
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWS FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

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Summary

AI reports & statements: Algeria / Saudi Arabia / Sierra Leone / Zimbabwe

Death penalty: end presidential clemency Guatemala / executions, amputations Saudi Arabia / committee prevention wrongful executions USA / Governor Illinois, USA, to consider abolition / procedure electrocution cruel treatment, finds court Nebraska, USA / New Hampshire, USA, voted for abolition / toleration execution innocent in Texas, USA

International tribunals & Impunity: health General Pinochet / tribunal East Timor / ratification ICC Tajikistan / ICC Prepcom / journalist pleaded guilty ICTR

Further news: UN & Brazil human rights cooperation / convictions Aceh violations / prisons Myanmar / 'honor crimes' Pakistan / trial Dr Basson South Africa / lack medical care Sri Lanka / trials doctors Turkey / therapy centre sex offenders USA

Campaigns / Projects: Doctors at Risk India / call ICRT torture victims day

Award: APA Human Rights Award: Dr Abraham Halpern

Publications

Amnesty International reports & statements

Algeria. Peace must be built on truth and justice. 15 May 2000 [AI Index: MDE 28/09/00] Press release on Amnesty International's first mission to Algeria in four years.
<http://www.amnesty.org/news/2000/52800900.htm>

Saudi Arabia update: Encouraging Human Rights Debate. 10 May 2000 [AI Index: MDE 23/34/00] Amnesty International's second report in the Saudi Arabia campaign.
<http://www.amnesty.org/ailib/aipub/2000/MDE/52303400.htm>
Press release - AI index MDE 23/36/00: <http://www.amnesty.org/news/2000/52303600.htm>
(See also Meetings and Courses below)

Sierra Leone. Civilians face real and immediate threat to their fundamental human rights. 10 May 2000 [AI Index: AFR 51/06/00]
<http://www.amnesty.org/news/2000/15100600.htm>

Zimbabwe. Amnesty International repeated its call for human rights to be fully respected following the announcement by President Robert Mugabe that elections in Zimbabwe are to be held on 24 and 25 June. 16 May 2000 [AI Index: AFR 46/09/00]
<http://www.amnesty.org/news/2000/14600900.htm>

Death penalty

Guatemala - The Guatemalan Congress has derogated a law that previously empowered the Guatemalan President to grant clemency to prisoners on death row (see in Spanish: *Noticias Nacionales*, 13 May).
<http://www.prensalibre.com.gt/noticias.asp?seccion=1&idnoticia=44291&showdate=956>

Saudi Arabia - The *BBC* reported on 13 May that seven Nigerians have been beheaded in Saudi Arabia after being found guilty of armed robbery. Three other Nigerians convicted of involvement in the

bank robbery had their right hands and left feet amputated. Saudi Arabia also executed a Pakistani citizen convicted of drug smuggling, *ABC* reported on 15 May.

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/world/middle_east/newsid_747000/747488.stm

http://abcnews.go.com/wire/World/reuters20000515_479.html

USA David Broder discusses the formation of the National Committee to Prevent Wrongful Executions (*Washington Post*, 14 May).

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A63556-2000May13.html> . To read more about the Committee go to: http://www.constitutionproject.org/nc_main.html

USA, Illinois - Governor Ryan said he would consider supporting the abolition of capital punishment if it was recommended by the special panel he appointed to review Illinois' death penalty system (*Death Penalty Information Center*, 12 May).

<http://www.essential.org/dpic/whatsnew.html>

USA, Nebraska - A Nebraska judge has ruled that the state's procedure for carrying out electrocutions violates the constitutional ban against cruel and unusual punishment (*Lincoln Journal Star*, 9 May).

See: <http://www.journalstar.com/archives/050900/top/sto1>

USA, New Hampshire - On 18 May the New Hampshire Senate voted by 14 votes to 10 to abolish the death penalty. The bill will now pass to the Governor who says she will veto the decision (*Boston Globe*, 19 May)

http://www.boston.com/dailyglobe2/140/metro/N_H_Senate_OK_s_death_penalty_ban+.shtml

Also see the pre-vote editorial in *The Concord*, 18 May:

http://www.cmonitor.com/stories/front0400/mlt_death_051800.shtml

USA, Texas - According to the web-based magazine *Salon*, Governor Bush has a near-perfect record of spurning clemency requests in capital cases: has Bush tolerated the execution of innocent people? (*The Hanging Governor*, *Salon.com* 11 May).

<http://www.salon.com/politics2000/feature/2000/05/11/bush/index.html>

International tribunals & impunity

Chile - Three doctors in Chile who have reviewed the medical records doubt if General Pinochet is really ill (see in Spanish: *El Nuevo Herald*, 9 May 2000).

<http://www.elherald.com/content/tue/noticias/amlat/digdocs/076353.htm>

Indonesia - *Le Monde Diplomatique* asked: how many fell victim to the armed violence and massive human rights violations in East Timor last August and September? Who was responsible? Will it be a national or international court that has jurisdiction to try these crimes? (May 2000).

<http://www.monde-diplomatique.fr/en/2000/05/12timorbox>

International Criminal Court (ICC)

On 5 May Tajikistan became the ninth state to ratify the Rome Statute of the ICC (see

<http://www.igc.org/icc>)

The fifth session of the Preparatory Commission for the ICC (PREPCOM) will take place from 12-30 June. The draft Elements of Crimes and Rules of Procedure and Evidence will be adopted at this session. For a report of proceedings at the fourth Prepcom in March 2000, see

<http://www.un.org/law/icc/prepcomm/prepmar.htm>

ICTR

Georges Omar Ruggiu, a Belgian journalist with a Rwandan radio station, has pleaded guilty to inciting killings during the 1994 genocide. According to the BBC, Mr Ruggiu's case is the first in which an international court has tried a suspect who is not a citizen of the country in which the alleged crimes were committed (15 May).

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/world/africa/newsid_749000/749079.stm

Further news

Brazil - High Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson and the Government of Brazil have signed an agreement (16 May) to explore cooperation on programmes of technical cooperation to improve the rights situation in the country.
<http://www.unhchr.ch/hurricane/hurricane.nsf/45ee90b46a08ca5a802565fd004e2473/84c7039a96e3b878802568e3002d7db1?OpenDocument>

Indonesia - *CNN* reported on 18 May that a human rights tribunal has convicted 24 Indonesian soldiers and one civilian of murdering 57 people last year in Aceh. According to the *LA Times*, 13 of these soldiers had admitted that they took 26 injured student activists into a field and shot them (10 May).
<http://www.cnn.com/2000/ASIANOW/southeast/05/17/indonesia.aceh/index.html>
<http://www.latimes.com/news/nation/20000510/t000044116.html>

Myanmar - *New York Review of Books* has a feature this month on victims of human rights violations in Burmese prisons: "I'm a vegetarian; I became a vegetarian after being in prison. You see, we ate rats". Timothy Garton Ash: 'Beauty and the Beast in Burma'.
<http://www.nybooks.com/nyrev/WWWfeatdisplay.cgi?20000525021F>

Pakistan - "Zahida Perveen's head is shrouded in a white veil, which she self-consciously tightens every few moments. But when she reaches to pick up her baby, the veil falls away to reveal the face of one of Pakistan's most horrific social ills, honor crimes" (*Washington Post*, 8 May).
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A23279-2000May7.html>
For AI's 1999 report on "honour crimes" against women in Pakistan see:
<http://www.amnesty.org/ailib/aipub/1999/ASA/33301899.htm>

South Africa - The *South African Mail and Guardian* reported on 18 May that prosecutors allege that apartheid-era chemical warfare specialist, Dr Wouter Basson, supplied toxins that killed hundreds of enemies of the apartheid government over two decades. His trial continues.
<http://www.mg.co.za/mg/news/2000may2/18may-basson.html>

Sri Lanka - Médecins Sans Frontières has expressed grave concern for the safety and medical care of the civilian population in Sri Lanka as a result of increased fighting in the Jaffna peninsula and vicinity (16 May).
<http://www.msf.org/projects/asia/srilanka/reports/2000/05/pr-civsafe/>

Turkey - The trials involving doctors active in human rights in Turkey continue:
The time-table of hearings is as follows:

23 May 2000: The fourth hearing of the trial launched against Dr. Zeki Uzun will be held at Izmir State Security Court (SSC) at 11.15

6 June 2000: The fourth hearing of the trial launched against Dr. Alp Ayan and Günseli Kaya will be held at Aliaga Penal Court of First Instance at 11.30

13 June 2000: The third hearing of the trial launched against Prof. Dr. Veli Lök will be held at Izmir Penal Court of First Instance No. 2 at 09.30

In addition there is a law suit launched by Prof Sebnem Korur Fincanci against Erol Cakir, Governor of Istanbul, to be held at Istanbul Court of First Instance No.8, 30 May 2000 at 10.15. Mr. Cakir accused Prof Fincanci of acting in favour of members or adherents of illegal organizations by furnishing reports for them. Prof Fincanci then initiated a law suit seeking compensation for the insult to her professionalism and the pressure that impeded her work.

USA, Illinois - The *Chicago Tribune* reported on 7 May that two years ago, Illinois judges began sending dangerous sex offenders who had finished their prison term to a new therapy centre. Since then 108 men have been sent in, but none has been deemed sufficiently rehabilitated to be let out.
<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/metro/chicago/article/0,2669,ART-44698,FF.html>

Campaigns/projects

The Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative is sponsoring a "doctors at risk" project to respond to custodial violence in India. For further information see
<http://www.humanrightsinitiative.org/doc%20at%20risk1.htm> or contact the CHRI,
f 1/2A, Hauz Khas Enclave, New Delhi - 110016, INDIA

Tel: +91-11-6864678 / 6859823, Fax: +91-11-6864688 e -mailto:chriall@nda.vsnl.net.in

The ICRT has now launched its International Call for Action for the UN Torture Victims Day on 26 June 2000. To support your activities, the IRCT is offering a limited range of 26 June campaign materials free of charge. Click here for further information: <http://www.irct.org/26June/26june00.htm>
Address: Project Manager, Campaigns, Exhibits & Website , IRCT, P.O. Box 2107, DK-1014 Copenhagen K, Denmark. Fax: +45 - 33 76 05 00

Award

Dr Abraham Halpern is the recipient of the 2000 American Psychiatric Association Human Rights Award for his long standing human rights advocacy. It was presented on 15 May at the annual APA meeting in Chicago. Dr. Halpern is professor emeritus at New York Medical College and a past president of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law.

Publications & press releases

Today's Lancet contains an editorial, commentary and analytical pieces on violence and the doctor (Lancet 2000 ; 355; 1737). See:

<http://www.thelancet.com/newlancet/sub/issues/vol355no9217/body.editorial1737.html> for the editorial and <http://www.thelancet.com/newlancet/sub/issues/vol355no9217/body.series1802.html> for the first article in the series.

An ICN press release notes that "nurses, pharmacists and doctors call for a UN Special Rapporteur to monitor the protection and independence of health professionals". See: http://icn.ch/PR9_00.htm

The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has adopted a general comment on the right to the highest attainable standard of health (CESCR, 22nd session, 11 May).

<http://www.unhchr.ch/Hurricane/Hurricane.nsf/b4aec4dec540ceb680256601005b87bd/7dc08151cf745b33802568dd00381272?OpenDocument>

The Committee against Torture started its consideration of an initial report presented by a government delegation from the United States on that country's compliance with its obligations under the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT, 24th session, 10 May).

<http://www.unhchr.ch/hurricane/hurricane.nsf/45ee90b46a08ca5a802565fd004e2473/1db59aa2eab21919802568dc002e2c54?OpenDocument>

Response of the UK Government to the report of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) on its visit to the UK and the Isle of Man (from 8 to 17 September 1997) was published 11 May 2000 and is available at <http://www.cpt.coe.int/en/reports/inf2000-07en.htm> ; the CPT's report of its visit is available at:

<http://www.cpt.coe.int/en/reports/inf2000-01en.htm>

Ireland made public yesterday (18 May) its follow up to a CPT report of its 1998 visit to Ireland and a preliminary response by the government. Relevant documents are available at

<http://www.cpt.coe.int/cpt/irl.htm>

Boutwell J. and M. Klare. Small arms and light weapons are weapons of choice in most internal conflicts for a number of reasons: they are widely obtainable, relatively cheap, deadly, easy to use and easy to transport, argue the authors in *Scientific American*, June 2000.

<http://www.sciam.com/2000/0600issue/0600boutwell.html>

Eisenman D, Keller AS, Kim G. Survivors of torture in a general medical setting: how often have patients been tortured, and how often is it missed? *Western Journal of Medicine* 2000;172:301-304. <http://www.ewjm.com/cgi/content/full/172/5/301> . For a comment on the above see: Iacopino V. Health professionals cannot be silent witnesses. *Western Journal of Medicine* 2000;172:304-305.

<http://www.ewjm.com/cgi/content/full/172/5/304>

Federal Council of Psychology, Brazil. Psychology side by side with the Human Rights. Short article from Jornal do Federal, the bulletin of the Federal Council of Psychology (March 2000, in Portuguese). <http://www.psicologia-online.org.br/jfcidadania.html>

For help with Portuguese-English translation (also English into French, Spanish, German, or Italian and vice versa), visit <http://babelfish.altavista.com/cgi-bin/translate?>

Fluss S.S. *International Guidelines on Bioethics*. Informal Listing of Selected International Codes, Declarations, Guidelines, etc. on Medical Ethics/Bioethics/Health Care Ethics/Human Rights Aspects of Health (CIOMS, Geneva 1999).

Health and Human Rights Vol 4 no.2, published by the FXB Center at Harvard has now appeared. This issue is dedicated to sexual and reproductive rights. For details see: <http://www.hri.ca/partners/fxbcenter/journal/back/v4n2/index.htm>

Jonsen A.R. *A Short History of Medical Ethics* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2000). ISBN 0-19-513455-9. For a book review, click here: <http://www.nejm.org/content/2000/0342/0019/1458.asp>

Ondaatje M. *Anil's Ghost* (1999). For a review of this book in which fiction meets forensic anthropology, click here: <http://www.theage.com.au/books/20000508/A47326-2000May7.html>

Meetings & courses

Amnesty International United Kingdom Conference on Saudi Arabia: A Secret State of Suffering Saturday June 3 at London School of Economics (LSE), Houghton Street, London WC1, 10am-5.30pm

For further information and bookings see the AI events page:

<http://www.amnesty.org.uk/action/events/index.html> or contact Amnesty International UK, 99-119 Rosebery Avenue, London EC1R 4RE (tel: +44 20 7814 6200).

Boston USA. Intensive Course in Health and Human Rights, June 26 - 28, 2000, Harvard School of Public Health

For further details contact: Harvard School of Public Health, Center for Continuing Professional Education, Attn: Jenny Abreu, Enrollment Coordinator, 677 Huntington Avenue, Dept. B, Boston, MA_02115, USA.

(tel) +1 617-432-1171, (fax) +1 617-432-1969

<mailto:contedu@hsph.harvard.edu> or go to: <http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/ccpe/programs/ICHH.shtml>

International Academy of Law and Mental Health. The Academy holds an International Congress on Law and Mental Health each year. This year, the XXVth Anniversary Congress is scheduled for Siena, Italy from July 9th-15th, 2000 and has already confirmed over 500 speakers. There are several human-rights-related sessions. For further information visit the IALMH web-site or contact Alexa Abiscott, Congress Secretariat, at <mailto:admin@ialmh.org>. Address: Académie internationale de droit et de santé mentale, c/o Chaire de psychiatrie légale et d'éthique biomédicale Philippe Pinel, Faculté de médecine, Université de Montréal C.P. 6128, Succ. Centre Ville, Montréal, Québec, H3C 3J7, Canada.

New York USA. Courses in Trauma Studies, apply by mid-June 2000. Contact details: International Trauma Studies Program, New York University, 418 Lafayette Street, Suite 554, New York, NY 10003.

For an application form, click here:

http://www.nyu.edu/trauma.studies/frame_application.htm

The XVth International Conference on the Social Sciences & Medicine-- Societies & Health in Transition -- will take place in Eindhoven, The Netherlands, 16-20 October 2000. Arranged as a series of workshops, each led by a discussion leader, the conference addresses key issues relating to the behavioural and social aspects of health and health care. For further details see the conference website <http://www.elsevier.nl/locate/ssmconf> or contact <mailto:t.collier@elsevier.co.uk> for a printed brochure.

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