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## AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

### NEWS FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

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#### Amnesty International Reports & Statements:

**4 August:** A new report, *In the waiting room: Internally displaced people in Georgia*, documents how thousands of people displaced during the conflicts struggle to access basic services including health. <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/report/georgian-government-must-secure-future-displaced-2010-08-04>

**29 July: Global:** AI has called on all UN members to uphold the rights to water and sanitation, after the General Assembly voted in favour of recognizing the rights. The resolution was supported by 122 countries while 41 countries abstained from voting and none voted against. <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/states-urged-support-rights-water-and-sanitation-2010-07-29>

**28 July: Japan:** AI has condemned the executions of two Japanese men in the first death sentences carried out since the country's new government came to power last year. Executions in Japan are by hanging and are typically carried out in secret. Death row inmates are only notified on the morning of their execution and their families are usually informed only after the execution has taken place. This means that prisoners live in constant fear of execution. Enduring these conditions for years or even decades has led to depression and mental illness among death row inmates. <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/japan-executions-two-men-condemned-2010-07-28>

**27 July: Greece:** A new report, *Greece: Irregular migrants and asylum-seekers routinely detained in substandard conditions*, documents their treatment, many of whom are held in poor conditions in borderguard stations and immigration detention centres with no or limited access to legal, social and medical aid. <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/report/greece-must-stop-treating-migrants-criminals-2010-07-27>

**23 July: USA:** AI welcomes groundbreaking legislation in the USA, which addresses the disturbing rates of acts of sexual violence committed with impunity against American Indian and Alaska Native women. The Tribal Law and Order Act, which was passed by the US House of Representatives, aims to address public safety issues in Indian territories. <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/landmark-us-legislation-addresses-sexual-violence-against-native-women-2010-07-23>

## Children

**India:** Activists dealing with child and youth issues claim that sexual harassment in schools is alarmingly on the rise. *Times of India* (26 July)  
<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/hyderabad/Sexual-harassment-in-schools-on-the-rise/articleshow/6216544.cms>

**Niger:** About 900,000 children in the West African state of Niger are on the brink of malnutrition, according to the UN. The UN's World Food Programme is calling for urgent help to get food aid to areas in the country that have suffered years of failed crops due to drought. Charity organisations operating in Niger are providing food aid to many, but some say they can't help out thousands of people due to insufficient funds. Video available. *AlJazeera* (3 August)  
<http://english.aljazeera.net/news/europe/2010/08/20108384431807632.html>

**Sudan:** A Sudanese rebel group has signed a deal allowing access to its bases to ensure children are not being used as soldiers and to protect them from sexual violence, the United Nations said. *CNN International* (22 July)  
<http://edition.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/africa/07/22/sudan.rebels.children.deal/#fbid=mmfstZ-yjFK>

## Food Security and Poverty

**Pakistan:** The United Nations warned that a food shortage could threaten the lives of thousands of people trapped in floodwater in north-western Pakistan. Amjad Jamal, a spokesman for World Food Program, said at least 1.8 million people urgently need regular food supplies. *The Wall Street Journal* (4 August)  
<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704741904575409193496744622.html>

**West Africa:** The 2010 rainy season in West Africa has opened with hail storms in Guinea and the heaviest rain in 50 years in northern Chad. Floods have killed at least 80 people and destroyed homes, bridges, septic tanks, livestock, crops and food stocks; dams have broken, and wells and latrines and have been submerged. The floods come as communities across West Africa are facing food shortages and livestock losses, with aid agencies providing emergency care to tens of thousands of severely malnourished children. *IRIN* (2 August)  
<http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=90046>

## HIV and AIDS

**China:** China's Health Ministry has detailed a plan to fight co-infection of HIV and tuberculosis (TB). A ministry circular to health authorities across China said tuberculosis infection had become one of the leading causes of death among people living with HIV. *Xinhua* (3 August)  
[http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2010-08/03/c\\_13428432.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2010-08/03/c_13428432.htm)

**Global:** A United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) report has highlighted the world's failure to include women in decision-making in the HIV and AIDS response, despite a significant rise in the epidemic among women. *Jamaica Observer* (2 August) [http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/Women-s-voices-silent-in-HIV-Aids-decision-making---UNIFEM\\_7842264](http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/Women-s-voices-silent-in-HIV-Aids-decision-making---UNIFEM_7842264) Report at: [http://www.unifem.org/materials/item\\_detail.php?ProductID=177](http://www.unifem.org/materials/item_detail.php?ProductID=177)

**Global:** Drug policies based on ideology rather than science are fuelling human rights abuses of drug users, according to a panel of experts speaking at last week's 18th International AIDS Conference which took place in Vienna, Austria. Violations of physical and legal rights coupled with poor outcomes mar many countries' drug treatment programmes, which can include forced labour or exercise and prison-like conditions. *AidsMap* (27 July) <http://www.aidsmap.com/page/1497482/>

**Kenya:** Research has shown that four out of five HIV-positive people are being ostracised by the wider community. And in a country where an estimated 1.4 million people aged between 15 to 64 years are infected with HIV, it represents widespread human rights violations. It is something human rights organisations in the country are looking to change by calling for the implementation of the AIDS tribunal which was gazetted in December 2009. It is expected to seek legal redress for past injustices against people living with HIV. *IPS* (3 August) <http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=52368>

## Malaria, TB and Other Diseases

**Cameroon:** Cholera has killed at least 94 people in northern Cameroon and is spreading, in what health officials say is the most severe outbreak in years. *IRIN* (3 August) <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=90056>

## Maternal and Infant Mortality

**Africa:** The recent AU Summit in Kampala has brought to light the shocking lack of readily available health services for women in Africa, endangering women's well-being and resulting in tragically high numbers of women dying in childbirth, writes Irūngū Houghton. Houghton (of Oxfam Pan Africa) brings the statistics into focus, and scrutinises both government and society in the facilitation of a failure in the battle for gender equality and the right to reliable health care for all on the continent. <http://www.pambazuka.org/en/category/panafrican/66283>

**Kenya:** The Kenya Obstetrics and Gynaecological Society of Kenya (KOGS) is pushing for the registration of the drug known as misoprostol, often referred to by the brand name Cytotec, which they argue could be very effective in controlling postpartum haemorrhage, particularly in limited-resource settings. *IPS* (4 August) <http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=52385>

**Indonesia:** The Indonesian government announced it would fund deliveries performed by skilled birth attendants for three million poor women in 2011 in a bid to reduce the maternal mortality rate. *IRIN* (2 August) <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=90034>

## Mental Health

**USA:** The Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) has recognized that it's not just events during combat that can cause post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), but any number of the horrors of war. It is a much-needed change that brings the DVA up-to-date not just with the current medical research, but with the nature of modern warfare, in which violence extends far beyond the combat zone. To qualify for PTSD related benefits soldiers no longer have to prove that they went through a specific combat event. But there is another cause of trauma that should be added to that list: the witnessing or participation in detainee abuse. *AlterNet* (22 July)

[http://www.alternet.org/world/147605/%22we\\_live\\_with\\_ghosts\\_and\\_demons%22%3A\\_soldiers\\_w\\_ho\\_took\\_part\\_in\\_torture\\_suffer\\_from\\_severe\\_ptsd](http://www.alternet.org/world/147605/%22we_live_with_ghosts_and_demons%22%3A_soldiers_w_ho_took_part_in_torture_suffer_from_severe_ptsd)

## Prisons and Detention Centres

**Global:** HIV spreads from prisons to the wider population because of misguided policies in most countries, the chief UN expert on torture, Manfred Nowak, said. Nowak called on governments to distribute condoms and adopt needle exchange and drug substitution programmes for detainees. *Sify News* (23 July) <http://sify.com/news/prisons-act-as-hiv-incubators-un-official-news-international-khxskchhjcg.html>

**South Africa:** South Africa has one of the worst TB rates in the world, and in 2008 reported over 6,000 cases of multi-drug-resistant TB. Prevalence of TB in overcrowded prisons mirrors that of overcrowded communities and the failure to address TB in one setting jeopardizes efforts to combat TB in the other. The maxim, "good prison health is good community health" highlights the fact that prisoners - and prison officials - return to their communities daily, making the idea of a separation of prison and public health concerns a myth. *Human Rights Watch* (23 July) <http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2010/07/23/hiv-and-tb-prison-crisis-southern-africa>

## Sexual and Reproductive Rights

**UK:** Female circumcision will be inflicted on up to 2,000 British schoolgirls during the summer holidays – leaving brutal physical and emotional scars. Yet there have been no prosecutions against the practice. Video available. *The Guardian* (25 July) <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2010/jul/25/female-circumcision-children-british-law>

**USA:** Proposed legislation would aid females fleeing gender-based persecution gain asylum in United States. *Voice of America* (27 July) <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/usa/New-Law-Aims-to-Help-Immigrant-Women--99326074.html>

## Violence against Women

**Kenya:** According to the Nairobi Women's hospital, one person is raped every thirty minutes in Kenya. Sexual violence leaves many women fearful for their lives. However, many are discovering a way to fight back. *Media Global* (1 August) <http://mediaglobal.org/article/2010-08-01/women-in-kenya-fight-back-against-sexual-violence>

**UK:** A lack of specialist medics to care for rape victims could be hampering conviction rates, doctors believe. *BBC News* (31 July) <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-10820667>

## Water and Sanitation

**Indonesia:** Like many big cities in the developing world, the city of Jakarta, with a population of nine million people, is struggling to provide clean water to all its residents. In some poor neighbourhoods international organizations are trying to help, but, their impact is minimal because the infrastructure problems are so complex and expensive to fix. *VOA News* (4 August) <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/asia/Jakarta-Struggles-to-Provide-Clean-Water-to-All-99487644.html>

**Mexico:** Nearly 1.3 million Mexican residents don't have running water in Mexico City, the nation's capital, a university study has revealed. *CNN* (4 August) <http://www.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/americas/08/04/mexico.water.supply/index.html>

**Pakistan:** Fears are growing about outbreaks of disease among up to 2.5 million people affected by floods in Pakistan that have killed up to 1,500 people in the northwest. Officials warned on Monday that a lack of drinking water is spreading disease, including cholera. *Al-Jazeera* (3 August) <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/asia/2010/08/201082201748673899.html>

## **Courses and Conferences**

**Human Rights Education Associates (HREA)** has several introductory e-courses on human rights issues, such as Rights of Refugees and Displaced Persons. The introductory e-courses are an addition to the specialised (11-week) distance learning courses, offered since 2002, and the short (6-week) certificate courses that HREA started offering in May. The introductory e-courses are primarily intended for those who want a quick introduction into a human rights-related topic through readings and rich multimedia, including videos and podcasts. For more information about short and specialised distance learning courses offered by HREA, please visit: <http://www.hrea.org/courses/>.

### **Health and Human Rights Course by HREA and Human Rights Centre of the UN Mandate University for Peace**

18 October-28 November 2010, 11am-12pm. This short certificate course jointly organised by HREA and the Human Rights Centre of the UN Mandated University for Peace introduces participants to the doctrinal, actual and policy related linkages between health and human rights, and the contemporary challenges associated with them.

Register: [http://www.hrea.org/index.php?base\\_id=795&language\\_id=1](http://www.hrea.org/index.php?base_id=795&language_id=1)

**The 2nd International Conference on the Survivors of Rape**, 30 September – 2 October 2010, Utrecht, The Netherlands.

The aim of the conference is to discuss rape-related issues with practitioners and researchers from all around the world as a consciously multidisciplinary effort. Registration is now open. For more information, visit:

<http://www.umcutrecht.nl/subsite/ConferenceOnRape/>

### **International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies (ISTSS) 26TH ANNUAL MEETING**

4-6 November, 2010 Montreal, Quebec, Canada

The ISTSS Annual Meeting is a unique opportunity to learn the latest in traumatic stress research, hear about clinical insights and innovations, earn continuing education credits, and network with colleagues. For more information: <http://www.istss.org//AM/Template.cfm?Section=Home1>

### **First Global Symposium on Health Systems Research**

16-19 November 2010 Montreux, Switzerland.

WHO and partners are pleased to announce the First Global Symposium on Health Systems Research (HSR) - *Science to Accelerate Universal Health Coverage*. Researchers, policy-makers, funders, and other stakeholders representing diverse constituencies will gather in Montreux, Switzerland to share evidence, identify significant knowledge gaps, and set a research agenda that reflects the needs of low and middle-income countries.

For more information: <http://www.hsr-symposium.org/>

**Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO) and WHO** offer a new basic E-Learning course on Health and Human Rights. English Version available online at: <http://bit.ly/cLA1Hy>

## **Publications**

Adams K. Zimbabwe's health system is beginning to function again. *BMJ* 2010;341:c4211 (4 Aug) [http://www.bmj.com/cgi/content/extract/341/aug04\\_3/c4211](http://www.bmj.com/cgi/content/extract/341/aug04_3/c4211)

Botting M, et al (2010), 'Water and sanitation infrastructure for health: The impact of foreign aid', *Globalization and Health*, 6:12  
<http://www.globalizationandhealth.com/registration/technical.asp?process=default&msg=ce>.

JAMA Special Thematic Issue on Violence and Human Rights: [Vol. 304, No. 5, 4 August, 2010](http://jama.ama-assn.org/).  
<http://jama.ama-assn.org/>

Singh J et al (2010), 'Shared Principles of Ethics for Infant and Young Child Nutrition in the Developing World', *BMC Public Health*. Available online at: <http://bit.ly/97zsK6>

May J. et al (3 August) 'Health Care for Prisoners in Haiti'. *Annals of Internal Medicine*, 153 (3)  
<http://www.annals.org/content/early/2010/08/02/0003-4819-153-6-201009210-00270.full?aimhp>

*World Policy Journal* Special Thematic Issue: Prevent and Cure, Volume 27, Issue 2 - Summer 2010. Available free online at: <http://bit.ly/b1exlc>

Jürgens R. et al (7 August 2010), 'People who use drugs, HIV, and human rights', *The Lancet*, 376 (9739): 475 - 485, <http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736%2810%2960830-6/abstract>

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