYA: GOV'T DISMISSES PRISON TORTURE ALLEGATIONS

The commissioner of prisons, Edward Lokopoyit, dismissed as hearsay allegations that prisoners were being tortured in Kenyan prisons. His remark came in the wake of mounting criticism over deteriorating prison conditions and allegations of torture of inmates. BBC on 30 January 2000.

-----RUSSIA: JOURNALIST UNDER PRESSURE

Since the beginning of the Chechen war in late September, journalists in Russia have been detained, interrogated, arrested and even ordered to undergo psychiatric tests, in what can be seen as a dangerous wave of government intimidation. LA Times reported on 8 Feb 2000 at

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nation/20000208/t000012478.html>

-----RUSSIA: REHABILITATION CENTRE FOR VICTIMS OF REPRESSION

Assisted by the IRCT (International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims) and funded by the European Union, a Rehabilitation Centre for Victims of Repression (SPRC) opened on 31 January. The Centre's mission is to provide rehabilitation treatment and services for victims of repression and to work for the prevention of torture in Russia. For more information: Suzi Clark, Information Officer, IRCT, Copenhagen, on +45 33 76 06 11 or +45 22 62 07 82.

See the full press release at <http://www.irct.org/media.htm#FirstRussianCentre>

-----SPAIN: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SURVEY

On 3 February the results of a survey of more than 20,000 Spanish women (>18 years) were reported; 14.2% of them have been victims of domestic violence at least once, and that 4.2% are repeatedly abused. See

http://www.thelancet.com/newlancet/sub/issues/vol355no9203/body.news_d557.html#madridreportrevealsextentofdomesticviolenceinspain

-----FRY / NATO: ANALYSIS OF BOMBING DURING KOSOVO CONFLICT

Nato breached international law in its air attacks on Yugoslavia last year, Human Rights Watch says in a report issued on 7 February. According to the report, Nato killed at least 500 civilians during the Kosovo conflict. See the Independent on 7 February 2000 at

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/World/Europe/2000-02/nato070200.shtml>

See <http://www.hrw.org/press/2000/02/nato208.htm> for the Human Rights Watch news release on the subject.

-----PUBLICATIONS

A Methodology for Gender-Sensitive Research. Step by step description of a gender-sensitive approach to research and suggested ways of addressing challenges faced by women's rights workers.

Documenting Human Rights Violations by State Agents. Sexual Violence. The booklet focuses on the monitoring and documenting of specific categories of women's rights violations. Both published by Amnesty International Canada - 214 Montreal Rd, 4th Floor - Vanier (Ontario) Canada K1L 1A4. Tel +1 (613) 744 7667; Fax +1 (613) 746 2411; e-mail: info@amnesty.ca; <http://www.amnesty.ca> and

International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development, 63 de Bresoles St. Montreal,
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e-mailto:ichrdd@ichrdd.ca; http://www.ichrdd.ca
Coninx R et al. Tuberculosis in prisons in countries with high prevalence.
http://www.bmj.com/cgi/content/short/320/7232/440

-----BULLET POINTS

The University of Vienna School of Medicine has published a Declaration in the Times of London (11 Feb 00) stating that it opposes discrimination based on origin, race, colour, gender and religion. Although not stated, the declaration seems prompted by recent political changes in Austria.

FINALLY....a special note of thanks to Zaira Drammis who leaves the medical team today. She has contributed a lot to the work of this office and particularly to the preparation of the health professional bulletin. Ria Boerema will join us from Monday 14 February.

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