

UNITY

THE NATIONAL PUBLICATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

Compiled from Federal parliamentary and other sources relevant to Australia's obligations to the United Nations.

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A. UNITED NATIONS & AGENCIES

UN LOOKS AT GEORGIA-RUSSIA TENSIONS

The UN Security Council was due to meet in emergency session on Wednesday to discuss the dispute over Georgia's allegations that Russia shot down one of its spy planes. Tensions rose last week when Russian President Vladimir Putin sought closer ties with two regions that are trying to break away from Georgia. [BBC](#) (22/4/08), [The Christian Science Monitor](#) (23/4/08).

ERITREA'S TREATMENT OF BLUE HELMETS ANGERS UN

Eritrea's treatment of the United Nations' peacekeeping force along the border with Ethiopia is unacceptable, UN Security Council members said Tuesday. Eritrean authorities have branded the UN's presence illegal and worked to push the force out of the country. [AlertNet.org/Reuters](#) (22/4/08).

THOUSANDS GATHER AS ANNUAL INDIGENOUS FORUM KICKS OFF AT UN

The UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues [meets](#) at "a historic crossroads," UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon [told](#) the opening session as some 3,300 participants from around the world converged on UN Headquarters in New York for the two-week event (21/4/08).

Last year's adoption by world leaders of the landmark UN [Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) means this year's Permanent Forum – established in 2000 – is taking on a new role, Mr. Ban said in a video message.

"You will work to translate the declaration into a living document at the national and international levels," he said. "As you do, you will promote the UN development agenda and its vision of development for all. This includes the poorest and most vulnerable, a group to which many indigenous peoples belong."

The Declaration, a non-binding text that was adopted after two decades of debate, outlines the rights of the world's estimated 370 million indigenous people and outlaws discrimination against them. It sets out rights to culture, identity, language, employment, health, education and other issues.

Climate change is the special theme of this year's session of the Forum, a choice applauded by the Secretary-General.

"Indigenous peoples live in many of the world's most biologically diverse areas. As custodians of these lands, they have accumulated deep, first-hand knowledge about the impacts of environmental degradation, including climate change. They know the economic and social consequences, and they can and should play a role in the global response."

Mr Ban also welcomed the focus this session on several other issues and challenges, including the Pacific region and the need to protect and promote indigenous languages.

Jomo Kwame Sundaram, Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development, said the high interest in the event this year pointed to increasing awareness of indigenous peoples' issues.

"The forum is thus fulfilling its mandate to make the challenges, opportunities and good practices in this field more visible, for public policy and for action," he said.

The participants at the [Forum](#), a subsidiary of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), include senior UN officials and representatives of states, civil society and academia, as well as Bolivian President Evo Morales Ayma, the first indigenous leader of his country.

REPORT: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=26404&Cr=indigenous&Cr1=>

POPE: IF STATES DON'T GUARANTEE PROTECTION, WORLD MUST INTERVENE

The head of the Roman Catholic Church, Pope Benedict XVI, has told the UN in New York that member states should solve the world's crises together, BBC reported (18/4/08).

He said the world was still subject to "the decisions of a few", without naming countries. He urged states to protect their people from "grave and sustained" human rights abuses or face outside intervention. Benedict XVI is the third pope to address the UN. '

"Every state has the primary duty to protect its own population from grave and sustained violations of human rights," the pontiff said. "If states are unable to guarantee such protection, the international community must intervene with the juridical means provided in the United Nations Charter and in other international instruments." The real harm, he said, came from indifference or non-intervention. [The Washington Post](#) (19/4/08) , [Financial Times](#) ((19/4/08).

REPORT: [At UN, Pope urges strong stance on human rights](#)

B. CLIMATE CHANGE & ENVIRONMENT

CLIMATE CHANGE EXPERT 'UNDERESTIMATED' THREAT

Climate change expert Nicholas Stern says he underestimated the threat from global warming in his watershed report for the British Treasury in 2006, The Australian reported (18/4/08).

His comments echoed Ross Garnaut's warning in his interim report for the Rudd Government on climate change that the world was moving towards high risks of dangerous climate change more rapidly than had been generally understood.

Sir Nicholas said in London: "Emissions are growing much faster than we'd thought, the absorptive capacity of the planet is less than we'd thought, the risks of greenhouse gasses are potentially bigger than more cautious estimates and the speed of climate change seems to be faster." In his interim report, Professor Garnaut said that developments in mainstream scientific opinion suggested the world was moving towards high risks of dangerous climate change.

Sir Nicholas said the latest climate science showed global emissions of planet heating gases were rising faster and upsetting the climate more than previously thought. He warned evidence was growing that the planet's oceans, an important carbon sink, were increasingly saturated and unable to absorb as much carbon dioxide as previously.

REPORT: <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,23558205-2703,00.html>

BHUTAN THREATENED BY GLACIAL MELT

The Himalayan country of Bhutan, more environmentally conscious than most nations, is increasingly threatened by a force that may be too big for it to stop: massive floods caused by melting glaciers. The country stresses conservation and sustainable development, but is struggling with how to best respond to global warming threats. [Los Angeles Times](#) (20/4/08).

BIO-DIVERSITY CONSERVATION 'KEY TO MEDICAL RESEARCH': UNEP

Ensuring the survival of rare plants and animals around the world is crucial for the medical community's efforts to find new cures for various diseases, UN Environment Program Executive Director Achim Steiner said on Wednesday. "Because of science and technology ... we are in a much better position to unlock this ingenuity of nature found in so many species," he said. "Yet, in many cases, we will find that we have already lost it before we were able to use it." The threat of extinction looms over more than 16,000 species, the International Union for Conservation of Nature has said. [USA TODAY/Associated Press](#) (23/4/08).

BRAZIL STRUGGLES TO IMPLEMENT LOGGING MEASURES

Brazilian authorities have launched a concentrated campaign to combat illegal logging in the Amazon with more inspections, potential fines and criminal charges for those found violating

policy. While authorities tout the program as a serious effort to protect the rainforest, recent satellite data show an increase in logging activities. [The New York Times](#) (19/4/08).

E-WASTE CHOKING DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Despite international prohibitions against the export and import of toxic materials, tens of thousands of tons of e-waste are shipped to Africa, India and China every year, adding to health and environmental problems. Many impoverished people eke out a dangerous living digging through the waste for usable parts. [The Toronto Star](#) (21/4/08).

ABARE BEGINS SURVEYS ON BEE INDUSTRY

Australia wide surveys of Australian beekeepers have begun this week as part of a project to provide more information about the state of the industry and set future directions in industry strategy, and research and development.

ABARE - Australian Bureau Of Agricultural And Resource Economics - is undertaking the survey on behalf of the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation's (RIRDC) Honeybee program, exploring the characteristics of honeybee businesses, production and profitability, and demographic and socio-economic circumstances of people in the industry. (14/4/08).

DETAILS: ABARE – Milly Lubulwa, Survey Analysis Section, on 02 6272 2069/0408 162 395 or milly.lubulwa@abare.gov.au; RIRDC - Danny O'Brien, Communications Manager, on 02 6271 4175/0438 130 445.

NARRAN LAKES WATERING RESULTS IN HUGE ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

Four weeks into a six-week Murray-Darling Basin Commission (MDBC) watering at the Narran Lakes system has already resulted in a huge boost to the environmental health of the system's plants and animals, particularly its birdlife, the Murray-Darling Basin Commission reported this week. The MDBC bought 11,000 megalitres of water over the Easter weekend to supplement the natural watering occurring at the internationally important Ramsar wetland site in north central New South Wales. Rewed bird and plant life are reported.

DETAILS: Sam Leone on 0407 006 332; Murray-Darling Basin Commission 51 Allara Street (PO Box 409); sam.leone@mdbc.gov.au; www.mdbc.gov.au.

BIG FRANKLIN RIVER CELEBRATION FOR 25TH ANNIVERSARY

Former Prime Minister Bob Hawke, former Tasmanian Premier Doug Lowe and British TV personality UK botanist Professor David Bellamy will join blockaders and campaigners from across Australia at Hobart's 25th anniversary celebration of the Franklin River being saved.

On July 1 1983, the High Court of Australia ruled that the Hawke federal government had power to stop the Gray state government from destroying the World Heritage values of the Franklin and Gordon Rivers by building a 100m high rock fill dam across the lower Gordon gorge. The decision was a watershed in Australian environmental and legal history, a Greens media release stated (23/4/08).

At the preceding peaceful blockade of the dam site, 1500 people were arrested and some 500 jailed. Meanwhile, in the biggest environment rally in history, 22, 000 people marched behind the 'No Dams' banner in Hobart.

Greens leader Bob Brown said that 1000 people will join the celebration on July 1 at Hobart's Grand Chancellor Ballroom for a fast-moving panoply of reminiscences, music, film footage and spectacular photography of the world-renowned Franklin River.

"A \$1000 prize is being offered for the best Tasmanian wild rivers photograph taken since 1983," Senator Brown said. DETAILS: www.franklin25th.com; or on 03 6224 3222.

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY AWARDS 2008

Nominations for the United Nations Association of Australia World Environment Day Awards 2008 are now open and will continue until May 7. The World Environment Day Awards is a national awards program which recognises businesses, local governments, organisations, community groups, individuals, schools and the media whose work serves to protect, manage or restore the environment.

In recognition of the 2008 United Nations World Environment Day theme '*Kick the Habit – Towards a Low Carbon Economy*' and the International Year of Planet Earth 2008, the UNAA World Environment Day Awards will focus particular attention on global warming and opportunities for countries, companies and communities to de-carbonise their economies and lifestyles.

This year the United Nations Association of Australia will also introduce the '*Building Commission Award for Best Sustainable Residential Development Project*'. The award is open to companies, businesses and their agencies and seeks to award innovative environmentally sustainable building practices and principles. The Building Commission Award for '*Best Sustainable Residential Development*' seeks to recognise a residential building project demonstrating innovation and incorporation of environmentally sustainable development principles and practices.

Nominations are invited in the following categories:

Szencorp Green Building Award, *Sustainability Victoria Meeting the Greenhouse Challenge Award*, *DSE Excellence in Marine and Coastal Management Award*, *Building Commission Award for Best Sustainable Residential Development*, *ITW Industrial Packaging Education/School Award*, *Lincolne Scott Triple Bottom Line Award* and *Business Sustainability Awards*

Best specific environmental initiative; and Environmental best practice program, Community Award, Excellence in Sustainable Water Management Award, Individual Award for Outstanding Service to the Environment, Local Government Awards, Excellence in overall environmental management; and Best specific environmental initiative and Media Award for Environmental Reporting.

DETAILS: www.unaavictoria.org.au; Laura Szekfy, Communications and Events Manager, UNAA (Vic) on 03 9670 7878; F 03 9670 9993; office@unaavictoria.org.au; www.unaavictoria.org.au

C. PEACE & SECURITY

AFRICA

ZIMBABWE: TSVANGIRAI SEEKS UN AND AU INTERVENTION

Zimbabwean opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai has urged the UN and African Union to intervene in the crisis over his country's elections, the BBC reported (21/4/08).

He told UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon that he felt African efforts to obtain the release of results had made "no progress", a UN statement said. Mr Tsvangirai, head of the Movement for Democratic Change, believes he defeated President Robert Mugabe in the polls.

Human rights groups say they have found camps where people were being tortured for having voted "the wrong way". The government denies such allegations.

A recount in 23 out of 210 parliamentary seats which had been due to end on Monday was delayed for an unknown period. The MDC has rejected the recount as illegal and insists it beat Mr Mugabe's Zanu-PF party outright in the March 29 parliamentary and presidential polls.

REPORT: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7359854.stm>

MINISTER ARRIVES 'WITH KALASHNIKOV'

Zimbabwe's Health Minister, armed with a Kalashnikov, threatened to kill opposition supporters forced to attend a political meeting unless they voted for Robert Mugabe in a second round of the presidential election, witnesses say, according to the Sydney Morning Herald (22/4/08).

The accounts of the incident involving David Parirenyatwa - and witness reports of other forced meetings at which ZANU-PF MPs and senior military officers oversaw the beating of people who voted against Mr Mugabe in last month's elections - establish a direct link between the highest levels of the ruling party and what the opposition MDC is calling a 'war' against the people.

An affidavit made before a commissioner of oaths by an opposition activist alleged Dr Parirenyatwa, along with a deputy minister and other senior ruling party officials, threatened to kill MDC supporters. REPORT: <http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2008/04/21/1208742852144.html>

ZIMBABWE INTERVENTION CALLS MOUNT AS CHURCH FEARS GENOCIDE

Calls for international intervention to defuse Zimbabwe's post-election crisis mounted on Tuesday as the US urged China to call back a ship loaded with weapons for President Robert Mugabe's regime, the Sydney Morning Herald reported (23/4/08).

As church leaders in the troubled southern African nation warned rising violence could reach genocidal levels, the government in Beijing defended its sales of arms but hinted the cargo might not be delivered.

UN chief Ban Ki-moon meanwhile described the continued delay in announcing results for the March 29 presidential election as unacceptable, while Australia called an ongoing recount a ploy by Mugabe to steal victory.

In a joint statement, signed by the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference and the Zimbabwe Council of Churches, church leaders all called for outside help to end the unrest.

REPORT: <http://news.smh.com.au/zimbabwe-intervention-calls-mount-as-church-fears-genocide/20080423-27y3.html>

STILL NO SOLUTION FOR DARFUR

Five years after fighting first erupted in Darfur between Sudanese Government forces and rebel groups, the world has still not found a durable solution to the suffering of millions of people in the region, the UN humanitarian chief told the Security Council, warning this week that the situation would only deteriorate unless urgent measures were taken.

John Holmes, the UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, told a council [meeting](#) that he was saddened and angry to inform them that the situation inside Darfur had only worsened in the past 12 months, despite the efforts of the international community.

"We continue to see the goalposts receding, to the point where peace in Darfur seems further away today than ever," he said in a statement. "Further progress in the deployment of UNAMID [the hybrid UN-African Union peacekeeping force], equipped to protect civilians and improve security, will help.

"But only an end to all violence and concrete steps towards a political settlement will make the fundamental difference needed, as the rebel movements themselves above all need to recognise. Otherwise the reality is that the people of Darfur face a continued steady deterioration of their conditions of life and their chances of lasting recovery."

REPORT: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=26422&Cr=darfur&Cr1=>

UN: DARFUR DEATH TOLL HIGHER THAN BELIEVED

An estimated 300,000 people, about 100,000 more than previously thought, have died in the last five years of conflict in Sudan's Darfur region, John Holmes, humanitarian affairs head for the United Nations, said Wednesday. Sudanese officials dispute such high figures, saying only around 10,000 people have died. [BBC](#) (23/4/08), [CNN](#) (23/4/08).

ANNAN URGES AFRICAN LEADERS TO TAKE ACTION

Former UN chief Kofi Annan has urged African leaders to urgently step in and resolve the election crisis in Zimbabwe, warning it was a threat to neighbouring countries, the ABC reported (20/4/08).

"There has been substantial international attention, the question that has been posed is where are the Africans? Where are the leaders of the countries in the region, what are they doing, how can they help the situation?" Mr Annan said in Nairobi, where he attended the swearing-in ceremony for the Kenyan coalition government born of the mediation he led following the lethal violence that erupted after disputed December elections.

Later UN secretary-general Ban Ki-moon said he would discuss the post-election deadlock in Zimbabwe with African leaders during a UN Trade and Development conference in Ghana from April 20/25. REPORT: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/04/20/2221870.htm>

UN MISSION CANCELS ARRIVAL IN BURUNDI

A UN mission to evaluate Burundi's peace process has cancelled its visit after a three-day battle between rebels and government troops killed at least 26, AlertNet/Reuters reported (20/4/08).

"In agreement with Burundi's Government, the mission has been delayed to a further date," said Amadou Ousmane, a spokesman for the UN mission in Burundi. A country of 8 million, Burundi has been emerging after more than a decade of ethnic conflict in which 300,000 people have been killed. REPORT: <http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/L20113147.htm>

FURTHER UN ASSISTANCE PROMISED TO LIBERIA

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon pledged continued assistance to Liberia, which he said had made great strides in recovering from a brutal decade-long civil war, but still faced daunting challenges in areas such as security, rule of law and development (22/4/08).

"I have come to Liberia to see at first hand the remarkable achievements your country has made in recovering from a devastating conflict. And I have come to reassure the Liberian people of my steadfast commitment to peace, stability and prosperity in your nation," he said in an [address](#) to a joint session of the Liberian legislature in the capital, Monrovia.

Mr Ban outlined several areas where further progress was needed, including reforming the legal and judicial system and extending the rule of law throughout the country.

REPORT: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=26416&Cr=liberia&Cr1=>

BAN DEPLORES DEATHS IN SOMALIA

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon voiced deep concern over this weekend's heavy fighting in Mogadishu, Somalia's capital, and deplored the substantial number of civilian deaths and injuries that have been suffered (21/4/08).

In a [statement](#), he "urges parties to the conflict in Mogadishu to refrain from the indiscriminate and disproportionate use of force that endangers the lives of civilians, particularly in heavily populated civilian areas, and reminds them that any targeting of non-combatants is a violation of international law."

Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah, the Secretary-General's Special Representative, underscored that the innocent were the victims of the fighting, which would only make achieving reconciliation and reconstruction more difficult.

"It is unjustifiable for such violence to erupt particularly when both the Transitional Federal Government [TFG] and the opposition Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia have courageously expressed their willingness to talk about peace and reconciliation," he said in Nairobi.

Last month, the TFG announced that it was ready to enter into discussions with the opposition. "I once again appeal to everyone to accelerate efforts to restore stability and unity and stop the violence which is bringing only misery and destruction to the people of [Somalia](#)," Mr. Ould-Abdallah said.

As of the end of March, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees ([UNHCR](#)) estimated that 70,000 people have fled the violence in Mogadishu since the start of 2008.

REPORT: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=26402&Cr=somalia&Cr1=>

ETHIOPIA AND ERITREA 'RESPONSIBLE FOR SETTling BORDER DISPUTE'

Ethiopia and Eritrea were primarily responsible for settling their border dispute and must follow up on the commitments they made in 2000, the top UN peacekeeping official said (22/4/08).

Given Eritrea's announcement that it no longer supports the UN peacekeeping presence, known as [UNMEE](#), Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Marie Guéhenno said following a closed Security Council meeting on the situation between the Horn of Africa neighbours "now we are reaching the end of what peacekeeping can achieve." Peacekeeping could only make a difference if the countries involved made a political commitment.

REPORT: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=26428&Cr=unmee&Cr1=>

SOUTH EAST ASIA

REINADO HAD OUTSIDE SUPPORT, SAYS RAMOS HORTA

East Timor President Jose Ramos-Horta claimed this week that people in Indonesia had provided clandestine support for the renegade military officer Alfredo Reinado, who led attacks on him and Prime Minister, Xanana Gusmao, in February, the Sydney Morning Herald reported (18/4/08).

After returning to the capital, Mr Ramos Horta said investigation into the attacks had found Reinado had a "lot of contact with elements in Indonesia", including people able to provide him with false travel documents. Indonesia's President, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, had assured him the individuals involved would be investigated, Mr Ramos Horta said.

"Indonesia is a country of 250 million people ... It's impossible to control every individual who might do things outside government policy," he said.

REPORT: <http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2008/04/17/1208025380734.html>

MIDDLE EAST

ISRAELIS AND PALESTINIANS ENGAGED IN INTENSIVE NEGOTIATIONS

Israelis and Palestinians are currently engaged in the most intensive negotiations on issues concerning the final status since the political process broke down almost eight years ago, a senior United Nations official told an [open meeting](#) of the Security Council (23/4/08).

However, Assistant-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Angela Kane warned the 15-member body that "the significance of this should not be underestimated, but neither should the grave risks to the process be overlooked." She noted that there have been several major incidents of violence recently, particularly in and around Gaza.

The area "has also witnessed heightened humanitarian distress, while conditions in the West Bank including East Jerusalem have not significantly improved despite continuing efforts," Ms. Kane said in her briefing to the Council on the events of the past month.

During the reporting period, Ms. Kane said, 69 Palestinians, including 15 children, were killed in operations of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), and 95 injured, while six Israelis were killed by Palestinian militants and 27 injured.

"We are deeply alarmed at the prospects of a further intensification of violence, given the terrible implications for civilians and the threat such conflict would pose to the security of all parties – the Palestinians, Israel and Egypt," she said, calling on the latter country to continue its efforts towards bringing calm to Gaza.

ARTICLE: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=26439&Cr=palestin&Cr1=>

TEN PALESTINIAN CHILDREN DIED AND 41 WOUNDED

The Palestinian Centre for Human Rights is seeking protests over a violation of human rights to be sent to Mrs Radhika Coomaraswamy, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, and H.E. Dan Gillerman, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations. PCHR stated that 29 Palestinians, including 10 children, had been killed, and that of the 81 wounded in the Gaza Strip from April 10 to April 16, 41 had been children.

REPORT: http://www.pchrgaza.org/files/W_report/English/2008/17-04-2008.htm

HAMAS WOULD ACCEPT ISRAEL, SAYS CARTER

Jimmy Carter, the former US president attempting to broker an understanding between Israel and Hamas, said on Monday the Islamist Palestinian group stood ready to accept the Jewish state as a "neighbour" and would back a peace deal under certain conditions, the London Financial Times/Reuters reported (21/4/08).

Mr Carter said: "I met with Hamas leaders from the West Bank, Gaza and Damascus. They said that they would accept a Palestinian state on the 1967 borders if approved by Palestinians – a departure from long-standing Hamas doctrine that refused to recognise two states."

REPORT: <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/c77b430c-0f7f-11dd-8871-0000779fd2ac.html>

HAMAS: 'WILL NOT RECOGNISE ISRAEL'

Palestinian militant group Hamas will not recognise Israel, its political leader Khaled Meshaal has insisted, the BBC reported (21/4/08). He was responding to comments by former US President Jimmy Carter.

Mr Meshaal said Hamas agreed to a Palestinian state on the land in East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza that Israel captured in the 1967 war. Mr Carter had said Hamas was prepared to accept the right of Israel to "live as a neighbour next door in peace".

Speaking in Syria, where he lives in exile, Khaled Meshaal said the Palestinian state must have "Jerusalem as its capital, with genuine sovereignty, without settlements". He added that this did not mean recognising Israel, but he said: "We have offered a truce if Israel withdraws to the 1967 borders, a truce of 10 years as an alternative to recognition."

The US said Mr Meshaal's comments did not amount to a change of position by Hamas. In any case, White House spokeswoman Dana Perino said, "actions speak louder than words".

REPORT: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7359661.stm

SILENCE IN ISRAEL ON HAMAS PROPOSAL

The Israeli Government says it is not commenting on an apparent offer by Hamas, relayed by the former US president Jimmy Carter, of peace in exchange for an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, the Sydney Morning Herald reported (23/4/08).

Earlier statements from Mr Carter and Mr Meshaal were seen as further signs that Hamas was moving away from the policy - enshrined in its hardline charter - that it will accept nothing less

than the destruction of the Jewish state and the imposition of Islamic rule in all of the former territory of Palestine, including the area that is now Israel.

The statements from Mr Carter and Mr Meshaal were met with silence by the Israeli Prime Minister, Ehud Olmert, and his ministers, who snubbed Mr Carter when he visited Israel last week. REPORT: <http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2008/04/22/1208742940630.html>

UN EMERGENCY MEETING OVER GAZA

The Office of the UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East (UNSCO) reported that the world body and international agencies operating in the Gaza Strip were expected to hold an emergency gathering to review the increasingly dire humanitarian situation there (22/4/08).

If further fuel supplies were not allowed in, Gaza's power plant would be forced to halt operations and there would be electricity cuts in most areas lasting as long as eight hours per day, UNSCO said ahead of the scheduled meeting. According to UNSCO, no diesel or petrol has entered Gaza since the April 9 attack by Palestinian militants on the Nahal Oz fuel depot.

In a bid to conserve fuel, the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) prioritised food distribution, solid waste removal and sewage projects. Despite this it was estimated 500,000 Gazans already lack solid waste management.

UNRWA noted that its own fuel supplies were expected to run out shortly and without a fresh supply, it would have to suspend food aid to 650,000 refugees and garbage collection services.

SADR THREATENS 'OPEN WAR'

Radical Iraqi Shia cleric Moqtada Sadr has threatened to wage "open war" on the Baghdad Government if it does not halt operations against his supporters, the BBC reported (19/4/08). Moqtada Sadr said he was giving the government a "last warning", and urged it to take "the path of peace".

In August the cleric's militia declared a ceasefire, pledging not to attack government or foreign soldiers. "I'm giving the last warning and the last word to the Iraqi government," Moqtada Sadr said. "Either it comes to its senses and takes the path of peace ... or it will be (seen as) the same as the previous government," he said in reference to former President Saddam Hussein's regime. "If it does not stop the militias that have infiltrated the government, then we will declare an open war until liberation," he said. REPORT: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7356875.stm

NEIGHBOURS 'ESSENTIAL TO IRAQ'

The support of neighbouring countries was essential for the stability of Iraq, UN Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs B. Lynn Pascoe told a ministerial meeting of Iraq and its neighbours in Kuwait, the third meeting of its kind since last year, focusing on issues such as energy, refugees and border security (22/4/08). Mr Pascoe added the opening of embassies would be "a very positive step".

He said efforts were helping the government and people of Iraq through the work of the UN Assistance Mission there, known as UNAMI. The UN was helping Iraq with political dialogue, the resolution of internal territorial disputes, the holding of governorate elections later this year and the review of Iraq's constitution.

"Even though violence, political tensions and slow socio-economic progress persist, the institutions set up in Iraq in 2005 through democratic elections and a constitutional referendum are progressively taking root," Mr. Pascoe stated. "A fundamental consensus on a democratic, sovereign, united and federal Iraq is emerging. Nevertheless, despite continuing improvements in the capacity of Iraq's national security forces, the security situation still remains fragile."

He highlighted the need to focus on alleviating the suffering of Iraq's refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), "not only on humanitarian grounds, but also because it has regional repercussions," he said.

The UN refugee agency (UNHCR) estimates that out of a total population of 26 million, some 4.4 million Iraqis are still uprooted, including 2.4 million displaced inside Iraq and 2 million outside – mainly in Syria and Jordan. The UN is developing a program for refugee return to ensure that the Iraqi Government and agencies are ready when conditions allowed.

'DEEP DISMAY' OVER LEBANON

On the margins of the Kuwait meeting, a number of concerned countries, along with officials from the UN, Arab League and European Union, met as the 'Friends of Lebanon' to discuss the situation there.

The group ended their meeting with a joint statement, stating that they are deeply dismayed at the ongoing political stalemate in Lebanon, and calling for the immediate election of the consensual candidate, General Michel Suleiman, as president without prior conditions.

ONE IN FIVE US VETERANS 'SUFFER DEPRESSION OR STRESS'

The latest and most comprehensive study of US veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars has concluded that nearly one in every five veterans was suffering from depression or stress disorders and that many are not getting adequate care, the Los Angeles Times reported (17/4/08).

The study shows that mental disorders were more prevalent and lasting than previously known, surfacing belatedly and lingering after troops have been discharged. An estimated 300,000 veterans among the nearly 1.7 million who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan were battling depression or post-traumatic stress disorder.

More than half of these people, according to the study conducted by the Rand Corp, were slipping through the cracks in the bureaucratic system, going without necessary treatment. REPORT: <http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-na-stress18apr18,0,6407969.story>

NORTH KOREA REPORTED ON PLUTONIUM

North Korea told the US in December that it had produced 30kg of plutonium, according to a new report by a Japanese newspaper. The US, which has estimated the regime has produced much more of the radioactive material, continues to pressure North Korea to make a full declaration of its nuclear activities, according to [The Washington Post/Reuters](#) (21/4/08). REPORT: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/04/21/AR2008042100128.html>

D. HUMAN RIGHTS

ANTI-WESTERN PROTESTS GROW IN CHINA

Anger over Western media coverage of human rights issues and anti-China protests that have dogged the Olympic torch relay has led to protests by thousands across China against Western businesses. [The New York Times](#) (21/4/08).

RAPE VICTIM 'JANE' CONTINUES TO FIGHT FOR JUSTICE

The car slowly pulls beside a deserted parking lot. The police officer turns to the woman, asking about the point where "it" happened, Japan Today reported (21/4/08). She looks up in an incredulous state, struggling to believe that the very people who are supposed to protect her are the same ones who have taken her back to this horrible place — the place that, no matter how hard she tries to forget is scorched into her memory. It is here, in this parking lot near the Yokosuka US Navy Base, where 'Jane' became a rape victim. Yet, as horrible as the crime was, it is Jane's efforts to seek help and, later, justice, that monumentally changed her life.

REPORT: <http://www.japantoday.com/category/lifestyle/view/victims-are-finally-learning-to-speak-out-against-japan%e2%80%99s-outdated-rape-laws>

1000 ZIMBABWEANS LEAVE EVERY DAY

Some 1,000 Zimbabweans every day are crossing the Limpopo River to flee into South Africa in a desperate attempt to flee the collapsed economy and growing post-election violence. Increasingly, those who flee are women and children. [The New York Times](#) (21/4/08). REPORT: http://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/21/world/africa/21zimbabwe.html?_r=2&ref=world&oref=slogin&oref=slogin

UN CHALLENGES TREATMENT OF REFUGEES IN GREECE

UN officials have recommended European countries refrain from sending asylum seekers to Greece, where they routinely face extraordinary hardships. Greek authorities responded angrily that the characterisation is unfair. [The New York Times](#) (21/4/08). REPORT: http://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/21/world/europe/21greece.html?_r=1&ref=world&oref=slogin

'BISHOP OF THE POOR' BECOMES PRESIDENT IN PARAGUAY

Fernando Lugo, who is known as the 'bishop of the poor' because of a career in the church working with economically disadvantaged Paraguayans, won his country's presidential election on Sunday. The victory by the former Roman Catholic bishop ends six decades of one-party rule in the South American country. [Los Angeles Times](#) (20/4/08). REPORT: <http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-paraguay21apr21,1,3636992.story>

3300 AT UN INDIGENOUS MEETING IN NEW YORK

21 April 2008 – The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues [meets](#) at “a historic crossroads,” Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon [told](#) the opening session today as some 3,300 participants from around the world converged on UN Headquarters in New York for the two-week event. SEE UN & Agencies page.

RACISM MAKES ME SICK CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED

Australian Race Discrimination Commissioner, Tom Calma, congratulated ANTaR (Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation) on the launch of the Racism Makes Me Sick campaign (21/4/08).

Australia is a country that takes pride in its Indigenous peoples and the multicultural make up of its society,” he said. “ANTaR’s Racism Makes Me Sick campaign is a vital reminder that racism has both physical and psychological effects on the person on the receiving end.” The Racism Makes Me Sick campaign draws upon research by Melbourne University.

“This campaign provides important information about the effects of racism to the public, as well as providing them with action they can take as individuals to confront the problem” said Mr Calma. “There is a 17 year gap in life expectancy between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Australia to which racism is most definitely a contributor in many ways. Campaigns such as this assist us as Australians to understand the full impact of racism and to take action to stop it.”
DETAILS: <http://www.antar.org.au/racism>

CLOSE THE GAP SHOULD BE 'DAILY PRIORITY'

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner Tom Calma used national Close the Gap Day to urge the Federal Government to make closing the gap in life expectancy between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians a daily priority (22/4/08).

"Just over a month ago we witnessed the historic signing of a Statement of Intent between the Australian government, Indigenous and non-Indigenous health experts and the reconciliation movement to work together to Close the Gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians by the year 2030," Mr Calma said. "We must do everything in our power to build on this momentum and to put flesh on the bones of the rhetoric and sentiment of the National Apology to the Stolen Generations in February."
HREOC WEBSITE: <http://www.hreoc.gov.au/>

CAMPAIGN TO EQUIP PEOPLE WITH PRINT DISABILITY

A campaign to better equip people with a print disability, and those who live and work with them, to protect their personal information and to look after their privacy rights when they feel their privacy may have been invaded, has been undertaken by the Victorian Privacy Commissioner and the Health Services Commissioner (18/4/08).

Through the Melbourne launch of Your Privacy Rights Explained campaign, they hope a new awareness of their functions and of privacy laws, people can become better informed.

Established to receive and resolve complaints from the public, the Office of the Victorian Privacy Commissioner (also known as Privacy Victoria, or OVPC) and the Health Services Commission (OHSC) are independent watchdog offices, which report to Parliament, not government. The Health Services Commissioner can deal with complaints about health service providers, including the handling of health information. The services of Privacy Victoria and the Health Services Commission are free and confidential. DETAILS: Pia Di Mattina on 0412 298 203

E. HEALTH & MEANS

FOOD

WFP SAYS HIGH FOOD PRICES ARE SILENT WORLD TSUNAMI

The UN World Food Program (WFP) said high food prices were creating the biggest challenge that WFP has faced in its 45-year history, a silent tsunami threatening to plunge more than 100 million people on every continent into hunger (22/4/08).

“This is the new face of hunger – the millions of people who were not in the urgent hunger category six months ago but now are,” said WFP Executive Director Josette Sheeran, who addressed a UK parliamentary hearing in London.

“The response calls for large-scale, high-level action by the global community, focused on emergency and longer-term solutions.” Analysis being carried out by WFP supports World Bank estimates that about 100 million people have been pushed deeper into poverty by the high food prices. WFP expects to release figures next week estimating how many new people have urgent hunger needs.

She said that like the 2004 tsunami, which hit the Indian Ocean leaving quarter of a million dead and about 10 million more destitute, the food price challenge requires a global response. At that time, the donor community, including governments, the corporate sector and private individuals, stepped up, giving a record US\$12 billion to help recovery efforts.

“We need that same kind of action and generosity,” Ms Sheeran said. “What we are seeing now is affecting more people on every continent, destroying even more livelihoods and the nutrition losses will hurt children for a lifetime.” She said WFP is urging a comprehensive approach where all parties, from governments to UN agencies to NGOs, all work together. Alongside other partners, WFP will follow a three-track response:

- in the short term, WFP will seek full funding for targeted food safety nets and mother-child health programs in extreme situations, scale up school feeding and use it as a platform for urgent, nutritional interventions;
- in the medium term, WFP will offer its huge logistics capacity to support life-saving distribution networks – every hour of the day, WFP has 30 ships on the high seas, 5,000 trucks on the ground and 70 aircraft in the sky, delivering food to the hungry; it will also expand cash and voucher programs and support local purchases from small farmers, helping them to afford inputs and sustain livelihoods;
- in the longer term, WFP will support policy reform and provide advice and technical support to

governments engaging in agricultural development programs; at the same time WFP will pursue local purchase contracts that can help farmers increase investment and yields.

“WFP can, if needed and if asked, ramp up to help cool down a nutritional crisis, so that longer-term solutions can come on board,” she said. WFP had assembled its top specialists to deploy programs to mitigate the effects of high food prices among the most vulnerable people.

Ms Sheeran stressed that partnerships would play a critical role in fighting this emergency in a coordinated response. The urgency of the situation was underlined by WFP’s decision to suspend school feeding to 450,000 children beginning in May in Cambodia, unless new funding was found in time. WFP representatives in 78 countries around the world are facing similar difficult choices. DETAILS: Gregory Barrow, WFP/London, on +44-20-72409001/+44-7968-008474; Jennifer Parmelee, WFP/Washington, on +1-202-6530010 ext. 1149/ +1-202-4223383; luescher@un.org.

TRADE AND INVESTMENT ‘CRUCIAL’ FOR AFRICA

Increased trade and investment, particularly in agriculture, were crucial if Africa was to achieve the kind of growth needed to meet its development targets, as well as to address the current global food crisis, which threatens to undo the gains made so far, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said this week.

REPORT: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=26397&Cr=food&Cr1=crisis>

HUNGER ACCOMPANIED BY HEALTH ISSUES

As food prices around the world continue to increase, hunger, malnutrition and accompanying health issues will become more commonplace. Unrest like that seen recently in Egypt and Haiti is also likely to spread alongside rising prices. REPORT: [The Toronto Star](http://www.thestar.com/News/World/article/416378) or [/http://www.thestar.com/News/World/article/416378](http://www.thestar.com/News/World/article/416378) (20/4/08).

HEALTH

WHO STRATEGY ON HEALTH PROTECTION FROM CLIMATE CHANGE

WHO is currently developing a global strategy that outlines the overarching framework for the international response to protect health from climate change. This is being led by WHO and partners in the health sector, and will be coordinated with the efforts of UN and other partner agencies.

WHO represents the health community at the international level, and contributes to the overall UN system-wide response by providing health expertise to the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC, by participating in the UNFCCC Nairobi Work Program on Impacts, vulnerability and adaptation, and by working with other specialised agencies and programs, such as WMO, UNEP and UNDP, on capacity building and implementation projects.

LINKS: Climate Change and Health: <http://www.who.int/globalchange/climate/faq/en/index.html>

DETAILS: WHO CC ACTIVITIES <http://www.who.int/globalchange/climate/activities/en/index.html>

BIRTH AND POVERTY RATES IN MANILA AMONG HIGHEST IN ASIA

Birth and poverty rates in Manila are among the highest in Asia, the Washington Post reported (21/4/08). And the Philippines, where four out of five of the country's 91 million people are Roman Catholic, also stands out in Asia for its government's rejection of modern contraception as part of family planning.

The government for the past five years has supported only what it calls "natural" family planning. No national government funds can be used to buy contraceptives for poor people, although anyone who can afford them is permitted to buy them. Local governments can also buy and distribute contraceptives, but many lack the money.

Distribution of donated contraceptives in the government's nationwide network of clinics will end this year, as will a contraception-commodities program paid for by the US Agency for International Development. For years it has supplied most of the condoms, pills and intrauterine devices used by poor Filipinos. REPORT: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/04/20/AR2008042001930.html>.

AUSTRALIAN BIONIC EYES HELD BACK BY FUNDS

Only a lack of money has kept Australia from leading the world in the race to develop a bionic eye, researchers say, according to the Sydney Morning Herald (23/4/08), after it was stated surgeons in Britain had fitted 'bionic eyes' to two men to partially restore their eyesight. The artificial retinas were designed by the US company Second Sight, as part of a three-year trial.

Australian researchers, working for a decade on shoestring budgets, have already successfully implanted locally developed bionic eyes into animals. Nigel Lovell, a biomedical engineering professor at the University of NSW, said that although the first experimental implants in humans were still two years away, the Australian technology was significantly more advanced than the overseas competition.

"We have everything in place [for human trials]," Professor Lovell said. However, the timing was "totally dependent on funding".

REPORT: <http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2008/04/22/1208742940215.html>

G. MEDIA MATTERS

HK IN PROTEST OVER JAILING OF JOURNALIST

The Hong Kong Journalists' Association (HKJA), in conjunction with the IFJ, has launched an online petition campaign in support of jailed Chinese journalist Hu Jia, the IFJ reported (23/4/08).

The Beijing No 1 People's Intermediate Court sentenced Hu Jia on April 3 to three-and-a-half years' jail and one year's denial of political rights for "inciting subversion of state power".

Mr Hu, whose writings focused on the Chinese Government's record on human rights and democracy, was accused of accepting two foreign media interviews and publishing five articles from 2001 to 2007 on *Boxun*, a Chinese-language website based in the US and banned in China. The HKJA said the decision was "one of the worst cases in China of anyone being jailed for their writings".

Before his arrest in December 2007, Hu Jia was under house arrest for an extended period, with his wife, blogger Zeng Jinyan, who remains under house arrest along with their baby daughter. Since his detention, Hu Jia has been denied the right to appeal by the Beijing Municipal Detention Centre. He is currently applying for parole on medical grounds due to chronic illness.

Signatures in support of the release of Hu Jia are to be presented to the Chinese Government on May 12. DETAILS: http://www.hkja.org.hk/Host/hkja/UserFiles/File/other/petition_for_hujia.html or IFJ Asia -Pacific on +612 9333 0919.

NO ACTION OVER ABDUCTION THREAT

The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) reported it was concerned that police in Sri Lanka had not investigated threats made against K. Rushangan, treasurer of the Free Media Movement (FMM) (22/4/08).

According to FMM, Mr Rushangan was first threatened on April 13 by a caller claiming to be from the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). The caller demanded Mr Rushangan hand over a motorcycle or the equivalent of US\$1500 by April 16, or he would be abducted.

Despite lodging a complaint with Dehiwala Police on April 16, it was reported no investigative action had been taken, reported FMM. According to Mr Rushangan, police said they were unable to investigate without a court order to obtain the caller's details from a mobile phone company.

FMM reports that the caller repeated his demand to Mr Rushangan on April 21, extending the deadline until April 25. DETAILS: IFJ Asia -Pacific on +612 9333 0919.

H. ARTICLES IN FOCUS

MICROFINANCE: WOMEN BEING CHEATED?

As microfinance moves more and more into the mainstream of the banking world, is some of its original mission getting lost in the shuffle? That's the implication of a landmark study released on Thursday by Women's World Banking (WWB), a network of microfinance institutions in 29 countries, Time reports (22/4/08). The study examined what happened at 27 outfits as they morphed from non-governmental (typically not-for-profit) organisations into regulated financial institutions, and found that they often end up lending to a smaller percentage of women — the very people they are often started to help.

ARTICLE: <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1731718,00.html>

ALONG THE SOUTH AFRICA-ZIMBABWE BORDER

Seeing South African military truck, two women, with their babies, fled back to Zimbabwe after trying to cross into South Africa, the New York Times (21/4/08). She said she had seen gangs loyal to Zimbabwe's longtime president, Robert Mugabe beating people — some to death — in the dusty roads of her village. She said Mugabe loyalists were sweeping the countryside with chunks of wood in their hands, demanding to see party identification cards and methodically hunting down opposition supporters. ARTICLE:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/21/world/africa/21zimbabwe.html?ex=1209441600&en=45679ae06f68a383&ei=5070&emc=eta1>

AN ORPHAN OF WAR AWAITS HIS FATE

Sahr Saffa was playing soccer at the train station when he heard the gunfire and rocket-propelled grenades. A friend told him his house was on fire, so the 16-year-old ran for the bush, just as his father had once told him, the Sydney Morning Herald reported (19/4/08). When he ventured back to Kabala, in northern Sierra Leone, a month later he found his house burnt and his parents gone. That was Christmas 1995. He has never seen them again. Sahr claims his only other immediate family member, an older sister, Regina, was raped by rebel soldiers who were looking for him.

ARTICLE: <http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2008/04/18/1208025479772.html>

WHY THE SURGE DOESN'T MATTER

General Petraeus has scored some victories. But the US is still far closer to having created another failed state than a functioning democracy, writes Blake Hounshell in Foreign Policy Magazine (April). He says since the surge was first announced in January 2007, attacks on coalition forces in Iraq have decreased by at least 60 per cent. Iraqi civilian casualties are down by a comparable amount. These impressive gains have stalled in recent months, as the war's critics have been quick to point out ... The few claims of political progress are strained at best.

ARTICLE: http://www.foreignpolicy.com/story/cms.php?story_id=4245

AUSTRALIA IN FOR A RUDD AWAKENING

Peter Hartcher writes in the Sydney Morning Herald (18/4/08) that Kevin Rudd's speech to Sydney Institute's annual dinner provided "a description, a definition of his government's political philosophy. He called it "the reforming centre". While it is subtly different, it's Rudd's equivalent to Tony Blair's 1997 effort to describe a new, post-ideological Third Way.

ARTICLE; <http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2008/04/17/1208025377389.html>

IRAN SHIFTS SLIGHTLY IN TREATMENT OF DRUG ADDICTS

Iran estimates that there are 2 million drug users in this rigidly conservative Shiite Muslim nation. International agencies put the number at more than 3 million, Jeffrey Fleishman writes in the Los Angeles Times (20/4/08). Facing one of the highest proportions of opiate addicts in the world, the Iranian government, which executes drug traffickers, has in recent years shown a degree of pragmatism and tolerance.

ARTICLE: <http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-addicts20apr20,1,3258686.story>

US MEMO JUSTIFIED USE OF DRUGS FOR INTERROGATIONS

Mr Nusairi, now free in Saudi Arabia, was unable to learn what drugs were injected before the interrogations, the Sydney Morning Herald reported (22/4/08). "He is not alone in wondering: interviews and court documents show at least two dozen other former and current prisoners at Guantanamo Bay and elsewhere say they were given drugs against their will or witnessed other inmates being drugged. Like Mr Nusairi, other detainees believed the injections were intended to coerce confessions ... The US Defence Department and the CIA ... deny using drugs as an enhancement for interrogations ... Yet the allegations have resurfaced because of the release this month of a 2003 Justice Department memorandum that explicitly condoned the use of drugs on detainees." REPORT: <http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2008/04/22/1208742940662.html>

I. OTHER NEWS

RSL ANZAC AWARD FOR JONATHON WELCH

Victorian Jonathon Welch has been awarded a RSL ANZAC Award for his work with disadvantaged and homeless men and women in establishing the 'Choir of Hard Knocks'.

The RSL ANZAC Awards Committee has also awarded the 2008 ANZAC Peace Prize to Scouts Australia. 2008 is the *Year of the Scout* and marks the centenary of Scouting in Australia.

The award of the ANZAC Peace Prize recognises the part that Scouting has played in the development of two million Australians over the past 100 years, both as individuals and as citizens and the friendships established which have made a significant contribution to international goodwill and understanding, and to world peace.

Other 2008 ANZAC of the Year awards went to: James Bourke MG of Victoria for his work for 'Operation Aussies Home' and his team's endeavours to recover Australian soldiers Missing-in-Action in the Vietnam War; Carolyn McColl of NSW for voluntary work on committees and fund raising projects in Pambula/Merimbula communities; and Harry Toole of Victoria for his work as a volunteer in Clunes, Victoria.

DETAILS: Major General Bill Crews (Retd) on 02 6248 7199/ 0410 627 873 and Derek Robson on 02 6248 7199/0416 258 125.

18 US VETERANS KILL THEMSELVES EACH DAY

Top officials at the US Veterans Health Administration confirmed that the agency's own statistics show that an average of 126 veterans per week —6,552 veterans per year—commit suicide, according to an internal email distributed to several VA officials, Opednews.com reported (21/4/08). REPORT:

http://www.opednews.com/articles/genera_jason_le_080421_va_confirms_18_vets_.htm

CELEBRATE ANZAC DAY AT HOME, SAYS PROFESSOR

Australia should begin to deflect its attention away from the ANZAC Day services in Turkey, and focus instead on our home-grown services, according to Victoria University's Associate Professor Anne-Marie Hede.

She said: "This view is probably not a popular one. After years of ANZAC myth-making, justifiably based around the Turkish landscape, it might seem unpatriotic. Such a suggestion might even be

considered blasphemous – given that the ANZAC legend has developed quasi-religious overtones.”

“Year after year memorable, packed services are staged around Australia on Anzac Day – and Anzac Day services at home offer more Australians the opportunity to embrace this part of Australia’s heritage.”

“There are many reasons to support this argument. Staging an event like the Anzac Day service on the Gallipoli Peninsula is becoming unsustainable. The logistics are challenging. Anzac Cove, where Australia’s service is held, is not easily accessed, even at the best of times. When you consider the need to transport all the equipment associated with a modern-day event, such as the big screens, the seating, the lighting, all the port-a-loos, the programs – and everything else that goes with it, the issue of accessibility becomes even more acute.”

“In 2005 about 80 buses carted an estimated 20,000 attendees around the Peninsula to the service site. Add to this number, all the representatives of the media ...When the roads were widened in 2005 making way for the parking bays for all the buses, expert archaeologists voiced their concerns that the integrity of the heritage landscape was compromised. While others may disagree with the archaeologists, there is no doubt that the landscape was permanently changed.” DETAILS: Christine White, Victoria University, on 03 9919 4322/0434 602 884.

PNG AND AUSTRALIA DISCUSS POLICE PRESENCE

An Australian delegation headed by Foreign Minister Stephen Smith is visiting Papua New Guinea for the 18th PNG-Australia ministerial forum, to be held in Madang province, Radio Australia reported (22/4/08).

The agenda was expected to be dominated by Australian development assistance and the new Pacific Partnership, signed by Prime Ministers Kevin Rudd and Sir Michael Somare during Mr Rudd’s visit to Port Moresby last month. Discussions were also expected to include climate change, the Kokoda Track, and a possible revision of Australia’s Enhanced Cooperation Program (ECP). REPORT: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/04/22/2223671.htm>

AUSTRALIA 2020 SUMMIT - INITIAL REPORT

The Initial Report from the 2020 Summit to the Prime Minister, sets out the key results of discussion by 1000 Australians over the weekend of 19 and 20 April in Canberra.

The Report includes results across the 10 streams of the Summit, including ambitions, priority themes and top ideas from each stream.

A more detailed, final report of the Summit to the Prime Minister will be prepared next month and will be available on the web site.

REPORT: [Australia 2020 Summit - Initial Report - WORD 2.6MB](#) | [PDF 825KB](#)

MINERS WENT TO 2020 ‘TO DEFEND ESTABLISHED INTERESTS’

The coal industry went to the 2020 summit to defend established interests and an out-of-date mindset, say the Australian Democrats in a media release this week. Democrats leader Senator Allison said (22/4/08), “The coal mafia shouted down the scientific evidence against their activities and derailed the climate change stream.”

In the next sitting of parliament, the Democrats would introduce legislation to set emissions standards for new power stations at a level that will exclude anything dirtier than best practice gas turbines, renewable energy, and coal with post combustion carbon capture and storage, she said.

“Emissions trading is coming and the government should not give in to the coal industry just because of the \$24 billion in export revenues.” Details: David Collyer on 0417 613 610.

YOUTH WORK INITIATIVE WINS NATIONAL PRIME MINISTER'S AWARD

Two organisations have together received the Prime Minister's Award for Excellence in Community Business Partnerships for their work in helping make local youth more employable (21/4/08).

For the past five years, Chess Engineering and not-for-profit Canterbury Bankstown Career Connections (CBCC) have worked in partnership to bring work experience and workplace learning programs to local youth in Sydney's Canterbury Bankstown region.

The area has one of the highest metropolitan rates of youth unemployment - officially 13% but some sources put it as high as 25 per cent - and also figures prominently on the SEIFA disadvantage index. Chess and CBCC guide young people to make informed career choices by exposing them to the realities of work. DETAILS: Steve Facer on (02) 9772 2355/0409 775 580;

ADVANCE PEACE WORLDWIDE

Rotary is accepting applications for a fellowship that teaches peace-making and conflict resolution to professionals committed to international understanding. The three-month program provides intensive English-language study at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok. DETAILS: <http://www.rotary.org/en/ServiceAndFellowship/Pages/ridefault.aspx>

CONGRESS OF WOMEN TO MEET IN OCTOBER

The Third Global Congress of Women in Politics and Governance will be held over October 19/22, at the Dusit Hotel, Makati City, Metro Manila, Philippines, supported by the Centre for Asia Pacific Women in Politics (CAPWIP) and the UN International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction (UN-ISDR). The congress theme will be 'Gender and Climate Change'.

"Today, on the average, one person out of 19 in a developing country will be hit by a climate disaster, compared to one out of 1,500 in an OECD country," Dr Jung Sook Kim, President of the Centre for Asia Pacific Women in Politics (CAPWIP), said advocating the forthcoming congress. "Climate change creates life time traps: in Niger, a child born during a drought is 72 per cent more likely to be stunted than a child born during a normal season."

Women and environment experts have raised concern over the absence of women in the discourse and debate on climate change, a global mainstream issue that is currently impacting the entire world, the congress media release stated this week.

"The involvement of women in areas of environmental management and governance should not be perceived as an afterthought. Women's roles are of considerable importance in the promotion of environmental ethics.

"The current imperative is for women to understand the phenomenon of climate change and its impacts and implications at the individual, household, community and national levels. Studies show that women have a definite information deficit on climate politics and climate protection. Only with this information can women take their proper, significant and strategic role in the issue of climate change."

The congress is expected to include women parliamentarians, women in decision-making and governance, environment organisations, youth leaders and media practitioners. The congress' objectives include providing a forum for women legislators, and women in decision-making and environment organisations at all levels, in formulating gender-responsive legislation and policies. DETAILS: CAPWIP on 632 8516934

TRAVELLERS KICK IN

Travellers have contributed to the Intrepid Foundation's Community Project Fund with nearly \$A36, 000 raised in the past three months, Editor Sue Elliot writes this week. The foundation supports local organisations and projects at grassroots level including projects in Cambodia, China, Morocco, Australia, Egypt, India, Laos, Malaysia, Vietnam, Russia, Thailand, Turkey and

Mongolia, as well as a new community project in Vietnam to assist the cyclo drivers of Cambodia.
DETAILS: <http://www.intrepidtravel.com/quicklink/foundation>.

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