

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWS FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

AI Bulletin Vol.12 No. 22 18 December 2009
AI Index: ACT 84/022/2009

Amnesty International Reports and Statements:

December 18: International: People across the world leave their homes, families and countries in search of work and education, and to escape poverty, discrimination and conflict. Many risk everything, even their lives, for security and a chance to earn a living. At every step, they are vulnerable to exploitation, fraud, and human rights abuses. To mark International Migrants Day, migrants from around the globe have told Amnesty International how they have been exploited, detained and attacked on their search for a better life.

<http://amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/migrants-tell-exploitation-and-detention-20091218>

December 18: Mongolia: The Government of Mongolia has failed to effectively respond to human rights abuses that took place during the July 2008 riot in Sukhbaatar Square, Ulaanbaatar, and its aftermath, leaving a legacy of impunity and injustice, Amnesty International said in a report released on Friday. Amnesty International's report describes how hundreds of people were taken to police detention centres where they were held in over-crowded cells without food or water for up to 72 hours during the riots. Police beat detainees while they were in custody and during interrogations to extract "confessions".

<http://amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/report/impunity-and-injustice-are-legacy-deadly-july-riots-mongolia-20091218>

17 December: Iran: Amnesty International has condemned the execution of an alleged juvenile offender in Iran on Thursday, at least the fifth such execution in 2009. Mosleh Zamani was hanged at Dizel Abad Prison at 4am, along with four other unidentified prisoners.

<http://amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/news/iran-executes-alleged-jvenile-offender-20091217>

15 December: Guatemala: Amnesty International has condemned the failure of the Guatemalan authorities to thoroughly investigate extra-judicial killings in which police officers have been implicated. In a report released on Tuesday, Amnesty International says that killings by police officers, often of young people who have either a criminal record or are suspected of involvement in crime, continue to be reported.

<http://amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/report/allegations-police-killings-guatemala-must-be-investigated-20091215>

11 December: Mexico: The Mexican authorities must protect residents of disputed land who have been intimidated and attacked by the security guards of local landowners who are contesting the ownership of the land, said Amnesty International.

<http://amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/news/mexico-must-protect-residents-disputed-land-20091211>

10 December: International: Women often bear the brunt of poverty and human rights abuses; but as activists they use these roles to trigger positive social change. To mark World Human

Rights Day, Amnesty International spoke to three women who put their lives on the line in defence of human rights.

<http://amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/feature/women-on-the-frontline-for-human-rights-20091210>

9 December: Nigeria: Amnesty International exposed the shocking level of unlawful police killings in Nigeria in a new report released on Wednesday. “The majority of the cases go uninvestigated and the police officers responsible go unpunished. The families of the victims usually get no justice or redress. Most never even find out what happened to their loved ones. Police don’t only kill people by shooting them; they also torture them to death, often while they are in detention.” said Erwin van der Borght, Director of Amnesty International’s Africa Programme.

<http://amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/report/nigerian-police-039kill-will039-20091209>

8 December: Mexico: New evidence of serious human rights violations carried out during military operations to combat organized crime and drug cartels in Mexico has been unveiled in a report published by Amnesty International. In its report, *Mexico: Human rights violations by the military*, Amnesty International accuses the authorities of failing to fully probe allegations of abuses committed by the military, including enforced disappearances, extrajudicial and unlawful killings, torture, ill treatment and arbitrary detentions.

<http://amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/report/mexican-civilian-authorities-must-investigate-pattern-serious-abuses-mili>

8 December: Iraq: Amnesty International has condemned the indiscriminate bomb attacks in Baghdad that killed at least 120 people, many of them civilians, and injured 400 other people on Tuesday. It is not known who carried out the bomb explosions in the Iraqi capital.

<http://amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/indiscriminate-baghdad-attacks-are-war-crime-20091208>

7 December: Sudan: Amnesty International has strongly condemned a violent crackdown by Sudanese security forces on political protests in Khartoum on Monday. The organisation also received reports of those arrested being tortured in detention. More than 200 people, including opposition leaders and human rights activists, were arrested as they gathered in front of the parliament building this morning.

<http://amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/news/sudan-must-end-violent-crackdown-protestors-20091207>

4 December: Iraq: The Iraqi authorities must immediately stop the executions of more than 900 people on death row who have exhausted their legal appeals and could be put to death at any time, Amnesty International said.

<http://amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/news/over-900-people-death-row-iraq-face-imminent-execution-20091204>

Death Penalty:

Uganda: MPs in Uganda will debate a Bill that proposes the death sentence for gay sex under certain conditions. The Bill is being debated despite outrage from gay and human rights activists in Europe and elsewhere. It calls for the death penalty for those having gay sex with anyone

under 18, or while infected with HIV/Aids, or with someone who is disabled, or for being “a serial offender”, or while infected with HIV/Aids, or with someone who is disabled, or for being what the Bill terms “a serial offender”. Stating that “same sex attraction is not an innate and immutable characteristic” the Bill proposes life imprisonment for consensual gay sex. *Times Online* (18 December) <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/africa/article6960920.ece>

Food Security and Poverty:

Central Africa Republic: Farmers across Lobaye complain of falling manioc prices, a lack of basic tools, a shortage of credit and a lack of cooperative structures. Many farmers neglected their fields in favour of the chantiers, the mining areas to dig for diamonds. This has caused severe malnutrition. *IRIN* (18 December) <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=87451>

Cote D'Ivoire: Fewer children suffer acute malnutrition in northern and western Côte d'Ivoire than in recent years, but chronic malnutrition has risen to “critical levels”, says a report by the government and UN. *IRIN* (18 December)

<http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=87492>

Maternal mortality:

Liberia: Liberia’s health authorities say the country’s health sector stands at risk, as maternal and newborn mortality rates rise to a level of 1,000 deaths for every 10,000 births (10 percent). A United Nations listing of 195 countries by infant mortality rate ranks Liberia in the bottom three, with 132 deaths for every 1,000 births and 205 deaths for every 1000 children under the age of five. Statistics for the top three countries with the lowest infant and under-five mortality rates hover at three deaths for every 1,000 births. *Liberian Daily Observer* (18 December) <http://www.liberianobserver.com/node/3524>

Cambodia: New maternal health centres are to be built in a number of Cambodia’s provinces in order to reduce the Kingdom’s high maternal mortality rate, Health Minister Mam Bun Heng announced at a seminar at the National Assembly on Thursday. *Phnom Penh Post* (18 December) <http://www.phnompenhpost.com/index.php/2009121830311/National-news/govt-plans-maternal-health-centres.html>

Africa: Member countries of the East, Central and Southern Africa Health Community (ECSA-HC) have launched a programme to reduce maternal and infant mortality rates through Focused Antenatal Care (FANC). It is a relatively new approach that aims to improve the quality of maternal services by giving more attention to a woman's preparations for childbirth. This includes getting the support she will need from her provider, family and community as well as making arrangements for her newborn. *The Citizen* (17 December) <http://thecitizen.co.tz/newe.php?id=16333>

Malaria, TB, and Other Diseases

Kenya: United Nations humanitarian agencies are providing emergency supplies and other forms of assistance to Kenyan Government officials as they respond to an outbreak of cholera in the northwest of the country that has left at least 26 people dead. *UN News Centre* (17 December)

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=33286&Cr=burundi&Cr1=>

Rwanda: Over 140,000 women and children in 85,000 households in Nyagatare and Gatsibo districts will be supplied long lasting impregnated malaria nets by the United Nations in a bid to fight malaria. This was revealed Thursday during a launch of two campaigns organised by the Ministry of Health (MoH) aimed at improving environmental health and sustain child survival in Rwanda. *The New Times* (18

December)

[http://allafrica.com/stories/200912180039.ht](http://allafrica.com/stories/200912180039.html)

[ml](http://allafrica.com/stories/200912180039.html)

Somalia: In remote northeastern Kenya, poor healthcare, a harsh climate and an ever-growing influx of refugees conspire to make preventable and treatable diseases more deadly than elsewhere in the country. *IRIN* (18 December)

<http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=87449>

Thailand: Researches in Thailand are warning that a drug-resistant strain of malaria is emerging. The developments come as the World Health Organisation announced on Tuesday that increased funding is starting to pay off in the battle against malaria. The WHO said in its World Malaria Report 2009 that "significant progress" had been made in the delivery of mosquito nets and malaria drugs due to an increase in funds totalling \$1.7bn in 2009 from \$0.3bn in 2003. *Al-Jazeera* (16 December) <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/asia-pacific/2009/12/20091216153039190234.html>

South Africa: Researchers and advocates have singled out South Africa's under-staffed and overcrowded prisons as hotbeds for the transmission of HIV and TB, which fuel the country's already rampant epidemics. *Mail and Guardian* (18 December) <http://www.mg.co.za/article/2009-12-18-prison-a-breeding-ground-for-aids-and-tb>

India: Due to lack of co-ordination among various government hospitals in both urban and rural areas, the objective of the district health authorities to detect and identify new tuberculosis patient and to put them on treatment under Revised National Tuberculosis Programme (RNTCP) was unable to reach the target of 70 percent detection of TB, in the year 2009. *The Times of India* (16 December)

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kanpur/HIV-patients-easy-prey-to-tuberculosis/articleshow/5344813.cms>

Refugees and Migrants

UK: Conditions at a privately run immigration removal centre have deteriorated so much that they are now "wholly unacceptable" for women and children, the chief inspector of prisons says today. The results of the unannounced inspection in October published today show that the centre has developed a "more prison-like culture" in the past 18 months and previous fears about the plight of a small number of children and women at this largely male establishment have grown. *The Guardian* (18 December) <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2009/dec/18/tinsley-detention-centre-unacceptable-children>

Prisons:

Republic of Congo: Conditions in the Republic of Congo's prisons are "as dreadful as they could be", according to a report published Thursday by a coalition of rights groups. The Congolese Federation for Human Rights (Fecodho) said prisoners were held in appalling conditions in cramped jails across the central African nation. *AFP* (10 December)

<http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5iKdJjdB7Q4ykT2sPflsoZ0mhyqjQ>

Iran: Iran's jails have a notorious reputation for brutal conditions and harsh interrogation methods that include torture. Now Iranian and international human rights organizations warn that a string of hidden detention sites have been established throughout Tehran and its suburbs by the government of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. *Global Post* (16 December)
<http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/middle-east/091214/iran-prison-torture>

Refugees and Migrants:

Sri Lanka: Progress is being made in clearing landmines to allow internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Sri Lanka's north to return home, but clearance will ultimately be a long-term process with no fixed deadline, agencies say. *IRIN* (18 December)

<http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=87491>

Violence Against Women:

Somalia: The number of reported rapes in camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Bosasso, in Somalia's self-declared autonomous region of Puntland, is increasing and rape has become "a major problem", says a civil society source. *IRIN* (16 December)

<http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=87453>

War crimes:

Adam Hochschild, writing in the *Atlantic Monthly*, discusses the first prosecution in the International Criminal Court -- that of Thomas Lubanga from the DRC. See:

<http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200912/hochschild-war>

Water and Sanitation:

Kenya: Eight years after Dandora, the site of Nairobi's only rubbish dump, was declared full and a health hazard, tons of fuming waste from more than four million city dwellers continue to be added daily, exposing local residents to illness but also profiting a few. *IRIN* (18 December)

<http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=87489>

Conferences and Courses:

Mental Disability Advocacy Center (MDCA) Seeks Board Members

Budapest, Hungary Deadline for Application: 22 January 2010

The MDAC is an international human rights NGO based in Budapest. The mission of MDAC is to advance the rights of children and adults with intellectual disabilities and psycho-social (mental health) disabilities. MDAC's vision is for a world that values emotional, mental and learning differences, and where people respect each others autonomy and dignity. MDAC's work focuses on central and eastern Europe, and the organisation is developing programing in Africa. MDAC is seeking people to join MDAC as Board Members during 2010. We are particularly seeking Board Members with the relevant skills and experience who would be willing to put themselves forward to be considered as Chair or Treasurer from March 2011 onwards. MDAC is particularly interested in receiving applications from persons from the intellectual disabilities community who are currently under-represented on the Board. For Further Information:

http://www.mdac.info/MDAC_seeks_Board_Members.pdf

The Law and Health Initiative (LAHI) of the Open Society Institute (OSI) Public Health Program (PHP). Applications by 8 January 2010. The LAHI seeks an experienced evaluator to lead an evaluation of LAHI's grant-making, capacity building, advocacy, convening, and fund leveraging activities from 2006-2010, and to make recommendations for LAHI's next strategy cycle from 2011-2015. Inquiries and applications to lawandhealth@sorosny.org

Publications:

Phillips, Christine B, 'Immigration Detention and Health' *The Medical Journal of Australia* 14 December 2009. Available online at:

http://www.mja.com.au/public/issues/192_02_180110/phi11170_fm.html

Janette P Green and Kathy Eagar. 'The Health of People in Australian Immigration Detention Centres'. *Medical Journal of Australia* 14 December 2009, Available online at:

http://www.mja.com.au/public/issues/192_02_180110/gre10973_fm.html

Glauser, Wendy, 'Malawi Health Workers Grapple with Rising Incidence of Rape' *Canadian Medical Association Journal* 181(12): E279, 8 December 2009, Available Online at:

<http://www.cmaj.ca/cgi/content/full/181/12/E279>

Gow, Jeff A, 'The Adequacy of Policy Responses to the Treatment Needs of South Africans Living with HIV (1999-2008): A Case Study', *Journal of the International AIDS Society* 2009, 12:37. Available online at: <http://www.jiasociety.org/content/12/1/37>

This will be the last newsletter of 2009. Thanks for your interest and support and best wishes for 2010.