



Human Rights Think Tank Watch

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HRI Updates

This section will deliver, direct to your inbox, info about the latest human rights-related job postings, internship offers, HRI's *Human Rights Tribune*, as well as our upcoming website redesign.

Next week, HRI will be hosting a Visiting Speakers's Series Event featuring a presentation by Harim Peiris, Senior Researcher from the Sri Lankan think tank *Council for Public Policy*. See the Events section for more details.

As we proceed, we will continue use this space to provide you with HRI updates.

- HRI Team

Bookmark hri.ca today.

- Human Rights and the Responsibility to Protect: From Theory to Practice

Introduction

Thank you for subscribing to the Human Rights Think Tank Watch, the latest knowledge sharing publication produced by Human Rights Internet.

For just over two years, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) has been producing the Development Think Tank Watch, an e-publication dedicated to sharing the latest information from research organizations, academics and international organizations from around the world. But as this publication evolved, it quickly became understood that some topics in development merited their own stand-alone "watch."

The field of human rights and its importance for development has grown tremendously over the last decade. And as this field has grown, it has also become increasingly difficult to remain abreast of current thinking, much less cutting-edge and innovative ideas, approaches and debates. In an attempt to help ease the burden and build a community of practitioners and students of human rights and development, Human Rights Internet (HRI) approached CIDA with a proposal to develop a new platform that can facilitate the sharing of information.

The Human Rights Think Tank Watch is the product of this collaboration with CIDA. Drawing inspiration from the Development Think Tank Watch, the HRTTW will not generate its own research or analysis, but rather it will point readers towards innovative, interesting, contemporary research being published by think tanks, international inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations, academic and scholarly centres, as well as academic journals. The primary focus of the HRTTW will be current research, tools and multimedia, and will also feature a few abstracts from academic journals as well as forthcoming publications.

But knowledge sharing works best when the community works together. The Human Rights Think Tank Watch may in fact be the conduit for information, but it is with the support and participation of our readers that it will thrive and succeed. We would like your feedback so that we can ensure that we remain responsive to the needs of the community. Please send all comments to subscriptions@hri.ca.

As we continue to grow and expand, we would also encourage you to share this publication with anyone who you think would be interested. And if this e-mail was forwarded to you, and you would like to subscribe, please send an e-mail to subscriptions@hri.ca and we will be happy to add you to our list.

Once again, thank you all for your participation. We look forward to working with each of you as we continue this process.

The HRI Team

Research

Burma/Myanmar: After the Crackdown

Organization: *International Crisis Group*

Date: January 2008

Brief Description

"The immediate challenges [for Myanmar are] to create a more durable negotiating process between government, opposition and ethnic groups and help alleviate the economic and humanitarian crisis that hampers reconciliation at all levels of society."

The above quotation is the conclusion offered by the International Crisis Group report on the aftermath of the violent crackdown on Buddhist monk-led opposition rallies August and September. Though there was hope for a dramatic change in Myanmar following the protests, the report clearly describes a situation where the balance of power has not shifted.

The report recommends to each of the actors a series of more modest goals, essentially for the international community to focus on humanitarian aid, and promoting the role of diplomacy and engagement with the Myanmar Government.

[View Source](#) [crisisgroup.org] [PDF]

Collateral Damage: The Impacts of Anti-Trafficking on Human Rights Around the World

Organization: *Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women*

Date: 2007

From the Report

This anthology reviews the experience of eight specific countries and attempts to assess what the impact of anti-trafficking measures have been for a variety of people living and working there, or migrating into or out of these countries. The eight are: Australia, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Brazil, India, Nigeria, Thailand, the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States (US). The chapters look specifically at what the impact has been on people's human rights.

[View Source](#) [gaatw.net] [PDF]

Girls in Fighting Forces: Moving Beyond Victimhood

Author: Myriam Denov, McGill University

Organization: *Child Rights Information Network*

Date: 2007

From the Author

Drawing upon the findings of three studies, this paper traces the perspectives and experiences of girls as victims, participants, and resisters of violence and armed conflict in Angola, Sierra

Leone, Mozambique and Northern Uganda.

The Child Rights Information Network is a global network that disseminates information about the Convention on the Rights of the Child and child rights amongst non-governmental organisations (NGOs), United Nations agencies, inter-governmental organisation (IGOs), educational institutions, and other child rights experts. The Coordinating Unit is based in London, UK.

[View Source](#) [crin.org] [PDF]

One Year On: Counter-Terrorism Sparks Human Rights Crisis for Sri Lanka's Minorities

Organization: *Minority Rights Group*

Date: December 2007

Brief Description

This *Minority Rights Group* briefing on Sri Lanka describes a grim security situation in Sri Lanka, one that has only gotten worse during 2007. Since the passing of new anti-terror legislation in December 2006, the government has been quick to use its new powers to target Sri Lanka's minority populations - Muslim and Tamil alike. The report describes the situation as being "marked by intense warfare, mass displacement, killings, abductions and torture in Sri Lanka." The report goes on to conclude that there is a direct correlation with this violence and the implementation of the new legislation: "The introduction of tough new counter-terrorism laws one year ago by the Sri Lankan government has led to a sharp rise in human rights abuses in the country."

In an attempt to find possible solutions to this seemingly intractable conflict, the report offers a number of recommendations for each of the parties involved: the Sri Lankan Government, the LTTE, the UK, and the international community.

[View Source](#) [minorityrights.org]

Social Watch Report 2007: In Dignity and Rights

Organization: *Social Watch*

Date: 2007

From the Report

To promote the political will needed for United Nations promises to become a reality, Social Watch was created in 1995 by a group of civil society organizations, with the aim of reminding governments of their commitments and independently tracking their implementation, country by country and at the international level. Since then, Social Watch has published a yearly report on progress and setbacks in the struggle against poverty and for gender equality, and today the network has members in over 70 countries on every continent. This is the report for 2007.

[View Source](#) [socialwatch.org]

The State of the World's Children 2008 - Child Survival

Organization: *United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)*

Date: 2007

From the Report

The State of the World's Children 2008 assesses the state of child survival and primary health care for mothers, newborns and children today. These issues serve as sensitive barometers of a country's development and wellbeing and as evidence of its priorities and values. Investing in the health of children and their mothers is a human rights imperative and one of the surest ways for a country to set its course towards a better future.

[View Source](#) [unicef.org] [PDF]

UNAMID Deployment on the Brink: The Road to Security in Darfur Blocked by Government Obstructions

Organization: *NGO Coalition Report on Sudan*

Date: December 2007

Brief Description

This paper, prepared by a considerable number of NGOs dedicated to raising awareness - and, where possible, forcing action - on the issue of Darfur, is a stinging indictment of the UN and African Union's "hybrid" intervention force into the Darfur region of Sudan.

The report describes the challenge of transferring authority to the AU force as being a double-edged sword: transferring authority to such a weak force would lead to further civilian attacks, but, so too would no transfer at all. Combine this with what the report describes as persistent blocking by the Sudanese government, and it appears as though a dire - an even more dire - humanitarian situation is in the making.

Finally, the report presents five reasons why this intervention should continue, as well as offering recommendations to both the United Nations Security Council and the broader international community on how to salvage this mission from failure.

[View Source](#) [fidh.org] [PDF]

Voice for Accountability: Citizens, the State and Realistic Governance

Authors: Marta Foresti & Bhavna Sharma

Organization: *Overseas Development Institute*

Date: December 2007

Brief Description

"When do citizens' voices and demands result in improved state responsiveness, transparency and accountability?"

The above question, asked at the beginning of this briefing paper from the Overseas Development Institute, points to the central tension in developing countries: balancing state effectiveness ("accountability") with citizen participation ("voice"). The paper draws attention to the fact that development projects to date have focused almost exclusively on either one or the other (i.e. strengthening state institutions vs. promoting a space for civil society), but not on improving the relationship between the state and the citizenry. According to this briefing, the promotion of human rights is perhaps one of the few areas where there is a focus on bridging "voice" and "accountability," however it remains still quite limited.

The paper offers a number of recommendations for donors, all of which are meant to encourage greater co-operation and collaboration, "even if in some circumstances donors prefer to operate independently...in more challenging political areas (e.g. corruption and human rights)."

[View Source](#) [odi.org.uk] [PDF]

Women in Ritual Slavery: Devadasi, Jogini and Mathamma in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, Southern India

Author: Maggie Black

Organization: *Anti-Slavery International*

Date: 2007

Brief Description

Devedasi, *Jogini* and *Mathamma* are all essentially synonyms for the same ancient practice still taking place in parts of the developing world: ritual enslavement of women for religious purposes. This report from Anti-Slavery International presents first-hand research conducted in the two regions of Southern India described in the report's title, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh.

This report begins by describing how this practice amounts to slavery and then continues by presenting a number of personal and dramatic tales from women who have been forced into this life. The report concludes by offering a number of recommendations for action to put an end to this anachronistic practice.

[View Source](#) [antislavery.org] [PDF]

Book References

The Many Dimensions of Poverty

Edited By: Nanak Kakwani and Jacques Silber

Organization: *International Poverty Centre - United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)*

Date: January 2008

From the Editors

This book takes a multidisciplinary approach to poverty, including five different perspectives from the disciplines of economics, sociology, anthropology, psychology and institutional economics. There are also studies of chronicity of poverty, the concept of vulnerability, the

political economy of poverty alleviation and the pro-poorness of government programs. The broad view of poverty that the book offers is likely to orient research on poverty in directions neglected hitherto and to help those in charge of implementing poverty reduction policies.

A sample chapter, "Multidimensional Poverty: Conceptual and Measurement Issues," by Erik Thorbeck can be found [here](#) [PDF]

[View Source](#) [undp-povertycentre.org]

Blogs

International Human Rights Day 2007: New challenges ODI Blog Entry

Organization: *Overseas Development Institute*

Date: December 10, 2007

Brief Description

This blog post for the Overseas Development Institute presents the challenges ahead in 2008 for the Human Rights community. As the 60th anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights approaches, the post describes how the international community has a lot of work to do to fulfil the spirit of the Declaration. The blog post also offers links to a number of external sources, all excellent reference material.

[View Source](#) [blogs.odi.org.uk]

Multimedia/Tools

Call to Action on the MDGs *Feature Video of the Day from the World Economic Forum*

Organization: *World Economic Forum*

Date: January 2008

Brief Description

Webcast session from the World Economic Forum featuring the following individuals:

- Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General, United Nations, New York
- Umaru Musa Yar'Adua President of Nigeria
- Gordon Brown, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom
- H.M. Queen Rania Al Abdullah of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Member of the Foundation Board of the World Economic Forum
- William H. Gates III, Chairman, Microsoft Corporation, USA
- Bono, Musician, DATA (DEBT, AIDS, TRADE, AFRICA), United Kingdom
- John T. Chambers, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Cisco, USA

[View Source](#) [world-television.com]

The Hub *Presented by Witness*

Organization: *Witness.org*

Brief Description

The Hub is the world's first participatory media site for human rights. Through the Hub, individuals, organizations, networks and groups around the world are able to bring their human rights stories and campaigns to global attention and to mobilize action to protect and promote human rights.

[View Source](#) [hub.witness.org]

Events

HRI Visiting Speakers' Series - Current Developments and Prospects for Peace in Sri Lanka *Presentation by Harim Peiris, Senior Researcher, Council for Public Policy*

Date: Wednesday, February 20

Time: 12:00pm - 1:00pm

Location: 1 Nicholas Street, Ottawa - 12th Floor Boardroom

RSVP: info@hri.ca

We would like to invite you to join us at our Speakers' Series Event, Current Developments and Prospects for Peace in Sri Lanka.

This event will feature a presentation from Harim Peiris, a Senior Researcher from the Sri Lankan think tank, Council for Public Policy. He will be presenting an overview of the Sri Lankan peace process as well as some of the work that the Council is doing to move this process forward. The event will take place at HRI in Ottawa, Canada.

A lunch buffet will be provided. Space is limited. To register, please send an e-mail to info@hri.ca or telephone HRI at 613-789-7407.

Human Rights and the Responsibility to Protect: From Theory to Practice *Featuring Louise Frechette, former UN Deputy Secretary-General*

Date: Thursday, February 28

Time: 8:00pm

Location: 102 Azrieli Theatre, Carleton University

The end of the Cold war marked the beginning of a new era for Human rights. The concept of the "responsibility to protect" which embodies this new era was formally adopted in the fall of 2005, thanks in large part to the efforts of Canada. However, with the political winds changing

and sobering experiences on the ground, how strong is the commitment to Human rights and the "responsibility to protect?" Are the improvements in international Human Rights cooperation irreversible or are we at risk of reverting to the times when sovereignty and non-intervention reigned supreme?

Currently a distinguished Fellow at the Centre for International Governance Innovation of Waterloo, Madame Frechette was Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations (1998 to 2006).

Co-produced and sponsored by Carleton University's Centre on Values and Ethics, the Centre for Security and Defence Studies, and the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre.

Sources: International Crisis Group, Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women, Child Rights Information Network, Minority Rights Group, Social Watch, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Overseas Development Institute, Anti-Slavery International, International Poverty Centre - United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

The opinions expressed in the material presented in this newsletter are those of their authors and not Human Rights Internet. If you have any feedback, please e-mail subscriptions@hri.ca

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