

**INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN
ALLIANCE INTERNATIONALE DES FEMMES**

IAW website: <http://www.womenalliance.org>

**Equal Rights - Equal Responsibilities
Droits Égaux - Responsabilités Égales**

IAW NEWSLETTER December 2008, no. 12



Equal Rights

Dear members,

In this last newsletter of 2008: an embargo on arms in the DRC, a look at countries which opposed the treaty on cluster munitions, a summit 2009 on climate change in Copenhagen, education worldwide, fighting the hunger crisis in January and CSW in March 2009, and other news.

The new year for 2009 has, like Ban Ki-moon said when talking about 'Education worldwide', reasons for hope and concern. Concern for the financial crisis, the climate change and - so it seems - the never ending outbreaks of conflict. With hope too: for more influence of women in leading roles in 2009 and for new technologies in fighting the climate change.

Our best wishes to you all for happy holidays and in particular, for a peaceful 2009!

INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN

[Commission on the Status of Women](#) - 53rd session - March 02-13, 2009

The 53rd session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) will take place from 2-13 March 2009. The priority theme is 'The equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including care giving in the context of HIV/AIDS'.

The review theme of the CSW will be 'Equal participation of women and men in decision making processes at all levels' and will be discussed through an interactive dialogue.

IAW members who are going to CSW, please contact Lene Pind at <iawsec@womenalliance.org>

The deadline for pre-registration is 9 January 2009

European Union - Equal Representation - 50/50

The political parties of the European Union are at the moment composing their member's lists for the European Parliament. Elections will be held in June 2009.

The European Women's Lobby has for months been lobbying for equal representation for the 2009 European Parliament elections, in the next European Commission and in all top political posts. See:

<http://www.5050democracy.eu/>

With the support of Margot Wallström, Vice President of the European Commission and the ministerial chair of the Council of Women World Leaders and **with the support of IAW and her Affiliates**. See for example: <http://www.femalesinfront.eu/default.asp?view=front?=de&lang=gb>

Sent by IAW Secretary Lene Pind

FIGHTING VIOLENCE

Arms embargo on the Democratic Republic of Congo

The International Alliance of Women endorses the open letter to the UN Security Council on the Democratic Republic of Congo, by Amnesty International and the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) on the arms embargo on the DRC.

Amnesty International is calling on the UN Security Council to take urgent steps to strengthen the design and implementation of the UN arms embargo on the DRC to help protect human rights in the eastern DRC and surrounding region.

Daily abuses against civilians, including widespread killings, rapes and other serious human rights violations continue to be committed in the DRC due to the proliferation and diversion of weapons and ammunitions to be used by the regular army, the police, and by armed groups.

When they enter the DRC, from Sudan, China and other sources, there is no longer any procedure for MONUC to ensure that such equipment is properly safeguarded, distributed, stored and used by named units of the DRC armed forces.

In order to ensure respect for the arms embargo, the UN Security Council must encourage urgent steps by the international community to help address the DRC government's lack of progress towards professionalizing its security forces, securing its arms stocks and ending impunity,

The UNSC should strengthen the procedures for the implementation of UN arms embargo as follows:

1. Require the DRC government to provide advance notification to MONUC of all imports to the DRC of military and related materials, and to require the government to only import such material via agreed designated receiving sites subject to MONUC supervision, and to submit to MONUC inspections of inventories.
2. In order to prevent diversion from official DRC holdings, all transfers to FARDC units deployed in eastern DRC should be made by prior arrangement under MONUC supervision where the subsequent FARDC holdings and stocks are subject to MONUC inspections.
3. Warn all governments of third countries from which arms have been sent or arranged in violation of the UN arms embargo, including transfers to the DRC without prior notification to the Security Council, that such action will result in secondary sanctions imposed by the Security Council.
4. Require MONUC to establish without delay adequately trained specialised units to monitor arms transfers, and to effectively promote stockpile security, accountability and management of arms and ammunition in the DRC.
5. Request as a matter of urgency that all UN Member States urgently review the end use of their transfers of military material to countries in and bordering the Great Lakes Region, and implement measures to ensure legitimate end uses that do not violate international law, including international

Arms Trade Treaty

Amnesty International reiterates its long held belief that to avoid massive human rights catastrophes such as the one that has unfolded in the DRC and Great Lakes, Member States should not only rely on arms embargoes but should also cooperate towards the early establishment of a global Arms Trade Treaty with the principles of the UN Charter and other legal obligations of states, including international human rights law and **IHL (?)** at its centre.

Such a treaty would require all States to establish an effective national system of control for the international transfer of conventional arms according to agreed international standards, thus considerably reducing the incidence of irresponsible arms transfers and rendering the UN arms embargo regimes much more effective.

Sarah Masters, Women's Network Coordinator, Development House, 56-64 Leonard Street, London.

Email: women@iansa.org Website: www.iansa.org/women

Convenor of the IAW Peace Commission: Susanne Riveles

Seeking justice for women in post conflict situations

The design of any post-conflict social and economic order must include women and women's rights in order to facilitate their access to justice, says an expert panel on the prosecution of sexual violence organised by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) on 15 December. OHCHR has held several expert meetings and commissioned two major studies to examine the effectiveness of international post-conflict accountability mechanisms in prosecuting sexual violence, and the extent to which women and women's rights have been included in post-conflict reconstruction.

From the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) IAW

More on <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/JusticeforWomen.aspx>

IAW representative at the Human Rights Council: Helene Sackstein

Cluster Munitions

At the Dublin Diplomatic Conference on Cluster Munitions last May, 107 states decided to prohibit the use, development, production, stockpiling and transfer of cluster munitions. They signed the Convention on Cluster Munitions on 2-4 December 2008.

It will enter into force after it has been ratified by 30 states; as of 8 December 2008, 4 states have ratified it and another 90 have signed but not yet ratified it.

Cluster munitions kill and maim civilians both during and after armed conflicts and wars. They have caused human suffering for more than 50 years.

The treaty was opposed by a number of countries that produce or stockpile significant amounts of cluster munitions, including **China, Russia, the United States, India, Israel, Pakistan and Brazil.**

More on: <http://www.clusterconvention.org/index.php>

International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia - ICTY

The ICTY launched a new website in December 2008.

Already a global leader in judicial transparency and accountability, the Tribunal has developed its new website to provide more information about how the organization works, as well as insights into its main challenges and achievements.

An interactive map on the site's homepage, for example, enables users to view at a glance the regions where alleged crimes were committed for which the Tribunal has held trials.

More on: <http://www.icty.org/>. *Sent by IAW President Rosy Weiss*

MUMBAI - THOUGHTS OF THE DAY AFTER

The trauma will linger. The audacity of the terrorist operation, carried out seemingly by only 10 desperadoes, is mind-boggling.

Large parts of the nation, while mourning for the dead and expressing deep compassion for the other victims, will also give vent to a ferocious anger. This anger, signs are already evident, could even reach hysteric proportions. *At such moments, conventional wisdom tends to assume centre stage, what nonconformists wish to say is drowned in collective disapproval.*

And yet, fatuities of the nature uttered from high places — the perpetrators of the outrage would be made to pay — sound hollow.

The young men who carried out the attack have, most of them, paid with their lives; they in any case were prepared to die.

The ideologues who inspired them on knew what they were embarking on, and had adequate justification according to their own lights.

The Telegraph on: http://www.telegraphindia.com/1081205/jsp/opinion/story_10209056.jsp

Sent to us by IAW member Anjana Basu

NEWS AROUND THE WORLD

Simone Veil elected to join France's "Immortals"

Simone Veil, an Auschwitz survivor, a feminist, and the minister in charge when France legalized abortion in 1975, was elected on Thursday to the prestigious body that acts as guardian of the French language. Deported to the Nazi death camp as a teenager, Veil, 81, was the first female minister in France's Fifth Republic, serving five years under former President Valery Giscard d'Estaing and overseeing the legalization of abortion as health minister.

One of 40 immortals

With her election, Veil becomes one of the 40 "Immortals" who make up the Academie francaise at any one time. They are elected for life and cannot resign.

The Academie francaise, one of the oldest institutions in France, was set up in 1635 during the reign of Louis XIII by Cardinal Richelieu to guard over the French language.

More recently, it has attracted controversy with defiant attacks on the excessive use of English words in modern French.

More on: <http://www.reuters.com/article/lifestyleMolt/idUSLK52675020081120>

Sent by Gudrun Haupter, convenor of the IAW Commission Health.

Zimbabwe's worst-ever cholera outbreak

The UN said the number of suspected cholera cases has risen to 18, 413 with 978 deaths. The outbreak is now affecting nine out of ten provinces in the country and spilling across borders into South Africa, Botswana, and Mozambique.

About half of all cases in Zimbabwe are in one suburb of the capital, Harare, and another 26 per cent in a town on the border with South Africa.

There is an operation plan

The UN World Health Organization (WHO) has drawn up a comprehensive cholera response operation plan, and is in the process of procuring and distributing emergency stocks of supplies to run health centres. The Government has accepted the plan and has also declared a state of emergency. In his briefing to the Security Council Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon noted that the lack of progress on the political front is accompanied by a “dramatic” deterioration in living conditions and of the humanitarian situation.

Close to 80 per cent of the country has no access to safe drinking water, and the vast majority of the population does not have adequate sanitary facilities – the very conditions that have allowed the acute intestinal infection caused by contaminated food or water to develop and flourish.

Convenor of the IAW Health Commission: Gudrun Haupter

Seven human rights fighters receive top UN awards

The UN Prize in the Field of Human Rights, awarded every five years, was presented at a General Assembly ceremony marking the 60th anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).

The winners are former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights *Louise Arbour*; United States ex-Attorney-General Ramsey Clark; Executive Director and co-founder of Jamaicans for Justice *Carolyn Gomes*; Denis Mukwege, co-founder of the General Referral Hospital of Panzi in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC); Human Rights Watch, represented by its executive director Kenneth Roth; *Ms. Bhutto*; and *Dorothy Stang* of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur who was murdered in Brazil three years ago.

They join a distinguished roster of previous laureates that includes apartheid fighter and former South African President Nelson Mandela, US civil rights leader Martin Luther King, former US first Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, former US President Jimmy Carter, and Amnesty International.

On <http://html.knowyourrights2008.org/nl/nieuws.html>

Climate change - from Kyoto - Bali - Poznan - to Copenhagen

*Poznan - consensus on carbon emission,
but not on funding for adaptation in developing countries*

Carbon emission will be cut by 20% in 2020

The top United Nations officials have welcomed a plan agreed by European Union leaders to fight global warming. The EU plan, reached in Brussels, reportedly elaborates how the group's 27 member countries will cut carbon emissions by 20 per cent by 2020.

From Kyoto to Copenhagen

The Kyoto Protocol, which launched an initial period of international climate commitments, expires in 2012. A round of negotiations intended to arrive at a new, international agreement was launched in Bali in 2007.

At the half-way point the Poznań conference should be decisive in sustaining political momentum towards reaching a new, ambitious agreement.

A negotiating text is to be drawn up in Poznań which shall be discussed at the meetings in 2009.

Three specific workshops will be held:

* on the shared vision of a new climate change regime,

* risk management and

* on the research and development of new technologies.

Lastly, Poznań will be an opportunity to continue the reflection process on the financial architecture for combating climate change.

Being held from 1 to 12 December, the different meetings will bring together nearly 10,000 participants from 170 different countries.

Ministerial meetings in between

Besides the two meetings between the two subsidiary bodies responsible for implementing the United

Nations Framework Convention and the Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change, there are two ministerial meetings between all the States that have ratified the Convention and those that have ratified the Kyoto Protocol, and two further meetings between both working groups dedicated to drawing up the framework for international action on climate change beyond 2012.

Climate change and the financial crisis

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon addressed the Poznan gathering, calling for renewed global solidarity to tackle the twin challenges of climate change and the financial crisis.

He told the high level officials from nearly all UN Member States that the world cannot afford to let economic woes hinder progress on "the defining challenge of our era."

Iran - Rights of Women

27 November 2008 – Two independent United Nations experts on human rights issues today voiced deep concern over the Iranian Government's increasingly severe crackdown on advocates of the rights of women in recent years.

"Peaceful demonstrators have been arrested, detained and persecuted with prison sentences having been imposed on many of them," said Margaret Sekaggya, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders and Yakin Ertürk, Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences.

Men and women involved in the One Million Signatures Demanding Changes to Discriminatory Laws campaign have been particularly targeted, according to the two experts.

EDUCATION FOR ALL

A United Nations conference this month aimed at overcoming global inequalities in education, especially for children in the poorest nations and girls, kicked off on December the 16th.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon: "I see reasons for hope and concern in this quest.

Hope, because in Africa and Asia, there has been genuine progress in expanding access to education. Since the year 2000, an additional 40 million children have gained access to school. Strong political will, the right policy choices and international support made this possible.

Hope

And hope, because this past September's High-Level Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals generated new financial commitments of \$17.5 billion to improve education, health, access to clean water and sanitation, and much more.

Coming at a time of international financial turmoil, this result was especially encouraging.

We cannot afford to lose this momentum.

Concern

But make no mistake. The financial crisis could undermine our efforts to advance the development agenda. I am very concerned that hard-won progress may be lost. This would have devastating consequences for the world's poorest and most vulnerable. Protecting these gains requires our utmost vigilance".

The UNESCO report found that 75 million children of primary school age are not in school, and whereas over one-third of children in rich countries complete university, a much smaller fraction in sub-Saharan Africa finish primary school and only five per cent attend university.

Children in the poorest 20 per cent of countries, such as Ethiopia, Mali and Niger, are three times less likely to be in primary school as children in the wealthiest 20 per cent.

Girls

Girls are also neglected in much of South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, which have much lower female enrolments in their schools than boys, along with deeply entrenched biases based on language, race, ethnicity and urban-rural differences.

More on: <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2008/sgsm12009.doc.htm>

Law to protect the young must cover madrassas as well

Muslim children are being beaten and abused regularly by teachers at some British madrassas - Islamic evening classes - an investigation by *The Times* has found.

Students have been slapped, punched and had their ears twisted, according to an unpublished report by an imam based on interviews with victims in the north of England. One was "picked up by one leg and

spun around" while another said a madrassa teacher was "kicking in my head - like a football", says the report which was compiled by Irfan Chishti, a former government adviser on Islamic affairs. Almost 1,600 madrassas operate in Britain, teaching Arabic and the Koran on weekday evenings to about 200,000 children aged from four to their mid-teens.

No hard evidence how many madrassas

While there is no hard evidence to indicate how many are involved in the physical abuse of children, *The Times* has uncovered a disturbing pattern in one town - Rochdale - through interviews with mainstream school teachers, Muslim parents and the children themselves.

By Richard Kerbaj. More on: <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/faith/article5315021.ece>
Sent by IAW member Anjana Basu

EVENTS - FIGURES - PUBLICATIONS

Costs of War in Iraq - WILPF

On the WILPF Website we found this URL on the Costs of War in Iraq. On:
http://www.nationalpriorities.org/costofwar_homer

Bridging the Gap: Financing Gender Equality

This [booklet](#), jointly produced by NGLS and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), builds upon the materials prepared for the "economic literacy" presentations at the meeting of the UN Commission on the Status of Women in 2008. It strives to provide a wide variety of actors, in particular government and civil society advocates for gender equality, a better understanding on the links between gender equality, public policy formation and development financing. It is available online on: <http://www.un-ngls.org/site/IMG/pdf/UNIFEM.pdf>

Ten myths about religious fundamentalisms - AWID

The myths exposed in this publication come from the experiences of more than 1,600 women's rights activists who responded to AWID's Resisting and Challenging Religious Fundamentalisms survey, as well as 51 key experts who were interviewed for the project.

<http://www.awid.org/eng/About-AWID/AWID-News/Ten-myths-about-religious-fundamentalisms>

Hunger Crisis

The Food Security for All meeting in Madrid, slated for 26-27 January 2009, aims to gather governments, private entities and civil society groups to examine progress in achieving food security, define a road map for the future and tackle hunger more effectively.

More on: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=29311&Cr=Food&Cr1=Security>

IAW representative at the FAO: Bettina Clarke

Note

We are sending this Newsletter as an attachment, saved in Word 97. Please be so kind to advise Pat Richardson if you know of any IAW members or affiliate/associate organisations with an e-mail address, so we can mail them this Newsletter too.

IAW Newsletter / News Flash	: Joke Sebus	<iaw.newsletter@inter.nl.net>
International Women's News	: Priscilla Todd (English)	<iaw.iwnews@womenalliance.org>
		: Mathilde Duval (French)
	<aifnfi@womenalliance.org>	
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