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## AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWS FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

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### Amnesty International reports & statements

See the following recent AI news releases [dates given in day/month/year format].

These and other links to news and reports can be found at: <http://web.amnesty.org/news/engindex>

25/03/2004 [Egypt: 26 new prisoners of conscience](#) MDE 12/003/2004  
25/03/2004 [India: Use of excessive force against demonstrators](#) ASA 20/005/2004  
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22/03/2004 [Israel/Occupied Territories: Amnesty International strongly condemns the assassination of Sheikh Yassin](#) MDE 15/029/2004  
19/03/2004 [Equatorial Guinea: Alleged mercenaries and opposition activists at grave risk of torture and death](#) AFR 24/004/2004  
18/03/2004 [African Union: Inauguration of the Pan African Parliament - human rights must be at the basis of any parliamentary activities](#) AFR 01/007/2004  
18/03/2004 [Amnesty International calls for restraint on all sides after attacks in Kosovo and reprisals in Serbia](#) EUR 70/008/2004  
18/03/2004 [Iraq: One year after the war the human rights situation remains critical](#) MDE 14/005/2004

## Children

**Worldwide.** According to UNICEF and the Micronutrient Initiative, up to one in three children around the world are not getting enough vitamins and minerals.suggests.The report calls for urgent action to tackle the problem. The report is available here: <http://www.unicef.org/media/files/vmd.pdf> and the press release here: [http://www.unicef.org/media/media\\_19965.html](http://www.unicef.org/media/media_19965.html). See also the report of the *BBC* (24 March) see: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/3560473.stm>

## Death penalty

**Caribbean.** Hundreds of death row prisoners in Trinidad, Barbados and Jamaica could win a reprieve if an unprecedented privy council hearing beginning in London on 22 March rules that the mandatory death penalty for murder is unconstitutional, reports *The Guardian* (22 March) <http://politics.guardian.co.uk/constitution/story/0,9061,1175058,00.html>

**China.** About 10,000 convicted criminals are sentenced to death and executed in China every year, according to a delegate on National Peoples Congress, according to a report in the *New Zealand Herald* (17 March) <http://www.nzherald.co.nz/storydisplay.cfm?storyID=3555160> See also the AI report on China in the AI news section above.

**Indonesia.** Illegal loggers and corrupt officials who help them plunder vast tracts of virgin tropical forests may face the death penalty under a presidential decree to be issued next month (April), reports *Environmental News Network* (16 March). See: [http://www.enn.com/news/2004-03-16/s\\_14046.asp](http://www.enn.com/news/2004-03-16/s_14046.asp)

**Kenya.** President Kibaki has commuted all death sentences to life imprisonment, reports the *East African Standard* (11 March). It cited the Justice and Constitutional Affairs Ministers Kiraitu Murungi as saying that the Government was determined not to hang anybody, as the punishment was inhuman. See: <http://www.eastandard.net/headlines/news11030410.htm>

**Pakistan.** According to the *BBC*, seven people accused of kidnapping and murder in one of Pakistan's semi-autonomous tribal areas have been executed on the orders of local elders (15 March) See: [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south\\_asia/3514282.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/3514282.stm)

**USA - death penalty: juveniles.** The American Psychiatric Association and the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry have advocated a ban on the execution of juveniles in testimony to three state legislatures in the US. See *Psychiatric News* (19 March): <http://pn.psychiatryonline.org/cgi/content/full/39/6/8>

## HIV/AIDS

**Africa - disclosing HIV status.** USAID and The Synergy Project published (in March) "Women's Experiences with HIV Serodisclosure in Africa: Implications for VCT and PMTC," a report of the meeting on 2 April 2003, that considered gender issues regarding the disclosure of HIV serostatus in sub-Saharan Africa. See: <http://www.synergyaids.com/documents/VCTDisclosureReport.pdf>

**UK - greater awareness needed.** Hard-hitting awareness campaigns are needed to wake up Londoners to the dangers of HIV, says the London Assembly. Its report has found 60% of Britons living with HIV are in London. (17 March) *BBC* See: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/london/3519322.stm>; see also report:[http://www.london.gov.uk/assembly/reports/health/hiv\\_report.pdf](http://www.london.gov.uk/assembly/reports/health/hiv_report.pdf)

**USA - AIDS plan critique.** The U.S. Department of State office of the global AIDS Coordinator released the "President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief: U.S. Five-year Global AIDS Strategy", which outlines the central priorities and policy guidance for spending billions of dollars in U.S. global AIDS funding. The Center for Health and Gender Equity (CHANGE) has conducted an evidence-based analysis of the U.S. Strategy, including the assumptions that underpin the Strategy and the priorities on which programmatic decisions are being made. For the analysis -- *Debunking the Myths in the U.S. Global AIDS Strategy: An Evidence-based Analysis* -- see: <http://www.genderhealth.org/pubs/AIDS5-YearStratAnalysisMar-04.pdf> (23 February)

**South Africa - microbicide trials.** Major human trials of microbicide creams and gels to fight against HIV infection are to start in Africa, where over 26 million people already have the disease, reports *New Scientist* (23 March): <http://www.newscientist.com/news/news.jsp?id=ns99994805>

**Zambia - condom ban.** The Zambian authorities are reported to have banned the distribution of condoms in schools as a measure to counter the spread of Aids. Education Minister Andrew Mulenga said condoms were encouraging young people to have premarital sex, reported the *BBC* (15 March) See: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/3512652.stm>. Prof Nkandu Luo, a former health minister, reportedly condemned the decision as representing "denial".

## Organ trade

**Moldova - kidney trade.** In Edinet, a small town in the north of Moldova, selling a kidney for a fistful of dollars is not an extraordinary act, reports *Le Monde* (25 March, in French). See: 'En Moldavie, le trafic d'organes prospère sur fond d'exploitation de la misère' <http://www.lemonde.fr/web/article/0,1-0@2-3214,36-358336,0.html> . See also: 'Un commerce lucratif aux mains de filières bien organisées' <http://www.lemonde.fr/web/article/0,1-0@2-3214,36-358337,0.html>

**Pakistan.** Following news reports on the illegal and unethical transplant of organs in Lahore, the government announced the formation of a review committee, reports the *Daily Times* (6 March) [http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=story\\_7-3-2004\\_pg7\\_22](http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=story_7-3-2004_pg7_22)

## Prisoners

**Iraq.** Adil Allami, a lawyer with the Human Rights Organization of Iraq, said security detainees had essentially no rights. None have lawyers, and most are denied visits. "Iraq has turned into one big Guantánamo," Mr. Allami said in a *New York Times* article (7 March) <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/03/07/international/middleeast/07DETA.html>

**South Africa.** The South African government is concerned by reports that the risk of infectious diseases was high in prisons as a result of rapes, Health Minister Manto Tshabalala Msimang said on 21 March. She said the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and Aids were reported to be high in prisons, especially among male inmates, because of unsafe sexual behaviour and rape cases that were reported. *Mail&Guardian* (22 March) See: <http://www.mg.co.za/Content/l3.asp?ao=32987>

## Right to health

**Africa.** Progress towards Millennium Development Goals on water and sanitation has been so "lamentably slow" that at the present rate, Africa will take more than 30 years to achieve the water target, and will never achieve the sanitation target, according to UK charity WaterAid, which released a report, *Water and sanitation: the education drain*, on March 22. See: <http://www.thelancet.com/journal/vol363/iss9413/full/lancet.363.9413.news.29066.1> [http://www.wateraid.org.uk/documents/Education\\_Media\\_Report\\_%5B3%5D.pdf](http://www.wateraid.org.uk/documents/Education_Media_Report_%5B3%5D.pdf)

**Northern Ireland - health workers.** *The BBC* reported that more than 5,000 attacks on health workers were recorded last year. More than 5,000 attacks on health and social service workers in Northern Ireland over the past year are "completely unacceptable", the health minister Angela Smith has said. (22 March) See: [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern\\_ireland/3554863.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern_ireland/3554863.stm)

**Papua New Guinea.** A violent raid by Port Moresby police on an alleged brothel on March 11 has galvanised women's groups, community and church organisations and aid workers in a new coalition to call for a public and independent commission to investigate human rights abuses by police and security forces. *Greenleft* (March) See: <http://www.greenleft.org.au/back/2004/576/576p17.htm>

**UK - European Court ruling in UK case.** The European Court of Human Rights has ruled that doctors' action medicating a boy against the wishes of the mother and without a court ruling supporting such medication was in violation of the European Convention on Human Rights. See: <http://www.echr.coe.int/Eng/Press/2004/mar/ChamberJudgmentGlassvUK9304.htm>. The case is also discussed in the *Lancet* (20 March): <http://www.thelancet.com/journal/vol363/iss9413/full/llan.363.9413.news.29071> and *BMJ*: <http://bmj.bmjournals.com/cgi/content/full/328/7441/661>

**UK/Former Soviet Union.** Cases of multiple-drug-resistant tuberculosis in many parts of the former Soviet Union are rising at an alarming rate and pose a global problem, the World Health Organization said on 16 March. Multidrug resistant tuberculosis in parts of eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union is 10 times as common as in most parts of the world, a new report from the World Health Organization said this week. (16 March) The report :[http://www.who.int/tb/publications/global\\_report/en/](http://www.who.int/tb/publications/global_report/en/) see also: <http://bmj.bmjournals.com/cgi/content/full/328/7441/663> and: <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/03/16/health/16TUBE.html>

**USA - freedom of movement.** A number of US scientists have been prevented by the government from attending a scientific congress on coma and death in Cuba. See <http://www.biomedcentral.com/news/20040310/04>

**Worldwide.** A new regular report will monitor important global health issues and the actions of international health institutions, a coalition of three global health networks announced last week. See the statement by Global Health Watch (comprising Global Equity Gauge Alliance, Medact and People's Health Movement) , available at: <http://www.gega.org.za/download/globalhealthwatch.pdf>. See also the *BMJ* report:<http://bmj.bmjournals.com/cgi/content/full/328/7442/728-b>

## Torture

**DRC/Netherlands.** A Dutch court is trying a Congolese man accused of torture during the 1990s. See the *BBC* report (25 March) at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/3564039.stm>. See also the *New York Times* report (25 March): <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/03/25/international/europe/25TRIB.html>

**USA** A critique of the pro-torture argument advanced by the lawyer Alan Dershowitz can be found at *DemocraticUnderground.com* (11 March). See: [http://www.democraticunderground.com/articles/04/03/11\\_torture.html](http://www.democraticunderground.com/articles/04/03/11_torture.html)

**Venezuela.** Venezuelan human rights group Cofavic executive director, Liliana Ortega accuses the Venezuelan Armed Force (FAN) of coordinating torture mechanisms as part of normal training procedures. *VHeadline* (21 March) See: <http://www.vheadline.com/readnews.asp?id=16453>

## Violence against women

**Afghanistan.** According to the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission, 235 women have tried to killed themselves there by self-immolation. Thirty-three have succeeded. Forced marriages

and domestic abuse are seen as the main cause - most of the women are between 15 and 30 years old. (9 March) See: [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south\\_asia/3543147.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/3543147.stm)

**Bangladesh - acid attacks on women.** At least 18 Bangladeshi women in the past week were attacked with acid, with two dying, reported News24 online (24 March), citing the Acid Survivors Foundation. See: [http://www.news24.com/News24/World/News/0,,2-10-1462\\_1502616,00.html](http://www.news24.com/News24/World/News/0,,2-10-1462_1502616,00.html)  
The home page of the Acid Survivors Foundation, Dhaka, can be found at:  
[http://www.acidsurvivors.org/index\\_home.htm](http://www.acidsurvivors.org/index_home.htm)

**Hungary.** A Roma woman who alleges she was sterilised without her consent during an emergency procedure at a Hungarian hospital is taking her case to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. A doctor at the hospital said it was a "strictly a professional decision"; see the *BMJ* report (20 March):  
<http://bmj.bmjournals.com/cgi/content/full/328/7441/662-c>

**Jordan - domestic violence.** Nearly half of Jordanian women suffer physical abuse in the home, a UN report has found. The report *Status of Jordanian Women: Demography, Economic Participation, Political Participation and Violence* [not available on-line] marks the first time that violence against women in Jordan has been statistically analysed. *BBC* (15 March) See:  
[http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle\\_east/3511068.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/3511068.stm)

**Sudan.** More than 100 women have been raped in a single attack carried out by militias in Darfur in western Sudan the United Nations co-ordinator for Sudan, Mukesh Kapila, said in a BBC interview. The conflict had created the worst humanitarian situation in the world he added. (19 March) See:  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/3549325.stm>. See also: Malnutrition reaches alarming level in Darfur, Sudan, <http://bmj.bmjournals.com/cgi/content/full/328/7441/664-c>

**Russia -- anti-trafficking law stalled.** Russia is a major source country for women trafficked to numerous countries around the world for sexual exploitation and a destination country for forced-labour trafficking -- campaigners are pushing for the adoption of an anti-trafficking law, reports the *Lancet* (27 March): <http://www.thelancet.com/journal/vol363/iss9414/full/llan.363.9414.news.29184.1>

**UK/worldwide -- FGM.** Female circumcision is believed to be on the rise in the UK despite a new law to stop girls being sent abroad for operations, according to a BBC report. (24 March)  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/3564203.stm>

## Course

### International Human Rights Academy

This human rights course is organised every year, alternately in South Africa and in Europe, under the auspices of: Ghent University (Belgium), University of the Western Cape (Republic of South Africa), Utrecht University (The Netherlands), Washington College of Law at American University (USA), International Federation of Health and Human Rights Organisations (IFHHRO, the Netherlands). In 2004 the course will be held in the Faculty of Law of Utrecht University from 15 - 28 August 2004. Please note that applications close on 8 April 2004. Some scholarships are available.

The program is available here: <http://www.ifhro.org/main.php?keuze=E9#right> and the application details are available here: <http://www.ifhro.org/main.php?keuze=E13>. Inquiries to: [info@ifhro.org](mailto:info@ifhro.org)

## Vacancies

### The Center for the Study of Human Rights at Columbia University (New York)

Call for applications for the *2004 Human Rights Advocates Program*.

Completed application forms should be submitted no later than 15 April 2004. The 2004 program will take place from September to December.

The 2004 program application form is available on-line at:  
<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/humanrights/training/training.htm>  
For more information, please visit <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/humanrights> or contact  
[hradvocates@columbia.edu](mailto:hradvocates@columbia.edu)

### **Physicians for Human Rights - Health and Justice for Youth Program Associate (Boston)**

Physicians for Human Rights has two openings for Program Associates in their Health and Justice for Youth Project. The project focuses on six key concerns around the protection of health and human rights of youth in the criminal justice system: unhealthy facilities, transfer into the adult system, the juvenile death penalty, mental health needs, the unmet needs of girls, and racial disparities. To apply for either of these post or for further information, send resume and cover letter or query to Barbara Harris at PHR 100 Boylston Street, Suite 702, Boston, MA 02116, e-mail to [resumes@phrusa.org](mailto:resumes@phrusa.org) or fax to 617-695-0307. See also <http://www.phrusa.org>

### **Publications**

The *Lancet* health and human rights section (27 March) contains articles on the WHO '3 by 5' initiative. See:

[http://www.thelancet.com/journal/vol363/iss9414/full/lan.363.9414.health\\_and\\_human\\_rights.29163.1](http://www.thelancet.com/journal/vol363/iss9414/full/lan.363.9414.health_and_human_rights.29163.1)

Amowitz LL et al. Human rights abuses and concerns about women's health and human rights in southern Iraq. *JAMA*. 2004;291:1471-1479. <http://jama.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/abstract/291/12/1471>

Canada's plan to sell generic drugs to developing countries is threatened, *BMJ* 2004;328:728  
<http://bmj.bmjournals.com/cgi/content/full/328/7442/728-d>

Reis C et al. Physician participation in human rights abuses in southern Iraq. *JAMA*.2004;291:1480-1486. See: <http://jama.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/abstract/291/12/1480> see also:<http://www.ajc.com/health/content/shared-auto/healthnews/inju/518044.html>

Ghods AJ, Changing ethics in renal transplantation: presentation of Iran model. Policy of sale of kidneys in Iran, *Transplant Proc*. 2004 Jan-Feb;36(1):11-3  
[http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?cmd=Retrieve&db=pubmed&dopt=Abstract&list\\_uids=15013286](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?cmd=Retrieve&db=pubmed&dopt=Abstract&list_uids=15013286)

Gibson TM, Coker WJ, Medical confidentiality and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection: a hypothetical case, *J R Army Med Corps*. 2003 Dec;149(4):267-73.  
[http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?cmd=Retrieve&db=pubmed&dopt=Abstract&list\\_uids=15015798](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?cmd=Retrieve&db=pubmed&dopt=Abstract&list_uids=15015798)

Guo Su-fang. Domestic abuse on women in China before, during, and after pregnancy. *Chinese Medical Journal* 2004;117(3):331-336, <http://www.cmj.org/information/full.asp?id=1523>

*Illicit Drug Policies and the Global HIV Epidemic: Effects of UN and National Government Approaches*. The "consensus" on drug control is challenged by this Open Society Institute report: See the press release: [http://www.soros.org/initiatives/ihrd/news/drugpolicy\\_20040316](http://www.soros.org/initiatives/ihrd/news/drugpolicy_20040316). The report is available here: [http://www.soros.org/initiatives/ihrd/news/drugpolicy\\_20040316/un\\_illicit\\_20040316.pdf](http://www.soros.org/initiatives/ihrd/news/drugpolicy_20040316/un_illicit_20040316.pdf)

Loue S, The involuntary civil commitment of mentally ill persons in the United States and Romania: a comparative analysis, *Rev Rom Bioet*. 2003 Jan-Mar;1(1):55-88.  
[http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?cmd=Retrieve&db=pubmed&dopt=Abstract&list\\_uids=15011669](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?cmd=Retrieve&db=pubmed&dopt=Abstract&list_uids=15011669)

Rappert B, A framework for the assessment of non-lethal weapons, *Medicine, Conflict, Survival* 2004 Jan-Mar;20(1):35-54. Available online in proof form at: <http://www.ex.ac.uk/~br201/Research/Non-lethalWeapons/201mcs04.pdf>. See the abstract at:

[http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?cmd=Retrieve&db=pubmed&dopt=Abstract&list\\_uids=15015546](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?cmd=Retrieve&db=pubmed&dopt=Abstract&list_uids=15015546)

Reynolds SJ et al. Male circumcision and risk of HIV-1 and other sexually transmitted infections in India. *Lancet* 2004; 363: 1039-40.

[http://www.thelancet.com/journal/vol363/iss9414/full/llan.363.9414.original\\_research.29166.1](http://www.thelancet.com/journal/vol363/iss9414/full/llan.363.9414.original_research.29166.1)

Veerma G, Upshur R, Rea E, Benatar S. Critical reflections on evidence, ethics and effectiveness in the management of tuberculosis: public health and global perspectives. *BMC Medical Ethics* 2004, 5:2 (published 12 March 2004) <http://www.biomedcentral.com/1472-6939/5/2/abstract>

Watts G. Waking governments up to their obligations. *BMJ* 2004;328:730

<http://bmj.bmjournals.com/cgi/content/full/328/7442/730> (Interview with WHO health and human rights advisor, Helena Nygren-Krug)

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