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## AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWS FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

AI Bulletin Vol 7 No. 1, 16 January 2004  
AI Index: ACT 84/001/2004

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### Summary

- **AI reports & statements**
- **Asylum/refugee issues**
- **Death penalty**
- **HIV/AIDS**
- **Organ trade**
- **Right to health**
- **Torture**
- **Violence against women**
- **"War on terror"**
- **Vacancies**
- **Publications**

### Amnesty International reports and statements

See the following recent AI news releases [dates given in day/monthly/year format]. These and other links can be found at <http://web.amnesty.org/news/engindex>

16/01/2004 [Sierra Leone: Commitments to the Special Court must remain firm and not falter](#) AFR 51/002/20041  
15/01/2004 [Haiti: International day of solidarity with the Haitian people](#) AMR 36/002/2004  
15/01/2004 [Lebanon: Decision to execute three men on Saturday must be immediately revoked](#) MDE 18/002/2004  
14/01/2004 [Singapore: High execution rate shrouded in secrecy](#) ASA 36/002/2004  
13/01/2004 [Zimbabwe: Unlawful suppression of independent media](#) AFR 46/001/2004  
12/01/2004 [Burundi: Donors must fund human rights protection](#) AFR 16/004/2004  
12/01/2004 [Cuba: Further bans on freedom of expression](#) AMR 25/003/2004  
09/01/2004 [Syria: Kurdish prisoners of conscience must be immediately released](#) MDE 24/002/2004  
09/01/2004 [UK/USA: Clarify fate of Britons held in Guantánamo Bay](#) EUR 45/001/2004  
08/01/2004 [Haiti: Killings can and must be stopped](#) AMR 36/001/2004  
07/01/2004 [Morocco/Western Sahara: Pardon of dozens of political prisoners is positive step](#) MDE 29/002/2004  
07/01/2004 [Sudan: Killings, abductions of children and arbitrary detention in Darfur](#) AFR 54/005/2004  
07/01/2004 [Viet Nam: Death penalty - a dirty secret](#) ASA 41/003/2004  
06/01/2004 [Morocco: Ali Lmrabet must be immediately released](#) MDE 29/001/2004  
06/01/2004 [USA/Guantánamo: holding human rights hostage](#) AMR 51/005/2004

### Asylum/refugee issues

**Afghanistan.** *The BBC* reported that seven Afghan asylum-seekers on hunger strike in Indonesia have pledged to continue their protest until they are recognised as refugees (11 January). Most of the group of which the hunger strikers are a part have tried to gain entry into Australia. See: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/3386535.stm>

**Australia.** A group of Australian specialists hoping to fly to Nauru on 19 January to independently assess the health of asylum seekers on the Pacific island now are uncertain of going. Psychiatrist Louise Newman, the convenor of the Alliance of Health Professionals for Asylum Seekers, said Nauruan Finance Minister Kinza Clodumar had expressed support for the mission, see *news.com.au*, 13 January --

[http://www.news.com.au/common/story\\_page/0,4057,8381403%255E1702,00.html](http://www.news.com.au/common/story_page/0,4057,8381403%255E1702,00.html). However a report a few days later suggested that the doctors said it had suspended its trip to Nauru, after the country's director of medical services Kieren Keke withdrew his invitation for them to assess the health care of asylum seekers on the island. Nauru denied banning the doctors according to the press report. See the *Sydney Morning Herald* report (16 January): <http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2004/01/15/1073877938601.html>.

## Death penalty

**Lebanon.** Lebanon to execute three in first imposition of death penalty since 1998. *EU Business* reports that Lebanon is preparing to execute three convicted murderers in the country's first imposition of the death penalty since 1998, a judicial source said Thursday. An order to carry out the executions on Saturday was signed by Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri and Justice Minister Bahej Tabbara despite opposition from human rights groups and a number of foreign governments. The European Union, in a statement, reacted swiftly with an expression of "dismay" and called on President Lahoud to reverse the decision to reinstate the death penalty. (15 January) See: <http://www.eubusiness.com/afp/040115191438.1wm1u0ld>. (See also the related press release in the AI documents section above.)

**Mexico/USA.** World Court hears Mexico's case against the US on death penalty in connection with denial of consular access to Mexican prisoners on death row. (24 December 2004) See: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=9315&Cr=icj&Cr1=>

**Philippines** will execute its first convicts this month since lifting a nearly four-year moratorium on the death penalty, a corrections official said according to *inq7.net* (6 January) See:

[http://www.inq7.net/brk/2004/jan/06/brkpol\\_10-1.htm](http://www.inq7.net/brk/2004/jan/06/brkpol_10-1.htm)

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo said on 8 January that two death row convicts would be executed at the end of the month to teach kidnapping gangs currently plaguing the country a lesson. (8 January) See: [http://www.inq7.net/brk/2004/jan/08/brkpol\\_8-1.htm](http://www.inq7.net/brk/2004/jan/08/brkpol_8-1.htm)

**USA.** More than a year after the American Bar Association overwhelmingly passed guidelines to raise the quality of defense counsel in death penalty cases, no state has adopted the standards and the ABA continues to voice concern that trials are proceeding under a system that is desperately broken reported *National Law Journal* (5 January). See: <http://www.deathpenaltyinfo.org/article.php?did=837&scid=64>

**USA.** *The Associated Press* provided a description of the struggle to execute Ohio death row inmate Lewis Williams on 14 January, and for the first time, witnesses saw members of the execution team insert the needles that will deliver the lethal drugs into an inmate's arms. See: *Toledo Blade* (15 January) <http://www.toledoblade.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20040115/NEWS24/101150141>

**USA.** Support for the death penalty remains very strong in the United States, even though almost everyone believes that innocent people are sometimes convicted of murder, and only a minority believes it is a deterrent reports a Harris Poll (7 January). See: [http://www.harrisinteractive.com/harris\\_poll/index.asp?PID=431](http://www.harrisinteractive.com/harris_poll/index.asp?PID=431)

**USA.** The European Union has written to the Governor of Arkansas saying that the execution of a mentally ill man on 6 January was contrary to international human rights standards. See *Lancet* (17 January) <http://www.thelancet.com/journal/vol363/iss9404/full/lan.363.9404.news.28412.1>

## HIV/AIDS

**India.** The announcement by India's health minister on the eve of world AIDS day in December that from 1 April 2004 the government will provide free antiretroviral drugs to 100 000 HIV positive people in six states with high prevalence of the infection has left the bureaucracy and AIDS experts confused and in a state of shock, reported the *BMJ*. (10 January)

See: <http://bmj.bmjournals.com/cgi/content/full/328/7431/70-f>

**Libya/Bulgaria.** The European Union has made representations to Libya over the trial in Libya of six Bulgarian medical workers who are accused of spreading AIDS in a hospital, *EU Business* reports Bulgaria's foreign minister said on 14 January. See:

<http://www.eubusiness.com/afp/040114102803.0nk2sse5> see also

[http://www.news.com.au/common/story\\_page/0,4057,8368453%255E2,00.html](http://www.news.com.au/common/story_page/0,4057,8368453%255E2,00.html)

**South Africa.** *The BBC* reported that a bigamist from South Africa who admitted infecting a woman with HIV has been jailed for six years. (12 January)

See: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/merseyside/3389735.stm>

**Swaziland.** *The Bangkok Post* reports that AIDS workers in one of the world's most highly infected nations are worried about an influx of the controversial Thai product Immunitor V1, claimed by some as a miracle cure for HIV and AIDS. The Thai company claimed it had nothing to do with the appearance of Immunitor in Swaziland, where about 40% of citizens are infected by HIV/AIDS and the government has taken little action to combat the virus (4 January) See:

[http://www.bangkokpost.com/040104\\_News/04Jan2004\\_news06.html](http://www.bangkokpost.com/040104_News/04Jan2004_news06.html). [This link may not work. We have been unable to connect with the Post archives today]

## Organ trade

**India.** The crime branch rescued a 25-year-old man on Friday who was allegedly abducted by four men involved in organ trade. The arrested men attempted to extort money from Jai Kumar Thakur, and threatened to sell away his kidney if he failed to pay Rs 80,000 reported the *Times of India* (10 January). See: <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/415151.cms>

**UK.** A man who put his kidney up for sale to help his handicapped daughter is planning to go to the USA to meet three people who have offered to buy it, reported *the BBC* (2 January) See:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/kent/3364335.stm>

## Right to health

**Israel.** According to a new report released (22 December 2003) by *B'Tselem* and *Physicians for Human Rights*, the IDF violates the right of residents of the Occupied Territories to obtain medical treatment. The security claims cited to justify this violation are dubious. See:

[http://www.btselem.org/English/Press\\_Releases/2003/031222.asp](http://www.btselem.org/English/Press_Releases/2003/031222.asp)

**Nigeria.** The planet could become polio-free by the end of the year, under plans outlined by health ministers from the six remaining polio-endemic countries at an emergency meeting on 15 January. However there is an obstacle in Nigeria where religious leaders in northern states are suspicious of the vaccine because the vaccination program is supported by the USA. See the *Nature* report (16 January): <http://www.nature.com/nsu/040112/040112-13.html>. See also the WHO poliomyelitis page: [http://www.who.int/health\\_topics/poliomyelitis/en/](http://www.who.int/health_topics/poliomyelitis/en/)

**Zimbabwe.** *AllAfrica* reported that action is needed to aid mentally ill. "The mentally ill people of Zimbabwe are not recognised in term of social care and support systems, so there has never been a budget for them" the web-site report said. (5 January) See:

<http://allafrica.com/stories/200401050673.html>

## Torture

**Algeria.** NGO informs UN on Human rights violations in southern Algeria. The Sweden-based Association for the Defense of the Population Sequestered in Tindouf (ADESETI) informed the UN on human rights breaches and violations against people sequestered in Tindouf camps (southwestern Algeria). (14 January) See: <http://www.arabicnews.com/ansub/Daily/Day/040114/2004011426.html>

**Azerbaijan.** More than 100 people were tortured by Azerbaijani law enforcers in 2003, a report by an NGO, called the Committee to Prevent Torture, has said. Committee chairman Elcin Behbudov said that more than 10 women had been tortured. "One of those detained for their part in the mass disturbances [following the presidential elections] on 15 and 16 October has [also] died of torture," he added. (12 January) Reported *Bilik Dunyasi news agency*, Russia

**Bulgaria.** The European Committee for the Prevention of Torture visited Bulgaria from 16 to 22 December, visiting institutions for men, women and children with mental disabilities. See the CPT press release (6 January) See: <http://www.cpt.coe.int/documents/bgr/2004-01-06-eng.htm>

**China.** A former deputy mayor who said he was tortured into confessing to corruption jumped to his death from a prison building, according to state media and a human rights monitoring center. The prisoner claimed at his 1998 trial that he was tortured into confessing, according to human rights groups. Torture is illegal in China, but defense lawyers say it is used by unskilled investigators under pressure to crack cases, reported *SFGate.com*. See:

<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/news/archive/2004/01/13/international0922EST0497.DTL>

**India.** The founder of a separatist rebel army from north-eastern India says he was tortured after his capture last month *The BBC* reported. (5 January) See: [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south\\_asia/3369615.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/3369615.stm)

**Kenya.** In a report released last month by *Independent Medical Legal Unit*, (IMLU), a Nairobi based non-governmental organisation, torture cases for the year 2003, are shown to have almost tripled compared to the preceding year, 2002. (12 January) See: <http://allafrica.com/stories/200401120474.html>

**Mexico.** According to Reuters Alertnet a new report released last week by the human rights watchdog, the National Human Rights Commission, found a peasant woman's rights were violated in a shoddy military investigation of her allegations of rape by military officers (8 January). See: <http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/N06150483.htm>

## Violence Against Women

**Afghanistan.** Noeleen Heyzer, head of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) says in an interview that the current security situation in Afghanistan is the main obstacle to implementing the new constitution, which the traditional national assembly (Loya Jirga) approved last week. The new constitution states clearly that "citizens of Afghanistan" are both men and women, who have full and equal rights and duties before the law. See: <http://www.ipsnews.net/africa/interna.asp?idnews=21918>

**Spain.** *The Daily Telegraph* reports that a prominent Muslim cleric was sentenced to 15 months in prison for writing a book advising men on how best to beat their wives without leaving tell-tale marks on their bodies. The judgement came after a three-year legal battle by human rights activists to bring the man to justice after he claimed that the message of his book had been misrepresented by the Spanish media (15 January) See: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2004/01/15/wmusl15.xml&sSheet=/portal/2004/01/15/ixportal.html>

**USA.** The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is planning to develop an online resource center aimed at preventing violence against women later this year and is seeking an organization that already manages an online collection to implement it, reported *GCN.com* (8 January). See: [http://gcn.com/vol1\\_no1/daily-updates/24593-1.html](http://gcn.com/vol1_no1/daily-updates/24593-1.html)

## "War on terror"

**Guantanamo.** Reuters reports that the USA has held three child detainees at its military base in Guantanamo Bay for more than a year and the Pentagon says it has no plans to move or free them, despite international pressure. A defence official said doctors estimated the boys were 13-15 years old and were deemed "enemy combatants" along with about 660 prisoners being held at the base in Cuba (16 January). See:

<http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2004/01/16/1073878008032.html?from=storyrhs>

## Vacancies

### **MDAC Guardianship Project Coordinator.**

The Mental Disability Advocacy Center (MDAC) seeks a Project Coordinator to lead a multi-country research project on adult guardianship/incapacity. Based in MDAC's headquarters in Budapest, the successful person will be responsible for implementing a major project in a number of different countries across Europe. The person will be guided by an international project advisory board, and will be supervised by MDAC staff. The person will recruit, manage and monitor ten in-country researchers as well as edit their work. The Mental Disability Advocacy Center (MDAC) is an international non-governmental organization that promotes and protects the human rights of people with mental health problems and intellectual disabilities across central and eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union and central Asia. MDAC works to improve the quality of life for people with mental disabilities through litigation, research and international advocacy. MDAC has consultative status at the *Council of Europe* and is a cooperating organization of the *International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights*.

12-month contract, with a possibility of extension. Job available from 15 March 2004. To apply, send - in English - a covering letter, CV, an unedited writing sample and contact details of three referees to [applications@mdac.info](mailto:applications@mdac.info) Deadline: **9 February 2004**.

## Publications

Attaran A et al. WHO, the Global Fund, and medical malpractice in malaria treatment. *Lancet* 2004; 363: 237-40.(criticising the Global Fund and WHO policy on the provision of anti-malaria medication.) [http://www.thelancet.com/journal/vol363/iss9404/full/llan.363.9404.editorial\\_and\\_review.28398.1](http://www.thelancet.com/journal/vol363/iss9404/full/llan.363.9404.editorial_and_review.28398.1)

Judah T. The fog of justice. *New York Review of Books* 15 January 2004.(discussing justice in former Yugoslavia). <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/16875>

Samiran Panda, Anindya Chatterjee, Abu S Abdul-Quader, eds. *Living with the AIDS Virus: The Epidemic and the Response in India*. New Delhi: Sage Publications India Pvt, 2003. Pp 204.ISBN 0 761 99622 2. See the review at: [http://www.thelancet.com/journal/vol363/iss9403/full/llan.363.9403.dissecting\\_room.28289.1](http://www.thelancet.com/journal/vol363/iss9403/full/llan.363.9403.dissecting_room.28289.1)

Reproductive health and human rights (series of articles). [http://www.thelancet.com/journal/vol363/iss9402/editorial\\_and\\_review](http://www.thelancet.com/journal/vol363/iss9402/editorial_and_review)

Smith-Estelle A, Gruskin S. Vulnerability to HIV/STIs among rural women from migrant communities in Nepal: a health and human rights framework. *Reproductive Health Matters* 2003; 11(22): 142-51. Author: [allisonnepal@yahoo.com](mailto:allisonnepal@yahoo.com)

Temme LA. Ethics in human experimentation: the two military physicians who helped develop the Nuremberg Code. *Aviat Space Environ Med*. 2003 Dec; 74(12): 1297-300. Author: [temme@namrl.navy.mil](mailto:temme@namrl.navy.mil)

World Bank. *Health Policy Research in South Asia: Building Capacity for Reform*, New York, 2004.  
Available at:  
<http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/SAR/sa.nsf/General/59570FEA7FBC122185256E1200819F2B> Also see  
*BMJ*: <http://bmj.bmjournals.com/cgi/content/full/328/7432/124-a> (17 January)

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Medical team  
Amnesty International - International Secretariat  
Tel: +44 20 7413 5522  
Fax: +44 20 7956 1157  
<http://www.web.amnesty.org/rmp/hponline.nsf>