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**AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL  
NEWS FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS**

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### Amnesty International reports & statements

See the following link for recent AI news releases and reports:

<http://web.amnesty.org/news/engindex>

### Death penalty

**Malaysia.** A government programme demonstrating punishment floggings to schoolchildren has been suspended after it drew public criticism. The government is considering introducing public flogging before execution as a punishment for child rape, after the rape and murder of two 10-year-old girls in the space of a week earlier this year. BBC, 31 May <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/3764311.stm>

**USA.** The US Supreme Court has ruled that a death row inmate can pursue an appeal on the grounds that lethal injection would be cruel and unusual punishment. David Larry Nelson says his veins - damaged by drug use - make it impossible to inject him without cutting deep into his flesh and muscle. BBC, 24 May. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/3744307.stm>

**USA.** Laurence Adams, who was sentenced to death in Massachusetts in 1974 shortly before the state finally abandoned capital punishment, was released on May 20 after spending three decades of his life in prison. Superior Court Judge Robert A. Mulligan said that he vacated the conviction to "avoid a miscarriage of justice." DPIC <http://www.deathpenaltyinfo.org/article.php?did=1006&scid=64>

**USA.** Texas Governor Rick Perry has issued a pardon on the basis of innocence to Josiah Sutton, a juvenile offender who had served four years of a 25-year prison term before new DNA tests proved his innocence. The faulty DNA results used to convict Sutton in 1998 were processed by the now thoroughly discredited Houston Police Department crime lab, the same facility that processed DNA and other forensic evidence used in cases that have resulted in death sentences. Death Penalty Information Center, 31 May <http://www.deathpenaltyinfo.org/article.php?did=1013&scid=64>

**USA.** Gordon Randall Steidl was released from prison in Illinois on 28 May after being wrongly convicted and spending 17 years in prison, including twelve years on death row.

He will be the nation's 114th death row inmate to be exonerated and the 18th freed in Illinois. Death Penalty Information Center, 28 May <http://www.deathpenaltyinfo.org>

## **HIV/AIDS**

**Africa.** Wealthy nations' contributions to fight the disease are unwittingly and unnecessarily exacerbating another crisis in some poor countries: the staggering shortage of health care personnel. Washington Post , 25 May <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A53219-2004May24.html>

**South Africa.** The government is accused of putting children's lives at risk as the health department advises hospitals not to enrol new children on drugs programs in case there are not enough drugs for them to continue. BBC, 1 June <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/3765707.stm>

**UK.** A third of gay men with the HIV virus do not know they are infected, research has suggested. BBC, 1 June <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/3765035.stm>

**UK.** HIV positive witness learns of his status in courtroom. BMJ, 5 June <http://bmj.bmjournals.com/cgi/content/full/328/7452/1334-b>

## **Prisoners**

**Afghanistan.** A high-ranking US Army officer has begun a "top-to-bottom" investigation into claims that Taleban and al-Qaeda suspects have been abused in the 20 US-run jails in Afghanistan. BBC, 25 May [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south\\_asia/3745897.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/3745897.stm)

**Iraq.** The British government has admitted for the first time that investigations are under way into the killing in British military custody of 10 Iraqis, double the number previously stated. Hi Pakistan 3 June [http://www.hipakistan.com/en/detail.php?newsId=en66638&F\\_catID=&f\\_type=source](http://www.hipakistan.com/en/detail.php?newsId=en66638&F_catID=&f_type=source)

**Malaysia.** The Malaysian government is abusing detainees held without charge or trial under its draconian internal security law, Human Rights Watch said in a report. Human Rights Watch, 25 May <http://www.hrw.org/english/docs/2004/05/25/malays8610.htm>

**USA.** Prisoners call supermaximum security prisons "torture chambers," where they are subjected to flagrant human rights and civil liberties violations, and appalling psychological and physical abuses Pacific News Service, 1 June <http://www.alternet.org/print.html?StoryID=18819>

## **Right to health**

**Iraq.** Health minister, Dr Khudair Abbas, said in an interview with the British Medical Journal (BMJ) that he is determined to transform Iraq's health services even though it leaves him exposed to danger. BMJ, 29 May <http://bmj.bmjournals.com/cgi/content/full/328/7451/1280>

**Israel.** Médecins Sans Frontières has accused the Israeli army of obstructing medical access to civilians in the Rafah refugee camp, occupied since last week by Israeli forces. BMJ, 29 May <http://bmj.bmjournals.com/cgi/content/full/328/7451/1278-b>

**Nigeria.** Nigeria has postponed its nationwide poliomyelitis immunisation programme for several months, after criticism by the country's Muslim population of the safety of the vaccines being given to children. BMJ, 29 May <http://bmj.bmjournals.com/cgi/content/full/328/7451/1278-c>

**South Africa.** Traditional leaders and officials in South Africa are meeting to discuss the alarming number of injuries and deaths due to botched circumcisions. In the last year, 12 boys have died and close to 92 have been hospitalised due to illegal circumcisions. BBC, 25 May  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/3745513.stm>

## **Torture**

**Croatia.** Sexual torture of men in wartime Croatia was regular and substantial. Evidence of rape and other forced sexual acts, castration, genital beatings and electric shock is documented in new research funded by Médecins Sans Frontières. BMJ, 29 May  
<http://bmj.bmjournals.com/cgi/content/full/328/7451/1280-b>

**Egypt.** Police in Egypt regularly beat suspects and use electric shocks to extract confessions according to a report by the Egyptian Organisation for Human Rights. Gulf Daily News 1 June, [http://www.gulf-daily-news.com/arc\\_Articles.asp?Article=83171&Sn=WORL&IssueID=27073](http://www.gulf-daily-news.com/arc_Articles.asp?Article=83171&Sn=WORL&IssueID=27073)

**USA.** Gordon Randall Steidl was released from prison in Illinois on 28 May after being wrongly convicted and spending 17 years in prison, including twelve years on death row. He will be the nation's 114th death row inmate to be exonerated and the 18th freed in Illinois. Death Penalty Information Center, 28 May  
<http://www.deathpenaltyinfo.org/article.php?scid=1&did=1017>

**Egypt/Sweden.** An international inquiry under U.N. auspices is needed to credibly address allegations that two men expelled from Sweden to Egypt on an airplane leased by the U.S. government were mistreated and possibly tortured by agents of each country, Human Rights Watch said. Human Rights Watch 27 May  
<http://www.hrw.org/english/docs/2004/05/27/sweden8621.htm>

**USA.** Many American adults believe the infliction of physical or emotional pain as a means of coercion is unjustifiable in cases of terrorism, according to a poll by ABC News and the Washington Post. 63 per cent of respondents believe torture is an unacceptable method to obtain information, while 35 per cent disagree. The Center for Public Opinion and Democracy, 1 June  
<http://www.cpod.ubc.ca/polls/index.cfm?fuseaction=viewItem&itemID=2884>

**Uzbekistan.** Human Rights Watch (HRW) acknowledged its error in attributing the cause of the death of a man in police custody to torture after a team of international experts found that the man, Andrei Shelkavenko, died as a result of hanging. HRW also urged the Uzbek government to continue its inquiry into the circumstances of the man's death and allegations that he had been beaten in custody and his relatives harassed. Human Rights Watch, 1 June <http://hrw.org/english/docs/2004/06/01/uzbeki8679.htm>

**Vietnam.** Human Rights Watch have issued a briefing paper describing how hundreds of Montagnards in the Central Highlands, fearing torture and arrest by Vietnamese troops, have resorted to hiding in village graves or pits dug in the forest. Human Rights Watch, 28 May

<http://www.hrw.org/english/docs/2004/05/27/vietna8626.htm>

## **Violence against Women**

**Gambia/Spain.** A Spanish court confiscated the passports of three Gambian girls to stop them being repatriated for female genital mutilation surgery. The Independent (Banjul), 21 May <http://allafrica.com/stories/200405210676.html>

**Jordan.** A Jordanian man has reportedly shot his unmarried cousin dead as she recovered in hospital after delivering a baby. The Jordan Times says this is the third case of so-called "honour" killing in the country in a week and quotes official figures which say that nine women have died in such killings this year. BBC, 3 June  
[http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle\\_east/3773449.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/3773449.stm)

### Conferences

'Health and Human Rights of Unlawful Detainees in Guantanamo Bay and Elsewhere'. London, 26 June, 10.00-18.00, organised by Physicians for Human Rights. Location: The Boardroom , Middlesex Hospital, Mortimer Street, London W1T 3AA. Cost: £40. Apply to:[helenbygrave@hotmail.com](mailto:helenbygrave@hotmail.com)

### Publications

Mark Danner. *The Logic of Torture*. The New York Review of Books Volume 51, Number 11 June 24, 2004 <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/17190>

Gross ML. *Doctors in the decent society: torture, ill-treatment and civic duty*. Bioethics. 2004 Apr;18(2):181-203

[http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?cmd=Retrieve&db=pubmed&dopt=Abstract&list\\_uids=15148947](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?cmd=Retrieve&db=pubmed&dopt=Abstract&list_uids=15148947)

Niveau G. *Preventing human rights abuses in psychiatric establishments: the work of the CPT*. Eur Psychiatry. 2004 May;19(3):146-54.

[http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?cmd=Retrieve&db=pubmed&dopt=Abstract&list\\_uids=15158921](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?cmd=Retrieve&db=pubmed&dopt=Abstract&list_uids=15158921)

Symposium on circumcision. Journal of Medical Ethics June 1 2004, Volume 30, Issue 3  
<http://jme.bmjournals.com/current.shtml>

Joanna Busza et al, *Trafficking and health*. BMJ, 5 June 2004

<http://bmj.bmjournals.com/cgi/content/full/328/7452/1369>

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