

UNITY

THE NATIONAL PUBLICATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

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Editor: Judy Cannon - 07 3358 2623

Email: judycnn@yahoo.com.au

Contributing Editor: Ian Mathews - 02 6281 4025

Email: ian.mathews7@bigpond.com

NOTE: It is planned shortly to upgrade the UNity format and the new Contents Headings are part of the process to provide easier access to information. Until the new format is introduced, please note some links may continue to need to be copied and pasted into address space/browser.

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A. HUMAN RIGHTS

AUSTRALIA

FEBRUARY 13 SET FOR APOLOGY

The formal apology to members of the Stolen Generations would be made on February 13 and would be the first item of business for the new parliament, Jenny Macklin, Minister for Indigenous Affairs, said (30/1/08).

"A national apology to the Stolen Generations and their families is a first, necessary step to move forward from the past," she said. "The apology will be made on behalf of the Australian Government and does not attribute guilt to the current generation of Australian people." She had consulted widely on the apology, she said.

A national Welcome to Country as part of the opening parliament ceremony would be held on February 12, delivered by Elder Matilda House on behalf of the Ngunnawal people. This would carry national significance in symbolising a future of respect and partnership with Indigenous people.

"Once we establish this respect, the government can work with Indigenous communities to improve services aimed at closing the 17-year life expectancy gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians," the minister said.

DETAILS: http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/Internet/jennymacklin.nsf/content/apology_30jan08.htm

SAYING SORRY 'ESSENTIAL FOR MOVING FORWARD'

Saying sorry to members of the Stolen Generations was an essential step in healing and progressing life outcomes for Indigenous Australians, said Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner said (30/1/08). He congratulated the Federal Government for saying it would make a formal apology on February 13.

"An apology that acknowledges the existence and the impact of this dark aspect of our history where Indigenous children were forcibly removed from their families, and which pays respect to the Stolen Generations for their suffering, their resilience and their dignity, is an early and exceptional sign of goodwill from the new government.

DETAILS: <http://au.mq1.mail.yahoo.com/dc/launch?.rand=f0273t043nom9>

ON 'SURVIVAL DAY 2008' WILPF CALLS FOR EARLY ACTION

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) in a January 26 statement congratulated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) peoples on surviving the many afflictions that the past 220 years of white settlement had brought.

WILPF stated it welcomed the new Rudd Government's indication that it would say "Sorry" to the stolen generations, as well as Jenny Macklin's consultations with Aboriginal leaders on the form of words.

The statement said because of the huge deficits and history of neglect by governments at all levels over many years, WILPF calls for greatly increased funds to be directed towards the needs of Aboriginal Australians.

"For instance, despite national prosperity, death rates for Aboriginal infants remain three times higher than those for non-Indigenous Australians. We concur with Fred Chaney in the joint address with Tom Calma to the National Press Club, 5 July 2007 in his view that, 'Australians want no less than equality for Aboriginal people. Australians will tolerate the extra expenditure required if they are confident that it will yield results.'

WILPF called for more funds for adequate housing, sanitation, nutrition, education and health programs and said it was greatly relieved the new Federal Government would not abolish the permit system in NT Aboriginal communities. It advocated the promised review of the NT intervention should be brought forward because it believed many of the previous government's measures were counterproductive.

DETAILS: WILPF (Australia) statement on Federal Govt's actions on Aboriginal issues.doc

43K [View as HTML](#) [Open as a Google document](#) [Download](#)

Cathy Picone and Ruth Russell, Joint National Coordinators, on 08 8232 6334; wilpfaustralia@wilpf.org.au and PO Box 345 Rundle Mall, 5000.

INDIGENOUS LAND USE AGREEMENT SIGNED OVER IPSWICH

An Indigenous land use agreement concerning native title claimants, the Jagera, Yuggera and Ugarapul people and Ipswich City Council, has been signed after two years of negotiations, the National Native Title Tribunal announced (30/1/08). The agreement deals with future infrastructure development, cultural heritage issues and community relations.

The entire Ipswich City Council region is covered by the group's native title claim, which was lodged in 2003 over a 1,204 sq km area in south-east Queensland.

Tribunal Member Neville MacPherson said the agreement, over one of Queensland's most rapidly growing regions, was a significant step forward for the Ipswich City Council and the traditional owners "as both parties now have certainty about their respective rights in the area and how this land will be managed."

The agreement was also a milestone for the Jagera, Yuggera and Ugarapul people as they worked towards attaining legal recognition of their native title rights in south-east Queensland, he said. (Note: Indigenous land use agreements are agreements about the use and management of land and waters, made between one or more Indigenous groups and other people.)

DETAILS: http://www.nntt.gov.au/media/1201650612_3692.html

HELD SIX YEARS - APPEAL FOR AFGHAN ASYLUM SEEKERS

Afghan asylum seekers, including children, have been waiting six years for protection, reports Pamela Curr, Campaign Coordinator, Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC). They have been held in Indonesia since 2001.

"Please ask our new government to show compassion and respect as they consider the future for these people," she said, commenting that before the October federal election, Afghan Embassy officials told the people that Australia did not want to pay the International Organisation of Migration (IOM) for them any more and they would have to return to Afghanistan.

She said on the day the ASRC legal team was interviewing a family to lodge humanitarian off-shore visa (applications) for them, the team returned from lunch to find only one woman. Indonesian police removed nine men and sent them 400km away to Makassar Island Quarantine prison. Ms Curr claimed the purpose of separating the women and children from the men had been to force them to sign to "voluntarily" return to Afghanistan. ASRC was also concerned about 31 others whom it believed were being treated "in this appalling way."

She urged people to write to Senator Chris Evans saying the asylum seekers should have a chance to live in Australia. Senator Christopher Evans is on 02 6277 7860 (f 02 6273 4144) or email: [Online Contact Form](#)

Related links on Afghan situation: http://www.rand.org/hot_topics/afghanistan.html; <http://dss.un.org>;

[Non-Governmental Security Group Says War in Afghanistan Just Beginning](#)

DETAILS: Pamela Curr on 03 93266066; f 03 93265199; www.asrc.org.au

and <http://justfreedom.org.au>

AUSTRALIANS URGED TO CONTRIBUTE TO COMMUNITY

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd used his Australia Day message to urge people to contribute more to their local communities. He said work and family commitments should not be incompatible with working to benefit the community and the country.

He said relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians were one of the nation's great challenges, according to The West (26/1/08). "We should be deeply proud of our country. Proud of Aboriginal culture, which represents the oldest continuing culture in human history. We stand in awe as we hear the songs and the sounds and the stories and the music which have come down to us from antiquity."

Governor-General Major-General Michael Jeffery said Australia Day was a time to reflect on the success in forging a peaceful and prosperous multicultural society but Aborigines were the nation's first settlers and their ancient culture should also be celebrated.

PM DETERMINED TO HALT HOMELESSNESS

Increasing numbers of the poorest Australians were becoming homeless despite the country's wealth. In Canberra on Sunday, Mr Rudd announced the Labor Government would develop a comprehensive, long-term plan to tackle homelessness as a matter of national urgency (27/1/08).

The prime minister ordered a White Paper report to be completed by August. The announcement followed a performance by the Choir of Hard Knocks, made famous by an ABC TV documentary last year. Many of the Melbourne choir members have struggled with homelessness or other forms of poverty.

Every night there were about 10,000 children who were homeless and about 14,000 people "sleeping rough", Mr Rudd said. "We have a situation where as the country gets wealthier, homelessness gets worse. Something needs to be done."

The executive director of the welfare group Brotherhood of St Laurence, Tony Nicholson, will chair the White Paper committee, the Daily Telegraph reported.

TOP WOMEN EARNING LESS 'A DEEP CONCERN'

Sex Discrimination Commissioner Elizabeth Broderick said she was deeply concerned that research showed that even women in top earning positions in the Australian Stock Exchange (ASX) top 200 companies earned much less than their male counterparts.

The research was conducted by the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency (EOWA), according to a HREOC media release (25/1/08). She said the data revealed in *Gender Income Distribution of Top Earners* made it clear that Australia had to get serious about closing the gap between female and male earnings.

"The figures from this report tell us that our task stretches from the bottom rungs of the labour market all the way to the top, where you'd think our leading companies would be doing much better," she said.

"With just seven per cent of women in the top earning category, it is particularly disappointing that even those women who

make it to the top as chief financial officers or chief operating officers, despite all the barriers they face, still find themselves paid up to 50 per cent less than men at the same level ... I'd also like to see strong leadership from male CEOs on the issue of gender equality as a whole."

MATERNITY LEAVE SCHEME

Commissioner Broderick welcomed the Federal Government's reference for a Productivity Commission inquiry into the introduction of a taxpayer-funded paid maternity leave scheme and recommended a minimum government-funded 14-week scheme paid at the level of the federal minimum wage.

"It is important that small business not be adversely impacted by the cost or administrative burden of any scheme," she said. "Any proposal must not act as a disincentive to the employment of women."

Paid maternity leave was crucial for addressing the disadvantage that women workers faced as a result of child-bearing. Australia should be brought into line as a matter of urgency with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) standard that countries should provide at least 14 weeks of paid maternity leave. Australia was one of only two OECD countries that did not have a legislated paid maternity leave system.

The commissioner is conducting a national 'Listening Tour' to hear Australians' views on issues concerning equality between men and women. DETAILS: www.humanrights.gov.au/listeningtour/

ASIA

CHINA CRACKS DOWN ON DISSENT PRE-OLYMPICS

Human rights activists Hu Jia and his wife, Zeng Jinyan, recently discussed with guests their hopes that the Beijing Olympic Games would help democratise China and now Mr Hu is in jail while Ms Zeng is under house arrest, The Australian reported (28/1/08).

The fate of Mr Hu and Ms Zeng illustrated a widening crackdown on dissent ahead of the summer Olympics, violating promises Beijing made in its winning bid to host the games, according to activists.

Mr Hu, named by Time magazine as one of the world's 100 most influential people, is accused of incitement to subvert state power, a charge that carries a possible life sentence. It was reported that his arrest had triggered protests from the European Union and the US, as well as anger from activists inside and outside China.

REPORT: <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,23117596-25837,00.html> and <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/30/world/asia/30dissident.html?ex=1202274000&en=5690df595d770aed&ei=5070&emc=eta1>

ALICE TAY MEMORIAL AWARD

The Australia-China Council is calling for applications for the Alice Tay Memorial Award, awarded for the promotion of human rights in China (30/1/08).

The \$15,000 award will be made in May 2008 to an Australian who has made a significant contribution to improving the understanding of human rights in China and who is also currently seeking funding for a project related to human rights in China.

Applications close on March 31. Instructions about the application procedure and selection criteria are located on the Australia-China Council (ACC) website at: www.dfat.gov.au/acc/rap/atm_award.html

DETAILS: ACC Secretariat on 02 6261 3818 or auschina.council@dfat.gov.au

POET IN TROUBLE: WOMEN POST PANTS

A leading Burmese poet has been arrested after concealing a message attacking the military regime's leader in a verse published in a popular magazine, the London Guardian reported (26/1/08).

Saw Wai's seemingly innocuous lines were printed in the weekly *Love Journal*. But read vertically, the first word of each line of the poem forms the phrase 'Power crazy Senior General Than Shwe'.

The issue of the magazine containing the eight-line poem, called *February 14*, was published last month. The author was arrested on Tuesday but no word has emerged about his fate.

The publisher and editor were also questioned.

Dissidents frustrated that last year's pro-democracy protests failed to bring any change have resorted to ever more creative ways to show their anger. In one, the Panties for Peace campaign, people were urged to send women's knickers to Burmese (Myanmar) embassies as the country's rulers believe contact with female underwear would sap them of their power.

REPORT: Guardian News & Media/Sydney Morning Herald
<http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2008/01/25/1201157668305.html>

SOUTH AMERICA

GREENS SEEK RELEASE OF CHILEAN ON HUNGER STRIKE

A delegation of Sydney women is taking a letter to the Chilean Consul calling for the release of Indigenous-rights activist Patricia Troncoso.

Ms Troncoso, a former Valparaiso Catholic University professor and well-known pro-Mapuche rights activist, has been on hunger strike in a Chilean prison for the past three months. She was convicted under an Augusto Pinochet-era anti-terrorism law for her alleged involvement in burning nearly 250 acres of pine plantations belonging to Mininco, a multinational forestry and logging company occupying Mapuche land.

Last October she and four other Angol prisoners began a hunger strike to draw attention to their plight. They had been controversially sentenced to 10 years' or more imprisonment and to pay over \$US750 000. Four prisoners ended their hunger strike in December but Ms Troncoso has continued. Her health was reported to have seriously deteriorated as she enters the fourth month of her hunger strike. The delegation is supported by NSW Greens Member Sylvia Hale. DETAILS: Chris Holley on 02 9230 3030 and 0437 779 546.

EUROPE

BRITAIN UNVEILS SWEEPING NEW TERRORISM LAW PROPOSALS

The British Government has unveiled sweeping plans to toughen terrorism laws, including a proposal to hold suspects for up to 42 days without charge, the Sydney Morning Herald reported (25/1/08).

Home Secretary Jacqui Smith's plan would increase the limit for detaining suspects without charge from 28 days to 42 days, allow police to take DNA samples from terrorism suspects and urge judges to impose stiffer sentences on criminals whose offences are linked to terrorism.

REPORT: <http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2008/01/25/1201157602833.html>

B. PEACE AND SECURITY

BAN: PENALISE COUNTRIES USING CHILD SOLDIERS

Child soldiers are being recruited in at least a dozen countries and the UN should impose sanctions against those responsible, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon urged on Tuesday in a report to the Security Council. Children are being used for fighting in armies and other groups mainly in African and Asian countries, including Uganda and Sri Lanka, Ban said. UNICEF estimated last year that some 250,000 children served as soldiers. UN News Centre's [release](#) or <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=25440&Cr=child&Cr1=soldier>. Reuters (30/1/08).

MIDDLE EAST

GAZA: UN CHIEF TELLS OF GAP BETWEEN HOPES AND GRIM REALITY

The recent troubles in the Middle East illustrate "the gap between the aspirations of the political process and the grim realities of the situation on the ground," the UN political chief told the Security Council, warning that the current crisis is overshadowing efforts to find a long-term peace settlement to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (30/1/08).

In his second Council [briefing](#) on the issue in just over a week, the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs B. Lynn Pascoe said there had been an intensification of violence in the past month in the Gaza Strip and southern Israel, as well as periods of total closure of Gaza and increased humanitarian suffering and human rights violations.

Only 32 truckloads of goods entered Gaza between January 18 and yesterday (29/1/08) because of Israel's comprehensive closure of the border crossings, Mr Pascoe said, compared to a daily average of 93 trucks during the first two weeks of this month and an average of 250 trucks in the weeks before last June.

A backlog of approximately 224 trucks belonging to various UN agencies had developed, although he said the UN understood that 35 trucks of the UN and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) were scheduled to enter Gaza that day.

"The crisis adds new urgency to the proposal of the Palestinian Authority to operate the Gaza crossings," he said, stressing UN support for the initiative and calling on all parties to work together towards the controlled re-opening of the crossings for both humanitarian and commercial reasons. DETAILS:

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=25455&Cr=palestin&Cr1=>

ISRAEL PLANS TO TIGHTEN GRIP ON GAZA

Israeli military officials said on Sunday they plan to cut the electricity supply as an extension of ongoing restriction of fuel deliveries to the Gaza Strip. The plan is part of a larger strategy of "economic warfare" against the Hamas leadership. [The Washington Post](#) (28/1/08).

HAMAS BLOWS ISRAEL'S STRATEGY

When Hamas blew large holes in Gaza's border with Egypt, allowing thousands of Palestinians a chance to stock up on medicines, food and consumer goods, it also blew a large hole in the Israeli policy, backed by Washington, of squeezing the population of Gaza in the hope that they would turn actively against Hamas, the Sydney Morning Herald reported (27/1/08).

ARTICLE: <http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2008/01/27/1201368944617.html>

US ASKS IRAQ FOR WIDE RIGHTS ON WAR

With its international mandate in [Iraq](#) set to expire in 11 months, the Bush administration will insist that the government in Baghdad give the US broad authority to conduct combat operations and guarantee civilian contractors specific legal protections from Iraqi law, according to administration and military officials (25/1/08).

The American negotiating position for a formal military-to-military relationship, one that would replace the current [United Nations](#) mandate, is laid out in a draft proposal that was described by White House, Pentagon, State Department and military officials on ground rules of anonymity. It also includes less controversial demands that American troops be immune from Iraqi prosecution, and that they maintain the power to detain Iraqi prisoners. REPORT:

http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/25/world/middleeast/25military.html?_r=1&hp&oref=slogin

ASIA

JAPANESE ANTI A & H BOMB COUNCIL SEEKS SUPPORT

Shushi Kajimoto, Secretary General of Hyogo Council Against A & H Bombs, of Kobe, Japan, writes that on the 33rd anniversary of the nuclear-free 'Kobe Formula' - which bans the entry of nuclear-armed warships into the Port of Kobe - the council is seeking messages of solidarity.

The celebration on March 18 will feature Motofumi Asai, president of Hiroshima Peace Institute of Hiroshima City University, as guest speaker. He will discuss the possibility of creating a nuclear-free north-east Asia and the role of the Kobe Formula.

Mr Shushi Kajimoto states the municipality requires certification from all foreign vessels entering the Port of Kobe stating that they have no nuclear weapons on board. This procedure is based on a 1975 resolution unanimously adopted by the city council. Since then the Kobe Formula seems to be a symbol of Japan's three non-nuclear principals; not to possess, not to manufacture and not to allow entry of nuclear weapons.

He says surprisingly it has had a major impact on US military forces. For the past 33 years, no US warship had visited Kobe because of the US policy of NCND (neither confirm nor deny) on whether or not it has nuclear weapons on board. Thus the Kobe Formula has been a beacon of hope for people aspiring for peace and a nuclear-free world.

"However, the US is putting pressure on both local and national governments of Japan to have the nuclear-free Kobe Formula completely scrapped so that they can use Japan's commercial ports for their new global strategy, the phoney 'War on Terror,'" he writes. With the subservient Japanese Government's help, the US military bases in Japan were being reinforced and the Self Defence Forces of Japan were more deeply involved in US military operations. For the past couple of years, all across Japan, the number of port calls of US warships had been increasing.

"The Bush administration's 'global realignment of US forces' strategy will have the SDFJ (Self Defence Forces of Japan) take part in any US war, including even a US pre-emptive nuclear attack," he warns. The role of the Kobe Formula had become more important than ever.

"We need your support and encouragement ... It would be a great help if you could send your message before the end of February," he says. Messages will be translated, printed and given to each individual at the meeting. "It is your message that always makes us keep going," he ends. DETAILS: Hyogo Council Against A & H Bombs, 5F Chamoto-bldg 6-7-6 Motomachidori Chuoku Kobe 650-0022 Japan; on +81-78-341-2818; f +81-78-371-2427; kbnohu@mub.biglobe.ne.jp; hikakukobe@yahoo.co.jp.

EX-PAKISTAN MILITARY HEAD 'TIME FOR TROOPS TO GO'

A former head of Pakistan's military intelligence says Australia's troop deployment in Afghanistan was doomed to failure and urged the Federal Government to withdraw its forces as quickly as possible, the Sydney Morning Herald reported (31/1/08).

Hamid Gul, the retired general who was the director-general of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate when it supported Afghan militias against the Soviet occupation of their country, believes Western troops will be forced to leave Afghanistan by the end of next year.

He said Australia should find a way out like Japan ... and many others.

ARTICLE: <http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2008/01/30/1201369228305.html>

PAKISTAN REJECTS CIA BID

Pakistan has rejected a bid by the top two US intelligence officials to win more access for the CIA in tribal areas where Al-Qa'ida, the Taliban and other militants are active, The Australian reported (28/1/08).

Citing unnamed officials briefed on the secret visit on January 9 by Mike McConnell, the director of national intelligence, and General Michael Hayden, the CIA director, the New York Times said that Pakistan's President Pervez Musharraf "rebuffed proposals to expand any American combat presence in Pakistan, either through unilateral covert CIA missions or by joint operations with Pakistani security forces.

"Instead, Pakistan and the US are discussing a series of other joint efforts, including increasing the number and scope of missions by armed Predator surveillance aircraft over the tribal areas, and identifying ways that the US can speed information about people suspected of being militants to Pakistani security forces," the newspaper said.

REPORT: <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,23117632-2703,00.html>

KARZAI: 'WE HAVE TO END EXTREMISM'

The Taliban's violent ways remain a strong force against progress in Afghanistan, President Hamid Karzai has warned. According to Newsweek, he complained of Pakistani "complicity" with the resurgent rebels but said he saw a new seriousness about fighting Islamist terrorists from [Pakistan's](#) isolated ruler, [Pervez Musharraf](#). [Newsweek](#) excerpts (4/2/08).

AFGHAN GUNMEN KIDNAP US AID WORKER

Gunmen have kidnapped an American aid worker and her driver in southern Afghanistan's largest city, snatching her from a residential area while on her way to work, The Australian reported (28/1/08). Cyd Mizell, 49, works in Kandahar for the Asian Rural Life Development Foundation.

Provincial Governor Asadullah Khalid blamed the kidnappings on the "enemy of Islam and the enemy of Afghanistan". He said the American was wearing a burka when she was seized. Ms Mizell teaches English at the university and gives embroidery lessons at a girl's school. Foreigners kidnapped in the past year number about 27 but is rare in the case of Americans.

REPORT: <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,23117629-2703,00.html>

AFRICA

ANNAN ON KENYA: 'IMPUNITY CANNOT BE ALLOWED TO STAND'

Former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan said he had witnessed "gross and systematic human rights abuses" on a visit to western Kenya where over 100 people had been killed in the Rift Valley province, The Australian reported (28/1/08). "Impunity cannot be allowed to stand," Mr Annan was reported as saying. In Naivasha gangs with machetes and bows and arrows burned and hacked to death members of a rival tribe as police stood by hopelessly

Ethnically driven violence intensified in Kenya on Sunday, and police officials said at least 19 people, including 11 children, were burned to death in a house by a mob, the New York Times reported (28/1/08). It was reported that at least 750 lives had been lost and the fighting appeared to be spreading across the Rift Valley region, a picturesque part of Kenya known for its game parks and lodges.

REPORTS: <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,23115366-12377,00.html> and <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/28/world/africa/28cnd-kenya.html?ex=1202101200&en=4452ca1d8fa67a3a&ei=5070&emc=eta1>

AUSTRALIA WELCOMES ANNAN DIALOGUE

Australia was deeply disturbed by the further surge in violence that has occurred in Kenya over recent days, Foreign Minister Stephen Smith said (31/1/08). Australia welcomed the national dialogue by African mediators. led by former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan. aimed at resolving the ongoing crisis.

"Those inciting or engaging in violence should cease immediately," Mr Smith said. "The continuation of the crisis and the violence only hurts ordinary Kenyans. The protection of those Kenyans displaced from their homes by the violence needs to be given priority by the Kenyan authorities." DETAILS: http://www.foreignminister.gov.au/releases/2008/fa-s021_08.html

RADIO STATIONS INFLAME PASSIONS

Media monitors in Kenya say inflammatory statements and songs broadcast on local language radio stations have contributed significantly to the surge in post-election ethnic violence that has killed nearly 900 people and displaced 255,000 others during the past month.

As VOA correspondent Alisha Ryu reports from Nairobi, the broadcasts bear a striking similarity to 1994 broadcasts in Rwanda that helped whip ethnic Hutus into a killing frenzy that resulted in the genocide of 800,000 ethnic Tutsis. The broadcasts that incited Rwandan ethnic Hutus to commit genocide used dehumanising language against ethnic Tutsis.

According to the state-funded Kenya National Commission on Human Rights, which monitored hate speech before the December 27 national elections, local radio stations in Kenya also aired opinions that used dehumanising language and

obscure references to make negative, sometimes genocidal, comments about other ethnic groups, the Voice of America reported (30/1/08)..

ARTICLE: <http://au.mq1.mail.yahoo.com/dc/launch?.rand=f0273t043nom9>

DARFUR PEACEKEEPERS' MISSION ACCELERATION AGREED

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir have agreed on the need to accelerate the deployment of the hybrid United Nations-African Union peacekeeping mission (UNAMID) to the war-wracked Darfur region and to finalise the status-of-forces agreement for the new missions (30/1/08).

DETAILS: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=25456&Cr=darfur&Cr1=>

C. UNITED NATIONS & AGENCIES

AUSTRALIA SEEKS BIGGER ROLE IN UN

Australia wants to play a greater role in the United Nations, including becoming a two-year member on the Security Council, Foreign Minister Stephen Smith said. Smith, who made the comments after meeting with UN Deputy Secretary-General Asha-Rose Migiro, also said that Australia wants "to see the UN play a much greater role in multilateral affairs" and that Japan and India deserve to be permanent members of a reformed Security Council.

REPORT: [The Age \(Melbourne, Australia\)/AAP](http://www.abc.net.au/news/2008-01-30/australia-seeks-bigger-role-in-un/125) (1/25)

UN FOUNDATION ANSWERS BUSH'S PLEA

One key way the US Congress could help achieve Mr Bush's goals would be by working to re-establish America's role as a global leader in international bodies like the United Nations, says the UN Foundation.

On Monday, in his last State of the Union address, President Bush asked Congress to help address key international issues, like stemming nuclear proliferation in Iran and providing stability in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"Right now, the United States is \$1.5 billion behind in its payments to the United Nations," said the UN Foundation. "This debt is undermining the US's ability to work with other nations and its ability to persuade them to help combat global warming, address threats to security, or promote peace in war-torn regions.

"These are issues that no one nation can or should face alone. Fortunately, the United Nations and its agencies provide an immediate and key way to leverage US dollars and protect our interests around the globe. The UN is deeply committed to addressing the world's most pressing problems." Listed were:

[Iraq](#). The UN is on the ground helping to promote peace and stability in and around Iraq. In addition to providing assistance on Iraqi governance issues, the UN is providing food, medicine, and educational materials for millions of Iraqi refugees.

[Darfur](#). The UN officially took control of the Darfur peacekeeping mission at the beginning of the year. While full deployment has been slowed due lack of resources and equipment, most importantly helicopters, the UN and Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon continue to press for broad international support for the peace process and the UN mission.

[Climate Change](#). Last year, the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change was awarded a Nobel Peace Prize for its work on climate change. Now, the UN, with support from the UN Foundation, is helping Member States to meet and development a comprehensive roadmap to deal with this global problem.

The UN Foundation says it looks forward to working with others this year to strengthen the state of the UN, especially by calling for improved US-UN relations and the full and timely payment of US dues to the United Nations.

UNF WEBSITES: <http://www.unfoundation.org/>;

http://www.globalproblems-globalsolutions-files.org/email/email_un.htm

BETTER WORLD CAMPAIGN BACKING

The Better World Campaign, in a separate message, said if readers had ideas about how the next US president should work with the UN and the world, ideas could be lodged at [On Day One](#), a new web project of the Better World Campaign to encourage Americans to tell the next US president what he or she should do "on day one" to improve international cooperation and America's standing in the world. DETAILS: [BetterWorldCampaign.org](http://www.betterworldcampaign.org)

VOLUNTARILY RETURNING CONGOLESE HIT 50,000

The number of Congolese refugees repatriated from Tanzania with UNHCR help has passed the 50,000 mark. The milestone was reached on Tuesday when the chartered ferry, MV Mwongozo, left the port of Kigoma on Lake Tanganyika with 184 returnees on board, UNHCR reports 30/1/08).

Kengeta Kiza was officially designated the 50,000th Congolese refugee repatriated by the UN refugee agency since October 2005, when UNHCR launched the voluntary program. Travelling with her six children and her elderly mother, the 26-year-old Kiza was headed for the town of Dine in the Democratic Republic of the Congo's South Kivu province after 10 years in Tanzania's Lugufu camp.

"It's both a happy and a sad occasion," said UNHCR Assistant High Commissioner for Operations Judy Cheng-Hopkins. "It is wonderful that we can help them to return in safety and dignity, but they will face many challenges upon return," she said.

The returnees will receive assistance packages once they are in South Kivu, including household items, plastic sheeting, buckets, jerry cans, mosquito nets, agricultural tools and food rations for three months. Besides assisting the refugees with transport and a basic assistance package, UNHCR has been involved in reconstruction work, promotion of income-generating activities and repairing infrastructure, including health clinics and schools, in a bid to ease the reintegration of the returnees. DETAILS: <http://www.unhcr.org/news/NEWS/47a0a86e4.html>

D. HEALTH & MEANS

POOR NATIONS BATTLE TO RECOVER LOOTED FUNDS

Delegates at the UN anti-corruption conference in Bali, Indonesia, agreed that poor countries required the assistance of the developed world in their efforts to repatriate billions of dollars in stolen funds. An increasingly complex international financial system is making recovery efforts more difficult, officials noted. [Reuters](http://africa.reuters.com/top/news/usnBAN939620.html) (29/1/08). REPORT: <http://africa.reuters.com/top/news/usnBAN939620.html>

UN OFFICIAL URGES ACTION ON CORRUPTION


A senior UN official has [urged](#) countries to put the UN Convention against Corruption into action as more than 1,000 participants attended a week-long UN conference in Bali, Indonesia (28/1/08).

"Corruption hurts us all, therefore fighting it is a shared responsibility - we all have a duty and the power to say 'No' to corruption," said the head of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Antonio Maria Costa. He highlighted areas where UNODC, and others, can provide technical assistance, for example asset recovery, a key measure in the anti-corruption convention.

He warned that efforts to recover assets, for example through the World Bank/UNODC Stolen Asset Recovery Initiative, were running into resistance from "middle-level bureaucrats with connections, knowledge and entrenched interests who have a lot to lose." He urged participants "to neutralise these black holes in your administrations."

Global flows from criminal activities, corruption and tax evasion are estimated at between \$1 trillion to \$1.6 trillion a year, according to a UN and World Bank report. Transparency International regards the UNCAC meetings in Indonesia as a key moment to take action on monitoring the anti-corruption measures which countries have agreed to implement.

TI CONTACT: pres@transparency.org

TI REPORT: [English](#) 

DEFEAT THE KLEPTOCRATS AND CRONIES, CORRUPTION FIGHTERS URGE

The World Bank's managing director overseeing anti-corruption efforts, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, urged delegates to remove legal obstacles to the return of stolen state assets, the Sydney Morning Herald reported (30/1/08). A former Nigerian finance and foreign minister, she said the billions stolen every year could provide food, health and infrastructure for those in most need.

Indonesian Foreign Minister Hassan Wirayuda said his country was still struggling to recover funds hidden overseas but did not state whether his nation would continue to pursue the billions in Indonesian state assets alleged to have been stolen by the late former President Soeharto.

REPORT: <http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2008/01/29/1201369135170.html>

E. CLIMATE CHANGE & ENVIRONMENT

BAN TO WORLD LEADERS: WATER CRISIS A TOP PRIORITY

The world was facing a growing water crisis and must do much more to preserve the essential resource, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon told the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, on Thursday. The Darfur conflict was originally set off because of drought. Water shortages would fuel conflicts in many places unless more was done to prevent it.

Businesses were doing too little to tackle a looming water crisis, he said describing its response to a UN water sustainability initiative as "a drop in the bucket," the London Financial Times reported. Water had displaced climate change as Davos delegates' chief worry outside the US economy, with no fewer than nine water-related events on the program, compared with just one last year.

Mr Ban said the conflict in the Darfur region of Sudan was touched off by drought. He said shortages of water contribute to poverty and social hardship in Somalia, Chad, Israel, the Palestinian territories, Nigeria, Sri Lanka, Haiti, Colombia and Kazakhstan, the Seattle Post-Intelligencer reported.

"Too often, where we need water we find guns instead," Mr Ban said. "Population growth will make the problem worse. So will climate change. As the global economy grows, so will its thirst. Many more conflicts lie just over the horizon."

REPORTS: [Financial Times \(free registration\)](#) (25/1/08);

[Seattle Post-Intelligencer/Associated Press](#) (24/1/08).

ACADEMIC: 'HUGE IMPACT ON HUMAN HEALTH'

Climate change will have a huge impact on human health, and despite the focus on its economic implications, is already undermining the earth's natural life-support systems.

Tony McMichael, from the National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health at the Australian National University, warns in the latest *British Medical Journal* that human-induced climate change is far from being merely an economic or technological challenge - it threatens the systems humans depend on for survival, The Australian reported (28/1/08).

He says the health dangers include direct threats such as heatwaves, cyclones, floods and storms, and the spread of tropical diseases as well as more complex effects such as the disruption of the ecosystems and food chains on which humans ultimately depend.

"For example, one of the things that a build-up of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is doing is acidifying the world's oceans, and scientists are concerned it will interfere with the ability of tiny zooplankton to make their shells out of calcium carbonate," Professor McMichael says.

ARTICLE: <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,23118733-11949,00.html>

Professor McMichael, NHMRC Australia Fellow at the National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health (NCEPH) at the ANU, co-authored the paper with ANU colleague Sharon Friel, and Tony Nyong from the University of Jos in Nigeria and Carlos Corvalan from the World Health Organisation. PAPER: <http://press.psprings.co.uk/bmi/january/ac191.pdf>
BMJ: <http://www.bmj.com/cgi/content/short/336/7637/191>

AMAZON DESTRUCTION STEPS UP

Brazil has announced a series of measures aimed at stopping an alarming rise in Amazon deforestation over the past five months, the Sydney Morning Herald reported (26/1/08). The moves include a call for stepped-up police vigilance, a ban on using deforested areas, and the suspension of public funds for any group or individual found to be breaking environmental laws. It is estimated 7000sq km have been devastated, occurring mostly in November and December.

REPORT: <http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2008/01/25/1201157668296.html>

GEELONG HOSTS WEATHER BOFFINS

Geelong has been host the Australian Meteorological and Oceanographic Society (AMOS) where recent science looking at climate and climate change was on the agenda (January 29-February 1).

The AMOS conference was a great opportunity for researchers to showcase their latest research," said Centre for Australian Weather and Climate Research director, Dr Chris Mitchell.

DETAILS: http://www.bom.gov.au/announcements/media_releases/ho/20080130.shtml

F. OTHER NEWS

THREE MSF STAFF KILLED IN SOMALI

Three Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) staff were killed in the Somali town of Kismayo, not far from the hospital where they worked, a Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) media release reported (28/1/08).

They were a Kenyan doctor, Victor Okumu, 51, a surgeon who had previously worked with MSF on several missions such as Darfur and Sierra Leone, a French logician Damien Lehalle, 27, on his second mission with MSF, and Billan, a Somali driver. Another team member was slightly wounded; the exact circumstances of the incident were not yet clear.

MSF opened an emergency surgical project in Kismayo in September 2007, providing, along with other care, emergency obstetrics surgery. MSF has worked continuously in Somalia for more than 16 years and is currently providing medical care in 11 regions. Some 60 MSF international staff and more than 800 national staff are now working in Somalia, performing more than 300,000 outpatient consultations and admitting an estimated 10,000 patients every year.

DETAILS: Sally McMillan on 02 8570 2611 or 0447 482 379; <http://www.msf.org.au>.

REFUGEES FAILING CITIZENSHIP QUIZ

Australian sporting heroes were likely to disappear from the controversial citizenship test after early results showed it was disadvantaging refugees, Michelle Grattan reported in The Age (29/1/08). Figures released by the government showed that while 97 per cent of skilled migrants passed the test, only 80 per cent in the 'humanitarian' program, which included refugees, passed at a first or subsequent attempt. People in the family reunion program had a 90 per cent pass rate.

REPORT: <http://www.theage.com.au/news/national/refugees-failing-citizenship-quiz/2008/01/28/1201369037439.html>

PRIME MINISTER OF SOLOMON ISLANDS VISITS

A visit by the Prime Minister of Solomon Islands, Dr Derek Sikua, to Canberra, has been welcomed by the Federal Government as an opportunity to re-establish a close and cooperative relationship, a media release stated (23/1/08).

Dr Sikua has announced an ambitious agenda of domestic reform for the Solomon Islands and discussions were held to discover how Australia's development assistance could best reinforce these reforms, especially in health, other public

services and vocational education. Dr Sikua spoke of the value of the bilateral relationship and the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI). DETAILS: 02 6277 7744.

ASIA PACIFIC WEEK 2008: CAN PAKISTAN SURVIVE?

Under panel discussion during the ANU's Asia Pacific Week 2008 was *Can Pakistan Survive?* Participants scheduled included Professor William Maley, Director of ANU Asia-Pacific College of Diplomacy, Professor Amin Saikal, Director of ANU Centre for Arab and Islamic Studies, writer and scholar Shakira Hussein and Dr Christopher Snedden from the Department of International Relations at Deakin University, chaired by Dean of ANU College of Asia and the Pacific Professor Robin Jeffrey.

Can Pakistan Survive? was the title of a book published by Pakistani writer Tariq Ali in 1983. Revisiting the question last year, Ali concluded: "The country is here to stay. And it's not religion or the mystical 'ideology of Pakistan' that guarantees its survival, but its nuclear capacity and Washington."

About 200 scholars, including 60 from overseas, met during the week - January 29 to February 1 – and established the largest international annual gathering of post-graduate students researching Asia and the Pacific, an Australian National University media release stated (25/1/08).

This year's event, *Building Australia's Asia Pacific Expertise*, was set around seven Graduate Summer Schools focussing on Japan, China, Vietnam, Indonesia, East Timor, Pacific Islands and South Asia.

"It's a week-long training opportunity when over 200 graduate students – most of them with scholarships – will be discussing their research and getting feedback from a wide range of academics, national and international guests," said Convener Dr Luigi Tomba earlier.

"Asia Pacific Week is not your traditional conference. It is a free and unique way of producing a network of young scholars, of developing skills and tools for research and of producing the expertise essential to the Australian capacity to understand the region," he said.

DETAILS: <http://rspas.anu.edu.au/asiapacificweek/> CONTACTS: Dr Luigi Tomba on 02 6125 2993 and Martyn Pearce, ANU Media Office, on 02 6125 5575 / 0416 249 245.

NGO CONFERENCE AT GENEVA IN MARCH

Since 1984, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) has worked with other NGOs to organise a seminar linking March 8 - International Women's Day - with disarmament, peace and security issues. Each year, a report and statement from the NGO conference has been read into the record of the Conference on Disarmament (CD), the only official oral statement from NGOs to this body. The 2008 seminar will be in two parts:

On March 5 there will be a NGO conference (Geneva), an opportunity for activists and advocates to share information in a series of briefings, discussion and strategising on gender, security and preventing conflict.

Co-sponsored by WILPF, the NGO Committee on the Status of Women, and the NGO Committee on Disarmament, the day will start with a panel reflecting on the rewards and limits of Security Council resolution 1325. Participants will hear from experts on gender and military budgets, landmines, small arms, nuclear weapons and security policy, followed by breakout sessions for more in depth information and discussion.

Confirmed speakers include Catalina Perdomo of the Stockholm Institute for Peace Research, Rebecca Johnson, executive director of the Acronym Institute, Cora Weiss, president of The Hague Appeal for Peace, Rebecca Peters, director of the International Action Network on Small Arms, and Kate Harrison of WILPF on gender and cluster munitions, and Saba Nowzari- Coordinator, WILPF European Security Politics. Sylvie Brigot, the executive director of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, has been invited.

March 6 will provide an opportunity for dialogue among NGOs, governments and UN officials. A keynote speech at lunch will be followed by two panel discussions in the Council Chamber of the Palais des Nations in Geneva. Co-sponsored by WILPF and the Geneva Forum, invited panellists include President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, Mary Robinson, Wangari Mathai and Naomi Klein among others.

The 2008 International Women's Day seminar will discuss the next phase of activity in putting resolution 1325 to work. A modest sponsorship program is available to enable the participation of a diverse range of women from developing countries and poorly funded NGOs.

DETAILS AND BACKGROUND: <http://www.wilpf.int.ch/events/2008IWDseminar.html> A finalised agenda will be posted

at this link shortly. INQUIRIES: Email felicity.hill@wilpf.ch

Two attachments — [Download all attachments](#)

8marchinvitation.doc

273K [View as HTML](#) [Open as a Google document](#) [Download](#)

8marchregistration.doc

352K [View as HTML](#) [Open as a Google document](#) [Download](#)

US NEGOTIATOR CHRISTOPHER HILL TALKS ABOUT ASIA

On this weekend CNN's *TALK ASIA* program, Washington's man in Asia, Christopher Hill, talks about North Korea and its leader Kim Jong-il. He shares his memories during a six-part series and voices concern over China's growing military power. Once US Ambassador to South Korea, the chief US negotiator explains why it is crucial to get his opponents to identify their real interests. He also reveals that selling the deal back to Washington can be an equally tough job.

PROGRAM DETAILS

Australia Eastern Time: February 2 at 1130; February 3 at 0300 and 0630; February 4 at 0100.

New Zealand Time: February 2 at 1330; February 3 at 0500 and 0830; and February 4 at 0300.

DETAILS: [CNN audio and podcasts: http://www.cnn.com/services/podcasting/](http://www.cnn.com/services/podcasting/)

LAST CHANCE TO VOTE ON PHOTOGRAPHS

The vote for the People's Choice Award of the 2007/08 Queensland Premier's Multicultural Photographic Awards closes on February 4. VOTE: www.photographicawards.qld.gov.au

Eleven entries responding to the theme New Beginnings have been selected for this year's shortlist and the images are on exhibition at South Bank Arbour, outside the Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University, Brisbane. The winners will be announced at the Awards Ceremony on February 10.

APPLICATIONS OPEN FOR \$3.5M COMMUNITY CELEBRATION FUND

A second round of community funding for Queensland's 150th Celebrations, which will provide up to \$3.5 million for community groups across the state, opened last week to help communities celebrate Queensland's 150th birthday.

The grants, ranging from \$2,000 to \$10,000, are available to community groups, local councils, educational institutions and incorporated organisations.

2009 marks the 150th anniversary of Queensland's separation from New South Wales. The anniversary celebrations, which will run over the year, will 'Reflect on our past, imagine our future', shaped around the four themes of history, people, places and the future.

Second round grants submissions close on April 13 and successful applicants will be announced in June. The third and final round will open in July 2008 with submissions closing in September.

DETAILS: Queensland's 150th Celebrations website at www.q150.qld.gov.au

G. MEDIA MATTERS

THE AGE: AFP CHIEF LAUNCHES ATTACK ON MEDIA

Australian Federal Police Commissioner Mick Keelty launched a stinging attack on the media for its reporting of counter-terrorism operations, accusing it of misinforming the community and, in some cases, helping to undermine the criminal justice system, *The Age* reported (30/1/08).

Mr Keelty also defended the AFP's counter-terrorism operations.

In a speech to the Sydney Institute, Mr Keelty said the need to act early to prevent terrorist attacks had to be balanced against the "need to have gathered as much evidence as possible to ensure successful prosecution".

Referring to "The now familiar chorus of calling for people to be sacked every time there is a difference of view", he was quoted as saying a first outcome could be that good people who would otherwise do an outstanding job for the community might be deterred from taking up positions of responsibility, and the second was "We risk permanent damage to public institutions when we actually need strong public confidence in those institutions."

Mr Keelty was reported as suggesting a "society of editors" be set up through which intelligence agencies could provide a series of off-the-record briefings to the media, to help keep it correctly informed.

The ABC reported that *The Australian* newspaper's Hedley Thomas who won Australian journalism's highest award, the Gold Walkley, for his coverage of the Mohamed Haneef affair, described Mr Keelty's reasoning in the speech as strange.

"On the one hand he was saying that defendants and suspects deserve a much better go in the court of public opinion, as he described it, and that the media should treat them more kindly," he said.

"But the facts are that in the Mohamed Haneef case and others, it's been the police, the security agencies and the politicians using police information, that have smeared the character of the suspects before they have even been charged," he claimed. It was reported that Dr Haneef's barrister, Stephen Keim, was equally perplexed by Mr Keelty's views about media coverage of AFP operations.

REPORTS: <http://www.theage.com.au/news/national/keelty-hits-out-at-media-reports/2008/01/29/1201369135967.html> ; <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/01/30/2149867.htm?section=australia>

AFGHAN JOURNALIST SENTENCED TO HANGING

Matthias Tomczak, convener, SAWA-Australia, writes that Parwiz Kambakhsh, a young Afghan journalist, imprisoned since October, has been sentenced to hang by a clerical court.

Parwiz Kambakhsh was accused of blasphemy for printing and distributing an article from the Internet, which pointed out controversial verses of the Quran regarding women's rights. A book, *Religion in the History of Civilization* by Will Durant, was reported to have been taken from his living room.

Mr Tomczak said although human rights and freedom of the press were officially guaranteed in Afghanistan, the religious fundamentalists had a solid grip on the justice system and tried every possible way to silence anyone who criticises or comments on alleged Northern Alliance criminals.

By placing Parwiz Kambakhsh in prison for "publishing enlightening articles in the local newspaper *Jahan-e-Now (The New World)*, the clerics are also trying to silence Kambakhsh's brother Yaqub Ibrahimi, a brave and realistic reporter who exposed many criminal aspects of the Jehadi mafia in Northern Afghanistan, he said. Ibrahimi was well-known around the world and the Jihadis and their clerical allies had not been able to silence him.

SAWA stands for the Support Association for the Women of Afghanistan. The Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA) is asking individuals and organisations to ask for Parwiz Kambakhsh's immediate release.

Protests can be sent to: The Presidential Office: [president@afghanistangov.org], the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) [spokesman-unama@un.org], the Supreme Court of Afghanistan [aquddus@supremecourt.gov.af] and to the Afghan Embassy in Australia [ambassador@afghanembassy.net] or to Afghan embassies in other countries. DETAILS: Matthias Tomczak at mtomczak@internode.on.net.

SRI LANKA: CONCERNS RISE FOR SAFETY OF JOURNALISTS

The safety of journalists in Sri Lanka was in serious jeopardy as several serious attacks and anti-media statements by government officials demonstrated a lack of respect for the value of media freedom in the country, the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) reported (30/1/08).

The Free Media Movement (FMM), the Sri Lankan Working Journalists' Association (SLWJA), the Federation of Media Employees Trade Union (FMETU), the Sri Lanka Muslim Media Forum (SLMMF) and the Sri Lanka Tamil Journalists' Alliance (SLTJA) have also condemned all attacks on journalists.

Recent incidents included a knife attack on Lal Hemantha Mawalage, producer in the news division of the state-controlled Sri Lanka Rupavahini Corporation (SLRC), on January 25. Mawalage reported he has received continuous death threats since speaking on behalf of SLRC employees regarding an aggressive intrusion into SLRC's offices by Labour Minister Mervyn Silva on December 27. Mawalage's vehicle was intentionally hit by another car on January 23.

On January 28, Suhaib M. Kasim, another journalist working for state-controlled media, was stabbed at his home in Colombo after five intruders entered his home and seriously injured his abdomen. On January 26 Associated Newspapers of Ceylon had "removed" Kasim from his position as associate editor of the state-controlled Tamil daily *Thinakaran*.

In an interview published on January 27, Defence Secretary Gotabhaya Rajapaksha openly called for media censorship, the judicial enforcement of criminal defamation and the prosecution of two leading media institutions for "critical reportage". The statement, published in *Sunday Lankadeepa*, was another alarming reflection of the Sri Lankan Government's growing and overt disregard for media freedom and the right of journalists to conduct their work freely, the IFJ stated. DETAILS: IFJ Asia-Pacific on +612 9333 0919.

H. ARTICLES IN FOCUS

ISRAELI AND PALESTINIAN

"I have often made the statement that the destinies of the Israeli and Palestinian people are inextricably linked and that there is no military solution to the conflict," writes Daniel Barenboim in the International Herald Tribune (29/1/08). "My recent acceptance of Palestinian nationality has given me the opportunity to demonstrate this more tangibly. When my family moved to Israel from Argentina in the 1950s, one of my parents' intentions was to spare me the experience of growing up as part of a minority - a Jewish minority. They wanted me to grow up as part of a majority - a Jewish majority. The tragedy of this is that my generation, despite having been educated in a society whose positive aspects and human values have greatly enriched my thinking, ignored the existence of a minority within Israel - a non-Jewish minority - which had been the majority in the whole of Palestine until the creation of the state of Israel in 1948."

ARTICLE: <http://www.ihf.com/articles/2008/01/29/opinion/edbarenboim.php>

HOW KENYA CAME UNDONE

Just a few weeks ago, Kenya remained an oasis of stability surrounded by nations at war. The tourist-friendly country is East Africa's economic engine, a hub for global trade, and a base for international humanitarian work, the Christian Science Monitor reported (29/1/08) ... So the explosion of violence that has left more than 750 people dead and forced a quarter-million to flee their homes since the disputed Dec. 27 presidential election came as a shock to many. But under the placid surface, Kenya boils with deep ethnic resentment that some observers say has been ignored for too long.

REPORT: <http://www.csmonitor.com/2008/0129/p01s04-woaf.html>

HOW TO STEAL AN ELECTION WITHOUT BREAKING A SWEAT

From Abuja to Islamabad, autocratic regimes have become adept at manipulating “free and fair elections” to stay in power, Foreign Policy magazine reports (January). The article discusses how it is done, gives a real-world example in Kenya and discusses how to stop it. ARTICLE: http://www.foreignpolicy.com/story/cms.php?story_id=4145

POOR MAN, RICH MAN, THIEF

Soeharto transformed Indonesia; his fatal flaw was not knowing when to stop, writes David Jenkins, in the Sydney Morning Herald (29/1/08) ... In 1965 - unless some of the more dramatic conspiracy theories prove to be correct - fate dealt an unexpected but opportune hand to Major-General Soeharto, the commander of Kostrad, the Indonesian army strategic reserve. Catapulted to prominence when six senior colleagues were murdered, Soeharto displayed “coolness, competence, caution and resolve. He also showed exceptional judgment and more than a streak of ruthlessness.” REPORT: <http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2008/01/28/1201369039312.html>

I. UNity, UN AND UNAA CONTACTS

To access major United Nations websites, go to:

[United Nations.](#)

[Secretary-General.](#)

[UN News Centre.](#)

[Key UN Bodies, Agencies, Funds and Programs.](#)

[United Nations Information Centre for Australia,](#)

[New Zealand and the Pacific,](#) Level 1, 7 National Circuit, Barton ACT 2600, Canberra or PO Box 5366, Kingston ACT 2604, and on 61 (2) 6273 8200.

The World Federation of United Nations is a global network of people linked through [United Nations Associations](#) in over 100 UN member states. Website available at <http://www.wfuna.org/who/>; newsletter at <http://www.wfuna.org/news/newsletter/index.cfm>.

For more information about the United Nations Association of Australia in your state or if you want to join UNAA, access <http://www.unaa.org.au/> or contact:

UNAA ACT unaaact@cyberone.com.au on 02 6247 4499.

UNAA NSW office@unaansw.org.au 02 9212 0998; f 02 9280 0137.

UNAA Qld unaabalmain@optusnet.com.au on ph/fax 07 32541096.

UNAA SA unaasa@picknowl.com.au on 08 8226 4141.

UNAA Tas. secretary@UNAATasmania.org on 03 6229 4269 <http://www.unaatasmania.org/>.

UNAA Vic info@unaavictoria.org.au on (03) 9670 7878 Website: <http://www.unaavictoria.org.au/>.

UNAA WA unaawa@tpg.com.au on 08 9221 9455 <http://www.unaa-wa.org.au/>.

UNAA NT (Darwin) <http://au.f313.mail.yahoo.com/ym/Compose?To=fletch44@bigpond.net.au> or on 0419 829509.

Earlier editions of UNity 2004-05, 2006 and 2007 are on the UNAA website: www.unaa.org.au or email the editor.

As a regular reader of UNity, please make sure you notify us if you change your email address by sending your new email address to judycnnn@yahoo.com.au

UN DISPATCH: The [UN Dispatch](#) is a blog providing commentary and coverage on UN issues. Its editor states its intended purpose is to offer thoughtful perspective on UN issues; provide factual information about UN work; and fact-check claims and coverage about the UN offered by pundits, journalists, bloggers, and others. It is sponsored by the United Nations Foundation.

Website: <http://www.undispatch.com/>