

UNITY *United Nations – 60th anniversary year – A time for Renewal*

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[1] 'Security' links disparate events

The hoax attack with a suspected biological agent on the Indonesian Embassy in Canberra this week drew together a series of events that have some links to Australia's responsibilities as a member of the United Nations. It has been reinforced with a similar, if unproven, attack in the mail on the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Alexander Downer.

Issues include the protection of foreign mission staff and property but also extend to lack of security at airports. These were revealed in an unpublished Customs' report citing laxity in policing international drug smuggling, and the wider implications of anti-terrorism security. The Government has, so far, speculated or fuelled speculation that the hoax attack was related to the 20-year prison sentence given to Australian Schapelle Corby after her arrest on drug-smuggling charges in Bali, earlier this year.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Alexander Downer, said that at the Government to Government level he found both the President of Indonesia and the Foreign Minister "very understanding and the Foreign Minister was very appreciative of what we were doing but at the community level in Indonesia there'll obviously be a lot of feeling about this and that isn't helpful to our relationship and of course if you're a campaigner for Schapelle Corby it's completely counterproductive."

On June 1 he told Parliament that the initial analysis of the powder has tested positive as a biological agent, though further testing was needed.

The Opposition spokesman for foreign affairs, Kevin Rudd, also spoke with the Indonesian Ambassador Imron Cotan and conveyed to him "the Opposition's and the entire Parliament's disgust at this apparent attack on the Indonesian Embassy and Indonesian Embassy staff."

The coincidence of the attack, its alleged linkage to the Corby case and the Customs' report on security breaches at Sydney Airport, prompted the Australian Democrats to formally request the Government present to Parliament the Customs report on baggage security which was leaked to *The Australian* newspaper. The return to order requests the Minister for Justice and Customs to table the report at the next sitting.

Democrats Leader Senator Lyn Allison, said, "It seems extraordinary that the Minister, would not have read and acted on the report. The revelations that have emerged from the Corby case, Senate estimates committees last week and the report in today's newspaper, all point to the need for improved baggage security at Australian airports. The first step is to confirm the information already collected by Customs."

The Democrats also backed ALP calls for the Inspector of Transport Security position to be filled. "The Government should also explain why the position of Inspector of Transport Security has been vacant while former police chief Mick Palmer is inquiring into immigration detention, when they knew in September last year, there were major problems with baggage handling security. ..."

The Shadow Minister for Defence and Homeland Security, Robert McClelland, said on May 31 that the Customs' investigation into Sydney's airport "virtually shows that our security as at Australia's airports is a farce. The report suggests widespread involvement in drug trafficking by baggage handlers and other staff.

"Crew employed overseas are potentially involved in drug smuggling, secret spots at airport utilised are used by these rings and indeed the existence of rings in some cases are ethnically based. These are very, very serious matters. The report says they are not simply indications of criminal conduct but they could in fact be indicators of a potential terrorist event. This is very, very serious."



For more information:

Minister for Foreign Affairs (02) 6277 7500 www.dfat.gov.au

Kevin Rudd's office (02) 6277 4941 e-mail: Kevin.Rudd.MP@aph.gov.au

Senator Allison's office (03) 9416 1880 senator.allison@aph.gov.au

Robert McClelland (02) 6277 4323 and (02) 9587 2344 R.McClelland.MP@aph.gov.au

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[2] Submissions wanted for Review of Aviation Security

Federal Parliament's Public Accounts and Audit Committee is calling for submissions to its review of aviation security in Australia. The inquiry aims to provide an update on progress since the Committee's *Report 400: Review of Aviation Security in Australia* which was tabled in Parliament in June 2004.

Committee Chair Bob Baldwin said, "We have ongoing security concerns about procedures at Australian airports, including in relation to baggage handling. Recent media reports of criminal activity have damaged the reputation of security systems in the aviation industry, and the Australian public needs to be reassured that these systems are protecting them and their property."

The Committee invites written public submissions addressing the terms of reference of the inquiry. The Committee would prefer to receive submissions by **Friday 1 July 2005**, but will continue to accept submissions throughout the inquiry.

Information on making a submission is available on the Committee's website. The Committee will consider all submissions and may then invite individuals and organisations to discuss issues directly with Members.

For more information and terms of reference: contact the inquiry secretary on telephone (02) 6277 4615 or visit the Committee's website at www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jpaa/

WMD still on Downer's mind

Given the airport security gaps exposed by Customs, there was a certain irony in the press release on May 31 when the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Alexander Downer, noted the second anniversary of the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI).

"Of all the threats to international security, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction poses one of the greatest," he said. "Recent interest by the likes of al-Qaida in acquiring and using such weapons adds a new, horrific dimension to the spectre of mass murder by rogue countries or terrorists."

"The gravity of this threat calls for fresh thinking and decisive action, for new practical measures to stop this noxious trade."

"Australia is proud to be a key driver of the PSI, a practical and informal arrangement among countries to cooperate with each other, as necessary, in intercepting and disrupting illicit WMD trade, their delivery systems and related materials. ..."

For more information: Minister for Foreign Affairs (02) 6277 7500 www.dfat.gov.au

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[3] Detention amendment bills 'on hold'

Following Coalition party room debate on the proposed legislation by a Liberal backbencher, Petro Georgiou, for an act of compassion for people in immigration detention and holders of temporary protection visas, and to reform the mandatory detention system, a two-week "cooling off" period has been agreed.

During this time Government members are being lobbied hard by advocacy groups to support the Bills in the face of reluctance by the Government to ease the strict mandatory detention regime currently in place.

The Leader of the Opposition, Kim Beazley, is also at pains to be "supportive" of the Georgiou Bills while claiming credit that they reflect Labor Party policy.

On May 31 he said ALP Caucus having talked it through agreed with the Shadow Immigration Minister's submission that the Labor Party is basically supportive of the content of the Bill that's been put out by Petro Georgiou. Mr Beazley said "it complies with what is now long-standing Labor Party policy in a number of areas. ... we are sympathetic and supportive of the direction in which the Georgiou Bill is going. The Caucus further authorised the Shadow Minister to discuss the Bill with Petro Georgiou."

Mr Beazley said that if the Private Member's Bills come to the House of Representatives "we will have an opportunity to consider it again of course, but, basically what we want to be doing is facilitating debate on it.

Asked if the Opposition would bring in a similar Bill of its own if the Georgiou Bills were not introduced, Mr Beazley said, "We've already put Bills in on these things. You may recollect that Nicola Roxon put forward a Bill on detention of children some time ago. On that occasion, twice, Liberal dissidents voted to keep the kids behind bars. We will keep doing that sort of thing until we get into office when we'll have an opportunity to put our whole policy into effect which is exactly the policy the country now needs. ..."

For more information:

Leader of the Opposition (02) 6277 4022 e-mail: Kim.Beazley.MP@aph.gov.au

Laurie Ferguson ph 02 9637 4717 e-mail: Laurie.Ferguson.MP@aph.gov.au

Dr Carmen Lawrence commenting on the support she had received for the Bills and Labor's general support for them, said, "... From a procedural point of view, however, it must be remembered that the Georgiou Bills won't be debated at all, let alone voted upon, unless Mr Georgiou puts the Bills on the Notice Paper and the Howard Government agrees to list the Bills for debate.

"From Opposition, the best we could do is to move a motion to suspend the Standing Orders so that the Bills could be debated. Even then, a number of Coalition Members would have to cross the floor for the motion to succeed. On present numbers, and assuming that all three independents voted with Labor (unlikely in Katter's case), we would still require at least 12 Coalition members to cross the floor. That would be unprecedented. And yet, considering the attitude of John Howard, that is probably what is required for the Bills even to be debated.

"Massive pressure must therefore be applied to the Government if these Bills are to see the light of day within the House of Representatives...."

To contact all members of the House of Representatives, access:

<http://www.aph.gov.au/house/members/mi-elctr.asp>

Dr Carmen Lawrence MP e-mail: C.Lawrence.MP@aph.gov.au

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[4] Electronic petition open for signature

Rights Australia has launched an Internet poll on refugee detention policy and dissident Liberal MP Petro Georgiou's private members bills. Senator Marise Payne will table the signatures in the Senate as a petition.

Howard Glenn, Executive Director of *Rights Australia*, said that the poll would show the conscience of the nation on this issue.

"Unlike a petition, this poll allows Australians to vote in favour or against the proposition", Mr Glenn said. "It is like presenting a Bill to one of the Houses of Parliament, except in this instance the franchise is universal and everyone can vote in line with their conscience."

The petition is hosted at <http://onlineopinion.com.au/petitions> by *The National Forum*, a non-partisan not-for-profit backed by a number of organisations, including the University of Sydney, QUT, and the Local Government Association of Queensland. *The National Forum* is the publisher of *On Line Opinion* eJournal of political and social commentary.

In supporting the private member's bills the petition says:

- That the detention of children and the Temporary Protection Visa, especially its effect on separated families, breach Australia's obligations under international conventions and protocols.
- That Australia's treatment of asylum seekers is inhumane and is totally inconsistent with the values of tolerance and equality.
- That there should be a 90 day time limit to detention of asylum seekers, with review by the Federal Court for any further need for detention on grounds of security or risk of absconding.
- That all asylum seeking children and their families should be released from detention, as well as all long-term detained asylum seekers, providing that there are no security or absconding risks.

For more information contact: Howard Glenn, *Rights Australia*, on **0418 44 33 98**
Graham Young, National Forum, on **0411 104 801**

For more information:

Texts of both Bills and of an outline of the proposed legislation are available from the office of Mr Georgiou **(03) 9882 3677 or (02) 6277 4419** e-mail: P.Georgiou.MP@aph.gov.au

Liberals who are backing Mr Georgiou's Private Member's Bills are:

Bruce Baird, Member for Cook bruce.baird.mp@aph.gov.au

Marise Payne, Senator for NSW senator.payne@aph.gov.au

Russell Broadbent, Russell.Broadbent.MP@aph.gov.au

Judi Moylan, Member for Pearce j.moylan.mp@aph.gov.au

Senator.humphries@aph.gov.au

Text of Senator Vanstone's statement [VPS 64.05] available on her website: www.immi.gov.au

Or on www.aph.gov.au/senate/committee and go to Estimates (May 25, 2005)

For comment

Amnesty International Refugee_Team@amnesty.org.au

ChilOut - Children Out of Detention www.chilout.org E-mail: friends@chilout.org

National Council of Churches in Australia, James Thomson on **(02) 9299 2215** E-mail:

jthomson@ncca.org.au Website: www.ncca.org.au

Refugee Council of Australia "Margaret Piper" margaret@refugeecouncil.org.au

Rural Australians for Refugees news@ruralaustraliansforrefugees.org

SafeCom advocacy group, : <http://www.safecom.org.au/>

United Nations Association of Australia national president Margaret Reynolds **0418 181 843** e-mail: president@unaa.org.au



UNAA National Administrator David Purnell (02) 6259 5078 e-mail: administrator@unaa.org.au
 Uniting Church in Australia WA Synod (08) 9486 1577 E-mail: wasy nod@wa.uca.org.au or
 "Rosemary Miller \ (Social Justice\)" rosemary.miller@wa.uca.org.au

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[5] Deported man killed, say Greens

Greens Senator Kerry Nettle warned that moves to restrict court appeals by asylum seekers will lead to more forced deportations often to dangerous situations.

"Today [June 2] we have information that an Iraqi asylum seeker returned from Nauru in 2003 has been killed in Baghdad This case highlights the potentially tragic consequences of returning asylum seekers," Senator Nettle said.

The Iraqi man was working as an interpreter when he was killed by unknown attackers. His photograph was seen on Iraqi television and news of his death relayed back to friends in Sydney. "Had this man been allowed to come to Australia he would surely be alive today," she said.

She says there is no need for people to be held in detention while their cases are processed. Asylum seekers can and do live in the community whilst their claims for asylum are assessed.

Office of Greens Senator Kerry Nettle (02) 6277 3501 or 02 9690 2038
 E-mail: senator.nettle@aph.gov.au website www.kerrynettle.org.au

Kevin Rudd, Opposition spokesman for foreign affairs says a letter from the Immigration Department tabled in Senate Estimates this week regarding when the Department of Foreign Affairs first became aware of the deportation of Ms Vivian Alvarez -Solon fundamentally contradicts Foreign Minister's Downer's statements on the matter.

Mr Rudd said that Mr Downer had failed to give any explanation as to what his Department did for 18 months once they had been told by the Queensland Police that Ms Alvarez was an Australian citizen and had therefore been illegally deported.

For more information, Kevin Rudd's office (02) 6277 4941 e-mail: Kevin.Rudd.MP@aph.gov.au

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[6] Island territories under scrutiny

A new Parliamentary inquiry into the *Future of Indian Ocean Territories* may give asylum seeker advocates an opportunity to air concerns by residents of Christmas Island about conditions in the present detention centre – and issues surrounding the proposed detention centre.

Federal Parliament's External Territories Committee is to conduct an inquiry into current and future governance arrangements for the Indian Ocean Territories of Christmas Island and Cocos (Keeling) Islands.

In particular the Committee will consider:

- accountability and transparency of decision-making in relation to the Indian Ocean Territories;
- the role of the Shire of Christmas Island and the Shire of Cocos (Keeling) Islands;

- aspirations of the residents of Christmas Island and Cocos (Keeling) Islands for more representative governance arrangements;
- the link between more effective governance and improved economic sustainability for the Indian Ocean Territories;
- the operation of Western Australian applied laws;
- community service delivery including the effectiveness of service delivery agreements with the Western Australian Government; and
- proposals for reform of governance arrangements.

Written submissions are sought from interested persons and organisations. Submissions should be lodged with the committee secretariat by Friday **15 July 2005**. The Committee intends to conduct public hearings in Canberra, Perth, and on Christmas and Cocos (Keeling) Islands at dates to be advised.

The Chairman of the Committee is Senator Ross Lightfoot and the Deputy Chair is Senator Trish Crossin.

For more information contact the Committee Secretary on **(02) 6277 4355** or via e-mail at jscncet@aph.gov.au Or visit the Committee's website at www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/ncet

SIEV X trial reports

["SIEV X people smuggling trial now in its third week"](#) - commentary by Tony Kevin, *New Matilda*, Issue No 40, 1 June 2005

"The trial continues in Brisbane of Mr Khaleed Daoed, alleged assistant to convicted people smuggler Abu Quassey (now serving a five year sentence in Egypt for accidental homicide and people smuggling) ...

["SIEV X people smuggling trial now in its third week"](#) - commentary by Tony Kevin, *New Matilda*, Issue No 40, 1 June 2005

<http://www.newmatilda.com/home/articledetailmagazine.asp?ArticleID=679&HomepageID=83>

<http://www.tonykevin.com/people-smuggling-3rd-week.html>

"Tony Kevin" tonykevin@webone.com.au

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[7] Dialogue on treaties

As the first of three related projects, The Australian National University's Centre for Democratic Institutions will conduct a joint Australian-Indonesian dialogue dealing with the topic 'Parliamentary Consideration of International Treaties'.

Parliamentarians and officials from Indonesia's House of Representatives (DPR) Commission 1 and Australia's Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Trade (JSCFADT), and Joint Standing Committee on Treaties (JSCOT) will participate.

An Indonesian scholar preparing a centre-piece research paper commissioned by CDI on '*Indonesian Treaty Practice*'. Confirmation of Australian and Indonesia participation has been received from the Chairs of JSCFADT, JSCOT, Commission 1, and the Speaker of the DPR.

Outcomes towards improving political governance and political practice will include establishment and enhancement of deeper Indonesia/Australia parliamentary links, and information and learning



exchange on high-level committee work best process and practice, for both the members and the secretariat of the DPR and its Commissions.

For more information, contact the Centre for Democratic Institutions, Research School of Social Sciences, Australian National University, Canberra. Ph: (02) 6125 0605
Email: cdi@anu.edu.au Website: www.cdi.anu.edu.au

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[8] Global burden of mental disorders

In an effort to reduce the huge global burden of disease linked to mental disorders around the world, the **World Health Organisation** (WHO) is launching the first global forum about community-based psychosocial rehabilitation services.

These rehabilitation services represent an alternative to psychiatric hospitals, and aim to provide local care to people with severe mental health disorders, including medication, psychological support, and rehabilitation activities. Services can include protected apartments where patients can live, and opportunities for them to work. An estimated 450 million people worldwide are affected by mental disorders.

WHO is inviting people to write the Organisation about community-based psychosocial rehabilitation projects that have worked well and about those which have not been successful. During the first phase of this forum, running from now to September 30, WHO encourages individuals, families, members of professional, healthcare and non-governmental organisations, and mental health representatives and providers around the world to tell us about their range of experiences.

Letters or reports of no more than 500 words on the topic should be sent to WHO's Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse by September 30.

These letters or reports should include the following information:

- Description of services before the changes;
- Description of what happened;
- Description of the mental health system after the changes;
- Lessons learned.
- The changes described can be from any time period between 1980 and 2005.

Letters or reports can be submitted by e-mail to: mnh@who.int

or by mail to: Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse, World Health Organisation, 20, Avenue Appia, Ch-1211 Geneva, Switzerland.

For further information, please contact:

Dr. Jose Bertolote , Department of Mental Health, OMS tel.: +41 22 791 3627 .

e-mail: bertolotej@who.int or Jane McElligott, Communications Adviser, Department of Non Communicable Diseases and Mental Health, Tel: +41 22 791 3353 e-mail: mcelligottj@who.int

See also: www.who.int/nmh

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[9] WHO seeks help in tobacco fight

The World Health Organisation (WHO) is encouraging health professionals to be proactive in minimising the problems caused by tobacco addiction, consumption and exposure to tobacco smoke.

This year's World No Tobacco Day on May 31 was dedicated to the role of health professionals in tobacco control under the banner of '*Health Professionals against tobacco, action and answers*'.

"Tobacco continues to be a leading global killer, with nearly five million deaths a year", notes Dr Lee Jong-wook, WHO Director-General, "The health community plays a key role in the global effort to fight this epidemic. Health professionals are on the frontline. They need the skills to help people stop smoking, and they need to lead by example, and quit tobacco use themselves."

Bill targets tobacco and politics

A Private Members' Bill proposing to make it painful and expensive for political parties to accept donations from tobacco companies is back on the Parliamentary Notice Paper. Denison MHR, **Duncan Kerr**, first introduced the Commonwealth Electoral Amendment (Preventing Smoking Related Deaths) Bill in February 2004. In its report in September last year, the Senate Community Affairs and Legislation Committee recommended that the Bill proceed, but a federal election intervened...

The Commonwealth Electoral Amendment (Preventing Smoking Related Deaths) Bill 2005, was introduced by Mr Kerr this week.

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Health **Ann Corcoran**, took advantage of World No Tobacco Day to introduce a Private Members Motion in Parliament on May 31, calling on political parties to refuse donations from tobacco companies.

Senator Lyn Allison, Leader of the Australian Democrats has called on the Federal Government to ban fruit flavoured cigarettes as they did with smokeless tobacco during the 1980s.

She says fruit flavoured cigarettes are the latest in a long list of tactics used by tobacco companies to lure more young people to their products.

"The Government has an obligation to do all it can to prevent the 19,000 deaths caused by smoking related illness in Australia each year and it can start by banning these products from sale."

On October 12, 1989 a ban on smokeless tobacco products was declared under the Trade Practices Act 1974. This ban was prompted by a World Health Organisation recommendation of a global and pre-emptive ban on all smokeless cigarettes on the basis of studies showing these products cause oral cancer and other severe oral conditions.

She said, also, that the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission "is a toothless tiger if it is not given the funds to take legal action against tobacco companies over deceptive conduct."

She was commenting after Australian Competition and Consumer Commission chairman Graeme Samuels indicated the commission's hand were tied if a tobacco company refused to comply with the law, when responding to her questions in Senate Estimates hearings.

The ACCC has struck an \$8 million deal with two tobacco companies who used the deceptive terms "mild" and "light" on cigarettes, but a third, Imperial Tobacco Australia Limited has refused to come to the party.



“These companies should be required to make good for the fact that they have fooled 55% of smokers into thinking mild and light descriptors are less harmful, undermining efforts to get people to quit,” she said.

“Estimates responses show the ACCC has no plan in place on how the \$8 million will be spent, will not analyse its advertising program to see if it has worked and that some of the \$8 million will be siphoned off for Quitline support.”

For more information about WNTD, visit www.who.int/tobacco/wntd .

All materials available on <http://www.who.int/tobacco/resources/publications/wntd/2005/en/>

For further information, please contact: Marta Seoane, Communications Officer, Tobacco Free Initiative, WHO Geneva, Tel: +41 22 791 2489, mobile +41 79 475 5551, email:

seoanem@who.int.

Duncan Kerr (03) 6234 5255 Duncan.Kerr.MP@aph.gov.au

Ann Corcoran MP (03) 5995 2905 e-mail: Ann.Corcoran.MP@aph.gov.au

Senator Allison's office (03) 9416 1880 senator.allison@aph.gov.au

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[10] PM says indigenous health “appalling”

In his address to the National Reconciliation Planning Workshop on PM May 30, the Prime Minister, John Howard, said, “The rest of the community has to reach out and meet the proper and enduring aspirations of indigenous people. To recognise, as I do and I believe the overwhelming majority of your fellow Australians do, that there is no section of our community which is more disadvantaged than the indigenous people of this country.

“It’s a disadvantage found in areas of health, of employment, of education opportunities and social acceptance and respect. But although we have made progress in things such as school retention rates we still have a very long way to go in the area of educational opportunities. And although we’ve made progress in many health areas the gap between indigenous health outcomes and the health outcomes of the rest of the community is quite unacceptable, indeed quite appalling.

“And that in recognising that a new spirit of responsibility is needed on an individual basis by indigenous communities and that passive welfare is a poison for indigenous communities, as it is for the rest of the Australian community, I say in the name of the Government that we will reach out. We will meet the indigenous people of this country more than half way if necessary ...”

The Leader of the Opposition, Kim Beazley, addressing the same workshop, said, “Indigenous children are more than twice as likely to be born with low birth weight as non-indigenous babies, putting 1,140 children a year at a physical and developmental disadvantage.

“Put bluntly, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies are not getting a good start in life compared to non-Indigenous babies. All the odds are stacked against them. Comparatively, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers do even worse. The average Indigenous Australian male will live to about 56, and females to 63. In comparison, non-Indigenous Australian men live to the age of 77 and women to the age of 82. The contrast is intolerable - Indigenous Australians have the worst health of any Indigenous population in a developed, wealthy country. ...”

Opposition spokesman for Public Administration and Open Government, Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation and the Arts Senator Kim Carr told the workshop that the ALP had outlined “the beginning of a new course on Indigenous affairs, acknowledging that as a nation we are still failing Indigenous Australians and we must find a better way. Under Labor a new Department of Indigenous Affairs would be established as a separate department within Cabinet. ...”



For texts and more information:

Prime Minister's office (02) 6277 7700 website: www.pm.gov.au

Leader of the Opposition (02) 6277 4022 e-mail: Kim.Bezley.MP@aph.gov.au Carr

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[11] NPT negotiations fail

The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Alexander Downer, says the failure of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference to agree on further steps to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons is deeply disappointing.

'The dangerous and destabilising nuclear activities of North Korea and Iran reveal the weaknesses of the current non-proliferation regime, while terrorist organisations are known to be seeking weapons of mass destruction,' he said.

"NPT members have missed a key opportunity at this five-yearly conference to adopt stronger measures to address these threats to international security. ...".

For more information: Minister for Foreign Affairs (02) 6277 7500 www.dfat.gov.au and his department 02 6261 1555

Uranium exports condemned

Greens Senator Kerry Nettle has condemned government plans "to massively expand the export of uranium as anti-environment, anti-peace, and pro-greed."

She said, "The Minister for Resources has said the government wants to export 'as much uranium as we possibly can', despite the environmental and nuclear proliferation dangers it poses. ... Expanding uranium mining and export is will clearly contribute to expansion of the nuclear industry and in some cases nuclear weapons.

"The government has admitted that it is seeking a treaty to allow uranium exports to China, one of the world nuclear superpowers, but the government will not be able to ensure that Australian uranium will not end up in Chinese nuclear weapons. ...

"Australia's plan represents another backward step for non-proliferation at a time when the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty talks in New York have failed and the nuclear weaponry industry is poised for further expansion.

"Australia is home to over a third of the world's know uranium deposits. As a result we have a unique capacity to limit the expansion of the nuclear industry for the good of the planet. This is a responsibility the government is too greedy to accept."

For more information: Office of Greens Senator Kerry Nettle (02) 6277 3501 or 02 9690 2038

E-mail: senator.nettle@aph.gov.au website www.kerrynettle.org.au

Follow-up news from the Conference in New York from [Reaching Critical Will's "News in Review"](#)

Or call Dimity Hawkins, Executive Officer, Medical Association for Prevention of War (Australia) ph: (03) 8344 1637 e-mail: dimity.hawkins@mapw.org.au website: www.mapw.org.au

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[12] Taskforce to report on biofuels

The Prime Minister, John Howard, has appointed a taskforce to examine the latest scientific evidence on the impacts of ethanol and other biofuel use on human health, environmental outcomes and automotive operations. It will report to the Government by the end of July.

The taskforce will assess the costs and benefits of biofuel production, examining:

- The findings of the December 2003 CSIRO/ABARE/BTRE desktop study into the appropriateness of a 350 million litre biofuels target;
- The findings of the DEH study into the impacts of E10 and E20 on automotive operation;
- Other international and Australian scientific research on the health and environmental impacts of supplementing fossil fuels with oxygenates such as ethanol and other biofuel blends;
- The economic and scientific bases upon which decisions have been made to support ethanol and other biofuel production in North America, Europe and other countries.

The Taskforce will comprise Dr Conall O'Connell, Deputy Secretary, Department of Environment and Heritage; Dr David Brockway, Chief, Division of Energy Technology, CSIRO; Dr John Keniry, Chairman Ridley Corporation Limited; and Mr Max Gillard, Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Toyota Technical Centre, Asia Pacific Australia.

It will be supported by a small whole-of-government secretariat based in the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet.

For more information: Prime Minister's office (02) 6277 7700 website: www.pm.gov.au

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[13] Tsunami funds accountability

The Australian Council for International Development launched its first quarterly report on tsunami accountability on June 1 "to demonstrates ACFID's commitment to transparency and accountability", according to executive director Paul O'Callaghan

He said, "Our report was launched jointly with [Foreign Minister] Mr Downer's own statement about government tsunami accountability. Mr Downer praised the NGO performance and was complimentary about the fact that the five major agencies, representing 95% of the total donations, had joined up under ACFID auspices for this purpose. ..."

To access the report and press release go to ACFID's website at <http://www.acfid.asn.au/campaigns/tsunamireport.htm>.

Tsunami Response

The primary reference point for information about NGO appeals and related issues is the ACFID website at <http://www.acfid.asn.au/campaigns/asiaearthquake.htm>.

Or call Olivia Allnutt, Australian Council for International Development (ACFID), ph: **02 6281 9214** "Olivia Allnutt" oallnutt@acfid.asn.au

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[14] HREOC reports

The full list of selected submissions to the Commission's 'Discussion Paper on Discrimination in Employment on the basis of Criminal Record' are now available on the project webpages at http://www.humanrights.gov.au/human_rights/criminalrecord/discussion.html http://www.humanrights.gov.au/human_rights/criminalrecord/submissions/index.html.

The submissions are listed by categories of organisation including Community groups and legal organisations; private employer bodies; government employers; licensing and registration organisations; researchers; ex-offenders; child protection organisations.

For inquiries on the project e-mail: criminalrecord@humanrights.gov.au

Recent updates on HREOC's disability rights site www.humanrights.gov.au/disability_rights include a submission and evidence to the Senate Committee on Mental Health and a submission to a review by the Australian Building Codes Board and the Victorian Building Commission on accessible housing.

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[15] Nominate for human rights awards

The President of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, John von Doussa QC, has announced that the annual **Human Rights Medal and Awards** are open for nominations of the outstanding contributions of 'local champions'.

People are asked to nominate someone who works everyday without fuss or fanfare to promote and protect human rights and overcome discrimination in Australia. Entries for the awards close on Friday, September 30. Presentations will be made at a ceremony in Sydney on December 9.

The **Human Rights Medal** recognises the achievements of an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to the promotion and protection of human rights in Australia. Last year's winners were Dick Estens, founder of Moree's Aboriginal Employment Strategy and Deborah Kilroy, founder of the women's prison support service Sisters Inside.

Human Rights Awards are also presented to an individual or an organisation that has made significant contributions in the areas of **Law**, the **Community**, **Print Media**, **Television**, **Radio** or **Arts Non-Fiction**.

Download the entry form from the Commission's website at

www.humanrights.gov.au/hr_awards/

Or phone **(02) 9284 9618** or email hrawards@humanrights.gov.au for more information.

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[16] Amnesty's Khan honoured

Amnesty International's Secretary General, Irene Khan, has been awarded an honorary doctorate by Ferris University, Yokohama, Japan. In accepting the honour, Ms Khan referred to Amnesty International's Stop Violence against Women campaign saying, "Students, ordinary people, each one of us can make a difference in the world. ... "Across the world women are asserting their rights to employment, medical care and education. Women activists have achieved huge victories



in the past 30 years. Yet, in many parts of the world, women still do not have the vote, or equal access to property and family rights.

"In far too many countries laws discriminate against women, politically, socially and economically. Cultural values are often invoked by governments to justify this unequal treatment, in contravention of their obligations to uphold universal standards of human rights. Violence against women doesn't only happen over there, far away. It also happens here: in our homes; to women we know and love; sometimes to us."

For more information, access Amnesty International's Stop Violence Against Women website at <http://amnesty-news.c.topica.com/maadzVeabhrMobfE1obb/>

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[17] Amnesty and US debate lack of human rights

President Bush again failed to address longstanding concerns regarding US detention policies and practices in the context of the "war on terror", Amnesty International said in response to his comments. President Bush had said, "I'm aware of the Amnesty International report, and it's absurd. (...) The United States is a country that promotes freedom around the world. When there's accusations made about certain actions by our people, they're fully investigated in a transparent way."

Amnesty says that at Guantánamo, the US has operated an isolated prison camp in which people are confined arbitrarily, held virtually incommunicado, without charge, trial or access to due process. Not a single Guantánamo detainee has had the legality of their detention reviewed by a court, despite the Supreme Court ruling of last year.

"Guantánamo is only the visible part of the story. Evidence continues to mount that the US operates a network of detention centres where people are held in secret or outside any proper legal framework - from Afghanistan to Iraq and beyond," said Amnesty International.

"US interrogation and detention policies and practices during the "war on terror", have deliberately and systematically breached the absolute prohibition of torture and ill-treatment. Individuals held in US custody have been transferred for interrogation to countries known to practice torture.

"If President Bush and his administration are serious about freedom and human dignity they should recommit to the rule of law and human rights," Amnesty says, and continues to call on the US administration to:

- End all secret and incommunicado detentions;
- Grant the International Committee of the Red Cross full access to all detainees including those held in secret locations;
- Ensure recourse to the law for all detainees;
- Establish a full independent commission of inquiry into all allegations of torture, ill-treatment, arbitrary detentions and "disappearances";
- Bring to justice anyone responsible for authorising or committing human rights violations

For more information, please see:

"Guantánamo and beyond: The continuing pursuit of unchecked executive power": <http://amnesty-news.c.topica.com/maadzT2abhrAHbfE1obb/>

"USA: Human dignity denied: Torture and accountability in the 'war on terror' ": <http://amnesty-news.c.topica.com/maadzT2abhrAlbfE1obb/>

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[18] Diplomatic appointment

Jeremy Bruer has been appointed Australian Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates. He will replace Noel Campbell, who has been Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates since August 2002. Mr Bruer is expected to take up his appointment in August.

A senior DFAT member, Mr Bruer is currently Director of the Iraq Rehabilitation Unit, a position he has held since July 2004. Before this he was a Director in the Terrorism White Paper Taskforce. He has also held the positions of Executive Officer in the International Organisations Branch (2003-2004) and the Iraq Task Force (2003); First Secretary and Deputy Head of Mission, Australian Embassy, Riyadh (1999-2002); Executive Officer, Pacific Islands Branch (1995-1998); and Third and later Second Secretary at the Australian High Commission in Port Moresby (1992-1995).

For more information: Minister for Foreign Affairs (02) 6277 7500
www.dfat.gov.au Department: 02 6261 1555

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[19] Anti-terror a threat to EU human rights

In a detailed analysis of the European Union's counter-terrorism initiatives in the area of criminal law since September 11 2001, Amnesty International has shown that the absence of concrete human rights safeguards in many of these initiatives is likely to undermine efforts to fight terrorism in Europe.

"Respect for human rights is often portrayed as hampering efforts to defeat terrorism but this new analysis shows how genuine security is undermined if basic human rights and the rule of law are not respected. It is in the breach, not in the protection of human rights that security is put at risk. That goes for the EU as well as anywhere else in the world," Dick Oosting, Director of Amnesty International's EU Office told a press conference in Brussels.

Amnesty International's 40-page analysis *"Human Rights Dissolving at the Borders? Counter-terrorism and EU Criminal Law"* - the first analysis of its type of the overall implications of the EU's recent counter-terrorism initiatives in the area of criminal law - is available on: <http://amnesty-news.c.topica.com/maadzxGabhpmhbF1obb/>
 A shorter Executive Summary <http://amnesty-news.c.topica.com/maadzxGabhpmibF1obb/> is also available online.

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[20] Events recall signing of UN Charter

The Charter of the United Nations was signed on June 26 1945, in San Francisco. To commemorate this historic event 60 years ago a Solemn Mass will be celebrated at 10.30am, on Sunday June 26, 2005, at St. Mary's Cathedral, Sydney, organised by the United Nations Association of Australia. All are invited to attend. For more details, contact Convenor, Mrs L. Price UNAA through U.N.I.C. Tel: (02) 9262 5111 or E.mail unic@un.org.au

There will be a special event at Parliament House, Canberra, on June 20 to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the UN's Charter signing, at 12pm in Committee Room 1R3.

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[21] WHO concern on infant mortality

New global estimates published in the June issue of the *Bulletin of the World Health Organisation* suggest that each year 904,400 newborn babies die in the first few days of life as a consequence of complications in childbirth and a further 1.02 million babies die during labour.

These are the first published global estimates for deaths of babies during labour (intrapartum stillbirths). The newborn deaths estimates from this study are the first using a more specific definition. The term "birth asphyxia" previously included other causes of newborn death such as complications of prematurity. These new estimates are the most rigorous to date. Dr Joy Lawn from Saving Newborn Lives/Save the Children-USA (an initiative funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation since 2000) worked with Dr Kenji Shibuya and Dr Claudia Stein of the World Health Organisation to develop new methods using the limited data available from vital registration and research studies.

The study:

Lawn JE, Shibuya, K, Stein C. *No cry at birth*: global estimates of intrapartum stillbirths and intrapartum-related neonatal deaths. *Bulletin of the World Health Organisation*, 2005, June <http://www.who.int/bulletin/en/index.html>

For more information:

World Health Organisation. *The World Health Report 2005*. Making every mother and child count. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2005. <http://www.who.int/whr/2005/en/>

The Healthy Newborn Partnership. An interagency group of over 30 members including WHO, partnering to address newborn survival and health. <http://www.healthynewborns.org/>

Saving Newborn Lives. <http://www.savethechildren.org/health/newborns/index.asp>

Health metrics network <http://www.who.int/healthmetrics/en/>

[21] Walk to feed the hungry

On Sunday, June 12 the United Nations World Food Program (WFP) and its partner TNT, global provider of express, logistics and mail services, will rally more than 200,000 people - WFP and TNT staff, partners, families and friends to join in the battle against child hunger and walk five kilometres in more than 90 countries across 24 time zones.

This year *Fight Hunger: Walk the World* a global advocacy and fund raising event, aims to raise over 2 million Euros (or more than US\$2.5 million) for WFP's global school feeding program.

Beginning at 10am in Auckland, New Zealand WFP and TNT --with the help of a wide variety of private and public partners, celebrities and public figures--are walking the world - from Sydney to Santiago, from Moscow to Los Angeles - in order to put the spotlight on hunger, which kills a child every 5 seconds.

To help by pledging money to a participant, or to donate money go to www.fighthunger.org.

For more information contact: Ramin Rafirasme, WFP Walk the World Communications Coordinator, Tel. +39-06-6513 2684, e-mail: ramin.rafirasme@wfp.org

José Driessen, TNT Group Media Relations, Tel +31 20 500 6238, e-mail: Jose.driessen@tnt.com

WFP: Brenda Barton, Deputy Director Communications, WFP/Rome, Tel. +39-06-65132602 e-mail: brenda.barton@wfp.org

Video game proves winner

The new humanitarian video game for kids called "Food Force", launched by the UN World Food Program has attracted its millionth user.



Designed to educate kids about hunger by working alongside a crack team of emergency aid workers, kids from more than 40 different countries have now downloaded the game.

"Not one shot was fired - unusual in games these days," said John Powell, WFP Deputy Executive Director for Fundraising and Communications.

Available as a free download through a dedicated website where a rich array of educational information on global hunger can also be found -- www.food-force.com -- the game contains six different missions for children 8-13 years old, who are faced with a number of realistic challenges.

Backed by Yahoo! and Internet2, a Washington-based educational high speed network, the World Food Program is now focussing on the free distribution into schools in multiple geographic markets. The game is supported by a community web site (www.food-force.com) which includes teacher lesson packs on world hunger, available in seven languages and provided by a UN sister organisation, the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO).

The MAC & PC based video game is available as a free internet download from www.food-force.com.

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[22] Keep in touch

The Dag Hammarskjöld Library has launched a new web blog, *UN Pulse*, an alert to just-released UN online information, major reports, publications and documents.
<http://www.un.org/depts/dhl/unpulse/>

If you are a regular reader of UNity, please make sure you notify us if you change your e-mail address by sending your new e-address to imathews@ozemail.com.au

If you want more information about the United Nations Association of Australia in your state or if you want to join UNAA, contact:

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unconnections_subscribe@topica.e-mail-publisher.com or access: www.wfuna.org

The United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator website to track funds pledged to the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster. www.reliefweb.int

Items [27] Diary Dates and [28] Job vacancies are in the Supplement to UNity transmitted separately

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