
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL
NEWS FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

AI Bulletin Vol 5, No. 4, 22 February 2002
AI Index: ACT 84/004/2002

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Summary

AI reports & statements: child soldiers / Turkey / USA

Further news: Protocol added to European Convention on Human Rights / HIV trial, Libya / increasing number of HIV infections, Russian Federation / MSF denounces killings, Sudan / prison health care, UK / study: error in capital cases, USA / stay of execution, Georgia USA

Conferences: Study day on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Birkbeck College UK

Vacancies: Project Coordinator and Organizational Development Trainer, Center for Victims of Torture, Minneapolis / Program Development and Public Relations Officer, Union of Palestinian Medical Relief Committees, Jerusalem

Publications

Amnesty International reports & statements

Red Hands to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers. 12 February (ACT 76/001/2002). The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict has entered into force. <http://web.amnesty.org/web/news.nsf/WebAll/2FA2DE6D11ADB19280256B5A00421747>

Turkey: "Mini-Democracy" law does not guarantee freedom of expression and freedom from torture. 19 February (EUR 44/011/2002). Recent legal reforms in the run-up to EU accession still fall short of Turkey's international human rights obligations, despite making progress in small areas. <http://web.amnesty.org/web/news.nsf/WebAll/1971E060D4D7D77980256B5F0062272E>

USA: As President Bush visits China, he should reflect on an execution looming at home. 21 February (AMR 51/037/2002). Alexander Williams is scheduled to die by lethal injection on Monday 25 February for a crime when he was 17 years old and is suffering from a mental illness. <http://web.amnesty.org/web/news.nsf/WebAll/7208CAD221863AB880256B67003DEAC8>
Also see 'Further news'.

This is a small selection of Amnesty International reports and statements. For a comprehensive overview, please check Amnesty International's website: <http://www.amnesty.org/>

Further news

Council of Europe - Protocol added to European Convention on Human Rights. The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe has adopted a text banning the death penalty in all circumstances (21 February). See CPT press release: [http://press.coe.int/cp/2002/091a\(2002\).htm](http://press.coe.int/cp/2002/091a(2002).htm)

Libya - HIV trial. The *BBC* reported that the People's Court in Tripoli has ruled that there is no evidence that one Palestinian and six Bulgarian health workers, accused of infecting 393 children with HIV, intended to undermine state security. http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/world/middle_east/newsid_1825000/1825777.stm

Russian Federation - increasing number of HIV infections. The *Boston Globe* reported on the fast spread of HIV/AIDS, which reportedly is due to an increase in drug use, prostitution and inadequate health care (10 February). http://www.boston.com/dailyglobe2/041/focus/Rapid_spread_of_AIDS_in_Russia_imperils_a_generation%2B.shtml

Sudan - MSF denounces killings. Medecins Sans Frontieres expressed its shock at the killing of James Koang Mar, an MSF health worker, and four other Sudanese civilians in southern Sudan (15 February). <http://www.msf.org/countries/page.cfm?articleid=510672AD-84F6-4AB2-8CDCF1EBBB6666F0>

UK - prison health care. This subject is addressed in a BMJ editorial this week: Birmingham L. Doctors working in prison. *BMJ* 2002;324:440. See: <http://bmj.com/cgi/content/full/324/7335/440>. See also the 83 page *Report of the Working Group on Doctors Working in Prisons* (Department of Health, UK, 2001): <http://www.doh.gov.uk/prisonhealth/drsinprisonsreport.pdf>. On a similar theme the Department of Health has published a 36 page report *Changing the Outlook: A Strategy for Developing Mental Health Services in Prisons* (2001). <http://www.doh.gov.uk/prisonhealth/mhstrategy.pdf>. A report on nursing in prisons was published in 2000: <http://www.doh.gov.uk/prisonhealth/nursinginprisons.pdf>. The reports can be obtained by mail from the Department of Health, PO Box 777, London SE1 6XH, UK.

USA - study: error in capital cases. Columbia University has published the second part of a study first published in June 2000. The report, *A Broken System Part II: Why There is so Much Error in Capital Cases and What Can be Done About It*, by James S Liebman and colleagues, is available on line at: <http://www.law.columbia.edu/brokensystem2/index2.html> (11 February).

USA - stay of execution, Georgia. The Georgia Board of Pardons and Paroles stayed the execution of Alexander Williams, convicted for the 1986 rape and murder of Aleta Carol Bunch. Alexander Williams was 17 at the time of the crime and is mentally ill. Authorities in Georgia reportedly have forcibly medicated him to make him competent for execution. Various newspapers reported on Alexander Williams' case: *Atlanta Journal - Constitution* (20 February): <http://www.accessatlanta.com/ajc/metro/0202/0220williams.html>, *Chicago Tribune* (19 February): <http://chicagotribune.com/news/opinion/chi-0202190018feb19.story>, *LA Times* (20 February): <http://www.latimes.com/news/printedition/asection/la-000013062feb20.story?>, *Washington Post* (20 February): <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A36177-2002Feb19.html>

USA - execution and mental disability. The US Supreme Court is currently hearing an appeal by Daryl Atkins (Virginia) that the execution of people with learning difficulties is unconstitutional. See the *New York Times* report (21 February) <http://www.nytimes.com/2002/02/21/national/21SCOT.html>

Conferences

Birkbeck College of the University of London is organising a **Study day on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights**. Date and place: 2 March, Birkbeck, Clore Management Centre, 25 - 27 Torrington Square, London WC1, UK. To book a place call Carol Watts on +44 (0) 20 7631 6652 or <mailto:ce.watts@bbk.ac.uk>

Vacancies

The **Center for Victims of Torture**, Minneapolis USA, is hiring a **Project Coordinator / Organizational Development Trainer** to manage a contract providing training and technical assistance to over 20 torture treatment centers nation-wide. For further information contact: Joann Morss, Director of Administrative Services, 717 East River Road, Minneapolis, MN 55455, USA. Fax: +1.612.627.4144.

The Union of Palestinian Medical Relief Committees (UPMRC) is seeking a Program Development and Public Relations Officer based at their Jerusalem Headquarters. For further information contact: Katie Taylor, UPMRC, PO Box 51483, East Jerusalem. Tel: +972.2.583.3510. Fax: +972.2.583.0679. [Mailto:katie@upmrc.org](mailto:katie@upmrc.org) Web-site: <http://www.upmrc.org/>

Publications

The American Medical Association has a site dedicated to articles published in JAMA and associated journals on the subject of bioterrorism. See: <http://pubs.ama-assn.org/bioterr.html>

The 2001 Annual Report of Global Lawyers and Physicians is available at:
<http://www.glphr.org/report.htm>

The *BMJ* published a number of electronic responses to a letter on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (*BMJ* 2002;324:361):<http://bmj.com/cgi/eletters/324/7333/361>

Baleta A. South African President hints at expansion of HIV-drug pilot programmes. *Lancet* 2002: 359;9306 (16 February).<http://www.thelancet.com/journal/vol359/iss9306/full/l1an.359.9306.news.20007.6>

The Carnegie Council on Ethics and International Affairs' Human Rights Initiative has made their publication 'Rights and the Struggle for Health' available online: <http://www.cceia.org/themes/hrdsummer2001.html>

Challenging Inequities in Health: From Ethics to Action edited by Timothy Evans, Margaret Whitehead, Finn Diderichsen, Abbas Bhuiya, and Meg Wirth (New York, Oxford University Press, 2001). See book review: <http://jama.ama-assn.org/issues/current/ffull/jbk0213-1.html>

Fazel S and Danesh J. Serious mental disorder in 23 000 prisoners: a systematic review of 62 surveys. *Lancet* 2002: 359;9306 (16 February).
http://www.thelancet.com/journal/vol359/iss9306/full/l1an.359.9306.original_research.19960.1

Hofvander Y. New law on male circumcision in Sweden. *Lancet* 2002: 359;9306 (16 February).
<http://www.thelancet.com/journal/vol359/iss9306/full/l1an.359.9306.correspondence.19997.1>

Lynoe N, Sandlund M, Jacobson L. Informed consent in two Swedish prisons: a study of quality of information and reasons for participating in a clinical trial. *Med Law* 2001;20(4):515-23 [PubMed]:
http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?cmd=Retrieve&db=PubMed&list_uids=11817382&dopt=Abstract

Sidley P. Mandela emphasises importance of preventing vertical transmission of HIV. *BMJ* 2002;324:386 (16 February). <http://bmj.com/cgi/content/full/324/7334/386/a>

The Summer 2001 edition of the Carnegie Council on Ethics and International Affairs' quarterly publication *Human Rights Dialogue*. -- 'Rights and the Struggle for Health' -- is now available in an online version on the CCEIA web site at <http://www.cceia.org/themes/hrdsummer2001.html>.

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