

we!

selected articles taken from
the electronic bi-monthly
newsletter of Isis

Special Edition No. 2, 2007



Isis International – Manila

Special
Edition

photo credit: Bianca Miglioretto

When **SECURITY**
is the
THREAT

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It takes more than one strategy to address the multiple concerns for security. But when security is typically met by policy that is built on the same justifications for violence and discrimination, it merely breeds more insecurity.

In this issue, we look at different structures that are set up against a flawed understanding of security. These scenarios illustrate the active questioning of social movements on the notions of security, human security, and threat.

The desire that human security encompasses social inclusion, economic redistribution and the political parity of participation of all, is not the debate. Rather, the arguments lie in how we can arrive at these ends. Therefore, we must ask ourselves who, what and where are the REAL threats?

In solidarity,



Raijeli Nicole

Executive Director

Letters to the Editor

Hello

I would like to thank Isis for sending me interesting and thought-provoking publications via the email and for the continued support in the form of keeping me on the mailing list.

Subadhra, Singapore

Dear Isis,

I came across your website today and thought that you might be interested in the work that we do on gender here in Brussels. I have attached a recent publication and information on the 1325 EU Partnership, particularly pertinent with the Isis International article published today, "Just who is being secured by security policies?" (we! online Issue 2, July 2007)

I also noticed with delight the similarity in our organisations' names!

I look forward to communicating further with you.

Giji Gya, Responding to Conflict and Gender & Security Programmes, International Security Information Service (ISIS Europe) and Chair, EPLO Gender Peace and Security group (EPLO GPS), Brussels, Belgium

Hello Southern Sisters!

This is a wonderful resource and a great discovery for our organisation of senior women activists concerned about economic security and social justice in Canada and globally. We're keen about broadcasting, too.

Jan Westlun, Vancouver, Canada

Hi!

Thank God for organisations like you for helping challenged women around the world. I did some illustrations for Isis and I am glad to see them in your website. However, I also did one cover for we!. I hope you can send me a copy of the artwork if it's possible. Thanks. More power!

Lillette De Lara, Philippines

More power to you ladies.

Jenny Atay Torino Wilkes, Australia

We would love to hear from you! Write to we! Send your comments, thoughts, or letters to the editor to <communications@isiswomen.org>.

we! is an electronic bi-monthly newsletter of Isis International – Manila. It is uploaded on the Isis website on the middle and end of every month.

As the current events newsletter of Isis, we! seeks to provide its readers with the latest issues, advocacies, campaigns, training activities, conferences, and other events within the women's movements and broad social movements. The primary geographic focus of we! is the Asia-Pacific region but not exclusively.

The electronic edition of we! can be accessed free of charge. The hardcopy version however has a small annual subscription fee of US\$4.00 (Php200) inclusive of postage.

Write to we!

Information that you would like to share through we! as well as letters-to-the-editor can be emailed to communications@isiswomen.org

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JUST WHO IS BEING SECURED BY SECURITY POLICIES?

Discussions and debates on national and international security has been defined traditionally by patriarchal high politics—giving priority to the survival of the nation state and the gendered hierarchies on which it is based. This has brought feminist organisations and peace activists to pose the question: “just who is being secured by security policies?”

Overcoming barriers to implementation

In June 2006, despite Security Council Resolution (SCR) 1325 being in place, the UN Under-Secretary-General, Anwarul Karim Chowdhury, otherwise known as the “father of SCR 1325,” lamented the absence of gender perspectives in new Security Council resolutions and peace-keeping missions. He recommended the establishment of a full-time institutional advocate for SCR 1325 so that barriers to the Resolution’s implementation could be overcome.

FY①

Breaching the walls of the Security Council

It took 55 years, on October 31, 2000, for the UN Security Council to finally address women’s experiences in conflict and post-conflict zones as well as recognise their vital contributions to conflict prevention, resolution, and peace building.

Prior to SCR 1325, women received very little attention in Security Council resolutions, and when they were mentioned, their interests and experiences were treated as being linked to that of children.



<http://www.un.org/women/1325.htm>

On October 31, 2000, the UN Security Council adopted a pioneering resolution on women, peace, and security, which calls for women’s equal participation and full involvement in all efforts to maintain and promote peace and security.

Among these barriers are as follows:

- the Security Council’s resistance to integrate gender perspectives into its mandate and its refusal to address the structural causes of armed conflict;
- the international community’s often selective and politicised consideration of and intervention in regional conflicts, especially after 9/11;
- the lack of any explicit reference to SCR 1325 in the General Assembly and Security Council resolutions establishing the Peacebuilding Commission and the absence of an institutional mechanism for mainstreaming gender perspectives into the Commission’s work;
- the widespread failure to adopt National Action Plans and consult local women’s organisations on the establishment of peace building agenda;
- the failure to grasp tensions between academic and activist approaches to SCR 1325; and
- the marginalisation of SCR 1325 advocacies in social movement spaces, such as the World Social Forum.

To surmount these obstacles and actualise SCR 1325’s transformative vision, Southern feminist organisations and grassroots activists continue to infuse the Resolution with women’s experiences of conflict, peace, and order; encourage men’s participation in and support for SCR 1325 advocacies and mainstreaming activities at all levels; and

champion committed women’s advocates operating within the UN, who are working towards productive institutional change.

The power of feminist communications

Since its adoption in 2000, SCR 1325 has been translated into 79 languages, celebrated annually, and employed as a practical advocacy tool by grassroots activists. Feminist information and communications organisations and networks from the South have strategically used the Resolution to gain access to governmental and intergovernmental arenas. Additionally, it was utilised to raise awareness about women’s right to participate in political decision making processes, particularly those that relate to conflict resolution and peace building.

Among such initiatives include:

1 Women’s International Network of the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC-WIN) celebrated International Women’s Day 2007 and marked the 7th anniversary of SCR 1325 by broadcasting interviews, dialogues, poetry, and music produced by community radio stations, which addressed the continuing relevance of the Resolution to women living in war zones.

2 Isis International-Manila, in 2006, collaborating with International Women’s Tribune Centre (IWTC) and others, broadcasted a local language programme series entitled “Women Talk Peace” to mark the 6th anniversary of SCR 1325 and highlight women’s engagement in peace processes in Mindanao, Philippines.

3 femLINKPACIFIC not only established femTALK 1325, a magazine that highlights SCR 1325 advocacies undertaken by regional women’s movements, but also developed a mobile community radio unit in 2004, which provides Fijian women with a space in which to discuss their experiences of conflict and their hopes for peace.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4, JUST ...

4 Isis-Women's International Cross-Cultural Exchange (Isis-WICCE) and IWTC, on July 30, 2002, provided part of an advocacy training on implementation of the Resolution 1325 at international and national levels through case studies.

Sources: "NGO Working Group on Women, Peace, and Security, Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security - Six Years On Report" (New York: NGO Working Group on Women, Peace, and Security, 2006). "Nongovernmental Organizations' Role in the Buildup and Implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325," <<http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/SIGNS/journal/issues/v28n4/042809/042809.web.pdf>>. "Mainstreaming Gender in UN Security Policy: A Path to Political Transformation?," <<http://www.genderandsecurity.org/Cohn.pdf>>. "Report on Involving Men in the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security," <<http://www.peacewomen.org/resources/1325/Men&1325.pdf>>. "Women, Peace, and Security: Resolution 1325" in *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, Volume 6, Number 1.

PHILIPPINES: Women Activists barred from flight; Anti-Terror Law blamed

Dr. Annalisa Enrile, national chairperson of GABRIELA Network USA (GABNet) and a professor at the University of Southern California, at a press conference on August 11, 2007, told the media how she became a hostage in this country.

"After four weeks here, on August 5, 2007, I attempted to leave [the country] along with six of my students and three of my colleagues—none of whom had any problems leaving the country. [However] I was stopped by the Bureau of Immigration. I was told that my name appeared on a watchlist, although I was not given any information about what the watchlist contained, nor why my name appeared there," Enrile said.

Along with Enrile, the names of two other GABNet members were in the same watchlist—human rights advocate Judith Mirkinson and award-winning Filipino novelist Ninotchka Rosca.

"We were never told why we were put on this list," Mirkinson said, adding, "The only thing we can think of is they don't want us to investigate what's going on here. I think it tells us, 'You should be very afraid, you shouldn't speak out about what's going on around the world.' And that's exactly the opposite of what we want to do as women activists. We are going to speak out. We are going to investigate what's happening to women. And we will protest.

Rosca, on the other hand, speculated that her name was included in the watchlist because of her active participation in an international mission to look into the killings and disappearances of Filipino women.

This year's March 8 broadcast campaign of AMARC-WIN solicited the largest response as 43 radio stations and organisations from 24 countries worldwide submitted 132 radio files in 14 different languages including Swahili, Creole, Arabic, Filipino, among others.

Through this campaign, AMARC-WIN together with its member organisations, was able to disseminate different information not only on the Resolution 1325 but also about other issues relevant to the women community radio broadcasters from around the world. ■

"In this country, if you're a writer, you get stepped on, you get killed, you disappear... Really, the first ones attacked are the writers, the journalists, because they [the government] want to keep things hidden and they want to keep people silent, obedient," said Rosca.

Anti-Terror Law to be blamed

Enrile was reportedly told to secure clearances from the Department of Justice, the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency, the National Security Agency, and the Office of the President—all members of the government's anti-terrorism council—before she would be allowed to take a flight back to the US.

"I feel that I am being held hostage... I cannot return to my work... [and] cannot return to my family because of the human rights work that I do," said Enrile.

During the press conference, Congress Representative Liza Maza of the GABRIELA Women's Party said that "Their right to travel is being restricted within the frame of the Human Security Act (HSA). Under the HSA, mere suspicion is enough [for the authorities] to arrest you... This is a blatant violation of their human rights. The HSA has emboldened the members of the anti-terrorism council to spread their oppressive tentacles beyond the Philippine borders and undermine the universally accepted principle of international solidarity."

Sources: "Immigration holds 3 women for 'links' to Afghan's Taliban" from *Inquirer.net*, posted on August 16, 2007, <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/breakingnews/nation/view_article.php?article_id=82891>. "US based Gabriela exec stopped from leaving; HSA cited" from *Inquirer.net*, posted on August 12, 2007, <http://globalnation.inquirer.net/news/news/view_article.php?article_id=82026>.



Three members of the GABRIELA Network USA (GABNet), during a press conference on August 11, 2007, have nothing to blame for being barred from leaving the Philippines but the implementation of the Human Security Act.

Fight not over yet

On August 14, the three women were informed that their names were cleared from the watchlist and that they were now allowed to leave the country. On that same day, the three women went to the airport, accompanied by their lawyers, Representative Liza Maza, journalists, and about 30 supporters from GABRIELA who staged a protest action outside the departure hall.

As reported by the Philippine Daily Inquirer, the media were only allowed to take a brief look at the lift order's first page and the Immigration officers denied their request for it to be photocopied, saying that it was confidential. The lift order supposedly removed about 500 other persons from the watchlist. ■

BURMA: Women's Organisation Released Report On Human Rights Abuses



<http://www.tayzathunia.org.uk/bd/2006/7/01/fbr.htm>

Family in the rain hiding from Burma army.

The Karen Women's Organisation (KWO) has released its report which focuses on the range of human rights abuses in Burma, based on 40,001 documented cases. KWO is a community-based organisation of Karen women working in development and relief in the refugee camps on the Thai border and with Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and women inside Burma.

The report entitled "State of Terror: The ongoing rape, murder, torture and forced labour suffered by women living under the Burmese Military Regime in Karen State,"

highlights the abuses experienced by women and girls under the military regime, State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), including forced labour and portering. These human rights abuses, the report says, occur as part of a strategy designed to terrorise and subjugate the Karen people, to completely destroy their culture and communities.

In April 2004, KWO also released a report entitled "Shattering Silences," detailing the high number of women and girls raped by the military during the SPDC's occupation of the Karen State. These reports

demonstrate that women bear the greatest burden of these systematic attacks, as they are doubly oppressed—based on both their ethnicity and gender.

The present report identified recommendations at different levels—for the SPDC, Thai government, and international community. For the SPDC, the report calls for putting an end to sexual violence and all other forms of human rights abuses against women and girls. It also calls for the SPDC to end militarisation in the country. A nationwide ceasefire and tripartite dialogue are also deemed necessary. What is expected from the Thai government, on the other hand, is its continued support and protection to Burmese refugees. And, from the international community, what is needed is to call for the United Nations Security Council to keep Burma on their agenda. In addition, the international community should ensure secure and timely support to refugees and to continue to pressure the Burmese Military Regime to begin a tripartite dialogue.

To read or download the full report, go to <http://www.karenwomen.org/Reports/state%20of%20terror%20report.pdf>.

For more information about the Karen Women's Organisation, visit their website at www.karenwomen.org. ■

Feminist Lawyer speaks of landmark Philippine rape case

Philippine civil society groups continue the clamour for justice after its own government authorised the transfer of convict Lance Corporal Daniel Smith to US custody on December 29, 2006, after he was found guilty of raping "Nicole."

This prompted feminist activist, human rights lawyer, and Nicole's private prosecutor Evalyn Ursua to file contempt charges against government officials Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez, Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno, Presidential Legal Counsel Sergio Apostol, and Makati City jail warden Superintendent Delvic Oreiro.

Nicole, together with former Senators Jovito Salonga and Wigberto Tañada, serve as petitioners in the contempt charge filed before the Court of Appeals in January 2007.

According to Ursua, Smith is an "escaped prisoner." As such, the Court of Appeals must declare his conviction executory and must issue a warrant for his arrest, she added.

Nicole (not her real name), a 23-year-old Filipina, filed rape charges against United States (US) military servicemen Lance Corporals Keith Silkwood, Daniel Smith, and Dominic Duplantis, and Staff Sergeant

Chad Carpentier in November 2005. The rape supposedly occurred at Subic Bay, a former US naval base, and now the site of US military exercises as allowed by the Philippine-US Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA). The court, in its verdict read on December 4, 2006, found US Marine Lance Corporal Daniel Smith guilty and sentenced him to life imprisonment, while the three were acquitted.

Prior to the court's decision, Isis International-Manila had the chance to talk to Evalyn Ursua as she spoke of Nicole's case and its implications to the women's issues in the Philippines.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6, FEMINIST ...

Movements Within 5

Isis International-Manila [Isis]:

What makes Nicole's case a landmark case in the Philippines?

Ursua [Ursua]: This case has foreign elements—the fact that the accused are US servicemen and the fact that the VFA is being enforced. These two factors make this case significant in the judicial history of the country.

This is the first ever rape case involving US servicemen that reached the Philippine courts. We know of so many cases of abuse committed against Philippine women in the past, but those cases never got to court. Those cases either were settled out of court, or the soldiers were never charged, or shipped out of the country, or the victims simply did not report the violation.

In this sense, Nicole's case is a landmark case.

Isis: You talked about the VFA. Can you further explain its components and its implications to the country, in general, and to women, in particular? How is it pertinent in Nicole's case?

Ursua: The Visiting Forces Agreement is an agreement that was concurred into by the Philippine Senate in 1998. From the point of view of the Philippines, this is a treaty; but from the standpoint of the US government, it is simply an executive agreement. And so, the nature of the agreement has always been an issue for many who are in the know about the lopsidedness of the agreement.

This agreement allows the US to conduct military exercises on Philippine soil. The scope of the exercises is undefined. It is so broad that anything and everything can be done under the framework of the VFA because of the term "exercises" used in the agreement.

Under the agreement, there are provisions on criminal jurisdiction related to the commission of offences on Philippine soil by US servicemen. And the criminal jurisdiction provisions in the VFA define who should take jurisdiction over the offence, who should have custody of the

accused military personnel, how the process should be done in terms of prosecution as well as serving of sentence, among others. In Nicole's case, the provisions of criminal jurisdiction were enforced.

When the US servicemen were charged of raping Nicole, the US government actually immediately took custody of the four accused US marines.

The Philippine government asked for custody but the US insisted that it should have custody because of the provision under the criminal jurisdiction part of the VFA that says, "...immediate custody shall be with US military authorities, if they so request..."

So the issue in this case is, one, the interpretation of that particular provision; and two, the way the provisions were formulated.



Protesters call for justice for the violation of a woman's right and a nation's sovereignty.

Isis: Does this mean there is a need for the women's movements to refine its advocacy around violence against women (VAW), particularly in terms of having to look at the laws that have been put into place? If so, how do you propose to proceed?

Ursua: Yes, of course. We have a long way to go in terms of educating the public about violence against women. In Nicole's case, the many misconceptions that we thought the public does not subscribe to anymore came out to the fore—in the discussion of this case, in the reporting of this case, in the way this case was tried inside the courtroom.

The victim-blaming, the condemnation, the character assassinations that came out against Nicole, that she was a woman of loose morals; a prostitute, etc. —all these

things somehow affected the conduct of the trial, and shaped public opinion about Nicole and the truthfulness of her claims.

Maybe in the long run, we could analyse the case's impact on other survivors of rape and on the public consciousness, in general, and about violence against women, in particular.

Isis: What are the implications of this case to women's movements in the Philippines?

Ursua: This case, being so high profile and so controversial, has provided a very rare opportunity for us to link the issues that we have been working on. This case illustrates how women's human rights can actually operate in a rape case.

This case shows the connection between the US military and abuse against women, particularly in Third World countries. Nicole's rape, no matter how the accused claimed it as consensual, exemplifies how the US military uses women in the Third World for their gratification.

The case can also be linked to militarisation. The presence of the US military in countries like the Philippines impacts on the women and can be directly connected to women's exploitation. It can be further related to issues of peace, security, and the promotion of women's human rights.

For more information about the case, go to The Subic Rape Case, <<http://subicrapecase.wordpress.com>>.

For the full text of the Visiting Forces Agreement, visit <<http://subicrapecase.wordpress.com/full-text-of-republic-act-8505-rape-victim-assistance-and-protection-act-of-1998/>>.

For the Subic rape case timeline, read "Timeline: Subic rape case, Nov 3, 2005 - Dec 4, 2006" from GMANEWS.TV, posted on December 4, 2006, <<http://www.gmanews.tv/breakingnews.php?sec=13&cid=22715>>. ■

Source: "Contempt raps filed vs Palace executives for Smith 'escape'" from GMANEWS.TV, posted on January 2, 2007, <<http://www.gmanews.tv/story/25399/Contempt-raps-filed-vs-Palace-executives-for-Smith-escape>>.

Inter-Movements

UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL: A step forward or a step back?

Across the globe, women continue to face human rights violations, especially in armed conflict situations where violence against women remains one of the most massive-scale violations of human rights. A year since the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) has been established, human rights activists are critically looking at the Council but still seeing the same flaws that its predecessor had.

In 2006, the establishment of Human Rights Council—which replaced the ineffectual Human Rights Commission—gave renewed hope for social movements and civil society with its positive reforms such as the Council's readiness to hold emergency sessions, better links to the General Assembly, and the new Universal Periodic Review, among others.

The Commission was noted for its members' unwillingness to accept criticism of its human rights practices, non-restriction of gross human rights violators to become members, and the lack of effective action on emerging human rights crises. And the Council, critics say, seems to be heading the same path as that of its predecessor.

Integrating gender in the agenda

Over 150 women's and human rights groups signed a petition urging the Human Rights Council to integrate gender and women's human rights into its work. The call was made in conjunction with the Fourth Regular Session of the Human Rights Council on March 28, 2007 in Geneva, Switzerland. About 56 states, with the same sentiments as that of the civil society organisations, are also calling for gender integration in the Council's agenda setting, universal periodic review (UPR), and in the work of the Special Procedures, including the Special Rapporteurs, and working groups.



<http://www.ohchr.org/news/20071005/uhakampaper.it>

"Women's rights are human rights" has been the rallying cry of the women's movements since the 1990s.

Among the recommendations are the following:

1 On the Agenda and Programme

- Ensure at least one full day of discussion every year on the human rights violations suffered mainly or exclusively by women.
- Ensure adequate planning and capacity building for the Council to address the differential impact on women and girls of all human rights situations under its consideration.

2 On the Review of the Special Procedures:

- Mandate gender integration and the explicit consideration of women's and girls' human rights under each relevant Special Procedure, and ensure adequate capacity building to allow for such integration.
- Continually identify protection gaps in areas of human rights violations that mainly or exclusively affect women and girls, and create a means to address these gaps.

3 On the Universal Periodic Review:

- Integrate respect for human rights of women into the criteria on which states will be reviewed, whether qualitative or quantitative, with particular focus on gender-specific human rights violations.
- Explicit evaluation of the gender-specific criteria of the review in the UPR outcome mechanism for each state, utilising analysis and observations from treaty bodies and Special Procedures as appropriate.

Women's groups signatories to the petition include the following:

- Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law, and Development (APWLD),
- Asia Pacific Women's Watch (APWW),
- CEDAW Watch-Philippines,
- Center for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL),

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8, UN ...

- Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN),
- African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET),
- International Women's Rights Action Watch (IWRRAW),
- Latin American and Caribbean Committee for the Defense of Women's Rights (CLADEM),
- MADRE,
- Network of Popular Education Between Women (REPEM),
- Thai Women Watch (TW2)-Thailand,
- Women and Gender Institute (WAGI) of Miriam College,
- Women Living Under Muslim Law (WLUML), and
- Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO).

NGO non-participation

Like the Commission, the Council needs NGO input for its credibility and transparency. However, issues on NGO participation such as how to allocate appropriate speaking time to the increasing number of NGOs, how to integrate grassroots organisations, how to prevent the appearance of government-sponsored NGOs, remain unresolved. NGOs are presently calling for the Council to provide adequate opportunities for all stakeholders, including NGOs and independent national human rights institutions, to participate in all aspects of its work.

As sessions are continually held in Geneva, a report of the Center for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL), an organisation which promotes the leadership of women and advances feminist perspectives in policy-making processes in local, national, and international arenas, back in 2005 clearly recommended that the Council should maintain a standing annual session



UN Human Rights Council

What is the Human Rights Council?

The Human Rights Council is the body created by United Nations Member States to strengthen the promotion and protection of human rights around the world. The Council replaces the UN Commission on Human Rights. The Council had its first session on June 19, 2006, after the Commission was abolished on June 16, 2006.

What are the main objectives of the Human Rights Council?

The Council is responsible for promoting universal respect for and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all. It aims to address violations, promote human rights assistance and education, help develop international human rights law, review the human rights records of member States, work to prevent abuses, respond to emergencies, and serve as an international forum for dialogue on human rights issues.

What makes the Human Rights Council different from its predecessor?

- The Commission's members were selected behind closed doors and then "elected" by acclamation. By contrast, the new members of the Council had

to compete for seats, and successful candidates needed to win the support of a majority of all member states, in secret ballot. For the first time ever, candidates gave voluntary commitments to promote and uphold human rights, and are expected to meet them or else face possible suspension from the Council.

- The resolution establishing the Council also stresses the importance of ending double-standards, a problem that plagued the past Commission. Thus, the Council will also have a new universal periodic review mechanism, which will offer the Council—and the world—the opportunity to examine the records of all 191 member States of the United Nations. Unlike before, no country can escape scrutiny. This promises to be a very powerful tool for human rights advocates worldwide.
- The Council meets throughout the year, whereas the Commission's limited six-week schedule severely impaired its effectiveness and flexibility. With this precious additional time, the Council should be able to undertake preventive initiatives to defuse simmering crises, and to respond quickly to emerging human rights crises.

Source: Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, <<http://www.ohchr.org/english/press/hrc/kit/kit-english.pdf>>.

of a period of few weeks. NGOs from the global South will find it difficult to participate at the Human Rights Council because of the high costs involved as the Council intends to meet more than three times a year. This may imply that only the large, well-funded NGOs can largely influence the Council's proceedings, if NGOs can influence them at all.

"For women's rights groups," said the Thailand-based Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD), "there were additional demands for advocacy towards ensuring both the retention of the existing spaces for women's rights as well as securing integration of women's human rights within the HRC."

Membership in the Council

One of the criticisms that lead to the downfall of the Commission is that States which tolerate human rights violations were not only allowed to become members, but were even given the Commission chairpersonship seat, like Libya in 2003.

Now, with membership reduced from 53 to 47 members states, Egypt won a seat to the Council last May 17 despite the appeal of some 40 human rights organisations and a range of regional and international organisations to not elect the country because of alleged “appalling human rights record and consistent failure to cooperate with the UN.”

Prior to the elections, the Nairobi-based African Women’s Development and Communication Network (FEMNET), along with other NGOs, successfully lobbied to oppose the election of the Government of Belarus to the Council, claiming that the country “has in the past consistently failed to cooperate with UN human rights mechanism and has actually one of the worst human rights records in Europe.”

More piled up work

With the Council’s first year mostly devoted to establishing a Universal Periodic Review in which the human rights records of all states will be considered, reviewing the system of independent experts which are responsible for reporting on human rights abuses, and developing its methods of work, the Council now faces an increasing backlog of work that deserves its immediate attention.

Peggy Hicks, global advocacy director of the NGO Human Rights Watch, says, “Addressing severe abuses shouldn’t be put on hold while the Human Rights

Council finds its way. Dozens of appalling situations the world over demand the Human Rights Council’s immediate attention. Human rights victims and defenders deserve better from the Council—much better.” Human Rights Watch is dedicated to protecting the human rights of people around the world.

The International Service for Human Rights (ISHR), an international NGO serving human rights defenders, has compiled the “20 Critical Issues for a Successful Outcome of the Human Rights Council’s Institution Building Process.”

Full text of which is available at <http://www.ishr.ch/lca/advocacy_kits/ngo_20_critical_issues_4_june_2007.pdf>. ■

Sources: “Background: The Human Rights Council and Women’s Rights” from Human Rights Watch, <<http://hrw.org/english/docs/2007/04/12/global15683.htm>>. “Chat session about the Human Rights Council, the new UN human rights body” from Human Rights Education Associates, posted on October 5, 2006, <<http://www.hrea.org/alumni/HumanRightsCouncil-chat.php>>. “Human Rights Commission Must Change” from Global Policy Forum, posted on January 16, 2006, <<http://www.globalpolicy.org/reform/topics/hrc/2006/0116carter.htm>>. Petition to the UN Human Rights Council: Integrating the Human Rights of Women” from Human Rights Watch, <<http://hrw.org/english/docs/2007/04/12/global15684.htm>>. “RP reelected to UN human rights council” from the Philippine Daily Inquirer, posted on May 19, 2007, <http://globalnation.inquirer.net/news/breakingnews/view_article.php?article_id=66841>. “Talking Points on the Millennium Summit Review and Women’s Human Rights” from Center for Women’s Global Leadership, posted on April 26, 2005, <www.un-ngls.org/UNreform/centerforwomensgloballeadership.doc>. “UN Reform & Rights Council” from the Global Policy Forum, posted on August 21, 2005, <<http://www.globalpolicy.org/reform/hrc/0821india.htm>>. “UN Reforms: will it strengthen or weaken advocacy for women’s rights?” from Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development, posted in April 2006, <<http://www.apwld.org/vol191-08.htm>>.

PHILIPPINES: Human Rights Activists, Journalists Protest Anti-Terror Law

Hundreds of human rights and peace advocates join protests of the enactment of the Human Security Act of 2007 or simply called the Anti-Terror Law in the Philippines on July 15, 2007. Demonstrations took place in various parts of the country as well as in other parts of the world including Australia, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan.

Renato Reyes, Jr., secretary-general of the progressive organisation Bayan, said that “The law violates due process because of warrantless arrests, prolonged detention without charges, and it gives too much power to the Anti-Terror Council,” that will have the sole authority in identifying who the so-called “terrorists” are.

The new law, passed by the Philippine Congress in February and signed by President Gloria Arroyo in March, took effect on July 15.

While the government vows that this law would be used to counter terrorists and militants, protesters fear that it would be used to suppress dissent against the present administration.

The law loosely defines terrorism as a criminal act that “causes widespread and extraordinary fear and panic among the populace.”

This “vague language of the Human Security Act invites the government to misuse it,” said Joanne Mariner, terrorism and counterterrorism director at Human Rights Watch, an international

organisation dedicated to protecting the human rights.

Under the law, terrorism is punishable by 40 years imprisonment without parole. A person accused of the crime but is later acquitted is entitled to Php500,000 (\$10,000) in damages for every day that the person was detained.

A petition will be filed in the country’s Supreme Court to question the constitutionality of the law as well as to seek a temporary restraining order on its implementation.

“The terror law is the single biggest threat to our basic freedoms and civil liberties. We hope the high court can help the people defeat this terrible legal monstrosity,” Reyes said.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10, PHILIPPINES ...



http://davaoeroday.com/category/philippines/rss

Activists stage protest rallies against the Human Security Act, the Philippines Anti-Terror Law.

FROM PAGE 9, PHILIPPINES...

Threatening press freedom

Although Section 7 of the law clearly states that “surveillance, interception, and recording of communications between... journalists and their sources” will not be permitted, a statement from the country’s top justice ministry official saying that in certain circumstances, the government would be allowed to wiretap journalists, caused journalists to fear that freedom of expression may be threatened under the new law.

Philippine Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez, in an interview with the *Inquirer*, said “You cannot wiretap [journalists]. Their interviews and sources are sacred,” but adds, “of course, unless there is sufficient basis or if they are being suspected of co-mingling with terror suspects.”

Under the law, those labelled “terrorist” as well as the accomplices and accessories to terrorism will face charges.

The National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP), in a statement, said that what the justice secretary has said is “a serious threat to press freedom and the people’s right to know.”

“This statement [is] as vague and as fraught with danger as many of the anti-terror law’s provisions, especially those that supposedly define what terrorism is and who [the] terrorists are; provisions so open-ended they could actually lead to anyone and everyone who [the] government deems fit [of] being tagged a terrorist,” said the NUJP in its statement. Now, it has become unclear whether journalists could be considered accomplices or accessories to terrorists if they merely interview or report the statements of those labelled by the government as “terrorists.”

Press freedom defender Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), also expressed its concern. “[T]he broad and vaguely defined measures of this law could be employed to harass journalists, particularly those

covering violent crime, terrorism, and conflict in the Philippines. If the government cannot give an unqualified assurance that this law will not be used to inhibit the work of the press, then it should be repealed,” said CPJ executive director Joel Simon.

In the Philippines, press freedom is guaranteed in Article III, Section 4, of the 1987 Constitution, which states that no law can be passed that abridges freedom of speech or of the press. However, Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo’s government has already repressed press freedom in February 2006 as the government declared a state of emergency because of an alleged coup and issued broad measures that barred news reporting, which officials interpreted as destabilising national security.

For the full text of the Anti-Terror Law, go to <http://philippinecommentary.blogspot.com/2007/03/human-security-act-of-2007.html>. ■

Sources: “Activists protest as terror law takes effect” from the *Inquirer.net*, posted on July 16, 2007, <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/inquirerheadlines/nation/view_article.php?article_id=76811>. “In the Philippines, new anti-terror law threatens journalists” from the Committee to Protect Journalists, posted on July 18, 2007, <<http://www.cpj.org/news/2007/asia/phil18july07na.html>>. “Journalists view HSA as threat to press freedom” from *The News Today*, posted on July 13, 2007, <<http://www.thenewstoday.info/2007/07/13/journalists.view.hsa.as.threat.to.press.freedom.html>>. “Philippines: New Terrorism Law Puts Rights at Risk” from Human Rights Watch, posted on July 17, 2007, <<http://hrw.org/english/docs/2007/07/16/philip16404.htm>>.

Community & Independent Media

CIVIL SOCIETY Welcomes UN Resolution 1738

As data shows that 2006 was the deadliest year for the press, civil society organisations advocating for the rights and protection of people in the media welcomed the United Nation's (UN) move to adopt the landmark Resolution 1738, condemning the attacks against journalists and other media professionals in conflict situations. The document called on all warring parties to prevent abuses against journalists and respect their professional independence and rights. According to Paris-based media watchdog Reporters Without Borders, at least 81 journalists and 32 media assistants were killed across 21 countries in 2006 alone. These only counted deaths directly linked to their work and excluded dozens more cases whose motives for the murders were still unknown.

Most dangerous countries

Iraq remained the world's most dangerous country for the press, with 64 journalists and media assistants (drivers, translators, security staff, fixers, technicians) killed last year. Since 2003 when the fighting began, 139 members of the press have been killed in Iraq, more than twice the number of journalist deaths during the 20-year Vietnam War.

The Philippines is the second most dangerous country with six murders and a number of attempts recorded last year, mostly against journalists investigating corruption and giving outspoken criticism against government authorities. Some officials exposed by the media filed charges against journalists, closed down radio stations, and even had some of them detained with prison sentences for defamation.

"Devastating numbers of journalists are being killed in the Philippines and something urgently needs to be done to stop these killings," International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) President Christopher Warren said. "It is disgraceful

that after so many senseless murders...the government of the Philippines is still not making a stand to put an end to these targeted killings. The impunity for those that attack, maim, and murder journalists must come to an end," Warren added.

A few of the killers have certainly been brought to justice; the policeman who shot dead a radio commentator criticising him on air had been arrested, and another police officer, Guillermo Wapile, had been sentenced to life imprisonment for the 2002 murder of a journalist. However, most of the murders are still unsolved, and even with the triggermen jailed, the people giving orders still walk free.

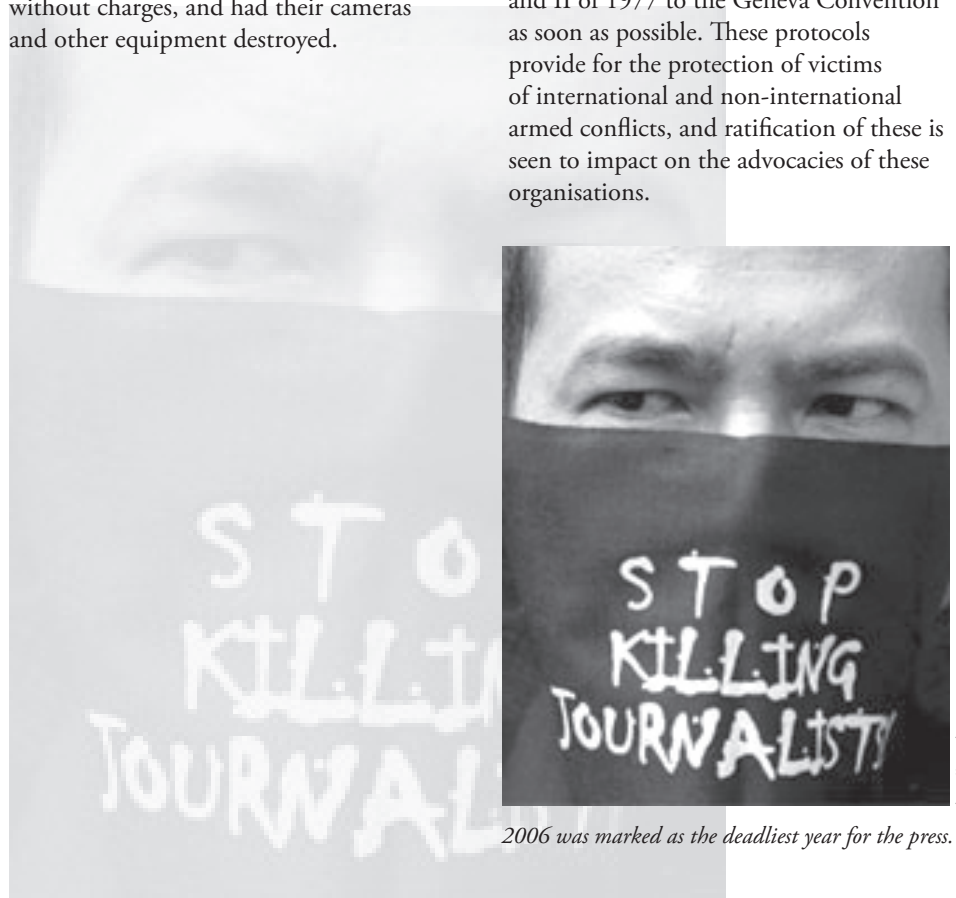
The situation is no less grim in Sri Lanka where journalists continue to suffer at the hands of authorities. Media personnel are assaulted by the police, taken into custody without charges, and had their cameras and other equipment destroyed.

"It is a deeply concerning sign of a new low in Sri Lanka, where members of the police force and military are using their powers to control and dominate journalists, instead of fulfilling their duty to uphold and protect a free and independent media," Warren said.

"The IFJ calls on the government of Sri Lanka to take swift action to send a message to all parties that the rights and safety of journalists must be respected at all times," he added.

Equally important

The advocacy of the IFJ and of the other watchdogs protecting the rights of media personnel is given a boost by another emphasis in the Council's Resolution 1738. The document also invites States to become parties to Additional Protocols I and II of 1977 to the Geneva Convention as soon as possible. These protocols provide for the protection of victims of international and non-international armed conflicts, and ratification of these is seen to impact on the advocacies of these organisations.



2006 was marked as the deadliest year for the press.

<http://portal.unesco.org>

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12, CIVIL ...

World figures on the situation of the press in 2006*

2006	KILLED	ARRESTED	ATTACKED/ THREATENED	MEDIA OUTLETS CENSORED
Africa	3	258	300	101
The Americas	16	65	476	74
Asia	16	328	517	478
Europe	5	112	98	183
North Africa & the Middle East	41	108	81	76
TOTAL	81	871	1,472	912

* Does not include the number of journalists kidnapped (at least 56 in 12 countries).

FROM PAGE 11, CIVIL...

Deeply concerned

According to news release, the UN Security Council is deeply concerned at the acts of violence and deliberate attacks against the press in many parts of the world. With Resolution 1738, the Council holds the States accountable to end impunity and prosecute those responsible for violations. Journalists and other media personnel are to be considered civilians, and under international law, states are obligated to protect civilians in armed conflict.

The resolution—unanimously adopted in the Council's meeting on December 23, 2006—also condemned all incitements to violence against civilians, and called for bringing into justice those who incite such violence. When authorising peacekeeping missions, the Council shall also consider steps responding to media broadcasts inciting genocide, crimes against humanity, and serious violations of international humanitarian law. ■

Number of journalists (per country) killed in 2006

COUNTRY	NUMBER (Killed)
Brasil, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ecuador, Guatemala, Indonesia, Iran, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Somalia, Sudan, Turkmenistan, Venezuela	1 each
China	2
Colombia	3
India	2
Iraq	39
Mexico	9
Pakistan	2
Philippines	6
Russia	3
Sri Lanka	3
TOTAL	81

Source: "Press freedom in 2006" from Reporters without Borders, posted on December 31, 2006, <http://www.rsf.org/IMG/pdf/bilan2006_eng.pdf>.

Sources: "Analysis: Press pays heavy toll in 2006" from C. Salhani, posted on January 2, 2007, <<http://www.upi.com/InternationalIntelligence/view.php?StoryID=20070101-081407-1564r>>. "IFJ slams Philippines' government for inaction, after a month of murders, attacks and death threats against journalists" from International Federation of Journalists, <<http://www.ifj-asia.org/>>. "Press freedom round-up 2006" from Reporters without Borders, posted on December 31, 2006, <http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=20286>. Reporters without Borders (Philippines—Annual Report 2006), <http://www.rsf.org/country-50.php3?id_mot=666&Valider=OK>. "Security Council condemns attacks against journalists in conflict situations, unanimously adopting Resolution 1738 (2006)" from United Nations Security Council, posted on December 23, 2006, <<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2006/sc8929.doc.htm>>. "Shocking violations' of journalists' rights continue in Sri Lanka" from International Federation of Journalists, posted on December 6, 2006, <<http://www.ifj-asia.org/page/srilanka0612061.html>>.

First Citizen Journalism Website in Sri Lanka unveiled

Groundviews <<http://www.groundviews.org>> or the Sri Lankan citizen journalism initiative is the first attempt in Sri Lanka to create a means through which civil society and concerned citizens can contribute their experiences of human rights abuses, write their own brief daily accounts of life in conflict zones, call attention to humanitarian emergencies, and give information on security or ground conditions, etc. Furthermore, since the site is trilingual—English, Sinhala, and Tamil—it also serves as a space for provincial journalists to write down

their thoughts in the local dialect, while reaching a global audience.

This initiative is a response to the many requests from international NGOs, humanitarian aid organisations, civil society organisations, and local and international journalists to have a better idea of conditions on the ground in Sri Lanka, particularly in areas of conflict.

With the current media situation in Sri Lanka—continued attacks on journalists and repression of the Tamil-language media—mainstream media reflects poorly on the interests of citizens in the

provinces. Through this site, citizens can have democratic and participatory discussions on the future of peace, reconciliation, social justice, fundamental rights, and equality.

Groundviews is an initiative of the Voices of Reconciliation project which aims to increase the capacity of civil society organisations to effectively engage in the peace process and strengthen professional media that supports Sri Lanka's transition to democracy and reconciliation.

Visit <<http://www.groundviews.org>>. ■

Calendar of Events

SEPTEMBER

September 1, 2007

**Deadline for nominations:
World Association for Christian
Communication's (WACC) Communication
for Peace Award**

<<http://www.wacc.org.uk/>>

September 10-28, 2007

**6th Session of the UN Human Rights
Council**

Geneva, Switzerland

<<http://www.un.org/webcast/unhrc/index.asp>>

September 10-28, 2007

**International Course on Gender
Mainstreaming: From Programmatic to
Organizational Transformation**

Cavite, Philippines

<<http://www.iirr.org/coursepdfs/Gender.pdf>>

September 15, 2007

Software Freedom Day

<<http://softwarefreedomday.org/about.>>

September 19 – October 9, 2007

Gender Studies and Peacebuilding Course

San José, Costa Rica

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

September 26, 2007

**Deadline for submission of applications:
Oxford Internet Institute - Civil Society
Practitioners Programme**

<http://www.oii.ox.ac.uk/people/CSPP_Application_Information.pdf>

September 27-28, 2007

**Measuring Change Symposium: Planning,
Monitoring, Evaluation in Media
Development**

Bad Honnef, Germany

<<http://www.cameco.org/mez/fome.html>>

OCTOBER

October 5-7 2007

**The Feminist Network on Gender,
Development, and Information Society
Policies: Strategic Planning Workshop**

Bangalore, India

<<http://www.itforchange.net/>>

October 7-27, 2007

**11th Asian Training and Study Session for
Human Rights Defenders (ATSS)**

Bangkok, Thailand

<http://www.forum-asia.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=324&Itemid=127>

October 11, 2007

**Launching Women Making Airwaves for
Peace Project Outputs**

Cagayan de Oro, Philippines

<www.isiswomen.org>

October 15-November 2, 2007

**International Course on Globalization
and Social Transformation**

Bangkok, Thailand

<http://www.focusweb.org/index2.php?option=com_content&do_pdf=1&id=1247>

October 22-24, 2007

**Conference on Community Radio in
Africa-Middle East and North Africa:
Sharing Experiences for development
and democracy building from the
grassroots**

Rabat, Morocco

<http://www.amarc.org/index.php?p=Africa_MENA_Conference_

October 29, 2007

**17th Annual Human Rights and People's
Diplomacy Training for Human Rights
Defenders**

Wellington, New Zealand

<http://www.forum-asia.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=385&Itemid=42>

October 29 – November 16, 2007

**17th Annual Human Rights and Peoples'
Diplomacy Training for Human Rights
Defenders from the Asia-Pacific Region
and Indigenous Australia**

Wellington, New Zealand

<<http://www.dtp.unsw.edu.au/2007%20Annual%20Brochure/2007-17th%20Annual%20Brochure.html>>

Isis Message Board

POST YOUR ANNOUNCEMENTS

Isis International-Manila is inviting women's groups, alternative media advocates, social movements, and the academe to post their upcoming conferences, training activities, workshops as well as their call for papers, call for nominations for awards, and call for applications for scholarships to be advertised in *We!*

Announcements in *We!* are read by hundreds of readers from different regions across the globe.

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FEEDBACK

Dear Readers,

We would love to hear your thoughts on We! We hope you can take some time to respond to a few questions which would be very useful for our continued improvement of this publication—online and off. As well, please feel free to send in your queries, comments, or suggestions.

1. How often have you read We!?
 1st time Occasionally Regularly Never
2. Generally, how would you rate We!?
 Excellent Good Satisfactory Poor
3. How would you rate the following sections?
From the Editor Excellent Good Satisfactory Poor
Movements Within Excellent Good Satisfactory Poor
InterMovements Excellent Good Satisfactory Poor
Community and Independent Media Excellent Good Satisfactory Poor
Calendar of Events Excellent Good Satisfactory Poor
4. How useful is We! in terms of your work/studies/activism?
 Very useful Somewhat useful Not very useful Not useful at all
5. What do you think is the strong point of We!?
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6. What do you see as priority topics for We! that we should feature in the coming months?

7. Do you have additional comments or suggestions?

=====

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1. In what region are you currently based?
 Asia Pacific Middle East Africa
 Europe North America Latin America and the Caribbean
2. In what age range do you belong to?
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 35-44 45-60 Over 60
3. In what advocacy spheres/areas are you currently involved with?
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 alternative media ICT mainstream media
 academe others, please specify _____
4. How did you learn about We!?
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 through the Isis website others, please specify _____
5. How would you prefer to read We!?
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We! is the news bulletin of Isis International-Manila, an international development organisation servicing women's information and communication needs within and beyond Asia and the Pacific regions.

We! provides the latest information on the issues, campaigns, conferences, training opportunities, funding possibilities and other goings-on in the women's movements. It also provides updates on national, regional and international events organised by social movements, government bodies and multilateral agencies that impact women.

The online version of We!, uploaded on the middle and end of every month, can be accessed free of charge at the Isis-Manila website: <www.isiswomen.org>.

The hardcopy version has a small annual subscription fee of US\$4.00 (Php200) inclusive of postage. Payments must be in cheque or bank draft. Free hard copy issues however can be picked up at the Isis office or BnI (Bahay ni Isis).

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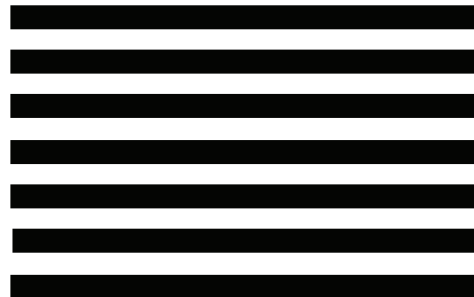
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