

-----  
**AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL**  
**NEWS FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS**

AI Bulletin Vol.10 No. 8, 20 April 2007  
AI Index: ACT 84/008/2007  
-----

Contents of external sites are not the responsibility of Amnesty International. Links are provided for the convenience of readers. Some sites may require registration or only be available to subscribers.

**Summary:**

Asylum seekers/refugees  
Children  
Death Penalty  
HIV/AIDS  
Human Rights  
Mental Health  
Organ Transplants  
Right to Health  
Torture  
Violence Against Women  
Women's Health  
Employment Opportunities  
Meetings/Events  
Publications

**Amnesty International reports & statements:**

See the following recent AI reports and press statements [dates given in day/month/year format]. These and other press releases and reports are accessible at:

<http://web.amnesty.org/library/eng-recent/index>

18/04/2007 [Zimbabwe: Call for Africa leaders to speak out against brutality in Zimbabwe](#) AFR 46/011/2007

17/04/2007 [Turkey: Raid on magazine raises spectre of more censorship](#) EUR 44/005/2007

17/04/2007 [Spain: Use of CCTV - an initial step to address police impunity](#) EUR 41/002/2007

17/04/2007 [EU-Andean Community: serious human rights concerns to address](#) AMR 03/001/2007

16/04/2007 [Eleven Organisations Intervene Before House of Lords in Case Considering the Role of UK Military in Torture and Killings of Iraqi Civilians](#) EUR 45/007/2007

16/04/2007 [Iraq: A deepening refugee crisis - Media Briefing](#) MDE 14/021/2007

16/04/2007 [Jamaica: Amnesty International condemns homophobic violence](#) AMR 38/004/2007

16/04/2007 [Russian Federation: Attack on public dissent](#) EUR 46/013/2007

13/04/2007 [2007 Elections to the UN Human Rights Council](#) IOR 41/010/2007

12/04/2007 [Nigeria elections: Attack impunity not human rights!](#) AFR 44/010/2007

12/04/2007 [Russian Federation: Health Professional Action: Denial of Health Care - Mikhail Trepashkin](#) EUR 46/011/2007

11/04/2007 [Algeria: Amnesty International condemns Algiers bomb attacks](#) MDE 28/009/2007

11/04/2007 [Egypt: New anti-terror law must not entrench systematic human rights abuses](#) MDE 12/013/2007

11/04/2007 [India: Orissa should avoid forced evictions in Jagatsinghpur, instead consult farmers protesting against displacement](#) ASA 20/009/2007

**Asylum seekers/refugees:**

**South Africa:** Johannesburg's inner city regeneration programme has led to the eviction of more than 100 refugees and asylum seekers, who are now living on the pavement outside their former accommodation. As the children begin to fall ill and winter approaches, it is not clear whether anything will be done, after the South African Supreme Court set aside a former prevention from eviction ruling. UNHCR (11 April):

<http://www.unhcr.org/news/NEWS/461cf0e42.html>

**UK:** The Court of Appeal has overruled Home Office plans to send failed asylum seekers from Sudan back to Darfur; the Sudanese Government has been accused of perpetrating genocide against Darfuris. Last year 675 Sudanese nationals applied for asylum in the UK.

<http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/news/press/2007/april/20070404.htm>

**Iraq:** As the UN holds a conference to discuss how to mobilize countries to act on the current crisis, the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon has urged Iraq's neighbours not to close their borders to the steadily rising numbers of Iraqis who are fleeing their homes. Since the conflict began, 4 million people have left the country, 800 000 in the past year. Jordan and Syria host nearly half the refugees, and there are fears that they are becoming overburdened. AFP (17 April):

<http://www.afp.com/english/news/stories/070417095218.y9rz7cds.html>

Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and the Refugee Council have sent an open letter to Tony Blair about the plight of Iraqi refugees :

[http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/7A05C251-9739-47EA-9BEE-BF40511A4DB5/0/Iraq\\_UKagencies\\_letter.pdf](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/7A05C251-9739-47EA-9BEE-BF40511A4DB5/0/Iraq_UKagencies_letter.pdf)

## **Children:**

**Bangladesh:** The vaccination of approximately 22 million children aged five and under is part of the continuing effort to eradicate polio. Last year, after a five year hiatus, polio returned to Bangladesh and left one girl paralysed; since then, sixteen more cases have been discovered. The children will also be given de-worming tablets and vitamin pills. The Khaleej Times (7 April):

[http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticleNew.asp?xfile=data/subcontinent/2007/April/subcontinent\\_April265.xml&section=subcontinent&col=](http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticleNew.asp?xfile=data/subcontinent/2007/April/subcontinent_April265.xml&section=subcontinent&col=)

**Laos:** Laotian police, who arrested three North Korean refugees, aged 12, 14 and 17, at the border crossing three months ago, wants an NGO to pay a thousand dollars for their release from prison, where they have now served their sentence. The organisation is concerned that paying would immediately encourage bounty hunters to go after North Korean refugees.

Should they be repatriated the three children could be sentenced to death. AsiaNews.it (13 April):

<http://www.asianews.it/index.php?l=en&art=8994&geo=5&size=A>

## **Death Penalty:**

**USA:** The *Dallas Morning News* has called on Texas to abandon the death penalty. After years of supporting the death penalty, the paper "cannot reconcile the fact that [the death penalty] is both imperfect *and* irreversible," and has changed its position after careful consideration of mounting evidence that the state has wrongly convicted a number of defendants in capital trials and has likely executed at least one man who was innocent. Death Penalty Information Center (16 April):

<http://www.deathpenaltyinfo.org/article.php?did=2305&scid=64>

## **HIV/AIDS:**

**Australia:** John Howard, the Australian Prime Minister, has provoked controversy by stating in a radio interview that HIV-positive immigrants should not be allowed to enter the country, purely due to their health status. The UK's National Aids Trust described the proposal as 'illegal, discriminatory and ineffective'.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/6553623.stm> in English  
<http://www.lemonde.fr/web/article/0,1-0,36-897130,0.html> en français.

**L’Afrique:** Le poids des maladies et la précarité du système des soins médicaux posent toujours de grands défis au développement du continent africain, ont averti vendredi les ministres africains de la Santé au terme de leur rendez-vous à Johannesburg. Après une semaine de délibérations, les quelque 40 ministres de la Santé de pays africains ont adopté une stratégie sur neuf années qui vise à assurer l'accès de tous les Africains aux soins médicaux fondamentaux d'ici 2015. CongoPlus.Info (14 avril) :  
[http://www.congoplus.info/article\\_congoplus-3038.html](http://www.congoplus.info/article_congoplus-3038.html)

**Pacific:** Governments in the Pacific have been warned that strong and decisive leadership is necessary to prevent the spread of AIDS throughout the islands, and a potential African-like epidemic. Strong church influence, the lack of sex education in schools, as well as discrimination by health workers were among the reasons for resistance that needed to be faced when discussing the issue. *New Zealand Herald* (12 April):  
[http://www.nzherald.co.nz/topic/story.cfm?c\\_id=204&objectid=10433704](http://www.nzherald.co.nz/topic/story.cfm?c_id=204&objectid=10433704)

**World Bank:** The World Bank is facing accusations that it is attempting to ‘radically alter a long-standing health strategy’. This is denied by the Bank’s current President, Paul Wolfowitz, but the instructions of Juan Jose Daboub, the Managing Director and a former member of the ruling conservative party in El Salvador, to remove all references to family planning from a proposal to fund work related to HIV/AIDS and poverty reduction in Madagascar last month, rang warning bells with staff. *Financial Times* (12 April):  
<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/996ea51c-e92e-11db-a162-000b5df10621.html>

## Human Rights:

**Iraq:** The Iraqi lesbian and gay community and NGOs dealing with gay issues have called for urgent action to protect gays and lesbians in the country. The groups say that the number of victims of “sexual cleansing” is growing on a daily basis, with over 30 known killings in the past three months, where the bodies have been found mutilated and with signs of rape. The Iraqi Ministry of the Interior denies that the gay community is being singled out for violent attacks, and claims that the problem is general and related to sectarian violence. “The gay community continues to be subjected to systematic terror by Shia militias,” reports IRIN (16 April):  
<http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=71632>

**South Africa:** The South African Medical Association (SAMA) has spoken out against the human rights abuses occurring in neighbouring Zimbabwe. They are particularly concerned about events highlighted by ZADHR (Zimbabwe Association of Doctors for Human Rights) who have highlighted that doctors there are both being victimised, and also prevented from treating political victims of human rights abuses. SAMA (5 April):  
<http://www.samedical.org/article.asp?ArticleID=1997>

**Zimbabwe.** Supporters of the Zimbabwean opposition party who had been beaten and tortured by police last month were denied medical care for days or were treated in the presence of their abusers by intimidated doctors, says the Zimbabwean Association of Doctors for Human Rights (ZADHR). See the *BMJ* report  
<http://www.bmj.com/cgi/content/extract/334/7598/817-a> (21 April)

## Mental Health:

**UK:** The Government is forcing through its mental health reforms, ignoring a series of amendments put forward by the House of Lords, which psychiatrists, mental health charities and patients have said would help to create laws fit for the 21st century. These include the demand that children be treated in wards suitable for their age, not with adults, and be assessed by specially trained professionals. *Independent on Sunday* (15 April):  
<http://news.independent.co.uk/uk/legal/article2449983.ece>

## Organ Transplants:

**China:** The Chinese Government has issued new rules governing human organ transplants, including a ban on sale of organs for profit, and donation by under-18 year olds. The legislation comes into effect on 1 May, and is also meant to standardize transplant procedures across licensed hospitals. However there was no mention of the provenance of organs, a large proportion of which are thought to have come from executed prisoners. There are also allegations that the military are involved in posthumous organ harvesting. See the Associated Press report in the *Sun Sentinel* (7 April):

[http://www.sun-sentinel.com/news/nationworld/ats-ap\\_health11apr07\\_0.1852618.story?coll=sns-ap-tophealth](http://www.sun-sentinel.com/news/nationworld/ats-ap_health11apr07_0.1852618.story?coll=sns-ap-tophealth)

## Prisoners:

**Azerbaijan:** Further to last month's hunger strike, demanding that their life sentences be commuted to 15 years imprisonment, 40 prisoners in Gobustan jail have gone on hunger strike again. The last strike was resolved when human rights activists visited the inmates. APA (17 April): <http://en.apa.az/news.php?id=24702>

**Cameroon:** Following the intervention of a local NGO, Help Out, basic toilet facilities have been built in a prison in Buea. Their involvement has changed other aspects of life for the prisoners as well; one guard said "formerly we used to put stubborn prisoners in chains... But now with the human rights system we've reduced all these sanctions." BBC (9 April):

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/6530583.stm>

## Right to Health:

**Ecuador:** A lawsuit on behalf of 30,000 local people has been filed against the petroleum company, Texaco, alleging that more than 25 000 sq. metres of rainforest has been contaminated. The suit contends that there is an unusually high incidence of cancer in the region, and children also suffer from high levels of skin disease, throat pains and diarrhoea. Al Jazeera (11 April):

<http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/8818D414-91DC-4A13-AB48-AF5FEFEF672D.htm>

**Nicaragua:** El Procurador de Derechos Humanos Omar Cabezas Lacayo se pronunció este martes en relación a la problemática de los altos precios en los medicamentos, el que plantea que las medidas adoptadas por el Gobierno a través del Ministerio de Salud y el Ministerio de Fomento, Industria y Comercio en revisar la estructura de costos de los medicamentos son muy bien vistas por la Procuraduría de Derechos Humanos debido a que la población no cuenta con los recursos necesarios para comprar las medicinas. La Gente (15 abril):

<http://www.radiolaprimerisima.com/noticias/notascortas/12236>

## Torture:

**Uganda:** Following public outcry against torture in Uganda's illegal detention facilities, also known as "safe houses", government security forces have taken on more ingenious torture methods that leave no physical marks on victims but are as severe and brutalising. "We are noticing a strange trend in torture cases; most of them are as a result of what we call invisible torture or systematic torture; infliction of maximum harm leaving no traces behind like scars of bodily bruises," Fred Muzira, a social worker at the ACTV (African Centre for Treatment and Rehabilitation for Torture Victims), said. AllAfrica (15 April):

<http://allafrica.com/stories/200704160400.html>

**Venezuela:** Out of almost four hundred cases of torture recorded by the Support Network for Justice and Peace since 1995, only one is at the stage of trial. According to the NGO representatives, proving the commission of a torture-related crime is very hard. Victims need

to take immediate action, but most fear complaining against their aggressors. El Universal.com (13 April):  
[http://english.eluniversal.com/2007/04/13/en\\_ing\\_art\\_in-venezuela.-polic\\_13A854991.shtml](http://english.eluniversal.com/2007/04/13/en_ing_art_in-venezuela.-polic_13A854991.shtml)

### **Violence Against Women:**

**Eritrea:** The Eritrean Government has announced on its website a ban on female genital mutilation (FGM), including the supply of instruments for this purpose. It says that FGM put women at grave risk of health problems. Eritrea currently has a FGM prevalence rate of approx. 94% but there are hopes that this is on the decline. IRIN (5 April):  
<http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=71199>

**India :** On average, two girls per day have been disappearing in the Assam region since 1996. The area is home to nearly 250,000 people who were internally displaced in the late 1990s. Recently several of the girls were discovered working as 'sex-slaves' in Delhi, and some of the girls found still within the state have been coerced into working in the pornography and sex industries. The police are aware of a sophisticated network of "recruiters" but don't have the resources to confront the problem. BBC (10 April):  
[http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south\\_asia/6430811.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/6430811.stm)

**Liberia:** The UN's first ever all-female peacekeeping unit has been stationed in Liberia since January 2007. As well as keeping the peace, there is the hope that the peacekeepers will encourage local women to join the police force, where the numbers of women are low. Rape and sexual violence are widespread in Liberia in the post-conflict situation. Christian Science Monitor (21 March):  
<http://www.csmonitor.com/2007/0321/p06s01-woaf.html?page=1>

### **Women's Health:**

**Brazil:** The new Minister for Health, Jose Gomes Temporao, said in an interview with the newspaper *Folha de Sao Paulo* that he wants to treat the issue of abortion as a matter of health rather than in a religious or moral context. Abortion is currently only allowed in the case of rape or if the mother's life is at risk. A strong response from the Catholic Church is expected, especially as the country prepares for Pope Benedict's May visit. BBC (9 April):  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/6539831.stm>

**Portugal:** After the March 2007 referendum, Portugal's president has ratified a new law allowing abortion up until the 10th week of pregnancy. Abortion is now banned in the EU only in Ireland, Malta and Poland. BBC (10 April):  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/6541143.stm>

### **Employment Opportunities:**

Torture Abolition and Survivors Support Coalition (TASSC) International is seeking an Executive Director. To apply, submit a résumé, writing sample and cover letter to [EDsearchtasc@gmail.com](mailto:EDsearchtasc@gmail.com). Further information can be obtained from the TASSC web site:  
<http://www.tassc.org/>

Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) is seeking a new Executive Director. See details at:  
<http://physiciansforhumanrights.org/jobs/executive-director.html>

### **Meetings/Events:**

**World.** Africa Malaria Day April 25 <http://www.rollbackmalaria.org/amd2007/>

**UK.** 'Exposed and Hungry – Life in Eastern Congo'. Susan Schulman photography exhibition. April 25-May 13. Oxo Tower Wharf (11am-6pm) Admission free.  
<http://www.oxotower.co.uk/Exposedandhungry.html>

**India.** 15-18 September. 6<sup>th</sup> International Neonatal Nursing Conference. New Delhi, India.  
[http://www.icnn2007.com/icnn2007\\_invitation.htm](http://www.icnn2007.com/icnn2007_invitation.htm)

**UK.** 19-21 September. 'Human Rights, Migration and Poverty; Their Impact on Transcultural Care'. 33<sup>rd</sup> Conference of the Transcultural Nursing Society. Bournemouth, UK. (Abstract Deadline extended until 30 April). <http://www.bournemouth.ac.uk/ihcs/tcns07.html>

**UK.** 18-20 October. Women Deliver! Conference. ExCel Centre, London, UK  
<http://www.womendeliver.org/>

## **Publications:**

De Parle J. The American prison nightmare. *New York Review of Books* 12 April.  
<http://www.nybooks.com/articles/20056>

Ivanova, Maria. 'Bulgarian Doctors Protest Over Crisis in Health-Care System'. *The Lancet*. Vol. 369, 9568. pp1157-1158.

<http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140673607605467/fulltext>

Kacker, Dr. Loveleen. Varadan, Srinivas. Kumar, Pravesh. 'Study on Child Abuse: India 2007'. *Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India*. April 2007.

<http://wcd.nic.in/childabuse.pdf>

Nieburg P et al. *Moving Beyond the U.S. Government Policy of Inadmissibility of HIV-Infected Noncitizens. A Report of the CSIS Task Force on HIV/AIDS*. Center for Strategic and International Studies. March 2007, available at:

<http://www.csis.org/media/csis/pubs/movingbeyonadinadmissibility.pdf>

Sepulveda, Jaime. Carpenter, Charles. Curran, James. Holzemer, William. Smits, Helen. Scott, Kimberley. Orza, Michele. eds. 'PEPFAR Implementation: Progress and Promise'. Institute of Medicine of the National Academies. 30 March 2007.

[http://books.nap.edu/openbook.php?record\\_id=11905&page=R1](http://books.nap.edu/openbook.php?record_id=11905&page=R1)

'Civilians Without Protection: The Ever-Worsening Humanitarian Crisis in Iraq'. *International Committee of the Red Cross*. 11 April 2007.

[http://www.icrc.org/Web/eng/siteeng0.nsf/htmlall/iraq-report-110407/\\$File/Iraq-report-icrc.pdf](http://www.icrc.org/Web/eng/siteeng0.nsf/htmlall/iraq-report-110407/$File/Iraq-report-icrc.pdf)

'Encourager une approche européenne en matière de responsabilité face au génocide, aux crimes contre l'humanité, aux crimes de guerre et à la torture'. FIDH and REDRESS. 2 April 2007.

[http://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/resume\\_executif\\_fr.pdf](http://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/resume_executif_fr.pdf) en français

[http://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/FINAL\\_FIDH-REDRESS\\_REPORT.pdf](http://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/FINAL_FIDH-REDRESS_REPORT.pdf) in English.

'Human Rights Based Programming : What It Is/How To Do It'. United Nations Population Fund : UNFPA.

[http://www.unfpa.org/upload/lib\\_pub\\_file/680\\_filename\\_hr\\_book.pdf](http://www.unfpa.org/upload/lib_pub_file/680_filename_hr_book.pdf)

'La Peine de Mort à Taiwan : en marche vers l'abolition ?' FIDH. 2 April 2007.

[http://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/tw\\_pdm450f.pdf](http://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/tw_pdm450f.pdf)

'Medical Students Should Be Taught About Rape'. Editorial *The Lancet* Volume 369, Number 9569, 14 April, 2007. p1234.

=====

This newsletter may be freely distributed. For a free subscription or to unsubscribe please write to: [Health@amnesty.org](mailto:Health@amnesty.org)

-----

Health and Human Rights Team  
Amnesty International - International Secretariat  
Tel: +44 20 7413 5522  
Fax: +44 20 7956 1157  
AI web-site: <http://www.amnesty.org/>  
AI Health Professional web-site: <http://www.amnesty.org/health>