

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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Unity and Supplement can also be accessed at: <http://www.unityunaa.info/>

Earlier editions of UNity 2004-05, 2006 and 2007 are on the

UNAA website: www.unaa.org.au or email the editor.

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A. UNITED NATIONS & AGENCIES (UNity, UN AND UNAA Contacts)

UN SECRETARY-GENERAL ATTENDS G-20 MEETING

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon stressed the need to protect the world's most vulnerable in the face of the current turmoil shaking global financial markets, a message he will take with him to Washington, this weekend when he attends the summit of the Group of 20 (G-20) nations (11/11/08).

"We must do everything we can to alleviate the impact of the crisis on the world's poorest and most vulnerable people," Mr Ban **told reporters** at his monthly news conference in New York. He also intended to emphasise the importance of tackling the systemic roots of the crisis. This is the first time the G-20 meeting the UN Secretary-General has been invited to attend.

"These leaders have requested urgent consultations with the Secretary-General to discuss pressing and long-term strategies to address the financial crisis and other important issues of immediate concern," Mr Ban's spokesperson said in a **statement**.

Mr. Ban has warned of the negative impact of the financial crisis on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – the globally agreed targets to halve extreme poverty and other ills by 2015 – as well as on efforts to deal with climate change, which he has described as the "defining challenge of our era."

He also said the current financial crisis was an opportunity to address climate change, stating that "at a time of growing economic hardship, green growth can create millions of jobs."

The UN chief will also carry these messages with him when he travels to Doha, Qatar, for the Financing for Development conference that opens later this month. **REPORT:** <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=28886&Cr=Financial+Crisis&Cr1=>

VISIONS OF WHAT G-20 MEETING OFFERS

British Prime Minister Gordon Brown and French President Nicolas Sarkozy believe the upcoming G20 summit represents an opportunity like the Bretton Woods conference in 1944, in which the International Monetary Fund was established. Critics note, however, that U.S. President-elect Barack Obama will not yet be sworn in and will not be in attendance -- so the likelihood that a solution to a problem caused in the US will emerge is doubtful, [The Independent \(London\)](#) reported (12/11/08).

UN PRESIDENT: WORLD MUST CHOOSE AND ACT

The General Assembly President told global leaders the world was facing its most difficult period since the founding of the United Nations and urged them to use their "moral strength" to find solutions to the problems plaguing the Earth, such as global hunger, poverty and climate change, UN News reported (12/11/08).

Speaking to over 70 heads of state and high-level officials at the 'Culture of Peace' gathering in New York, Miguel D'Escoto said that the world must choose between the values of consumerism and greed, or social responsibility and ethical behaviour, including the economic and political spheres.

Mr D'Escoto said that one of the most burning problems today was that half the world's population suffers levels of poverty, malnutrition and hunger that violate their human rights and basic dignity despite humankind having the collective knowledge and the financial and technological resources to cure these afflictions.

"This is not only shameful, it is – to use religious terminology – downright sinful," he said. "We know that nothing short of heroic decisions and actions can awake us from our moral coma."

Mr D'Escoto noted that social responsibility was a basic law in each of the world's religions and in all ethical and philosophical traditions, but said that the dominant culture is guided by the spirit of selfishness and individualism.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon told the meeting that as economies merge and boundaries disappear as a result of globalisation, extremist ideologies are on the rise, societies are more polarised, anti-Semitism persists and Islamophobia has emerged.

"One of the great challenges of our time must now surely be to ensure that our rich cultural diversity makes us more secure, not less," Mr. Ban said in his **remarks** to the meeting promoting inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace.

REPORT: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=28910&Cr=tolerance&Cr1=>

US PRESIDENT-ELECT AND THE UN

Careful observers of the US elections noted that mentions of the United Nations were not a major part of the foreign policy platforms of either candidate, says The Nation's UN correspondent Barbara Crosette, who writes, "Ignoring the UN has become bipartisan."

Nonetheless, the election of Barack Obama brings with it some immediate gains for the UN, including a likely restoration of American funding to the UN Population Fund -- which totalled nearly \$300 million in 2008. The Nation (11/05)/UN Wire (11/10/2008).

PM: GOOD FRIEND AND PARTNER TO AUSTRALIA

Barack Obama would be a good friend and partner to Australia, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd said after telephoning the US president-elect to congratulate him on his win, reported Yahoo News (7/11/08).

Their conversation included discussion of the global financial crisis, climate change and security.

"There's going to be plenty of time to discuss the new administration's plans on Afghanistan in the period ahead, I look forward to doing that," Mr Rudd said. "I've said before and I'll say again, Australia has stated publicly its commitment and resolve to be in Afghanistan for the long haul.

UN VOTE: RUDD BREAKS WITH HOWARD ON ISRAEL

Australia switched its position to vote against Israel on two resolutions at the United Nations, ending the Howard government's unswerving alignment with the United States and raising concern from the Jewish community, the Sydney Morning Herald reported (10/11/08).

The move also signals to the incoming Obama administration that the Rudd Government plans to take a different approach to the Howard Government on the international stage. In the weekend vote in New York, Australia supported a resolution calling on Israel to stop establishing settlements in the Palestinian territories and a resolution calling for the Geneva Conventions to apply in the Palestinian territories.

Australian officials told the UN the government had changed its position because it supported a two-state resolution of the conflict to deliver a secure Israel living beside a viable Palestinian state and that Australia believed both sides should abide by their obligations under the Road Map for Peace.

Australia said it was concerned activity in the disputed settlements undermined confidence in the negotiations. It was among 161 countries that supported both resolutions, with two abstaining and six against.

REPORT: <http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2008/11/09/1226165386581.html>

PARLIAMENT REVIEWS NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION/DISARMAMENT TREATIES

The Joint Standing Committee on Treaties has been invited by the Prime Minister Kevin Rudd to undertake an inquiry into Australia's involvement in nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament treaties.

Nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament is one of the major challenges facing the international community. Australia has signalled the importance that it places upon this issue through the recent establishment with Japan of an International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament.

The commission has a mandate to reinvigorate the global debate on the need to prevent the further spread of nuclear weapons, advance nuclear disarmament and strengthen the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT). The 2010 NPT Review Conference is a particularly important milestone in this process.

The prime minister has asked the Treaties Committee to contribute to Australia's non-proliferation and disarmament objectives by examining:

- ~ how the international treaties on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament that involve Australia advance our objectives in these areas;
- ~ how treaties might be made more comprehensive or effective; and
- ~ how the committee and the Parliament can contribute to the work of the International Commission.

Committee Chairman Kelvin Thomson believes the Federal Parliament's Treaties Committee can contribute to the work of the International Commission and the development of consensus on the way forward for the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

"I am honoured that the prime minister has asked my committee to investigate important issues concerning nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament," he said. "I believe the treaties committee can play an important role in engaging the Australian community and other parliaments in the debate leading up to the 2010 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference."

"The treaties committee has already demonstrated the importance that it attaches to the disarmament and non-proliferation regime established by the NPT in an earlier inquiry this year. I look forward to this opportunity for the committee to be at the forefront of contemporary public debate about an issue of global significance." It is due to report by June 30 2009.

SUBMISSIONS: The committee is calling for submissions from the public and interested organisations by **January 30 2009**.

DETAILS: Committee's website: www.aph.gov.au/jsct.

INQUIRY'S TERMS OF REFERENCE

The treaties committee will consider:

1. the international treaties involving Australia which relate to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament;
2. how these treaties advance Australia's objectives in this field;
3. how the treaties might be made more comprehensive or effective;
4. how inter-parliamentary action can assist in strengthening treaty-based aspects of the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime; and
5. how the Committee and the Parliament can contribute to the work of the International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament.

PIRATES: NATO NAVY ESCORTS FOOD TO SOMALIA

Naval escorts from the Netherlands and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) are providing protection from pirate attacks off Somalia for UN World Food Program (WFP) ships loaded with life-saving aid for the war-ravaged country, the UN News reported (11/11/08).

"More than 2 million Somalis could go hungry without this protection," **WFP** said in its latest update on the pirate-ridden waters off the coast of the Horn of Africa country, where the seizure of a weapons-laden Ukrainian ship made headlines earlier this year.

Chartered WFP ships have been a frequent target for ransom-seeking privateers but since the naval escort system began in November 2007, no pirate attacks have been made against WFP food ships despite 2008 being the worst year so far for piracy off Somalia.

REPORT: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=28896&Cr=somalia&Cr1=pirates>

UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS 60TH ANNIVERSARY

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is the world's most translated document with over 360 translations according to the Guinness Book of World Records.

The 60th anniversary of the declaration will be marked this year on Human Rights Day on December 10 by a Canberra public forum, organised by Parliament's Human Rights Sub-Committee with presentations by leading human rights experts on November 24.

Sub-Committee Chairperson Kerry Rea said she wanted to encourage everyone to mark this significant anniversary, saying, "This could involve organising your own event, showing your support for activities in your local area, or by learning more about the declaration."

At the public forum, Emeritus Professor Ivan Shearer RFD, renowned international human rights law scholar and practitioner, will present on the theme '60 years of UDHR'. Professor Hilary Charlesworth, ANU Professor of International Law and Human Rights and Director of the Centre for International Governance and Justice, will present on 'Looking Forward'.

FORUM DETAILS: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Pages/60UDHRIntroduction.aspx>.

Venue: Main Committee Room, Parliament House, Canberra from 9.30 – 11 am,

DETAILS: 02 6277 2313; Committee Secretariat on 02 6277 2313;

<http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jfadt/udhr/index.htm>.

UN BACKS 'NO SMOKING' AT UN HEADQUARTERS

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has welcomed the consensus decision of the UN General Assembly to ban smoking and tobacco sales at UN Headquarters in New York.

"The General Assembly deserves congratulations for protecting the health of delegates, employees and visitors," said Dr Margaret Chan, Director-General of WHO. "Fewer of them will sicken and die prematurely as a result of today's action," the UN News reported (6/11/08).

The resolution passed by the General Assembly on November 3 imposes "a complete ban" on indoor smoking and tobacco sales. In addition, the resolution carries the General Assembly's recommendation that smoking be banned at "all United Nations indoors premises, including regional and country offices throughout the United Nations system", and that tobacco sales be banned at "all United Nations premises".

Tobacco is the leading preventable cause of death, killing 5.4 million people per year from lung cancer, heart disease and other diseases, according to the *WHO Report on the Global Tobacco Epidemic, 2008*, which was released in February.

There is no safe level of second-hand smoke, the report says, citing research by the WHO International Agency for Research on Cancer, the Surgeon General of the United States of America, the UK Scientific Committee on Tobacco and Health and the Conference of the Parties to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC).

"By banning smoking and the sale of tobacco products on UN premises, the member states set a tremendous example," Dr Chan said. "Uruguay -- the first smoke-free country in the Americas -- deserves particular praise for sponsoring the smoke-free resolution and working long and diligently to ensure its passage."

DETAILS: WHO Tobacco Free Initiative: <http://www.who.int/tobacco/en/>; www.who.int

WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control: <http://www.who.int/fctc/en/index.html>;

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UNity, UN AND UNAA CONTACTS

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.

UNity: <http://www.unityunaa.info>

The World Federation of United Nations is a global network of people linked through United Nations Associations in over 100 UN member states.

WFUNA website: <http://www.wfuna.org/who/>; newsletter at

<http://www.wfuna.org/news/newsletter/index.cfm>.

United Nations Association of Australia by state:

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 mail@unaasa.org.au; 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

Daily press briefing by the office of the spokesperson for the UN Secretary General:

(<http://www.un.org/News/briefings/docs/2008/db080527.doc.htm>)

UN Daily News (Link only)

<http://www.un.org/news/dh/pdf/english/2008/27052008.pdf>

Nautilus Institute Australia puts out a free email edition of Austral Peace and Security Network (APSNet) Bulletin, together with policy forum essays and briefing notes. APSNet Bulletin covers national and regional security issues in Australia and the surrounding region. The twice-weekly bulletin includes news and analysis of military affairs, defence, foreign policy and other aspects of hard security; also on climate change, infectious diseases and human security. **DETAILS:** Nautilus Institute Australia, hosted at RMIT:

<http://www.globalcollab.org/>

B. CLIMATE CHANGE

CARBON TRADING TENSION MOUNTS IN PNG

The issue of future carbon trading deals is causing friction between the Papua New Guinea Government and PNG landowners, the ABC reported (13/11/08).

Under the deals, countries receive money for not cutting down its forests.

The island of New Guinea is home to the third-largest block of intact tropical rainforest and the PNG Government insists that it will handle potential carbon trading deals on behalf of the people.

Landowners, who own most of the country's terrain, disagree, but Theo Yasause, head of the government's new climate change office, says ownership is not a sticking point.

"The state has absolute control over the resources," he said.

REPORT: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/11/13/2419153.htm>

PORT PIRIE SMELTER CLOSURE WARNINGS

The Port Pirie smelter will close if the Rudd Government's carbon emissions trading scheme goes ahead, its owner confirmed, The Australian reported (13/11/08).

Nyrstar, the world's largest zinc producer, told ABC Radio it was also reviewing its smelter operations in Tasmania, warning of "devastating effect on communities" if the plants were to close.

Nyrstar chief operating officer Greg McMillan told AM said the Federal Government's carbon emissions trading scheme - scheduled to roll out in 2010 - would increase its operating costs substantially.

The move would cost Nyrstar about \$70 million per year, making its Australian operations unviable, resulting in the closure of the Hobart and Port Pirie plants, with the likely result that smelting operations would shift to countries like China.

REPORT: <http://www.news.com.au/adelaidenow/story/0,22606,24645430-2682,00.html>

AL GORE PUTS FORWARD US CLIMATE CHANGE PLAN

In the New York Times Al Gore writes on climate change: Here's what we can do — now: we can make an immediate and large strategic investment to put people to work replacing 19th-century energy technologies that depend on dangerous and expensive carbon-based fuels with 21st-century technologies that use fuel that is free forever: the sun, the wind and the natural heat of the earth (UN Wire 10/11/08).

First, the new president and the new congress should offer large-scale investment in incentives for the construction of concentrated solar thermal plants in the South-western deserts, wind farms in the corridor stretching from Texas to the Dakotas and advanced plants in geothermal hot spots that could produce large amounts of electricity.

Second, we should begin the planning and construction of a unified national smart grid for the transport of renewable electricity from the rural places where it is mostly generated to the cities where it is mostly used. New high-voltage, low-loss underground lines can be designed with "smart" features that provide consumers with sophisticated information and easy-to-use tools for conserving electricity, eliminating inefficiency and reducing their energy bills. The cost of this modern grid — \$400 billion over 10 years — pales in comparison with the annual loss to American business of \$120 billion due to the cascading failures that are endemic to our current balkanized and antiquated electricity lines.

Third, we should help America's automobile industry (not only the Big Three but the innovative new startup companies as well) to convert quickly to plug-in hybrids that can run on the renewable electricity that will be available as the rest of this plan matures. In combination with the unified grid, a nationwide fleet of plug-in hybrids would also help to solve the problem of electricity storage. Think about it: with this sort of grid, cars could be charged during off-peak energy-use hours; during peak hours, when fewer cars are on the road, they could contribute their electricity back into the national grid.

Fourth, we should embark on a nationwide effort to retrofit buildings with better insulation and energy-efficient windows and lighting. Approximately 40 percent of carbon dioxide emissions in the United States come from buildings — and stopping that pollution saves money for homeowners and businesses.

This initiative should be coupled with the proposal in Congress to help Americans who are burdened by mortgages that exceed the value of their homes.

Fifth, the United States should lead the way by putting a price on carbon here at home, and by leading the world's efforts to replace the Kyoto treaty next year in Copenhagen with a more effective treaty that caps global carbon dioxide emissions and encourages nations to invest

together in efficient ways to reduce global warming pollution quickly, including by sharply reducing deforestation.

Al Gore, the vice president from 1993 to 2001, was the co-recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in 2007. He founded the Alliance for Climate Protection and, as a businessman, invests in alternative energy companies.

MALDIVES SAVES ITS MONEY TO BUY NEW HOMELAND

The Maldives will begin to divert a portion of the country's billion-dollar annual tourist revenue into buying a new homeland - possibly in Australia - as an insurance policy against climate change that threatens to turn the 300,000 islanders into environmental refugees, the country's first democratically elected president has said, the Sydney Morning Herald reported (11/11/08).

Mohamed Nasheed, who takes power officially today in the capital, Male, said the chain of 1200 islands and coral atolls dotted 800 kilometres from the tip of India is likely to disappear under the waves if the current pace of climate change continues to raise sea levels.

The United Nations forecasts that the seas are likely to rise by up to 59 centimetres by 2100 due to global warming. Most parts of the Maldives are just 1.5 metres above water. The President said even a "small rise" in sea levels would inundate large parts of the archipelago.

"We can do nothing to stop climate change on our own and so we have to buy land elsewhere," Mr Nasheed said. "It's an insurance policy for the worst possible outcome. After all, the Israelis [began by buying] land in Palestine."

REPORT: <http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2008/11/10/1226165481956.html>

EU LEADS CARBON CAPTURE STORAGE

Under pressure to avert global warming, utility and industrial companies are considering carbon capture and storage as a means to curtail carbon dioxide emissions. The process carries carbon dioxide to underground storage facilities before it can escape into the atmosphere. While it's still unclear how long the gas can be safely stored, pilot CCS programs are taking place in several nations, with the European Union leading the way. [BusinessWeek](#) reported (11/11/08).

ENVIRONMENTAL RADAR TO AID REEF PROTECTION

A university professor says Australia's only environmental radar will provide data to help protect coral reefs.

Professor Mal Heron from James Cook University says the radar at Tannum Sands, near Gladstone, in central Queensland, is the first of six in the country.

He says during this month's coral spawning, researchers can use the data from the radar to see where spawns from certain reefs are distributed.

REPORT: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/11/11/2416474.htm>

C. HUMAN RIGHTS

MEN THROW ACID IN SCHOOLGIRLS' FACES

Two men on a motorcycle used water pistols to spray acid on girls walking to school Wednesday in the southern Afghan city of Kandahar, blinding at least two of them, military spokesmen said, CNN reported (14/11/08).

US Col. Greg Julian said Afghanistan's National Military Command Center told him that four girls were hurt in the incident. Two were blinded and remain hospitalized, and two were treated and released, he said.

The men escaped after the attack, and no one claimed responsibility for it, but Arab-language network Al-Jazeera said Taliban militants were suspected to be responsible.

The incident occurred about 8 a.m. near Mirwais Nika Girls High School in the Meir Weis Mena district.

Kandahar government spokesman Parwaz Ayoubi gave different figures on the number of girls injured, saying six were burned, one of them severely. He called the attackers "enemies of education."

Girls were forbidden to attend school under the Taliban which ruled the country from 1996 to 2001, when U.S.-led forces removed them from power.

REPORT:

<http://edition.cnn.com/2008/WORLD/asiapcf/11/12/afghanistan.acid.attack/index.html>

KARZAI ORDERS EXECUTION OF FIVE

The UN human rights chief voiced her dismay after several prisoners were put to death in Afghanistan in recent days and urged the government to stop any further planned executions, the UN News reported (11/11/08).

Five convicted prisoners are known to have been executed – on orders signed by President Hamid Karzai – over the past four days in the country, which had observed a de facto moratorium on the death penalty since 2004.

"While recognising the severity of the crimes with which these prisoners were charged, I am very concerned that the law enforcement and judicial systems in Afghanistan fall short of internationally accepted standards guaranteeing due process and fair trial," **said** UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay.

"Under these circumstances, there is a grave risk that there will be miscarriages of justice and that innocent people may be executed. The serious shortcomings in the police and judiciary have been well documented, and the government has recognised this and committed itself to reform both branches of law enforcement," she said.

REPORT: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=28892&Cr=Afghan&Cr1=>

HARSH SENTENCES GIVEN ACTIVISTS IN BURMA

Fourteen '88 Generation' activists in Burma have been given jail sentences of up to 65 years over their role in anti-government rallies last year, the BBC reported (11/11/08). Another 20 leaders from the group are still being tried on numerous charges which could result in sentences of up to 150 years each.

The military authorities have arrested hundreds of dissidents this year. Since July they have put dozens on trial under tightly restricted conditions.

REPORT: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/7721589.stm>

BAN: DEEP CONCERN OVER LENGTHY JAIL TERMS

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon expressed his deep concern at reports this week that authorities in Myanmar have issued lengthy jail terms to some participants in last year's peaceful demonstrations in the Asian country (12/11/08).

Media reports say some pro-democracy advocates have been jailed for 65 years, and in a **statement** issued by his spokesperson Mr. Ban referred to "severe prison terms" imposed in Myanmar recently.

"He calls once again for all political prisoners to be released and for all citizens of Myanmar to be allowed to freely participate in their country's political future as part of an inclusive national reconciliation process," the statement noted.

JUDGES SIT IN PRISON

The International Herald Tribune (11/11/08) reported that Tuesday's sentences were delivered by judges operating within the compound of Insein prison, which holds many of the country's estimated 2,000 political prisoners. Family members said they and defence lawyers were not allowed into the courtroom.

The Irrawaddy Website, based in neighbouring Thailand, listed the names of 14 activists it said were sentenced to the 65-year terms. Some of the activists were reportedly veterans of 1988 pro-democracy uprising that nearly succeeded in toppling the country's military leaders.

Relatives said they were convicted under a wide range of laws such as the Foreign Exchange Act, which bans Burmese from holding foreign currency without permission. Other laws reportedly used were the Video Act and Electronics Act, which require Burmese to hold permits for various types of ordinary electronic equipment.

REPORT: <http://www.iht.com/articles/2008/11/11/asia/myanmar.php>

ASYLUM-SEEKERS TO GO ON CRIMINAL DATABASE

Asylum-seekers and their teenage children will be included in a criminal database, with their fingerprints to be rolled into the national system by mid-2009, the Sydney Morning Herald reported (9/11/08).

The plan will give the National Automated Fingerprint Identification System (NAFIS) access to the Immigration Department's database of about 3000 detainee fingerprints. About 1000 of the prints could belong to asylum-seekers aged 15 and older.

About 90 per cent of the fingerprints are from convicted criminals, the remainder coming from NSW security guards, police and gaming and casino operators, who are required to provide fingerprints.

Dr Mohammed Al Jabiri, an Iraqi international law expert who chaired a UN commission on human rights and now a Sydney migration agent, said the plan was "abhorrent".

REPORT: <http://www.smh.com.au/news/national/asylumseekers-to-go-on-criminal-database/2008/11/08/1225561202058.html>

HANEEF LAWYERS SUPPORT INQUIRY DELAY

Lawyers for the Indian-born doctor Mohamed Haneef say they are not concerned that an inquiry into their client's failed prosecution has been given another week to report back, the ABC reported (11/11/08).

John Clarke QC is investigating the decision to charge the former Gold Coast-based doctor in relation to a terrorism plot in the UK last year and how the case against him collapsed.

Mr Clarke was to report to the Federal Government by the end of September, but he has been granted a second extension until later this month. Dr Haneef's lawyer Rod Hodgson says he supports the delay.

REPORT: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/11/11/2415915.htm>

GP THREATENS TO LEAVE OVER IMMIGRATION'S DECISION ON DOWN SYNDROME

A Horsham doctor who was refused permanent residency because he has a disabled son is looking for a country that will accept his family, SKY News reported (3/11/08).

The Immigration Department has rejected German doctor Bernhard Moeller's application because his 13-year-old son has Down Syndrome.

Dr Moeller has applied to have his case reassessed by the Migration Review Tribunal but said his family faced six months of worry and uncertainty and he had no choice but to look elsewhere. REPORT: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/11/03/2408183.htm>

VILLAWOOD HUNGER STRIKE ENDS

A three-day hunger strike at Sydney's Villawood Detention Centre is over after a meeting between detainees and immigration officials had ended, news.com.au reported (10/11/08). An Immigration Department spokesman said the strike ended after a meeting lasting several hours. Dialogue with the detainees would continue.

Refugee [Action Coalition](#) spokesman [Ian Rintoul](#) said detainees had agreed to suspend the

strike for seven days, but would continue it and other protest action if their concerns were not met. He said detainees believed the government was not acting quickly enough on its planned detention reforms, due to be implemented next year. He said about 135 detainees had taken part in the strike.

"Very little has changed for people actually in detention," he said, calling on Immigration Minister Chris Evans to convene a roundtable with detainees and refugee advocacy groups. **REPORT:** http://www.news.com.au/story/0,23599,24632194-1242,00.html?from=public_rss

KIRBY PUSHES FOR CHARTER OF RIGHTS

High Court Judge Michael Kirby says government failures on law reforms justify enacting a charter of rights, the ABC reported (14/11/08).

Delivering the inaugural Neville Wran Lecture in Sydney, Justice Kirby called for shorter terms for High Court judges and for court proceedings to be televised.

He also said it would be wrong to raise the retirement age of 70, which he reaches next year. Instead, he says judicial terms should be 10 years, so the High Court reflects the values of different generations.

"It's an inescapable fact of nature that older people are sometimes disconnected from the values and aspirations of younger generations," he said. "I declare that I am of course an exception to this rule."

REPORT: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/11/14/2419343.htm>

OBAMA MOVES SWIFTLY TO SHUT DOWN GUANTANAMO BAY

US president-elect Barack Obama is expected to move swiftly to close Guantanamo Bay as soon as he takes office, his staff said this week. Mr Obama is thought to be planning to ship dozens of terror suspects from the prison to face criminal trial in the US as part of a plan to shut the jail down.

It is a controversial move but one that demonstrates how abruptly he plans to change Washington in terms of policy, personnel and tone the moment he enters the Oval Office, the London TIMESONLINE reported (11/11/08).

Mr Obama has said he wants to hit the ground running. He has vowed to start immediately removing combat troops from Iraq, although in recent weeks he had become more opaque about the speed of withdrawal. **REPORT:** http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/us_and_americas/us_elections/article5126528.ece

ON-LINE CHILD RIGHTS EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS RELEASED

The Australian Human Rights Commission has released online new on-line teaching and learning activities for students about children's rights (7/11/08).

Under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, governments have agreed that the people of the world have a right to have their basic needs met, no matter their age, sex, colour religion or where they live, says the Australian Human Rights Commission.

These are needs such as food, shelter, education, healthcare and freedom from persecution and discrimination International human rights law also recognises that children have additional rights that afford them protection against exploitation, provision for growth and development (through health and education) and participation in decisions made on their behalf. These laws are found in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The new series of educational materials on the commission website are broken into three separate activities:

- Rights and wants
- Getting to know the Convention on the Rights of the Child

- Zarah's situation: A last resort.

The intention of these activities is to assist students to:

- understand the difference between rights and wants
- research important aspects of the Convention on the Rights of the Child
- appreciate the important rights in their life, and
- consider the rights issues that children in Australian immigration detention centres faced prior to policy changes.

The commission's Human Rights Education Program includes a range of interactive resource-rich, web-based learning intended to assist students and their teachers in the study and understanding of human rights issues.

DETAILS: www.humanrights.gov.au/education/resources/child_rights.html;
www.humanrights.gov.au/education

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE LOOKS AT ABS STATISTICS

Women are more likely to be working without paid leave entitlements and without superannuation coverage; according to the latest Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) *Survey of Employment Arrangements, Retirement and Superannuation*, released last Friday.

House Employment and Workplace Relations Committee Chairperson Sharryn Jackson said "Witnesses have been telling the committee that better data would greatly help understand the gender pay gap and also go some way to identifying ways to address the current pay equity issues in Australia."

The Australian Bureau of Statistics was due to appear before the committee on November 13. The agenda for discussions covered current structural arrangements in the negotiation of wages that may impact disproportionately on women; the adequacy of recent and current equal remuneration provisions in state and federal workplace relations legislation; and the need for further legislative reform to address pay equity in Australia.

DETAILS: <http://www.aph.gov.au/ewr>; committee secretariat on (02) 6277 4162; ewr.reps@aph.gov.au. BACKGROUND: Committee Secretary on 02 6277 4162.

53RD SESSION OF THE CSW

Pre-registration for ECOSOC-accredited NGOs to attend the [53rd session](#) of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is now available on the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) [website](#) until January 9.

D. PEACE & SECURITY

MIDDLE EAST

BAN CALLS ON ISRAELI TO ABIDE BY COMMITMENTS TO DISMANTLE OUTPOSTS

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has spotlighted in two new reports to the General Assembly how Israeli practices impinge upon the rights of Palestinians through the continued building of Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory and other means (7/11/08).

In one publication, Mr Ban stressed that UN resolutions and a 2004 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) both reflect how Israel's construction of settlements – "in effect, the transfer by an occupying Power of parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies" – breach the Fourth Geneva Convention.

Other activities, such as land requisition and the destruction of houses and orchards, are also "illegal," he writes.

Between 1967 and the end of last year, Israel set up 120 settlements in the West Bank, excluding East Jerusalem, and as of this August, over 1,000 new buildings were being erected in the settlements, the **report** says.

"The existence of settlements restricts the freedom of movement of Palestinians resident in the West Bank in several ways," the UN Secretary-General notes, with Palestinians barred from entering settlement areas without a special permit.

"Despite the claim of the government of Israel that the internal closure system within the West Bank is imposed on Palestinian residents there for security purposes, most of those internal restrictions on movement are largely premised on the protection of Israeli settlers and settlements and are designed to provide settlers with unobstructed travel capacity between settlements and to Israel itself."

Further, the report, covering the period between January and August of this year, says that one-third of settlements and land incorporated into these areas is private Palestinian-owned land, much of which was expropriated by Israel on the grounds of military necessity.

Mr Ban calls on the Israeli Government to abide by its commitments to dismantle outposts built after March 2001 and freeze settlement activity called for in the so-called Road Map, which foresees a two-state solution with Israel and the Palestinians living side by side in peace, as well as the Annapolis Joint Statement of 27 November 2007, which was intended to reinvigorate the peace process.

He also urges Israel to take steps to curb attacks by Israeli settlers against civilians in the occupied territory and guarantee that violent incidents are properly investigated.

The second **report** covers the same time period as the other, and says that the human rights situation in the occupied Palestinian territory is "worsening."

Regarding closures, the Secretary-General says that Israel's closures have had serious consequences, including economic ones, on Palestinians. "The restrictions continue to undermine the enjoyment of other rights guaranteed under international human rights law by effectively impeding access to health care, education and employment."

REPORT: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=28861&Cr=Palestin&Cr1=>

The two reports were prepared at the request of the General Assembly.

DETAILS: Julia Dean, United Nations Information Centre for Australia, New Zealand & South Pacific, on 61-2-62738200 & 61-2-62738205(d); F 61-2-62738206; PO Box 5366, Kingston ACT 2604 Australia; www.un.org.au

IRAN REPORTED TO HAVE TESTED NEW MISSILE

Iran has successfully tested a new long-range surface-to-surface missile capable of reaching Israel, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf nations. More accurate than earlier missiles, the Sejil was "produced as part of our deterrent policy," said Defence Minister Mostafa Mohammad Najjar. "It will be for peace and security in the region and we will only use it against enemies who invade the Islamic Republic," [The New York Times](#) (12/11/08) reported.

KURDISH OIL A SOURCE OF TENSION

Despite an overall decrease in sectarian violence throughout Iraq, Kirkuk and larger Iraqi Kurdistan remains a source of tension. Kurds and Iraqi Arabs alike are debating whether Kirkuk and its oil resources belong to Iraq proper or to the semi-autonomous Kurdish region-state within Iraq. The nation's current revenue-sharing program allots 17 per cent of Iraqi oil revenue to Kurdistan, which Kurds think is too low and Arabs think is too high, the [London Financial Times](#) (11/11/08) reported.

GENERAL

SECRET ORDER LETS US RAID AL QAEDA IN MANY COUNTRIES

The US military since 2004 has used broad, secret authority to carry out nearly a dozen previously undisclosed attacks against [Al Qaeda](#) and other militants in Syria, Pakistan and elsewhere, according to senior American officials, the [New York Times](#) reported (9/11/08). These military raids, typically carried out by Special Operations forces, were authorized by a classified order that Defence Secretary [Donald H. Rumsfeld](#) signed in the spring of 2004 with

the approval of President Bush, the officials said. The secret order gave the military new authority to attack the Qaeda terrorist network anywhere in the world, and a more sweeping mandate to conduct operations in countries not at war with the United States.

REPORT: <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/10/washington/10military.html?th&emc=th>

WARNING OF NEW BIN LADEN ATTACK

Osama bin Laden is planning an attack against the United States that will "outdo by far" September 11, a London Arab newspaper reported, according to the Brisbane Times (10/11/08).

According to a former senior Yemeni al-Qaeda operative, the terrorist organisation has entered a "positive phase", reinforcing specific training camps around the world that will lead the next "wave of action" against the West. The warning, on the front page of an Arabic newspaper published in London, *Al-Quds Al-Arabi*, quotes a person described as "very close to al-Qaeda" in Yemen.

The editor, Abdel al-Bari Atwan, is said to be the last journalist to interview Osama bin Laden in 1996. According to the report, bin Laden is closely following preparations for an attack against the US and aims to "change the face of world politics and economics". The operative was quoted as saying "this will be shown by the fact that we now control a major part of the south of Somalia".

REPORT: <http://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/news/world/warning-of-new-bin-laden-attack/2008/11/09/1226165421403.html>

SEE OTHER NEWS **BIN LADEN'S SON IN QATAR**

ASIA

US AID DIRECTOR ASSASSINATED

The American director of a project designed to counter Taliban influence in Pakistan by bringing jobs and infrastructure to tribal regions was assassinated as he rode to work in Peshawar. His driver also died. Pakistani officials said they did not know who was responsible, [The New York Times](#) reported (12/11/08).

Gunmen kidnapped an Iranian diplomat and killed his local guard in north-west Pakistan on Thursday, police said, in the latest of a series of attacks in the region, Yahoo News reported (13/11/08). Hashmatullah Atharzadeh was on his way to the consulate in Peshawar when unknown assailants attacked his car, police said.

KARZAI BLASTS US OVER 14 DEATHS

The Afghan President, Hamid Karzai, has blasted US troops for killing 14 private security guards in the east of the country. He said the incident will only expand the gap that has grown between Afghanistan and its Western backers, the Sydney Morning Herald reported (11/11/08).

The US coalition said its troops shot at three vehicles carrying armed men in the eastern Khost province on Sunday only after its occupants opened fire on their forces. Mr Karzai said those killed were private security guards working for a road construction company.

"Carrying out such attacks will only expand the gap between the people and the government of Afghanistan, as well as between Afghanistan and its international allies," Mr Karzai said. The US military said that after its troops stopped the cars, the men inside "got out of their vehicles and fired on the coalition forces, who returned fire with rifles and helicopter gunfire."

REPORT: <http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2008/11/11/1226318652342.html>

MILITARY CHIEF SAYS UK TROOPS NOW IN IRAQ 'NEED REST'

The UK head of defence staff said British armed forces needed time to recover after years of deployment in war zones, the London Guardian reported (10/11/08). Troops should not be transferred directly from Iraq to Afghanistan after a "significant reduction" is made to the British contingent there next year, he said.

Sir Jock Stirrup, the chief of defence staff, said it was crucial for the armed forces to experience a reduction in "operational tempo" in order to recover from several years of being overstretched. The Foreign Secretary, David Miliband, indicated that the UK, whose 8,100 troops in Afghanistan make it the second largest contributor to the international force, would expect other NATO countries to take up a bigger share of the burden in any US-led 'surge.'

The US president-elect, Barack Obama, is preparing to order a significant increase in troop numbers in Afghanistan in the hope of quelling the Taliban insurgency in the country.

REPORT: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2008/nov/09/military-iraq>

AFRICA

SUDAN'S PRESIDENT DECLARES CEASEFIRE IN DARFUR

Sudanese rebels said they would defy President Omar al-Bashir's declaration of an immediate cease-fire in Darfur, which came at the close of a government-sponsored effort to achieve peace in the embattled region. Under pressure from the International Criminal Court, which sought to indict him in July, President Bashir also pledged to disarm militias and to release Darfurian political prisoners, the [BBC](#) reported (12/11/08).

TROOPS FOR CONGO?

Alain Le Roy, UN Undersecretary-General for peacekeeping, said the UN Security Council was considering the possibility of sending troops to prevent the outbreak of full-scale war in DR Congo, where rebels under Laurent Nkunda have renewed fighting.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has requested at least 3,000 more peacekeepers, noting that 250,000 Congolese have been displaced by fighting and some 100,000 are completely cut off from any aid. the [Mail & Guardian \(South Africa\)](#) reported (12/11/08).

[UN Dispatch comment](#): With barely one peacekeeper for every 10,000 civilians in eastern Congo, MONUC cannot be everywhere at once. Its troops are spread thin throughout the country; moving large numbers of them would destabilise other volatile regions. This is why we have called on the international community to reinforce the mission immediately. We need the right tools if we are to succeed in the difficult days ahead. - [UN Dispatch](#)

UN PEACEKEEPERS TRY TO STOP LOOTING

Army troops battling rebel forces have been looting villages in the Kanyabayonga area of eastern Congo, trapping some UN aid officials in the violence. The looting may have been caused by rumors of a rebel strike, said a UN spokesman, who added that UN peacekeepers and the army are getting the situation under control, the [BBC](#) reported (11/11/08).

UN INVESTIGATION UNCOVERS WAR CRIMES

Rebel forces under Laurent Nkunda, who had ordered the town of Kiwanja evacuated, went house to house accusing those who remained -- woman and children for the most part -- of collaboration with the government and shot them dead. The Red Cross estimates as many as 200 were killed. The UN discovered 11 graves with 26 bodies and spoke to witnesses who say that many more are dead. The investigation, conducted with armed escort, led the UN to accuse Nkunda of committing war crimes, reported the [Telegraph \(London\)](#) (10/11/08).

UN CONCERN OVER MAI MAI MILITIAS

As the Southern African Development Community dispatched military advisers to the Congolese army and called for an immediate cease-fire between the government and rebel forces, UN officials warned that dozens of local Mai Mai militias are getting increasingly combative. [The New York Times](#) (9/11/08).

CONGO TROOPS ACCUSED OF LOOTING

Army troops have been looting and targeting civilians in villages in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, a UN spokesman said, the BBC reported. UN spokesman Lt-Col Jean Paul Dietrich said the looting around Kanyabayonga began on Monday and continued through the night. There were also reports of women being raped .

Troops in eastern DR Congo have been battling rebels loyal to a renegade general, Laurent Nkunda. More than 250,000 people have been displaced by the violence, triggering a major humanitarian crisis. **REPORT:** <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7722069.stm>

SOMALIS FEAR HARSH NEW LAWGIVERS

Al-Shabab and other militant Islamists in Somalia have provoked new fears among Somalis that Islamic-party rule never prompted. The al-Shabab-controlled authorities in a region where a 13-year-old girl was stoned for adultery are considered unaccountable by locals, who otherwise support a strict interpretation of Sharia law, the [BBC](#) reported (12/11/08).

TSVANGIRAI REFUSES COMPROMISE

Power-sharing talks in Zimbabwe failed after Prime Minister-elect Morgan Tsvangirai refused to submit to pressure from regional leaders to agree to share authority with President Robert Mugabe over the nation's security and police forces. Authority over the security apparatus, which Mugabe has used to terrorize opponents of the Zanu-PF party, has been a consistent deal breaker for Tsvangirai, reported [The Guardian \(London\)](#) (11/10/08).

FORMER UN AMBASSADOR IN LEAD FOR JUSTICE

An advocacy organisation founded by Canada's former UN ambassador Stephen Lewis is collecting sworn affidavits from women raped and beaten by followers of Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe because they supported the opposition party. The effort is one of several ongoing attempts to bring to justice human-rights violators of the Mugabe regime, [The Globe and Mail \(Toronto\)](#) reported (10/11/08).

EUROPE

EU TO END FREEZE ON RUSSIA

European Union foreign ministers have decided to resume partnership talks with Russia, despite failing to reach unanimous agreement, the BBC reported (10/11/08). Lithuania, the former Soviet republic, remains unconvinced, saying the decision is a "mistake".

The EU suspended talks over Russia's intervention in Georgia, and Lithuania argues it has still not fully met the terms of the truce and withdrawn.

But the 26 other EU members agreed it was time to re-engage with Moscow.

"We have found a good way to proceed," said EU External Relations Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner, after the foreign ministers met in Brussels. "We think it is time to resume the talks." **REPORT:** <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7719666.stm>

SOUTH AMERICA

SHINING PATH GUERRILLAS TARGETTED

A new offensive by the president of Peru to destroy the remnants of the Shining Path guerrilla organisation - coupled with soaring profits from the cocaine trade -- has proved to be a renaissance for the dreaded group. In October, the group killed 17 soldiers and five civilians, more than they have at any point since the 1990s, [The Washington Post](#) reported (12/11/08).

AUSTRALIA

THOUSANDS PAUSE TO REMEMBER WAR SACRIFICE

Thousands of Australians paused for Remembrance Day at 11am on the eleventh day of the eleventh, November 11, commemorating 90 years since the end of World War I, the ABC reported (11/11/08). On November 11 1918 the guns fell silent on the Western Front, signalling the end of World War I.

MEDICOS IN ACTION

The Medical Association for Prevention of War (Australia) reports a number of activities regarding conflicts and nuclear issues. They included:

MAPW BACKS ADVERTISEMENT CALLING FOR AUSTRALIAN TROOPS OUT

The Medical Association for Prevention of War (Australia), also known as MAPW, supported a full-page colour advertisement in Tuesday's West Australian newspaper asking that readers urge Foreign Minister Stephen Smith to bring Australian troops home.

DETAILS: www.mapw.org.au

URANIUM EXPORTS AND NUCLEAR WEAPONS

MAPW President Dr Sue Wareham has launched a statement on behalf of 36 civil society organisations across Australia calling for an end to arms exhibitions in Australia. Speaking at Adelaide's Festival of Peace and Remembrance on November 9, Dr Wareham called for our governments to withdraw support from future arms exhibitions, and to seek economic security through industries that promote life, not death. **DETAILS:** www.mapw.org.au

Poll results: Australians were 2-to-1 against uranium exports to countries with nuclear weapons according to new polling which found twice as many Australians (62 per cent) are against exporting uranium to countries with nuclear weapons than are in favour (31 per cent), MAPW reports. **DETAILS:** www.mapw.org.au. **SEE ALSO UN & AGENCIES PAGE**

UN CALL FOR ALERT STATUS OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS TO BE REDUCED

The First Committee of the UN General Assembly has urged the nuclear weapons states - in particular the US and Russia - to lower the state of operational readiness of some thousands of nuclear warheads that currently stand ready to be launched at literally two minutes notice. MAPW says that as the resolution was supported by Australia, it showed the winds of change were blowing through Australia's foreign affairs department. The resolution was adopted 134 votes to three (US, UK, France) with 32 abstentions.

DETAILS: http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2007_12/NuclearAlert

MAPW URGES NO URANIUM SALES TO RUSSIA

The Australian Government's Joint Standing Committee on Treaties has recommended that against Australia selling uranium sales to Russia until far stricter safeguards separate Russia's power and weapons, the MAPW reported, urging that the government to withstand industry lobbyists who pressure the government to ignore clear evidence of inadequate safeguards. **DETAILS:** <http://www.foe.org.au/anti-nuclear/issues/russia/russia-letter/>

E. HEALTH & MEANS

BAN CALLS ON ISRAEL OVER FOOD AND FUEL STOPPAGES

Food distributions to 750,000 people in the Gaza Strip were due to be cut unless critical supplies, including wheat, powdered milk and oil, were allowed into the area, the UN agency assisting Palestinian refugees warned.

"I call on Israel to ease the severe closure of Gaza by allowing sufficient and predictable supplies to reach the population, ensuring access for humanitarian workers, and facilitating stalled UN projects," UN Secretary General Ban said

The ongoing closure of crossings in and out of Gaza – which has a population of some 1.4 million people – is "both a physical as well as a mental punishment of the population," according to the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

The closures have led to a prolonged humanitarian crisis in the territory, despite the continuing calm between Gaza and southern Israel. The UN World Food Program (WFP) has also voiced concern about the situation, noting that food prices are increasing due to limited stocks.

Meanwhile, the Office of the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process (UNSCO) reported that the Nahal Oz fuel pipelines were briefly reopened that day. As a result, Gaza's power plant was able to get industrial gas. However, no other types of fuel, including petrol, diesel and cooking gas, were allowed in.

The fuel shortage is constraining water and sewage services and causing blackouts in Gaza, according to UN humanitarian agencies working to alleviate the plight of the affected population.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon repeated his concern at the “distressing conditions” in Gaza, during a news conference at UN Headquarters in New York.

Mr Ban said the closures and establishment of roadblocks, as well as ongoing settlement issues and the demolition of houses, did not help the ongoing peace process. He had stressed this point at a meeting in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, with the other members of the Middle East diplomatic Quartet, which includes Russia, the US and the EU.

REPORT: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=28894&Cr=Palestin&Cr1=>

UN: NO MORE FOOD TO DISTRIBUTE TO GAZA STRIP

The UN has no more food to distribute in the Gaza Strip, the head of relief efforts in the area warned, the BBC reported (13/11/08).

John Ging said handouts for 750,000 Gazans would have to be suspended until Saturday at the earliest, and called Gaza's economic situation "a disaster".

Israel earlier denied entry to a convoy carrying humanitarian supplies. It has prevented the transfer of all goods into Gaza for nearly a week, blaming continuing rocket attacks by Palestinian militants.

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) distributes emergency aid to about half of Gaza's 1.5m population.

Mr Ging, UNRWA senior official in Gaza, said "Unless the crossing points open... we won't be able to get that food into Gaza," he told Reuters news agency.

On Thursday Israel had refused permission for senior European diplomats to visit the coastal enclave. It has also prevented journalists from entering the territory.

REPORT: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7726943.stm

WFP CUTS RATIONS IN ZIMBABWE

The UN World Food Program (WFP) warned that it is facing a serious funding crisis in providing life-saving aid to over 4 million people in Zimbabwe suffering the effects of a disastrous harvest, and it has already been forced to cut rations (11/11/08).

“WFP still requires \$140 million to fund its operations in Zimbabwe until the end of March 2009 – with a shortfall of approximately 145,000 tons of food, including 110,000 metric tons of cereals and 35,000 metric tons of other food commodities,” the agency **said** in an update detailing its first month of large-scale distributions in October.

“There is currently no food in the pipeline for distributions in January and February – just when the crisis is reaching its peak and when WFP is aiming to assist over 4 million people each month.”

In October WFP distributed 29,000 tons of food to around 2 million vulnerable people across the southern African country and plans to double the beneficiaries in November by scaling up its operations to reach almost 4 million hungry people in rural and urban areas. But it will have to cut back on the individual rations so as to provide something for all beneficiaries.

“In the worst affected communities, people are surviving on one meal a day – at most,” WFP said. “There are widespread reports of people skipping meals for an entire day or eating wild foods such as baobab seeds and amarula fruit. Hungry families are being forced to exchange their precious livestock for buckets of maize.

REPORT: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=28887&Cr=Zimbabwe&Cr1=>

ICRC DISTRIBUTE 208 TONNES OF FOOD IN DCR

Since November 9, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has distributed about 208 tonnes of food to more than 17,000 displaced people between Nyamilima and Ishasha to cover their needs for the next 10 days (11/11/08).

The area, along the border with Uganda about 100km north-east of Goma, recently received thousands of people fleeing the fighting in North Kivu, among them pregnant women and children separated from parents.

"The people arriving have lost everything, and often have to spend the first few nights on the ground in churches or schools," said Ian Byram, the ICRC's relief coordinator in the Congo.

The ICRC, with support from the Red Cross Society of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, is for the time being the only humanitarian organisation responding to the urgent need. It is delivering surgical and other medical supplies to Nyamilima's hospital.

On November 9 the ICRC also resumed its distribution of food aid in the Kibati area, 15km from Goma. [DETAILS](#): Sydney ICRC Office: 61 (0)2 9388 9039/mob 61 (0) 2 418 485 120 [.gva@icrc.org](mailto:gva@icrc.org); <http://www.icrc.org>

IRAQ FOOD SECURITY BETTER BUT SITUATION STILL VOLATILE

The number of people without adequate access to food in Iraq has fallen dramatically, according to the findings of a joint assessment carried out by the Iraqi Government and the UN World Food Program (WFP) (12/11/08).

The assessment – which shows a significant improvement in food security - found some 930,000 people were without adequate access to food last year, down from around four million in 2005.

The Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Assessment (CFSVA) was carried out in late 2007 in collaboration with the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the World Health Organisation (WHO), as a follow-up to the last food security survey in mid-2005.

"We can give a cautious welcome to these figures," said Edward Kallon, WFP Country Director for Iraq. "I say cautious, because 930,000 is still far too many for a relatively wealthy country. Moreover, there are a further 6.4 million people who would slide into food insecurity if it were not for safety nets, such as the Public Distribution System (PDS)."

UN PROJECT TO HELP DOMINICAN FARMERS

Some 19,000 rural households in the poorest areas of the Dominican Republic are set to benefit from a \$31 million United Nations project to directly link farmers with markets and pilot new risk management mechanisms (13/11/08).

The UN International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) project targets economic organisations of small farmers and rural micro-entrepreneurs, aiming to go beyond the traditional mechanism based on intermediaries, who pay a very low price for farmers' produce, and strengthen producers' organisations.

These groups will gradually build capacity and directly link with traders and buyers in niche markets such as fair trade and organic, with particular attention to export commodities such as quality coffee and organic bananas and cocoa.

"We are drawing up creative comprehensive solutions and bringing know-how in partnership with the private sector. In this way we can help smallholder farmers' link with markets on a successful and sustainable basis," IFAD Country Program Manager Marco Camagni said of the project, which will also include innovative measures to reduce risks and encourage local banks to invest in agriculture on a Caribbean island that is regularly subject to tropical storms. These measures include the creation of a guarantee fund through an experienced private bank – and the piloting of a weather-indexed insurance scheme.

"Climate change mitigation and sound environmental management will be woven through this project, which will also recognise and endorse the vital role of women in economic development processes," IFAD Latin America and Caribbean Director Josefina Stubbs said.

Ms Stubbs will be meeting government officials in Santo Domingo next week to agree on the next steps to finalise the preparation of the initiative, which will build on the success of the South Western Region Small Farmers Project (PROPESUR), a government-IFAD plan launched in 2000 in the midst of the international crisis that affected coffee prices. With a commercial value that did not even cover production costs, many traditional coffee plantations were abandoned. Investing in quality seemed to be the only way to escape the crisis.

PROPESUR provided training to small farmers, supported them in creating a cooperative, and facilitated their access to credit and contacts in the international markets. Today, the coffee produced by Café JAMAO is sold in the select European fair trade market. The new project targets 11 provinces in the north-west, south and south-west, near the Haitian border.

NUCLEAR POWER AND CHILD CANCER

New evidence from two major studies, establishes beyond reasonable doubt that living near a nuclear power station increases the risk of leukaemia for children, the Medical Association for Prevention of War (Australia) reports. This evidence has been concisely presented in a new MAPW Fact Sheet, developed by Melbourne University medical student Jocelyn Chan, with support from Associate Professor Tilman Ruff.

DETAILS: <http://www.mapw.org.au/resources/Fact+Sheet>.

CHOLERA BREAKS OUT IN CONGO REFUGEE CAMP

Doctors and aid workers in DR Congo struggled to maintain the integrity of a sprawling refugee camp that has suffered an outbreak of cholera. Situated near Goma, where government forces and rebels have been seen operating as close as 800 yards from one another, the camp hosts some 50,000 refugees displaced by fighting; volunteers from Doctors Without Borders fear that fighting could prompt the refugees to scatter and potentially cause a cholera epidemic. [The Boston Globe/The Associated Press](#) (10/11/08).

RECYCLE SEWAGE 'AS A LAST RESORT'

The federal agency responsible for establishing national health standards has warned the Queensland Government it should not proceed with its \$2.5 billion plan to recycle sewage and industrial waste for drinking water unless it is "absolutely necessary", The Australian reported (10/11/08).

National Health and Medical Research Council water quality advisory committee chairman Don Bursill issued the warning as the Gold Coast City Council launched an investigation into how unsafe recycled waste water was if put into a treatment plant's drinking water.

Sixty million litres of recycled waste water a day will be pumped to the Wivenhoe Dam, Brisbane's main drinking water source, from early next year.

REPORT: <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,24626801-601,00.html>

POVERTY AND POOR HEALTH IN GENE LINK

Poverty can cause poor health by altering a person's genes, a new study suggests, the Sydney Morning Herald reported (11/11/08). The finding, a first in children with asthma, could help explain why social disadvantage is linked to greater vulnerability to sickness and death in many diseases. Canadian and American researchers who compared the DNA of rich and poor children with the chronic lung condition said the study revealed how poverty can "get under the skin", with nurture influencing nature.

REPORT: <http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2008/11/10/1226165481865.html>

MEASLES JABS FOR CHINESE CHILDREN

The Measles Initiative is supporting the government of the People's Republic of China in providing measles vaccines to more than 7.3 million children, implementing additional

measles control activities and strengthening the delivery of routine immunisation in the provinces of Chongqing, Gansu, Sha'anxi and Sichuan - areas severely harmed by the magnitude 8.0 earthquake that struck six months ago. [Click here](#): Measles Initiative from the United Nations Foundation.

F. MEDIA MATTERS

FIJI: MEDIA WARNING OVER QARASE ALLEGED

Fiji's Department of Information and the Attorney General's Office has announced a draft of a new media law to be made public in December, according to the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ).

IFJ said the former editor and publisher of the *Fiji Times* was facing trial on charges of alleged contempt brought by the interim government (11/11/08). The charge was said to refer to the publication of a letter following a High Court ruling on the dismissal of the Qarase Government in 2006. Details of the letter's author were being sought and that Fiji's media had been warned to be careful what they published about comments by Mr Qarase, IFJ reported.

In 2008 the interim government deported *Fiji Sun* publisher and managing director Russell Hunter in February and *Fiji Times* publisher Evan Hannah in May. In August a reporter for the *Fiji Times* was reported to have been arrested and interrogated by police regarding an article about an ex-PM. [DETAILS](#): IFJ Asia -Pacific on +612 9333 0919.

MPS SEEK TO CENSOR THE MEDIA

Britain's security agencies and police would be given unprecedented and legally binding powers to ban the media from reporting matters of national security, under proposals being discussed in Whitehall, the UK Independent reported (10/11/08).

The Intelligence and Security Committee, the parliamentary watchdog of the intelligence and security agencies which has a cross-party membership from both Houses, wants to press ministers to introduce legislation that would prevent news outlets from reporting stories deemed by the Government to be against the interests of national security.

The committee also wants to censor reporting of police operations that are deemed to have implications for national security. The ISC is to recommend in its next report, out at the end of the year, that a commission be set up to look into its plans, according to senior Whitehall sources. [REPORT: http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/mps-seek-to-censor-the-media-1006607.html](http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/mps-seek-to-censor-the-media-1006607.html)

BLINDFOLDED AND KEPT IN HOLE: CANADIAN JOURNALIST

A Canadian journalist described in a video how kidnappers kept her in a hole in the ground in Afghanistan for four weeks, sometimes chained and blindfolded, the Sydney Morning Herald reported (10/11/08). Other reports said she was kept in a small cave.

Wearing a head scarf and muddied traditional Punjabi outfit, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation reporter Mellissa Fung, 35, said she had not been hurt. She was kidnapped in or near Kabul on October 12.

Days earlier a Dutch female journalist was freed after a week in captivity, but a French aid worker taken in the city centre on Monday was still missing.

[REPORT: http://www.smh.com.au/news/world/blindfolded-and-kept-in-a-hole/2008/11/10/1226165416901.html](http://www.smh.com.au/news/world/blindfolded-and-kept-in-a-hole/2008/11/10/1226165416901.html)

ANOTHER PAKISTAN JOURNALIST KILLED

Qari Mohammad Shoaib, a reporter for daily newspapers *Azadi* and *Khabar Kar*, was shot dead on November 8 in Mingora, Swat Valley, north-west Pakistan, as he returned home from work, reportedly because he did not stop his vehicle when signalled to do so, the IFJ reported

He is the third journalist to be killed in Swat this year, said the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ). Security forces admitted that Mr Shoaib was killed "by mistake", according to the PFUJ. His vehicle displayed a press sticker and he was carrying a press card.

Journalists around the country were expected to rally on November 12 to demand greater security for media personnel in Pakistan's conflict zones. Members of local press clubs and unions in Swat staged a protest rally on November 9 to condemn the killing, and announced three days of mourning for Mr Shoaib. The Khyber Union of Journalists, an affiliate of the PFUJ, was holding a protest demonstration in Peshawar.

Swat Valley, in North-West Frontier Province (NWFP), about 150km north-east of Peshawar, has been the focus of a Pakistan Army offensive against insurgents since August.

Mr Shoaib is the third journalist to be killed in the conflict-ridden region this year. In late August, Abdul Aziz was murdered during an attack by Pakistan forces on a Taliban hideout in Swat where he was being held hostage. In May Mohammad Ibrahim was killed by unknown militants in Bajaur, in the Federally Administered Tribal Area north of Swat.

Journalists and media workers in Pakistan are calling on the Pakistan Government to honour a commitment made by President Asif Zardari in March to ensure implementation of wage rises for newspaper employees which have been stalled since 2001 the IFJ reported (11/11/08). [DETAILS](#): IFJ Asia -Pacific on +612 9333 0919.

MALAYSIA'S HIGH COURT RELEASES ONLINE JOURNALIST

The Malaysia's High Court released unconditionally online journalist Raja Petra Kamarudin who had been detained for two months under Malaysia's draconian Internal Security Act (ISA). The court ruled his detention was unlawful.

Raja Petra, who has run the popular political website *Malaysia Today* for two years, was arrested on September 12 and released on November 7.

An order signed by Home Minister Syed Hamid Albar on September 22 had extended his detention for two years on the grounds that his writing allegedly posed a threat to "national security".

Malaysia Today, which has broken controversial stories including accusations against senior government members, was also temporarily shut down by government officials. [DETAILS](#): IFJ Asia-Pacific on +612 9333 0919.

TWO JOURNALISTS ATTACKED IN NEPAL'S EAST

The bashing of two senior journalists by an unidentified group in Biratnagar, Eastern Nepal, on November 5 was reported by IFJ (10/11/08).

According to the Federation of Nepali Journalists (FNJ), the vice-president of the FNJ's Saptari chapter, Abadesh Jha, and a correspondent for *News Today*, Sanatan Mandal, were attacked by four to five people at the Tiffen Room Hotel.

The journalists were reportedly held by the group for about 20 minutes while they were beaten and their money and mobile phones stolen.

[DETAILS](#): IFJ Asia -Pacific on +612 9333 0919.

CALL ON BEHALF OF SRI LANKAN JOURNALIST

A representative of the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) is attending the trial as an independent legal observer of senior Tamil journalist J.S. Tissainayagam, who is defending himself against terrorism charges in the Colombo High Court.

The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) and the International Press Institute (IPI) have called on colleagues in South Asia and the international press to report loudly and widely on the current trial.

Mr Tissainayagam is to give evidence on two charges of writing to bring discredit to the government and inciting ethnic and racial disharmony and printing and publishing such material in the *North Eastern Monthly* between June 2006 and June 2007 under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (1979), and one charge of violating the 2006 Emergency Regulations with regard to allegations of aiding and abetting terrorist organisations through raising money for the magazine.

He was arrested on March 7 by the Terrorist Investigation Division (TID) of the Sri Lankan police force and had spent over five months in detention without charge before a formal indictment was issued on August 25. Two other media workers, E-Kwality Printers owner N. Jesiharan and his wife Valamarthi, also continue to be held.

[DETAILS](#): IFJ Asia-Pacific on +612 9333 0919.

2008 HUMAN RIGHTS MEDALS AND AWARDS SHORTLIST

President of the Australian Human Rights Commission, Catherine Branson has announced the shortlisted entries for the 2008 Human Rights Medals and Awards.

The awards are held annually to coincide with International Human Rights Day, December 10. This year's awards ceremony also celebrates the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights passed by the United Nations in 1948.

Shortlists were finalised from around 220 nominations for the Human Rights Medal, the inaugural Young People's Human Rights Medal and the seven award categories including: Law (sponsored by the Law Council of Australia), Community (Individual), Community (Organisation), Literature Non-Fiction, Print Media, Radio, and Television.

2008 Human Rights Medals and Awards Shortlist

These shortlisted entries are not in order of preference. There are no shortlists for the Human Rights Medal or the Young People's Human Rights Medal.

Law Award (sponsored by the Law Council of Australia)
Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement
Bill Mitchell
David Manne
Law Society of Western Australia
Refugee and Immigration Legal Service (RAILS)

Community Award (Individual)
Shelley Argent
Sharon Boyce
Ivan 'Tiwu' Copley
Bill Mitchell
Charandev Singh

Community Award (Organisation)
Accessible Arts
GetUp!
Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) Brisbane Inc.
Refugee and Immigration Legal Service (RAILS)
Youth Referral and Independent Person Program

Television Award
Angels and Demons
Sonya Pemberton, Andrew Denton and Anita Jacoby
Enough Rope with Andrew Denton, ABC Television

Hope
Steve Thomas and Sue Brooks
Flying Carpet Films

In my Shoes
Quentin McDermott, Steve Taylor and Stephen Skinner
Four Corners, ABC Television

Secret Trade
John Stewart (Producer)
Lateline, ABC Television

Young Carers
Peter Kirkwood, Deb Prince, Rose Hesp, Dina Volaric
Compass, ABC Television

Print Media Award
National Apology: commemorative liftout
Kirstie Parker (Editor)
Koori Mail

Funeral funds: door to door death
Joel Gibson
The Sydney Morning Herald

Serving up mediocrity and Dismantling mediocrity - two-part series
Link Disability Magazine

32 Weeks – 5 1/2 Years
Julie-Anne Davies
The Bulletin

Diversity, Difference and Diagnosis (D3) issues - series
Copeland Publishing: The 'Child' Magazines

Literature Non-Fiction Award
(Click on covers for a larger image)

The Jihad Seminar
Hanifa Deen

Trafficked
Kathleen Maltzahn

Watching Brief: Reflections on Human Rights, Law and Justice
Julian Burnside

Mastering Bipolar Disorder: An insider's guide to managing mood swings and finding balance
Kerrie Eyers and Gordon Parker (Eds)

Human Rights Over Board: Seeking Asylum in Australia
Linda Briskman, Susie Latham and Chris Goddard

The Tall Man - Death and Life on Palm Island
Chloe Hooper

Radio Award
Exposed to moral danger: The story of the Hay Institution for Girls
Ann Arnold

Hindsight, ABC Radio National

No Money, No Car: Stories of everyday poverty
Nicole Steinke
Street Stories, ABC Radio National

Central Australia - The Intervention Part 1, The Intervention Part 2 - Regulating Grog, The Intervention Part 3 - Bush Courts
Damien Carrick and Anita Barraud
The Law Report, ABC Radio National

Stolen Wages Series
Stefan Armbruster
SBS Radio

Up the line to Goodna: Stories from Inside the Asylum (three part series)
Natasha Mitchell and Anita Barraud
All in the Mind, ABC Radio National

The shortlist for each award category (excluding the Human Rights Medal and the Young People's Human Rights Medal) are available on the commission's website at: www.humanrights.gov.au/hr_awards Winners and highly commended entries will be announced and presented at a gala luncheon ceremony at the Grand Ballroom, Sheraton on the Park Hotel in Sydney, on December 10.

DETAILS: Louise McDermott on 02 9284 9851 or 0419 258 597.

BOYER LECTURE – Rupert Murdoch: SEE OTHER NEWS

NEWSPAPER RESOURCE SERVICE

The Australian Newspapers beta service now contains 367,000 newspaper pages from 26 different newspaper titles dating from 1803-1954, providing access to over 3.5 million newspaper articles. The National Library is currently undertaking a procurement process to establish a panel of digital scanning and Optical Character Recognition (OCR) contractors for ongoing newspaper digitisation activities. During this period no additional content will be added to the Beta service.

"We would like to thank everyone for the feedback that has been provided so far, and encourage everyone to keep providing feedback on the service," says the ANDP Team.
DETAILS: Mark Raadgever, Australian Newspapers Digitisation, National Library of Australia: <http://www.nla.gov.au/ndp>; <http://ndpbeta.nla.gov.au>; on +61 2 6262 1622; ANDP@nla.gov.au

IFJ PRESS FREEDOM IN CHINA CAMPAIGN

In the November 8 bulletin:

1. IFJ Concerned By Reporting Restrictions in China on Financial Crisis
2. IFJ Applauds Sakharov Prize Winner Hu Jia and Calls for Immediate Release
3. 'Challenging Step Forward' For Reporting in China as Regulations Extended
4. Continuing Restrictions on Reporting China's Food Crisis
5. IFJ Demands China's Authorities Release Huang Qi
6. Taiwan Journalists Angered at Government Interference
7. IFJ Condemns Police Attack on Documentary Maker in Taiwan
8. Journalist Challenges Censorship Powers
9. Macau Begins Review of Basic Law With Implications for Hong Kong
10. "Journalists" Seek Payment to Keep Quiet on Mine Accident

DETAILS: IFJ Asia -Pacific on +612 9333 0919.

G. OTHER NEWS

MIGRANT WORKER DIED ON JOB: UNION

Another temporary migrant working on a 457 visa has died from injuries sustained on the job after attempts by the union to visit his worksite were repeatedly thwarted, the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union says (11/11/08).

It was reported that at least nine migrants on the visa scheme have died in work-related accidents in the past two years, at almost double the workplace mortality rate of the general working population. Lian Ron Xia, a welder from China, died in September from a head injury sustained in an industrial accident at Byrne Trailers in Wagga Wagga. This follows three 457-worker deaths in remote areas revealed by the Sydney Morning Herald last year.

The newspaper reported the union wants an overhaul of the 457 visa system, which can link a person's ability to stay in the country to acceptance of low wages and unsafe conditions.

The Department of Immigration and Citizenship said nine migrants on 457 visas had died in workplace-related accidents between January 1 2006 and October 31 2008.

REPORT: <http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2008/11/10/1226165481853.html>

AFGHAN PARLIAMENTARIANS VISIT AUSTRALIAN PARLIAMENT

A group of seven parliamentarians from Afghanistan made an historic visit to the Australian Parliament this week. They were the first representatives from the National Assembly of Afghanistan to officially visit Australia since the end of the Taliban regime and the establishment of the new democratically elected parliament.

The visit is a joint initiative of the Australian Parliament and the UN Development Program (UNDP), under its Support for an Effective Afghan Legislature Project (SEAL). It is the first stage of a mentoring program between the Australian and Afghanistan Parliaments, which will see Australian parliamentarians work with their counterparts from Afghanistan to help them boost their knowledge of and understanding about parliamentary processes.

The five men and two women are from the two houses of the National Assembly: the lower house known as the Wolesi Jirga (House of People) and the upper house known as the Meshrano Jirga (House of Elders).

DETAILS: Andrew Dawson, House of Representatives on 02 6277 2063/mob 0401 143 724.

CHINA SPENDS \$586 BILLION ON MAJOR INFRASTRUCTURE

In an effort to strengthen its flagging economy, China plans to spend \$586 billion on major infrastructure projects over the next two years, including \$18 billion in the fourth quarter. The stimulus program, which is the largest in China's history, is expected to encourage foreign investors and mitigate the financial pressures facing the U.S. and Europe. [The New York Times](#) (11/9)

BRITISH REVOKES THAKSIN'S VISA

The British Government has revoked the visas of the former Thai prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra and his wife, the BBC reported (8/11/08). Mr Thaksin was deposed in a military coup in 2006 and travelled to Britain.

The BBC reported that he had since been convicted by a Thai court on corruption charges and sentenced in absentia to two years. His wife faces three years' for tax evasion. Mr Thaksin is thought to be travelling in East Asia.

REPORT: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/7717199.stm

EX-TAIWAN PRESIDENT GOES FROM COURT TO HOSPITAL

A court proceeding against Taiwan's former President Chen Shui-bian has been suspended after he asked to be taken to hospital, the BBC reported (11/11/08). Mr Chen told the judges he needed treatment after being pushed earlier in the day, according to opposition lawmaker Lai Ching-the.

Earlier, Mr Chen was detained by prosecutors questioning him over corruption charges. The charges relate to his eight years in office, which ended in May. He is accused of money laundering and illegally using a special presidential fund.

REPORT: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/7721468.stm>

BALI BOMBERS EXECUTED

The Indonesian Attorney-General's Office confirmed that the three Bali bombers had been executed by firing squad for their involvement in the 2002 bombings which killed more than 202 people, including 88 Australians, the ABC reported.

A spokesman for the Attorney-General, Jasman Pandjaitan, said all three men had been declared dead. REPORT: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/>

INDONESIAN EDITORIAL CRITICAL

Indonesia's handling of the executions of three militants for the 2002 Bali bombings caused unnecessary suffering for victims of the blasts and helped fan domestic passions, Indonesian media said Monday.

"The three terrorists most responsible for the carnage in Bali in October 2002 have finally been executed after months of uncertainty that turned the waiting into a public spectacle that only upset and infuriated relatives of the victims and prolonged their pain," the Jakarta Post said in an editorial.

"The media, particularly television, seemed to be a willing partner throughout this whole spectacle, especially during the last four weeks while the authorities hesitated in carrying out the execution order," the paper said.

REPORT: <http://au.news.yahoo.com/a/-/world/5136277/questions-indonesia-bali-executions/>

DEATH PENALTY DEBATE 'A GLOBAL ISSUE'

Indonesia's Foreign Minister said the debate about the appropriateness of the death penalty was not confined to just Australia and Indonesia, the ABC reported (12/11/08).

Hassan Wirajuda was in Canberra for the ninth Australian Indonesia Ministerial Forum. Foreign Affairs Minister Stephen Smith has reaffirmed that the Australian Government will continue to seek clemency for Australians on death row in Indonesia, if all other legal appeals fail.

Dr Wirajuda said the whole world was divided between those countries which had abolished the death penalty, and those which had not.

"If and when all legal and appeal processes have been concluded so far as the remaining members of the Bali nine are concerned, and if one or more of those continue to be subject to a death penalty, then once all legal procedures and appeal procedures have exhausted themselves, then the Australian Government will make a plea of clemency on their behalf," he said. REPORT: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/11/12/2417796.htm>

SAUDI ARABIA INITIATES FAITH TALKS

As part of a personal effort by King Abdullah to encourage discussion among the world's major faiths, Saudi Arabia was to host a two-day UN meeting on religious tolerance attended by US President George W. Bush, Israeli President Shimon Peres and other world leaders. The king dined for the first time with the Israeli president at a banquet this week while critics charged that a nation that forbids the public practice of other religions is not in a moral position to lead such an initiative, [The Washington Post](#) reported (12/11/08).

BIN LADEN'S SON IN QATAR AFTER BEING DEPORTED BY EGYPT

Osama bin Laden's son Omar, 27, arrived in Qatar after being deported from Egypt following his return from a failed bid to secure political asylum in Spain, his English-born wife told AFP, the Sydney Morning Herald reported (10/11/08).

"We have finally found somewhere where we can stay and we thank the government. We cannot thank them enough," Zaina Alsabah bin Laden said in Doha. She did not give details of their legal status in Qatar. Mr Bin Laden, who holds a Saudi passport, should normally have the right to live in any of the six Gulf Cooperation Council states, being a citizen of a

member state. In his request for political asylum, he said his life was in danger in the Middle East because he was a pacifist.

REPORT: <http://www.smh.com.au/news/world/bin-ladens-son-in-qatar-after-being-deported-by-egypt/2008/11/10/1226165417015.html>

CHINA UNVEILS \$586 BILLION ECONOMIC STIMULUS PLAN

[China](#) announced a huge economic [stimulus package](#) aimed at bolstering its weakening economy and perhaps helping fight the effects of a global economic slowdown, the New York Times reported (9/11/08).

In a sweeping move at a time when major projects are being put off around the world, Beijing said it would spend an estimated \$586 billion by 2010 on wide array of national infrastructure and social welfare projects, including constructing new railways, subways, airports and rebuilding communities devastated by an earthquake in southwest China in May.

The package is the largest economic stimulus effort ever undertaken by the Chinese Government. Earlier this year, the United States Congress passed a [\\$700 billion bailout package](#) in a country with an economy whose size is close to \$14 trillion.

REPORT: http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/10/world/asia/10china.html?_r=1&hp&oref=slogin

HOSTAGES RELEASED IN CAMEROON

Rebels in Cameroon have freed 10 people - mostly French nationals - seized from an oil vessel last month, French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner says, the BBC reported (11/11/08).

They were captured off the Bakassi peninsula by a group opposed to the transfer of the oil-rich region from Nigeria to Cameroon. The rebels had threatened to kill the hostages if Cameroon's government did not talk to them. There was no word on the circumstances of the release. REPORT: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7723105.stm>

LATIN AMERICANS EVICT US DRUG OFFICERS

Bolivia and Ecuador affirmed measures to restrict or evict US anti-drug operations within their borders, while Venezuela confirmed its longstanding opinion that the US failed to cooperate in the Americas' fight against drugs. US officials said while the expulsion of DEA agents will have a negative impact on US intelligence in the region, the greater fear was that these moves among leftist Latin American nations represent a diminished interest in prosecuting the drug trade. [The Christian Science Monitor](#) (10/11/08).

GETTING GOVERNANCE RIGHT FOR INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIA

'Closing the gap' between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australia will remain a pipedream unless workable and legitimate governance arrangements are created in Aboriginal communities, according to contributors to a new book launched in Canberra (10/11/08).

Contested Governance: Culture, power and institutions in Indigenous Australia, argues that resolving the tensions between western and Indigenous approaches to governance is an essential foundation for social and economic improvements for first Australians. The book comes from the Indigenous Community Governance Project, an ARC-funded collaboration between the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research (CAEPR) at ANU, Reconciliation Australia and a number of Indigenous community organisations.

"Getting governance right is importance for the future of Indigenous Australia, yet time and again governments have failed to seize the opportunity" said book co-editor Janet Hunt from CAEPR. "Our book draws on the most comprehensive Indigenous governance research ever undertaken in Australia to make the case for policies to focus on effective governance. Various reports and enquiries have urged governments to focus on governance capacity, most recently the Report of the Northern Territory Emergency Response Review Board, but the message hasn't got through as yet."

Dr Hunt said, "Our book features case studies from remote, rural and urban areas that show how negotiated governance models, based on the informed consent and decision making of

Indigenous people, lead to improved community and economic development. The evidence is in – there is consensus about the importance of a new approach to Indigenous governance.”

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, Tom Calma, said the book provided an invaluable insight into the subtleties of Indigenous governance and was an excellent tool for governments, policy makers, academics and the broader community.

Contested Governance: Culture, power and institutions in Indigenous Australia is co-edited by Janet Hunt, Diane Smith, Stephanie Garling and Will Sanders from CAEPR, and published by ANU E Press. It will be launched this morning by Mr Calma at 11.30am at the Indigenous Leadership Centre, Lady Denman Drive, Yarramundi Reach, ACT.

DETAILS: [Contested Governance at: http://epress.anu.edu.au/c29_citation.html](http://epress.anu.edu.au/c29_citation.html); and Simon Couper on 02 6125 4171/ 0416 249 241.

UNIVERSITY LAUNCHES SOCIAL CHANGE AWARD FOR 2009

The University of Queensland has invited applications from Australia and around the world for its prestigious 2009 Communication and Social Change Award. The award, which recognises outstanding achievements by individuals or organisations in the field of Communication for Social Change (CSC) is the only one of its kind to be offered by an Australian university.

It is administered by the UQ School of Journalism and Communication's Centre for Communication and Social Change.

Launching this year's award, the Head of School, Professor Michael Bromley, said the number and quality of applications had increased each year since the annual Award commenced in 2006 (10/11/08). "Last year, we received 16 nominations from a wide range of organisations and individuals from Pakistan, USA, Nigeria, India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia and Iran," Professor Bromley said. "In 2009, we hope to build on this success to attract even more applications from Australia and internationally."

Winners of the award receive a plaque and A\$2500 and are selected in the last quarter of each year by an independent jury of senior Australian academic, media and aid and development representatives.

DETAILS: <http://www.uq.edu.au/sjc/>; Marsali MacKinnon, UQ Centre for Communication and Social Change, on +61 7 3365 1393. m.mackinnon@uq.edu.au

RUSSIAN HEAD WANTS TO EXTEND PRESIDENTIAL TERM

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev has sent to parliament a bill that extends the presidential term to six years from the current four, the Kremlin says, the BBC reported (11/11/08). Mr Medvedev said last week the measure would give more time for the head of state to push through reforms. He did not say if he wanted to extend his own term or that of his successor.

REPORT: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7722460.stm>

A GOLDEN AGE OF FREEDOM

The 2008 Boyer Lectures: The 2008 lecture series, A Golden Age of Freedom is presented by Rupert Murdoch, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, News Corporation.

On a wall in Rupert Murdoch's *Wall Street Journal* office in Manhattan hangs a Russel Drysdale painting. It has travelled with him around the world. *The Stockman and his Family* depicts a pioneering Australia, steely and resilient in the face of solitude and hardship. Values which he feels have taken us to where we are today - one of the most prosperous and peaceful nations on Earth. But will these values see us through the times ahead?

Rupert Murdoch presents the 2008 Boyer Lectures on Sundays at 5pm on [Radio National](#).

DETAILS: <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/boyerlectures/default.htm>

SEMINAR LOOKS AT JUSTICE, HEALING & DEVELOPMENT IN EAST TIMOR

The Australia East Timor Friendship Association is organising a seminar on November 15 at the University of Adelaide, Andrew Alcock, AETFA's Information Officer, said. Entitled *East Timor: Justice, Healing and Development*, the seminar will explore some of the problems being faced by the tiny nation.

Speakers scheduled included Dr Clinton Fernandes, Senior Lecturer at the Australian Defence Academy/University of NSW and author, Grant Niemann, Senior Lecturer at Flinders University and Senior Trial Attorney for the UN International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, Hermen da Cruz, East Timorese police officer and student at Flinders University, Dr Richie Gun and Anne Bunning, who have both recently worked in East Timor. DETAILS: Andrew (Andy) Alcock on 61 8 83710480; 61 8 82053200; 0417 838 952; aa@cpsu.asn.au; andyalcock@internode.on.net

H. ARTICLES IN FOCUS

THE GREAT WAR IS THE KEY TO REMEMBRANCE

I believe that it is right to hold on to Armistice Day, and its related Sunday, however many other wars there are now to think of, writes Mary Warnock in *The Guardian* (9/11/08). (The writer was born six years after the end of WWI). The First World War was a turning point in our perception of war. Before that, war had been heroic, picturesque, possibly glorious ... But the scale of the incompetence and the horror of trench warfare, the appalling number of people who inevitably died, and were knowingly sent to die, even when victory was certain, all these things changed the concept of war. Even those of us who did not remember it became gradually aware of people (such as Harold Macmillan) whose war experiences were so dire that they could not be spoken of. We read truthful accounts, like *Goodbye to All That*, that opened our eyes to what it had actually been like, to the existential ghastliness of that particular war ... those who were young had horrible experiences in the Second World War as well and performed great feats of courage and self-sacrifice ... We never learn completely to avoid the stupidity of our fathers (for the conduct of the First World War seems now to have been the outcome of almost unbelievable stupidity), or the wrongs that they did, but we may learn to see them more clearly and recognise them as a constant danger for ourselves.

ARTICLE: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2008/nov/09/armistice-day-first-world-war>

G20 SUMMIT: NEW WORLD ORDER?

Some G20 nations hope the weekend summit on financial reform will be a modern Bretton Woods, but can it make big decisions without Barack Obama? Stephen Foley writes in the *London Independent* (12/11/08). For the (UK) Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, it is a "new Bretton Woods", as important as the 1944 convention that established the modern financial world order. For Nicolas Sarkozy, President of France, it is a once-in-a-lifetime chance to remake the global financial architecture and usher in an era of "regulated capitalism". But beware the headlines that these leaders try to manufacture when they assemble for their credit crisis summit in Washington this weekend. What we have is a summit without an agenda, on a crisis without an agreed cause, in a country without a functioning government. The US – whose outgoing President agreed to hold the meeting under French pressure, and whose President-elect, keen to stress that the US has "only one president at a time", won't even be there – has already bristled at European talk of a creating new supra-national regulators and international rules.

ARTICLE: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/analysis-and-features/g20-summit-new-world-order-1012519.html>

TEARS TO REMEMBER

I will admit that back in January, when Barack Obama, in his post-Iowa victory speech, spoke about the "cynics," the "they" who said "this country was too divided, too disillusioned to ever come together around a common purpose," he was talking about me. Judith Warner writes in the *New York Times* (6/11/08). I will admit that the call of "change" did not speak to me as an achievable goal. Until it actually came. On Wednesday, there was a run on newspapers, as voters rushed to grab a tangible piece of the history they'd made. My husband Max and I, unable to find extra copies, brought our own worn papers home to 8- and 11-year-old Emilie and Julia. Sept. 11, the seismic event that we'd feared would forever form their political consciousness, shaping their world and constricting the boundaries of the possible, had actually been eclipsed, light blotting out darkness, the best of America at long last driving away the demons of fear. We wanted them to see that it was the end of an era. "Look," we said, pointing to the headline "Racial Barrier Falls." "This is *huge*." We laboured to make them

understand that their world ... had irrevocably changed. But how can you understand change when you've only known one way of being?

ARTICLE: <http://warner.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/11/06/title/?ei=5070&emc=eta1>

BOLD IS GOOD

Just about everyone is giving President-elect Barack Obama advice based on one interpretation or another of what his victory really means, E.J.Dionne writes in the Washington Post (10/11/08). Obama should be wary of any counsel that the advice-givers had in mind before a single vote was counted. The worst advice will come from his conservative adversaries, the people who called him a socialist a few days before the election and insisted a few days later that he won because he was really a conservative ... These conservatives are trying to stop Obama from pursuing any of the ideas that he campaigned on -- universal access to health care, a government-led green revolution, redistributive tax policies, a withdrawal of American troops from Iraq, more robust economic regulation. Their gimmick is to insist that the United States is still a "[center-right](#)" country because more Americans call themselves conservative than liberal. What this analysis ignores is that Americans have clearly moved to the left of where they were four, eight or ten years ago.

ARTICLE: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/11/09/AR2008110901896.html?wpisrc=newsletter>

BLACK, WHITE OR NEITHER? THE MIXED RACE DILEMMA

Barack Obama has identified himself as a 'mutt'. We, too, should acknowledge our fastest-growing ethnic minority, David Aaronovitch writes in the London Times (11/11/08). In America in the spring of this year, 2008, a widow named Mildred Dolores Loving died at the age of 67. Let me hand the story over to the late Chief Justice of the US Supreme Court, Earl Warren, writing in 1967. "In June 1958," Warren explained, "two residents of Virginia, Mildred Jeter, a negro woman, and Richard Loving, a white man, were married in the District of Columbia pursuant to its laws." But not pursuant to the laws of their native Virginia. When they returned to the state and set up home in Caroline County, a Virginia grand jury indicted them for violating the local ban on interracial marriages. "On January 6, 1959," Warren continued, "the Lovings pleaded guilty to the charge and were sentenced to one year in jail; however, the trial judge suspended the sentence for a period of 25 years on the condition that the Lovings leave the state and not return to Virginia together for 25 years. (To Warren) 'Almighty God created the races white, black, yellow, Malay and red, and he placed them on separate continents ... The fact that he separated the races shows that he did not intend for the races to mix'."

ARTICLE:

http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/columnists/david_aaronovitch/article5126706.ece

THE LIST: FIVE REAL MISSIONS FOR 007

The Foreign Policy magazine, November issue, poses the question: James Bond is out for revenge in the new film, *Quantum of Solace*, opening in the US on November 14, but in the real world, the intelligence community is badly in need of a superspy to solve some of its biggest conundrums. FP suggests five missions. The first is: Who's Got the H-Bomb?

The mission: Infiltrate the nuclear weapons programs of India, Pakistan, and North Korea to determine which ones possess the hydrogen bomb. FP also looks at: Could China Rule the Waves?; Who Supplies Russia's Energy Wealth? Which Tribe (Pashtun) to Bribe? and Who Will Follow Kim?

ARTICLE: http://www.foreignpolicy.com/story/cms.php?story_id=4551

THE COURAGE OF INDIVIDUALS IS THE CURRENCY OF OUR FREEDOM

I saw Russian journalist Anna Politkovskaya speak at the Sydney Writers' Festival in 2006. She was direct and eloquent, and five months later, she was assassinated, writes Anna Funder in the Sydney Morning Herald (12/11/08). She answered questions about Russia and Chechnya, about Vladimir Putin's assumption of dictatorial power and the abandonment of the fledgling democracy of the '90s. She did not, like so many writers, indulge faux self-deprecation to draw the conversation back to herself. At the end, a man said he admired her valour, but he wanted to know the personal price she paid for living under the threat of death. "Traditionally in Russia we do not talk about such things," she said, before drawing breath. "Because the price does not matter. It does not matter compared to the cause you are trying

to serve. Anna Funder is the author of *Stasiland: Stories From Behind The Berlin Wall*. The herald published an edited extract from a Sydney PEN lecture.

ARTICLE: <http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2008/11/11/11226318649658.html>

I. ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

UK POLICE WARN OF GROWING THREAT FROM ECO-TERRORISTS

UK police have warned of the growing threat of eco-terrorism after revealing they are investigating a group which has supporters who believe that reducing the Earth's population by four-fifths will help to protect the planet, the London Guardian reported (9/11/08).

Officers from a specialist unit dedicated to tackling domestic terrorism are monitoring an eco-movement called Earth First! which has advocates who state that cutting the Earth's population by 80 per cent will ease pressure on other species. Officers are concerned a 'lone maverick' eco-extremist may attempt a terrorist attack aimed at killing large numbers of Britons.

The National Extremism Tactical Co-ordination Unit, which collates intelligence and advice to police forces, has revealed that eco-activists are researching a list of target companies which they believe are major polluters or are exacerbating the threat of climate change.

REPORT: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2008/nov/09/eco-terrorism-earth-first-elf>

INDONESIA LAUNCHES ITS TSUNAMI WARNING SYSTEM

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon this week welcomed the launch of the Indonesian Tsunami Early Warning System, congratulating the country's government for its regional leadership by taking steps towards making its citizens less vulnerable to the effects of such a natural disaster (11/11/08).

In a **speech** delivered in Jakarta by UN Director of the Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) Sálvano Briceño, Mr Ban acknowledged the terrible destruction of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami.

With countries of the region forging partnerships in technology, sharing data, communicating in real time and helping communities to prepare, Mr Ban has acknowledged such efforts will reduce risks to vulnerable communities in the region. He further urged all participating countries to maintain commitment to working with the UN, not only in preparation for a possible tsunami but to deal with all natural hazards.

The launch of the Indonesian initiative follows in the footsteps of the UN-led staged tsunami drill, *Exercise Pacific Wave 08*, carried out by the Pacific Tsunami Warning and Mitigation Systems (PTWS) just with the aim of achieving rapid tsunami detection in that region.

REPORT: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=28898&Cr=tsunami&Cr1=>

TRACE URANIUM INVESTIGATION IN SYRIA

International Atomic Energy Agency chief Mohamed ElBaradei said the UN atomic watchdog was investigating claims that trace uranium was found at the site of an alleged nuclear reactor bombed by Israel last year. Allegations about a secret nuclear program have been fuelled by the assassination of Gen. Muhammad Suleiman, who was shot by a sniper -- some say in order to silence him, [The Guardian \(London\)](#) reported (12/11/08).

NORTH KOREA FORBIDS SOIL AND WASTE SAMPLE TESTS

North Korea said it will forbid American and UN nuclear inspectors from taking soil and nuclear waste samples, confining their activities to the nation's main nuclear complex in Yongbyon where they may access only documents and engineers. The announcement complicates efforts to determine the extent of North Korea's nuclear program, reported [The New York Times](#) (12/11/08).

GARRETT DOES NOT COMMIT TO MONITORING JAPANESE WHALERS

The Federal Government has not decided whether to monitor Japanese whaling ships in the Southern Ocean this summer, the ABC/AAP, reported (10/11/08).

The anti-whaling group, Sea Shepherd Conservation Society, will send a boat to Antarctic waters in an effort to stop the whaling. Last year, the Australian Government sent the customs ship Oceanic Viking to conduct surveillance of Japanese activities, but Environment Minister Peter Garrett had not committed to monitoring whaling again this year, the ABC reported.

"The government has been really clear about its opposition to the killing of whales in the name of science in the Southern Ocean," the minister said. "That opposition remains. Everything that we said that we would do in order to engage on this issue we have done and we'll continue strong diplomatic engagement in the meantime."

REPORT: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/11/10/2415264.htm>

LOP, CHOP AND PORK BARREL: FOREST FUNDS ROW

Government funds earmarked for replanting the diminishing tropical forests in the Solomon Islands were diverted to buying sawmills and chainsaws to fell more trees, the country's auditor-general reported (11/11/08).

The report, by the Office of the Auditor-General, is among a pile of hard-hitting documents shown to the Sydney Morning Herald which detail irregular and inflated payments for projects in the key forestry and fishery sectors, and relief operations for Gizo Island's tsunami disaster in April last year, the inquiry into the 2006 Honiara riots and support for national athletes.

Although the scandals occurred under the previous prime minister toppled in a no-confidence vote last December, they are causing embarrassment to his successor, Derek Sikua, because individuals named include MPs who crossed sides to his government.

The fate of the reports, recently presented to the parliamentary public accounts committee but published only in summary, is being closely watched as an indicator of improving governance under the Australian-led Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands which began in July 2003. REPORT: <http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2008/11/10/1226165481965.html>

AFFORDING OUR FUTURE: ENERGY & WATER ROUNDTABLE

Leading academics and policy makers from Australia and France this week considered ways for the two countries to work together to develop more affordable low emission water and energy technologies.

The French-Australian Bilateral Dialogue Roundtable one-day conference *Affordable Low Emission Energy and Water* was organised by the Embassy of France and the Forum for European-Australian Science and Technology cooperation (FEAST). FEAST and hosted by the ANU on behalf of the Australian research and innovation community and jointly funded by the European Commission and the Australian Government.

The forum explored how best to achieve affordability in low emission energy and water. Executive Director of FEAST Dr Mark Matthews said: "Securing supplies of low emission energy and water represent two major global challenges. The problems faced are legion, and have been exacerbated by the turmoil in global financial markets. A global recession will result in difficulties in funding the private sector energy and water research and development critical to advancing low emission energy and water systems," he said.

"An additional problem is that of affordability. Unless the price of new systems can be significantly reduced promising lower emission technologies will have a limited uptake with consumers," said Mr Eric Noitakis, Economic Counsellor at the French Embassy.

The conference, which has been organised as part of the French Presidency of the European Union, aims to explore the ways in which intensified bilateral cooperation between European countries and Australia can be of mutual assistance in achieving affordable low emission energy and water supplies.

DETAILS: <http://www.feast.org/france/>; Martyn Pearce on 02 6125 5575 / 0416 249 245.

SECRETS TO DEVELOP A GREEN ECONOMY

John Scanlon, Principal Adviser, UN Environment Program, based in Kenya, believes that while desert communities have not been a huge contributor to climate change, they could offer a wealth of knowledge to move forward in a green economy.

Speaking at this week's Desert Knowledge Symposium in Alice Springs, he said, "One method to deal with climate change is bio-mimicry, where we look at nature and how it does various things, and mimic it. This is currently being investigated in many desert species around the world.

"Unique properties of the Namibian Desert Beetle can teach us how to recycle steam from cooling towers, based upon the way this creature harvests water from fogs. The Arabian Peninsula Sandfish Lizard and how it manages to move through the sand is helping us to develop friction-free surfaces and modern electrical devices based upon properties of the lizard's skin," he said.

"Then there is Africa's Resurrection plant, which dehydrates itself when there is no rain and then rehydrates again after rain. Somehow this plant can go into a state where it is dehydrated and it stays alive, and bio-mimicry is looking at producing vaccines that can stay alive without refrigeration, based upon the plant's properties. This is significant in Africa where you need to get vaccines out to areas where there is no refrigeration.

"Bio-mimicry is being pursued based on Mother Nature perfecting certain techniques over many years, so we could mimic nature first before going down other expensive paths to get to a greener future. However, this new technology is just a small part of the pie. We are currently faced with a global financial crisis, fuel crisis, energy security and climate change issues and an ongoing water crisis." Scanlon suggests that the world needs to recalibrate itself in order to deal with these multiple crises.

"Australia and its desert regions have a massive opportunity to develop an entire green energy economy that is based on solar, wind and geothermal technology," he said.

DETAILS: Laurelle Halford on 0417 222 211; laurelle@creativeterritory.com
<http://www.desertknowledge2008.com/abstracts.asp>

LONG ABSENCE OF LONG-TERM PLANNING FOR REMOTE AUSTRALIA

An additional labour force of 58,000 will be required by 2020 if Australia is to maintain its current share of commodities, said the Director, Environment and Social Policy at the Minerals Council of Australia, Melanie Stutsel.

Ms Stutsel spoke this week at the Desert Knowledge Symposium in Alice Springs to highlight the challenges and opportunities facing desert communities and economies affected by mining activity. The mining industry in desert Australia had a lot of shared challenges, many of which were the result of the systemic failure of governments at all levels.

"These challenges include the lack of resources and effective representation for Indigenous people, and the paucity of soft infrastructure such as health, education, transport, community housing – services that are provided as core citizenship entitlements on eastern seaboard and capital cities." For some time there had been an absence of any long-term vision or planning for remote Australia – economically, environmentally, socially and culturally.

DETAILS: <http://www.desertknowledge2008.com/>; Laurelle Halford on 0417 222 211; laurelle@creativeterritory.com

'LATEST AND BEST' ON OUTBACK WATER

The latest and best ideas for efficient water use in Australia's pastoral regions are now available to graziers with the publication of DKCRC's *WaterSmart Pastoralism™* handbook, along with real-life case studies, DKCRC Managing Director of Jan Ferguson states.

The WaterSmart Pastoral Production™ project has brought together farmers, scientists and commercial technology, combining the best grazing management and pastoral experience, with the latest in practical telemetry, solar power, and innovative materials.

Project partners were: [Desert Channels Queensland Inc.](#) (DCQ), the [South Australian Arid Lands Natural Resource Management Board](#) (SAAL NRM), the [Northern Territory Department of Primary Industries, Fisheries and Mines](#) (NT DPIFM) and [pastoral partners, manufacturers and suppliers](#).

DETAILS: Jan Ferguson, Desert Knowledge DKCRC, on 08 8959 6041; and Andrew Bubb, Desert Knowledge DKCRC, on 08 8951 8139; WaterSmart Pastoralism™ Project: <http://www.desertknowledgecsrc.com.au/watersmart/index.html>;

RUSSIAN SUBMARINERS DIE

At least 20 people were killed and 22 injured in an accident on a new Russian nuclear submarine in the Sea of Japan, The Australian reported (10/11/08). The people killed died as a result of inhaling freon gas released when the K-152 Nerpa's fire extinguishing system was triggered by accident on Saturday, said Sergei Markin, an official with Russia's top investigative agency. His agency has launched a probe into the accident, which Mr Markin said will focus on what activated the firefighting system.

REPORT: <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,24627302-601,00.html>