
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWS FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

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Amnesty International Reports & Statements

31 May: Egypt: [Admission of forced 'virginity tests' must lead to justice.](#) A senior Egyptian general has admitted female protesters were forced to undergo 'virginity tests', which the government has previously denied.

27 May: India: [Indian executions would be blow to human rights.](#) Indian President Pratibha Patil approves the executions of two death row prisoners, according to media reports.

24 May: Syria: [Syrian student tells of torture ordeal in mass stadium.](#) A 25-year-old university student tells Amnesty International of the beatings and torture he and other detainees suffered while held in a sports stadium after he was seized with his 73-year-old father by security forces from their home in the coastal town of Baniyas on 8 May.

22 May: Indonesia: [Indonesian government must repeal caning bylaws in Aceh.](#) The Indonesian government must end the use of caning as a form of punishment and repeal the laws that allow it in Aceh province, Amnesty International said, after at least 21 people were publicly caned since 12 May.

19 May: USA: [Independent investigation urged into Guantánamo detainee death.](#) An independent and transparent investigation is needed into a new detainee death in the Guantánamo detention camp

19 May: Egypt: [Egypt: Victims of protest violence deserve justice.](#) The Egyptian authorities must provide justice to all of the victims of violent repression that took place during mass anti-government protests earlier this year, Amnesty International said in a comprehensive report into abuses that led to at least 840 deaths. The release of *Egypt rises: killings, detentions and*

torture in the '25 January Revolution' comes two days before former Interior Minister Habib El Adly goes on trial on charges arising from the killings of protesters.

18 May: Mexico: [Mexico migrant find highlights grim conditions](#). The discovery of 513 migrants being smuggled through Mexico in squalid conditions highlights the vulnerability faced by thousands.

13 May: Iran: [Iran must not carry out retribution blinding sentence](#). Amnesty International today called on the Iranian authorities to not carry out a sentence ordering a man to be blinded by having acid dropped in both eyes as part of a retribution punishment. Majid Movahedi was sentenced to “retribution in kind” (qesas) in 2008 after he poured a bucket of acid over Ameneh Bahrami, who had rejected his marriage proposal several times. A Tehran court ordered that five drops of acid be placed in each of his eyes and the sentence is reportedly due to be carried out on 14 May.

10 May: Cuba: [Cuba must investigate beating and death of dissident](#). Former political prisoner Juan Wilfredo Soto died in hospital on Sunday in the Cuban city of Santa Clara, three days after he reported being beaten following his arrest by police officers in a park. “The Cuban authorities need to immediately establish an independent inquiry into the causes of Juan Wilfredo Soto’s death. If he ultimately died as a result of a police beating in Park Vidal, those responsible must face justice,” said Javier Zuñiga, Special Advisor at Amnesty International.

9 May: Syria: [Syria death toll rises as city is placed under siege](#). At least 48 people have been killed in Syria by the security forces in the last four days, local and international human rights activists have told Amnesty International, as the crackdown on the coastal city of Baniyas intensified.

5 May: Libya: [Attacks against Misratah residents point to war crimes](#). Attacks by forces loyal to Colonel al-Gaddafi on civilian and residential areas of Misratah may amount to war crimes, as detailed in a new report on the bleak situation in the besieged city. *Misratah: under Siege and under Fire* accuses al-Gaddafi forces of unlawful killing of civilians due to indiscriminate attacks, including use of heavy artillery, rockets and cluster bombs in civilian areas and sniper fire against residents.

4 May: Bahrain: [Bahrain renews Emergency Law as repression persists](#). The Bahraini government must end its relentless crackdown on human rights, Amnesty International said after the country's parliament voted to extend a repressive state of emergency amid continued arrests of dissidents

3 May: Syria: [Syrians tell of torture in detention amid mass arrests](#). Amnesty International received first-hand reports of torture and other ill-treatment from detainees held in Syria as a wave of arrests of anti-government protesters intensified over the weekend.

3 May: North Korea: [Images reveal scale of North Korean political prison camps](#). Amnesty International has published satellite imagery and new testimony that shed light on the horrific conditions in North Korea’s network of political prison camps, which hold an estimated 200,000 people. According to former detainees at the political prison camp at Yodok, prisoners are forced to work in conditions approaching slavery and are frequently subjected to torture and other cruel, inhumane, and degrading treatment. All the detainees at Yodok have witnessed public executions.

Actions for Health Professionals

Please click on the link and take action by writing appeals to the addresses listed.

19 May: Cuba: [Death following alleged police assault in Cuba](#). Amnesty International is seriously concerned over the death of Juan Wilfredo Soto García, who died in hospital on 8

May 2011 in the Cuban city of Santa Clara, three days after he was reportedly beaten during his arrest by police officers in a public park.

11 May: Bahrain: [Health professionals held incommunicado](#). On 26 April 2011 more than 30 health professionals, including doctors and nurses, were arrested in Bahrain. The numbers of those detained has risen since, including at least three doctors arrested in the last two weeks. Now, 47 health professionals detained in Bahrain since mid-March have been formally charged and are likely to face trial soon before a military court. A further eight female doctors detained since mid-March were released on 4 May.

NEWS ARTICLES

Death Penalty

China: [China to cut dependence on executed prisoners for transplants](#). "The Ministry of Health in set to approve new organ-transplant hospitals under a one-year pilot project, on condition they only use donated organs from the country's voluntary organ donation system run by the ministry and the Red Cross Society of China. China has 164 hospitals authorized to practice transplants, but they have been relying on death row inmates as a major source of organ donations." *China Daily* (5 May)

Sri Lanka: [Death Row prisoners commence a fast unto death](#). The 224 death row prisoners held at the Welikada prison in Colombo have started a hunger strike, requesting that their sentences are either subdued or implemented without delay. The death penalty is not implemented in Sri Lanka since the President does not endorse it as required by law. *ColumboPage* (19 May)

USA: [Nebraska's first lethal injection postponed; debate continues](#). Nebraska's prison system has had to order a supply of anaesthetic agent sodium thiopental from a drug company in India in order to carry out its first execution by lethal injection. Due to controversy surrounding the sourcing of the drug, which is no longer manufactured by American companies, the execution of Carey Dean Moore has been postponed indefinitely by the state Supreme Court. *Net Radio* (26 May)

USA: [The Executioner's dilemma](#). An analysis of the controversy surrounding the recent executions of two death-row prisoners in Georgia, Brandon Rhode and Emmanuel Hammond, which were likely carried out without the use of effective anaesthesia. *The Nation* (12 May)

Gender-Based Violence

DRC: [Forty-eight women raped every hour in Congo, study finds](#). A new study, due to be published in the American Journal of Public Health in June, has found that the problem of endemic sexual violence in the DRC is more pervasive than previously thought. It found 1,152 women are raped every day, a rate 26 times higher than the estimate of 16,000 reported in one year by the United Nations. "Not only is sexual violence more generalised, but our findings suggest that future policies and programmes should focus on abuse within families," the study's researcher has said. *The Guardian* (12 May)

Egypt: [Egyptian general admits 'virginity tests' conducted on protestors](#). "A senior Egyptian general admits that "virginity checks" were performed on women arrested at a demonstration this spring, the first such admission after previous denials by military authorities." *CNN* (31 May)

Haiti: [Anti-rape legal experts mobilize for change in Haiti](#). The government of Haiti is beginning a new legislative focus in the handling of rape crime, in response to ongoing sexual violence directed at women and girls throughout the country. *Women News Network* (18 May)

India: [Govt to crack down on female foeticide.](#) Alarm at the declining sex ratio in Bihar, India, has led the state government to announce a crackdown on health professionals and ultrasound centres participating in the illegal sex determination of unborn children, in an effort to curb female foeticide. *Times of India* (11 May)

Kenya: [Abandon the knife.](#) In the Pokot community in Kenya, young girls are starting to fight against female circumcision. *Al Jazeera* (26 May)

Libya: [Libya: 'Forced to rape in Misrata.'](#) Testimony from two young prisoners held in a detention centre in the rebel-held city of Misrata, describing how they were ordered to take part in a systematic campaign of rape by forces loyal to Libyan leader Colonel Muammar al-Gaddafi. *BBC News* (23 May)

USA: [Research to target untested rape kits.](#) In a project funded by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), researchers at Sam Houston State University and the University of Texas at Austin will team up with representatives from the criminal justice system in Houston to establish protocols to determine when sexual assault kits need to be tested by crime labs. "These research projects will enable us to better understand what happens to sexual assault evidence, why it might not be analyzed, and what we need to do to fix the problem," said NIJ Director John Laub. "When sexual assault kits go untested, it can result in significant and unnecessary delays in justice for sexual assault victims." *Medical News Today* (6 May)

Health Professionals (Special focus on Bahrain)

[Bahrain medics claim confession under torture.](#) "Part two of Al Jazeera's exclusive report on Bahrain looks at the abuse of medical workers as part of the government's crackdown." *Al Jazeera* (12 May)

[Doctors must speak up about this human rights scandal.](#) "It is a fundamental humanitarian principle, spelt out in the code of conduct of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent, that the givers of humanitarian assistance should have "unimpeded access to affected populations." That isn't happening – not only in Bahrain but elsewhere. The intimidation of medical staff is becoming routine and unless it is stopped we risk slipping back into an era where the red cross and red crescent symbols lose their protective power and the wounded are left to die." *The Independent* (10 May)

Health Services

Bahrain: [From hospital to prison- medical aid in Bahrain.](#) Report on the continuing assault on the provision of impartial medical aid in Bahrain, where widespread fear and the militarization of medical assistance are preventing wounded patients from accessing health services. *Medecins Sans Frontieres* (13 May)

Côte d'Ivoire: [UNICEF concerned about safety of women and children in southwest Côte d'Ivoire.](#) Weeks of clashes near Soubré, a town in the southwestern province of Bas-Sassandra, Côte d'Ivoire, have triggered population displacements and prevented UN aid agencies from delivering life-saving assistance to those affected. The risk of widespread epidemics is increasing due to the start of the rainy season and the poor quality of health service delivery in the current post-crisis situation. UNICEF fears that overall conditions for displaced women and children could further deteriorate if safe humanitarian access is not quickly restored to allow rapid assessments and delivery of aid. *UNICEF* (24 May)

Libya: [Specialist health clinics in Benghazi desperate for support.](#) "Medical specialists in the Libyan city of Benghazi are struggling to work as lack of funding for supplies and equipment seriously hinders their efforts." *IRIN* (3 May)

Syria: [SYRIA: Allow humanitarian access to Deraa- ICRC](#). "The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has called for better humanitarian access to the southern Syrian city of Deraa, which has been hit by political violence and where food, water and medical supplies have also run short." *IRIN* (5 May)

Mental Health

Australia: [Report raises alarm over detention centres](#). In a new report released 19 May, the Australian Human Rights Commission said it was "increasingly alarmed" at rising rates of suicide and self-harm among detainees and called for an end to mandatory detention. *Sydney Morning Herald* (25 May)

Columbia: [UN human rights official lauds ratification milestone for disability pact](#). UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, has welcomed the 100th ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) by Columbia. However, she warned that too few countries currently have laws that protect persons with disability from discrimination. *UN News Centre* (13 May)

Ghana: [Ghana: Mental Health has no direction in the North](#). Reports released by BasicNeeds Ghana, national branch of the international NGO, highlight severe lack of basic psychiatric services and violations of the human rights of persons with mental illness in Ghana, particularly in the northern regions of the country. *All Africa* (27 May)

Libya: [War takes psychological toll in Libya's Misrata](#). Misrata psychologist Amal Saleh describes the impact of the recent intense fighting between rebels and forces loyal to Colonel al-Gaddafi on the mental health of the city's population. "We have depression, hysteria, shell shock. Some fighters blame themselves for a friend's death. Some are so hysterical they break things and lash out, and must be restrained. Some people are now afraid, and have lost all confidence," she says. Children have also been affected, with many exhibiting signs of psychological damage due to exposure to violence. *Reuters* (28 May)

UK: [Rise in mental health cases among armed forces](#). "Almost 4,000 servicemen and women - or two percent of the armed forces - were diagnosed with mental health disorders last year, the Ministry of Defence says. Last year saw 249 post-traumatic stress disorder cases after men and women had been in Afghanistan and Iraq. The most likely to suffer were women, the young and those in lower ranks." *BBC News* (May 22)

USA: [Experts: jails, prisons the 'new asylums'](#). "Indiana University of Pennsylvania criminology Professor Dr. Rosemary Gido and Dr. Lanette Dalley, an IUP criminology alumna now at the University of Denver, say mentally ill women are largely incarcerated because of de-institutionalization and the "war on drugs". Mentally ill women outnumber mentally ill male offenders in jails and prisons and they are likely to have a history of co-occurring disorders and trauma, the researchers say." *United Press International* (18 May)

Prisons and Detention Centres

Burundi: [Inmates riot at Burundi's Ruyigi prison over deteriorating living conditions](#). At least 900 inmates detained at Ruyigi prison, which has a capacity of 300, rioted on the morning of 17 May in protest against deteriorating living conditions. Local media quoted prisoners as saying they had spent a whole week without receiving bean rations, the staple food in the prison. *People's Daily Online* (18 May)

Burundi: [Burundi: Boys Behind Bars](#). *Unreported World* exposes the plight of hundreds of children in Burundi locked up for years without trial in adult prisons, among some of the most dangerous criminals in the country. *Channel 4* (13 May)

Iran: [Iranian women political prisoners kept in 'intolerable conditions'](#). The families of female political prisoners recently transferred to a strict prison in a southern Tehran suburb have written to the head of Iran's Islamic Human Rights Commission, asking him to immediately address the jail's conditions. The letter says the 600 women are kept in a hall without beds or access to basic washing facilities and sanitation and claims prison officials refuse to provide them with food and water on a regular basis. It also says the prisoners have been subjected to beatings and that their lives are at risk. *Radio Free Europe* (10 May)

Morocco: [Clashes over prison conditions shake Moroccan prison](#). "Clashes between security forces and prisoners from the radical Salafist branch of Islam on Tuesday rocked a jail in Sale, close to the Moroccan capital Rabat, officials said." *Radio Netherlands Worldwide* (17 May)

Philippines: [Prisoners fall easy prey to TB- study](#). At least 20 of 1,000 inmates in jails and prisons around the Philippines are suffering from tuberculosis (TB), with a further 49 per cent suspected of having the disease, according to a recent study undertaken by national health research bodies in collaboration with the WHO and International Committee of the Red Cross. The study also noted that the majority of the respondents were not aware of the signs and symptoms of TB, and exhibited "attitudes such as stigmatism, fatalism, and perceived inaccessibility of health care", says Dr. Maridel Borja, who headed the research team. *Manila Bulletin* (14 May)

South Africa: [Babies behind bars: doing time with Mum](#). In the Johannesburg Female Correctional Facility, newborns are housed with their mothers in a hospital wing in a separate section of the facility. But experts have concerns about what effect growing up in jail- where the high walls, razor wire and isolation are intimidating even for an adult- will have on the babies. "The correctional facility is not conducive to the growth of a human being, so for the children that are growing inside the correctional facility it is not a good thing at all," says Sisakele Zwane, who runs the overcrowded women's prison. *CNN* (5 May)

Sri Lanka: [HIV prevention in prisons](#). "The Rehabilitation and Prison Reforms Ministry and the Health Ministry have jointly started the J'eevithayata Nawa Eliyak' prison HIV and AIDS prevention programme, according to a World Health Organization plan to improve health facilities and save lives of the prison community by preventing HIV, AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases." *Daily News* (10 May)

Thailand: [Thailand: prisons use shackling, have 'inhumane' crowding, report says](#). A new report by an independent rights group in Thailand claims the country's prisons keep long-term inmates shackled throughout the duration of their sentence, including when ill. *Global Post* (31 May)

USA: [Justices, 5-4, tell California to cut prisoner population](#). "Conditions in California's overcrowded prisons are so bad that they violate the Eighth Amendment's ban on cruel and unusual punishment, the Supreme Court ruled on Monday, ordering the state to reduce its prison population by more than 30,000 inmates." *New York Times* (24 May)

Refugees and Migrants

Australia: [Kids' detention fears](#). Northern Territory (NT) doctors have called for children to be released from lock-up detention immediately. Australian Medical Association NT president Paul Bauert says children as young as four have been involved in hunger strikes in Darwin's detention centres and children under 10 have tried to commit suicide. Dr Bauert also said about 95 per cent of children in detention would become Australian citizens but would have "long-term" disadvantages because of their time in detention. *NT News* (29 May)

UK: [Immigration Minister commits to reviewing UKBA processes in light of MF report](#). "The Immigration Minister, Damian Green, has indicated that a report published this month by the Medical Foundation will be used by the UK Border Agency (UKBA) to improve its processes in

dealing with the asylum applications of torture survivors." *Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture* (26 May)

See report: [Body of Evidence: Treatment of Medico-Legal Reports for Survivors of Torture in the UK Asylum Tribunal.](#)

Torture and Ill-treatment

Global: [Prevent torture and promote justice.](#) Article by Salil Shetty, Secretary-General of Amnesty International, reflecting on the values underpinning the organization's work as it celebrates its 50th anniversary. *Korea Times* (13 May)

Indonesia: [Indonesian rights group says caning unconstitutional.](#) An Indonesian human rights group has condemned the use of caning in the Islamic province of Aceh province, on the grounds that the punishment violates the country's constitution. *Jakarta Globe* (27 May)

Iran: [Acid blinding sentence postponed after international outcry.](#) In a literal application of the Shari'a law of "an eye for an eye", Majid Movahedi was scheduled to be rendered unconscious in Tehran's judiciary hospital on 14 May while his victim, Ameneh Bahrami, dropped acid in both his eyes. However, following international outcry over the retributive punishment, Iranian officials have announced the postponement of the sentence. *The Guardian* (14 May)

USA: [What's wrong with solitary confinement?](#) Written by Dr. Mark W. Diamond, who operates a private forensic psychiatry practice in Lake Oswego, Oregon, and was the Colorado Department of Corrections Chief of Psychiatry from 1995-2004. *Denver Post* (20 May)

Events, Conferences and Courses

[International Diploma in Mental Health Law and Human Rights, 2011-2012, Pune, India.](#) The Diploma, now in its fourth year of existence, is a collaboration between WHO and the Indian Law Society (ILS) Law College in Pune, India. The course builds the capacity of students to advocate for human rights and to influence national legislative and policy and service reform in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and other key international human rights standards. It is a one year Diploma commencing 9th October 2011 and includes two residential sessions and distance learning. **Application deadline: 30th June 2011**

[ISHHR Capacity Building Workshops & Conference: Health and Human Rights: Doing Justice, Building Capacity. Tbilisi, Georgia 6-9 October 2011.](#) This four day event has been created by the International Society for Health and Human Rights (ISHHR) to bring together health specialists, human rights advocates, social workers and other professionals that work to eliminate gross human rights violations and assist affected people all around the world. Participants share knowledge on how to combat the effects of trauma, torture and human rights abuses on mental health and gain new skills. **Early Registration Deadline: 15 June 2011**

[Sexual Violence Research Initiative Forum 2011: Moving the Agenda Forward. Cape Town, South Africa, 10-13 October 2011.](#) Key conference themes: primary prevention (including community-based interventions); models of care for responding to sexual violence, and conflict and crisis. **General Registration Deadline: 31st August**

Publications

Conference Report: [Truth Seeking and the Role of Forensic Science. October 12-14, 2010. Kabul Afghanistan.](#), Physicians for Human Rights 2011.

Training Resource: [Protecting the rights of those facing the death penalty and life and long-term imprisonment](#) Penal Reform International 2011.

Abd-Allah A.H, Rasheed S.M, Yousef F.M. [Female genital mutilation in Upper Egypt in the new millennium](#). *International J of Gynecology and Obstetrics* July 2011 114:1:47-50

Blankenship K.M, Gupta J, Kershaw T, Reed E. [History of sex trafficking, recent experiences of violence, and HIV vulnerability among female sex workers in coastal Andhra Pradesh, India](#). *International J of Gynecology and Obstetrics* 2011. Article in Press, Corrected Proof.

Chaudoir S.R, Earshaw V.A, Pitpitam E.V. [Intended Responses to Rape as Functions of Attitudes, Attributions of Fault, and Emotions](#). *Sex Roles* March 2011, 64(5-6): 382-393

Day M, Jurgens R, Nowak M. [HIV and Incarceration: prisons and detention](#). *Journal of the International AIDS Society* May 2011, 14:26

Duroch F, Grais R.F, McRae M. [Description and consequences of sexual violence in Ituri province, Democratic Republic of Congo](#). *BMC International Health and Human Rights* April 2011, 11:5

Hossain M, Kiss L, Zimmerman C. [Migration and Health: A Framework for 21st Century Policy-Making](#). *PLoS Med* May 2011, 8:5

Joshi S, Prescott G.J, Simkhada P. [Health problems of Nepalese migrants working in three Gulf countries](#). *BMC International Health and Human Rights* March 2011, 11:3

Kabanga J, Kelly J, Maclin B, Mullin C, VanRooyen M. [Hope for the Future Again: Tracing the effects of sexual violence and conflict on families and communities in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo](#). *Harvard Humanitarian Initiative* April 2011.

Marthoenis M, Minas H, Puteh I. [Aceh Free Pasung: Releasing the mentally ill from physical restraint](#). *International J of Mental Health Systems* May 2011, 5:10

Nordgren L, Morris McDonnell MH, Loewenstein G. [What Constitutes Torture? Psychological Impediments to an Objective Evaluation of Enhanced Interrogation Tactics](#). *Psychological Science* May 2011, 22:5:689-694

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