
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWS FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

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Amnesty International Reports & Statements:

27 May: Global: Launching **Amnesty International Report 2010: State of the World's Human Rights**, which documents abuses in 159 countries, AI said that powerful governments are blocking advances in international justice by standing above the law on human rights, shielding allies from criticism and acting only when politically convenient.

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/report-2010-global-justice-gap-condemns-millions-abuse-2010-05-27>

21 May: Mexico: AI has called on the Mexican authorities to release three community leaders who began a hunger strike in protest at their detention for taking part in a campaign against high electricity prices. <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/mexico-urged-release-imprisoned-community-leaders-hunger-strike-2010-05-21>

20 May: Malawi: The fourteen year sentence imposed on a Malawian couple convicted of "gross indecency" and "unnatural acts" is an outrage, AI said. The defendants have reportedly been subjected to torture and other ill-treatment. They told their lawyers that they were beaten by police while in custody. <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/malawian-couple-sentenced-14-years-hard-labour-gross-indecency-2010-05-20>

18 May: Zimbabwe: The government of Zimbabwe must take action to protect hundreds of thousands of people left to survive in substandard settlements five years after a program of mass forced evictions, AI Zimbabwe and a coalition of partners said. "Five years have passed and many of us are still living in tents," said Chinyuku a resident at Hopley Farm, on the outskirts of Harare, where the majority of residents survive in make-shift housing. "There are no schools, no health services and very little sanitation. This is no way for humans to live." <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/zimbabwes-700000-victims-forced-eviction-still-ignored-five-years-2010-05-18>

17 May: Sri Lanka: The United Nations must set up an independent investigation into massive human rights violations committed by both government and Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam forces during the country's civil war, AI said on the first anniversary of the end of the conflict. There have been a host of serious violations including extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, torture, indiscriminate attacks on civilian targets, forcible recruitment of children, and assassinations. Additionally, hospitals were shelled, resulting in death and injuring among patients and staff. Survivors were detained in the government's massive military-run displacement camps where they arrived wounded, hungry, and ill.
<http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/un-must-investigate-sri-lanka-rights-violations-2010-05-17>

Children

DRC: Ongoing fighting and poor health care have produced a generation of mourning mothers and fathers, many of whom have lost more children than they are raising. There is only one doctor and five nurses or midwives for every 10,000 people in the country. And that's before factoring in deaths from war. UNICEF estimates that children account for half of the more than 4 million deaths blamed on conflicts in east Congo that have raged for more than a decade. *The Washington Post* (24 May) http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/05/23/AR2010052301975_pf.html

Global: With only five years left to meet the Millennium Development Goals' 2015 deadline for reducing child mortality, progress toward that goal may be coming faster than was previously thought. Past studies have indicated many countries are not moving quickly enough toward the goal of a two-thirds reduction in deaths of children under five years old, but a new study sees an acceleration of this reduction in several low-income countries. (See publications section for study) *IPS* (24 May) <http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=51567>

South Africa: This short film looks at South Africa's rape crisis - where as many as 40 percent of rape victims are under the age of 18. *IRIN* <http://www.irinnews.org/film/?id=4210>

Food Security, Malnutrition, and Poverty

Chad: Two million people in Chad will go hungry by June, the head of Oxfam GB's mission in the country said, unless there is an immediate intervention by the international community. The WFP said the malnutrition rate stands at 27 per cent in some areas. The benchmark for a crisis is 15 per cent, said Jean Luc Siblat, country director for the WFP in Chad. Severe malnutrition stands at 4.5 per cent, when the threshold is 1.5 per cent. The situation has been exacerbated by a drying up of funds from the international community. *Irish Times* (22 May) <http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/world/2010/0522/1224270891448.html>

Israel (and the Occupied Palestinian Territories): Since the imposition of Israel's blockade on the Gaza Strip in June 2007, the formal economy in Gaza has collapsed. Over sixty percent of households are now food insecure, threatening the health and well-being of children, women and men. In this context, agriculture offers some practical solutions to a humanitarian problem. However, Israel's import and access restrictions continue to suffocate the agriculture sector and directly contribute to rising food insecurity. *Reuters AlertNet* (25 May) <http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/fromthefield/wvmeero/59f63b9334c17e02900601b71f758aOf.htm>

Liberia: The U.N. estimates that 44 percent of childhood deaths in the country are due to malnutrition, making it the most common cause of child mortality. U.N. agencies have warned that if efforts to address key nutritional problems such as children being underweight, stunted growth or micronutrient deficiencies are not accelerated, some 78,000 Liberian women and children will die and 87,000 babies will be born with mental retardation. "The problem is that people do not know that the problem is occurring and only learn that their children are malnourished after the child is brought sick to hospital and nurses diagnose malnutrition," said

Samson Azorquoi, the acting medical director of Phebe Hospital in Bong county, central Liberia. *Reuters AlertNet* (18 May) <http://www.alertnet.org/db/blogs/58388/2010/04/18-162547-1.htm>

Malawi: At least one million people could face acute food shortage in Malawi between this June and March next year. The latest report by the food security monitoring initiative famine early warning system network [fewsnet] has revealed. In its report it is estimated that one million people in the country would not be able to access food. *AfricaNews* (24 May) http://www.africanews.com/site/Food_scare_hits_Malawi/list_messages/32172

Health Services

Africa: Shortages of medical staff have been identified as one of the major impediments to achieving the health-related MDGs. For example, one of the poorest countries in the world, Mozambique, has just 548 doctors for a population of more than 22 million, according to the WHO. The WHO's baseline estimate for achieving health-related MDGs is at least 23 health workers per 10,000 people - against an average of 13 in Africa. IRIN/PlusNews has compiled a list of 10 African countries - in no particular order - that are critically short of skilled personnel. *IRIN* (19 May) <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=89186>

Egypt: While Egypt's population has grown to just over [80 million](#) in 2010, the number of blood donors has fallen sharply in recent years, according to health experts, threatening the lives of hundreds of thousands of patients. Medical experts say there are various reasons behind the drop, including malnutrition, which has become common in Egypt. *IRIN* (27 May) <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=89264>

USA: Homeless U.S. adults are up to 10 times less likely to get the health care they need than people in the general population, a new survey reveals. The poll results -- analyzed by researchers from both the Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) and the Boston Healthcare for the Homeless Program -- are reported in the May issue of the *American Journal of Public Health* (see publications section). *US News and World Report* (24 May) <http://health.usnews.com/health-news/managing-your-healthcare/research/articles/2010/05/24/homeless-americans-unlikely-to-receive-basic-health-care.html>

HIV and AIDS

Africa: The cable television network, HBO, broadcast a new documentary (24 May) about the transformative effects of low-cost anti-retroviral drugs in the fight against AIDS in Africa. Eight years ago, such medication would have cost \$10,000 per person, per year. Since then, global health groups and private organizations have worked to reduce that cost. Host Liane Hansen speaks to filmmaker Lance Bangs about his new documentary, *The Lazarus Effect*. Hear his interview here: *NPR* (23 May) <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=127069421&ft=1&f=1008>

Africa: Backtracking by international donors in funding for HIV and AIDS may undermine years of progress and is already putting lives at risk, Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) said. In a report on AIDS in eight sub-Saharan African countries, it said major donors have decided to cap, cut or halt spending on HIV treatment and AIDS drugs in the past year and a half. *Reuters* (27 May) <http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/LDE64P182.htm>
Report at: http://www.msf.org/msfinternational/invoke.cfm?objectid=D9101088-15C5-FOOA-258244A3E07C4A75&component=toolkit.pressrelease&method=full_html

Asia: Some 90% of gay men in the Asia-Pacific region are denied access to HIV and AIDS prevention and care services because of discriminatory laws in many states, a UN-backed report says. Almost half the region's countries criminalise gay male sex and the report says this is worsening a situation in which infection rates are climbing. *BBC* (17 May) <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/8687845.stm>

Malaria, TB and Other Diseases

Global: Measles is making a rapid comeback in African, Asian and even some European countries despite being easily avoided through vaccination, the WHO said as countries pledged to sharply cut infections and deaths worldwide by 2015. Since 2008, funding cuts for vaccination campaigns have allowed measles to spread again where previously it was close to being eradicated, the global body said. *Los Angeles Times* (21 May)

<http://www.latimes.com/features/health/sns-ap-un-who-measles,0,6218231.story>

Global: Global efforts to control tuberculosis have failed and radical new approaches are needed, experts said. With more than 9 million people infected last year, including 2 million deaths, officials say there is more tuberculosis now than at any other time in history. In a special tuberculosis edition of the British medical journal *Lancet* published on Wednesday, experts said past failures prove new strategies are required. *Yahoo News/AP* (18 May)

http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20100518/ap_on_he_me/eu_med_tuberculosis_failure_1

The Lancet special issue on TB: <http://www.thelancet.com/series/tuberculosis#>

Pakistan: According to the WHO, Pakistan ranks sixth among TB-burdened countries in the world. Some 300,000 new cases of TB are recorded in the South Asian country every year, with female patients outnumbering the males by a ratio of 52:48. *IPS* (18 May)

<http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=51469>

Maternal and Infant Health

Guatemala: Guatemala still has one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the world, and alongside Bolivia it has the highest rates in Latin America. According to the WHO, 290 women die out of every 100,000 live births, meaning that Guatemalan women are 20 times more likely than Costa Rican women to die from birth-related causes. In Guatemala indigenous women are three times more likely than non-indigenous women to die in pregnancy or giving birth. *EurAsia Review* (24 May) <http://www.eurasiareview.com/2010/05/guatemala-health-system-unequipped-to.html>

Guinea: Guinea's government offers free cesareans, but health workers say the initiative does not do much good if families do not have the money or the means to get women to hospitals. But rural communities in the Kissidougou region of southeastern Guinea have found a creative solution that is saving lives. They are called motorcycle ambulances, three-wheeled motorbikes outfitted with small trailers that can carry one health worker and a reclining patient. *VOA News* (25 May) <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/health/Rural-Guinea-Communities-Find-Creative-Ways-to-Fight-Maternal-Deaths-94847499.html>

Philippines: Giving midwives access to further training in life-saving skills could prevent up to 80 percent of maternal deaths in the Philippines, says Rosalie Paje, division chief of the [Family Health Office under the Department of Health](#) (DOH). According to the 2007 UN Development Programme (UNDP) Philippines Mid-Term Progress Report on the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), the number of maternal deaths per 100,000 live births has declined from 209 in 1993 to 162 deaths in 2006, but it is unlikely the MDG 2015 target of a maternal mortality ratio (MMR) of 52 will be met. *IRIN* (26 May)

<http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=89254>

Yemen: There has been some increase in the number of women accessing antenatal healthcare services in Yemen over the past four years, but most mothers still deliver at home and their health situation remains rather bleak, according to new reports from the Ministry of Health and the WHO. The proportion of women benefiting from antenatal healthcare services has increased from 40 to 55 percent over the past four years, according to an 18 May Health Ministry report covering 2006-2010. *Middle East Online* (24 May) <http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=39163>

Refugees and Migrants

Sri Lanka: Floodwaters are starting to recede from the villages they submerged in the districts of Gampaha, Colombo and Kalutara, western Sri Lanka. The official death toll stood at about 20 deaths and 600,000 people forced from their homes. Now, health authorities are warning against possible infections and water-borne diseases, urging people in the affected areas to drink only boiled water. *Spero News* (24 May)

<http://www.speroforum.com/site/article.asp?id=33490&t=Sri+Lanka%3A+++High+risk+for+infectious+diseases+and+epidemics+in+flood+aftermath>

USA: State plans to cut funding to a program that coordinates care for refugees from Myanmar in Indiana who are eligible for Medicaid. This raises concerns that those with serious illnesses such as HIV and hepatitis will go untreated or inundate emergency rooms for care. Budget constraints are forcing the state to end the program that supporters say has increased refugees' willingness to seek care. *Chicago Tribune/Associated Press* (23 May)

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/chi-ap-in-burmeserefugees-h,0,1881232.story>

Sexual and Reproductive Rights

India: New Delhi-based health activist Jaya Velankar says, "the rampant and unscientific use, over-the-counter sales and misleading advertisements on emergency contraceptives like i Pill and Unwanted-72 have raised huge health concerns for young women (taking these pills)." Emergency Contraceptives, also known as 'curb abortion' and 'morning-after' pills, contain high concentrations of hormones, usually levonorgestrel or estrogen. They have about eight to 10 times more estrogen compared to a regular contraceptive pill and thus are known to pose serious health risks to women, especially when taken in high doses. *IPS* (21 May)

<http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=51529>

USA: The American Academy of Pediatrics has rescinded a controversial policy statement raising the idea that doctors in some communities should be able to substitute demands for female genital mutilation with a harmless clitoral "pricking" procedure. "We retracted the policy because it is important that the world health community understands the AAP is totally opposed to all forms of female genital cutting, both here in the U.S. and anywhere else in the world," said AAP President Judith S. Palfrey. *CNN* (27 May)

<http://www.cnn.com/2010/HEALTH/05/27/AAP.retracts.female.genital.cutting/>

Violence Against Women

Pakistan: Experts at a seminar recently said that violence against women in Pakistan has reached an endemic level that is due to women's marginalised social status and a long established pattern of active suppression of women's rights by society. *The News International* (15 May)

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/print1.asp?id=239263>

Timor-Leste: Earlier this month, Timor-Leste approved its first domestic violence law, eight years after it was initially drafted. The legislature voted overwhelmingly in favor of the law, with 30 votes in favor and three abstentions. *Ms Magazine* (14 May)

<http://www.ms magazine.com/news/uswirestory.asp?ID=12400>

Courses and Conferences

Second International Conference on Violence in the Health Sector

27 – 29 October 2010, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

This conference targets concrete and sustainable initiatives, projects, and research aimed at combating violence in the health sector. Preliminary programme now available.

To access the programme, visit: <http://www.oudconsultancy.nl/Violence-Healthsector/violence/preliminaryprogr.html>

Training Course: Coordination of Multi-Sectoral Response to Gender-Based Violence in Humanitarian Settings

1 – 12 November 2010, Ghent, Belgium.

This course is specifically designed to train qualified GBV professionals from various backgrounds in the coordination of multi-sectoral prevention of and response to GBV in humanitarian settings.

Application deadline: 1 June 2010. For more information, contact Anke Van Vossole at anke.vanvossole@ugent.be

International Conference 2010: Advancing Quality through Partnerships of Health Professions Education and Health Services Institutions

13-17 November, 2010, Kathmandu, Nepal

The aim of the Conference is to foster partnership of institutions for health professions education and health services, and to advance quality of the education and the services. Participating institutions and members seek partners based on compatibility of their own institutional objectives and discuss on establishing strong partnerships that will interface education and services so that quality on their outputs can be achieved. For more information visit: <http://www.the-networktufh.org/conference/default.asp>

Educating the Youth on HIV/AIDS & Women Empowerment

1-4 June 2010 in U.S.A and 7 -11 June 2010 in The Netherlands

<http://www.unitedyouthallianceforvictory.info/>

BIT's 1st Annual World Congress of Forensics 2010: From Evidence to Verdict

21 - 23 October 2010, Dalian, China.

This event focuses on bringing together forensic experts primarily working in the field of forensic medicine, toxicology, forensic pathology, forensic science, criminology, forensic psychiatry and other allied subjects. For more information, visit:

<http://www.bitlifesciences.com/wcf2010>

2010 National Sexual Assault Conference

1 – 3 September 2010, Los Angeles, USA

For more information, visit: <http://www.calcasa.org/nsac>

Vacancies

Nursing & Midwifery Coordinator

Aga Khan University (AKU) Kabul, Afghanistan Closing date:
May 31, 2010 For more information visit: <http://www.awid.org/eng/Jobs/Jobs-Around-the-World/Nursing-Midwifery-Coordinator>

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