

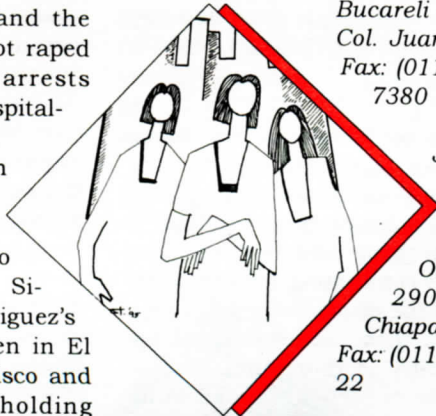
nurses who were part of a vaccination brigade were ambushed and raped by 25 heavily armed men as they were returning to San Cristobal. Rocks blocking the road forced the nurses to stop and get out of their vehicle to remove the barriers. They were ambushed by 25 heavily armed men who raped them. One woman suffered a broken pelvis and the lone woman who was not raped suffered nine cardiac arrests and continues to be hospitalized.

After the assault on her, Cecilia Rodriguez held a press conference in Mexico City to denounce the violence. Simultaneous with Rodriguez's press conference, women in El Paso, Texas, San Francisco and Chicago were also holding press conferences to denounce the violence.

But the media in Mexico and in the U.S. have not given it much coverage and even the *L.A. Times* which covered a press conference given by Rodriguez in Los Angeles decided not to print the story.

The Mexican government is not pursuing these cases actively and the media for the most part is silent on the violence that is being perpetuated against the women. The U.S. media who extensively covered Mexico's presumed economic growth prior to the economic bust is not printing the stories of the violence in Chiapas, and in particular the violence against women by the Mexican military.

Letters to Mexican officials to support the women and denounce these cases of violence against the women of Chiapas are being requested from readers. Send letters or faxes to:



C. Lic. Ernesto Zedillo  
*Presidente de Mexico*  
*Residencia Oficial de Los Pinos*  
*Puerta #1*  
*Col. San Miguel Chapultepec*  
*Mexico, D.F.*  
 Fax:  
 (011-52-5) 271-1774 or 271-1764

C. Lic. Emilio Chauyffet  
*Secretario de Gobernacion*  
*Bucareli #99*  
*Col. Juarez, Mexico, D.F.*  
 Fax: (011-52-5) 546-5350 or 546-7380

Julio Cesar Ferro  
*Gubernador Interino*  
*de Chiapas*  
*1a Avenida Norte*  
*Oriente #456*  
*29000 Tuxtla Gutierrez,*  
*Chiapas*  
 Fax: (011-52-967) 2-09-17 or 3-50-22

Ambassador  
*Embassy of the United States*  
*Paseo de la Reforma #305*  
*Col. Anzures C.P. 06550*  
 Fax: (011-52-5) 208-3373

Fax copies of your letters to 011-52-967 so the women who have been raped will know that they are not lacking in support.

*[Editor's Note: On February 1, 1996, Isis received a response from the Comision Nacional de Derechos Humanos (National Commission on Human Rights) to our letters of inquiry. The Commission reports that they have been made aware of Cecilia Rodriguez and are waiting for responses from officials investigating the rape in the state of Chiapas.]*

**HAIR-CUTTING ZEALOTS PREY ON MUSLIM GIRLS**

by Allan Nawal

COTABATO CITY - Muslim women here oppose the recent

order of religious scholars, known as *ulama*, for them to wear veils as part of the Islamic tradition.

Since December, numerous complaints have been received by the media here on the *ulama*'s alleged strict enforcement of the rule requiring the wearing of head cover called *hijab*.

Suspected religious fanatics, armed with scissors, have enforced the *hijab* rule and forcibly cut the hair of unveiled Muslim women.

Shameera, a university student, had her hair fixed at a beauty parlor and was walking with friends on Don Rufino Alonzo Street here when an unidentified man approached her and stepped on her toes.

The suspect, about 30 years old, immediately pulled out a pair of scissors and cut her hair so badly that she cried.

She said the suspect warned her to wear a *hijab* or her hair would be clipped again by force. Shameera now wears a *hijab*.

Maimona, another victim, said a man cut her hair while she was standing outside a department store here.

She now carries a knife to protect herself from the hair cutters.

"Just let them try that again," she said.

Ustadz Jaafar Ali, spokesman for the *ulama*, did not confirm or deny the hair cutting.

But he said that under Muslim laws, women are compelled to wear veils.

"It is in the Koran and the Hadith (saying of Prophet Mohammad, S.A.W). Women

should avoid exposing their hair because this could tempt the opposite sex," he said.

Source: Today  
1 February 1996

### INDONESIAN WOMEN ACTIVISTS: TARGETS OF RAPE AND TORTURE - AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

The human rights group Amnesty International said Indonesian women, particularly activists, were targets of arbitrary rape, torture, execution and other rights violations by security forces.

In a report entitled "Women in Indonesia and East Timor, Standing Against Repression," Amnesty International said torture has become institutionalized within the security forces."

Indonesian Foreign Ministry spokesman Ghaffar Fadyl said the report was "biased" and the allegations were not new. "Amnesty International has always been engaged in the distortion of facts on human rights in Indonesia," Fadyl said.

But Amnesty International spokeswoman Nalyni Mohamed said, in releasing the report, that "those who challenge Indonesian authorities frequently suffer human rights violations, including arbitrary arrest, rape, torture and extrajudicial executions," Mohamed said.

Amnesty International's report said women most at risk were those involved in land disputes, Islamic or other religious activities or those criticizing the central rule in the provinces of Aceh, Irian Jaya and East Timor. The report lists a number of allegations of imprisonment, rape, torture and executions of women in Indonesia in the 1990s.

Amnesty International said

it had received 40 testimonies from women describing torture since 1993. Torture methods included electric shock, cigarette burns, sleep and food deprivation, and bashing with iron bars, wood and bottles. "Torture is frequently used to obtain information, to intimidate detainees and to obtain confessions," Amnesty International said. "In many cases, the attitude of government and security officials appears to condone the human rights violations," it added.

The human rights group added that since the Indonesian invasion of East Timor in 1975, independence supporters had been routinely tortured and maltreated by Indonesian military personnel.

### FILIPINO WOMEN TARGETED BY MOONIES

Philippine immigration authorities stopped 984 Filipinas from leaving Manila for South Korea as brides. The agency alleged that the women, who were married to mostly South Korean men in mass wedding rites of the Unification Church, are victims of a mail order bride scheme by the church.

Rodolfo Dumapias, an embassy counsellor in Seoul, said that, "To the Korean Unification men, marrying a Filipina or any foreign woman is like a business transaction [because] he pays more than \$2,000 to get a housemaid, who can also be a sex partner."

Reports have come to the Philippine embassy in Seoul that Filipina women were being brought to Seoul by the Unification Church and deployed as domestic workers and prostitutes. Reports also included the testimony of a

woman who was married to a member of the Unification Church. She said that her husband kept her at home as a prisoner and passed her around to other men.

The Unification Church, founded by Reverend Moon and whose members are called Moonies, has been a controversial religious sect in many countries. It is known internationally for its mass weddings. The mass weddings that were held in the Philippines have been found by authorities to be nothing more than "mass blessings" for the hundreds of couples that were matched by Reverend Moon in the Philippines.

Believers of the Unification Church claim that the church is a blend of many religions and that it is a peace-loving organization. They believe that their Church is being attacked for not being part of established religions.

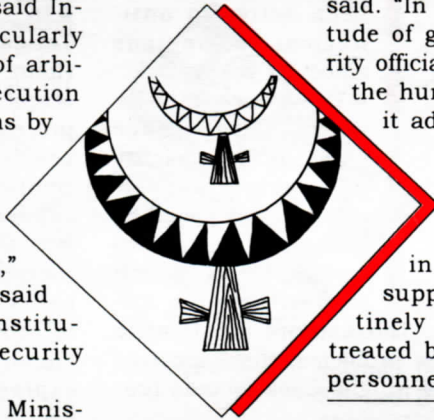
Women who support the match-making of the Unification Church claim that they are under no coercion to leave their countries and to settle elsewhere. They added that the match-making process is with their participation.

Authorities counter that it is no coincidence that Filipinas are being targeted as brides. The Korean government has announced the need for 40,000 more workers to help small companies. Women also question why the Unification Church is targeting only Filipina women to become brides to mostly South Korean men. Why not Filipino men as grooms to foreign women?

Source: The Philippine Daily Inquirer and Today  
25 January 1996

### AFRICAN LEADER AWARDED

The 1995 Africa Prize for Leadership for the Sustainable



End of Hunger went to Joyce F. Munghera, Vice-President of the World Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) and the National Executive Director of the YWCA of Uganda.

Ms. Munghera has led the Uganda branch of the YWCA for 30 years. In the '70s, she went underground after she was directly threatened with execution by then Ugandan dictator Idi Amin. But Ms. Munghera continued to work even after going underground.

Ms. Munghera is credited as a key person in the establishment of one of the world's strongest networks for women's literacy. She is the manager of the country's first successful revolving credit scheme for rural women. Now, Ms. Munghera is also establishing a rural women's bank in Uganda.

Ms. Munghera joins the distinguished list of awardees of the Africa Prize for Leadership for the Sustainable End of Hunger. The 1994 prize went to H.E. Nelson Mandela, President of the Republic of South Africa. The prize is a project of the Hunger Project Organization.

Source: World Young Women's Christian Association

### **SOUTH PACIFIC WOMEN IN THE FOREFRONT OF ANTI-NUCLEAR PROTESTS**

Women from throughout the Pacific Islands demonstrated their solidarity with one another as France carried out its nuclear tests at Moruroa Atoll

sis International-Manila joins human rights groups around the world in denouncing the Nigerian military dictatorship that executed Nobel Peace Prize nominee Saro-Wiwa and eight other human rights activists.

Saro-Wiwa, a noted writer, had led a campaign for self-determination for the Ogoni people who have suffered under the Nigerian military regime. Saro-wiwa fought to protect the environment which has been exploited by foreign oil companies.

Finau Tabakaucoro led. Despite engine problems, the Kaunitoni joined in the Cook Islands protest.

The Cook Islands, which is geographically closest to the Atoll, sent a *vaka*, a traditional canoe, for which one quarter of the population gathered for a national farewell. The *vaka* is an important symbol to the French Polynesians because a thousand years ago, populations moved from Polynesia through the Cooks to New Zealand on it.

● In Western Samoa, women's organizations visited the Prime Minister. Subsequently, the government decided to boycott the South Pacific Games in Tahiti.

Individual athletes also boycotted the South Pacific Games, including Fijian young female swimmer Angela Birch.

● Women led "a very hostile" demonstration at the Cook Islands airport when the leader of French Polynesia arrived to "explain" the French testing. This was considered an unusual

in August and October 1995.

● In Fiji, 5,000, including a woman member of Parliament and the woman Minister of Education, marched in protest of the French nuclear testing. The two government women have been active in anti-nuclear campaigns since 30 years back.

● The Peace Flotilla where Greenpeace ships, private yachts and vessels participated in was joined by the MV Kaunitoni from Fiji which woman Senator Adi

event as the Cook Islands have, in the past, tended to defend French Polynesia.

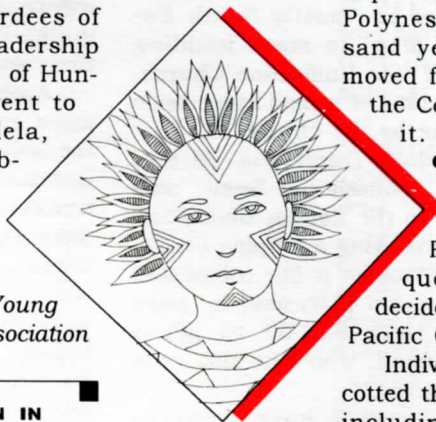
● "Peace Women" from New Zealand and Cook Islands on board a chartered plane were refused landing in Papeete. Not giving up, the women went back on a commercial plane just to establish ties with their Maori sisters.

● In politically conservative Tonga, 500 people, most of them women, marched in the streets in an unusual show of protest. Most of the time, the people of Tonga will not speak contrary to the King who did not condemn the nuclear testings.

● In the Women and the Environment meeting in Fiji, participants resolved to lobby France to stop nuclear testing in the Pacific. Women at the meeting expressed concern for the impact nuclear testing would have on tuna fishing in the region, for possible climate changes, and for the stability of the atoll.

● In Suva, Fiji, Katerina Teaiwa, a young Fijian designer, staged the first ever anti-nuclear fashion show. Teresita Teaiwa, sister of Katerina, said the concept was inspired by the launching in 1946 of the bikini, the two-piece bathing suit named after the Bikini Atoll in the Marshall Islands where the U.S. held nuclear testings. While the bikini became immortal, history has tended to ignore the suffering, displacement and degradation of Bikini Atoll's Islanders, Teresita Teaiwa said.

French President Chirac went ahead with the testing despite global protests. However, the people and the governments of the Pacific are not letting things end there. At the Annual South Pacific Forum of Prime Ministers, France was suspended from the observer list. Other governments, with



support from the NGOs of the region, have taken action. Australia, New Zealand and Fiji have taken France to the World Court and Fiji sponsored a motion that was passed by the UN General Assembly condemning the testing.

*Source: Report by Ruth E. Lechte, Director of Energy and Environment for the World Young Women's Christian Association  
20 November 1995  
the Western Samoa Observer June 1995  
and Fiji Times, July 1995*

### **SHELTER COALITION FORMED**

Three international women's networks joined forces to form what is now known as the super coalition. HIC Women and Shelter Network, Grassroots Organizations Operating To-gether for Sisterhood (GROOTS) based in the USA and the International Council of Women (ICW) based in The Netherlands, as well as the United Nations Council on Human Settlements' (Habitat) Women in Human Settlements Development Programme (WHSDP) have been collaborating to voice the concerns and priorities of women regarding their access to housing, land and services.

The members of this coalition have been working together to have a women's perspective on housing through major United Nations conferences such as the World Summit for Social Development and Commission on the Status of Women (PrepCom II), and the second PrepCom for Habitat II. Over 30 members of the newly formed super coalition met during the NGO Consultation held in New York in March 1995. The coalition was able to get some

clauses on women's land and housing rights into the Draft Platform of Action. One of the clauses that is still bracketed reads: "Governments must guarantee women's human right to equal access to and control of land, property and credit, regardless of customary laws, traditions and practices related to inheritance and marriage. Non-governmental organizations and women's organizations should mobilize to protect the traditional land and property rights of all women, including pastoralists, fishery workers and nomadic groups, indigenous peoples, refugees and migrant workers."

For more information, contact HIC Women and Shelter Network Secretariat, Mazingira Institute, PO Box 14550, Nairobi, Kenya. Phone 254 2 443219/26/29, Fax 254 2 444643/443214, E-mail: [Mazingira@elci.gn.apc.org](mailto:Mazingira@elci.gn.apc.org)  
*Source: Women and Shelter No. 9, July 1995*

### **YOU'VE GOT TO BE IN IT TO WIN IT**

Just as South Africa was once banned from the Olympics, any country that bars women from its delegation should be sidelined, says Atlanta Plus, an international coalition of activists and athletes.

After 32 countries sent all-male teams in 1992, the group came together to urge the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to improve its record in time for the 1996 games in Atlanta. According to Atlanta Plus, Iran is the only country known to explicitly ban women, but women are conspicuously absent from

the sizeable delegations of other Islamic countries like Kuwait and Pakistan.

The group is urging the IOC to investigate countries that could be running afoul of the Olympic charter, which prohibits gender discrimination. But the IOC has called the campaign an attack on religion—a claim Moroccan gold medalist Nawal El Moutawakel, who is a Muslim rejects. "There isn't a religion on earth that says women can't practice sports."

*Source: Ms., Vol. VI, No. 2.*



## MEDICAL HELP FOR SEXUAL ASSAULT VICTIMS

Every 45 seconds, a woman is sexually assaulted in America. The number of victims would total about 700,000 victims a year. Most victims are under age 18. The assailant is most often a lover, a friend, an acquaintance or a relative.

Women opt to keep silent about sexual assaults because, too often, they are made to feel more like the criminal rather than the victim. Fewer than half of all sexual assaults are reported, and many victims fail to seek help promptly.

But these women are also desperate for someone to whom they can speak with confidentiality, and many would like to speak with their personal physicians. Doctors, however, are often too clumsy or insensitive to counsel victims of sexual violence. While doctors are in a good position to identify and treat victims, they do not routinely talk to patients about sexual violence and patients do not routinely turn to them.

New guidelines just issued by the American Medical Association (AMA) should help improve doctors' skills. AMA's new guidelines remind doctors to be alert for physical signs of abuse and for evidence of psychological trauma, as when a woman or child panics or withdraws from the doctor's touch during a routine exam. The guidelines, which are being distributed to healthcare professionals, are part of a broader AMA effort to address the physical and mental scars of sexual abuse. The more doctors are aware of sexual violence and its consequences, the more effectively they can treat or help prevent it. AMA

# C I P S



president Lonnie Bristow says that sexual assault is a "silent violent epidemic" that is "traumatizing women and children."

*Source: Today  
17 November 1995*

## THE BIBLE OF DEBT

World Bank-IMF  
Commandments

1. Thou shalt worship us thy money gods.
2. Thou shalt not seek any other means of raising foreign exchange.
3. Thou shalt devalue, first, thy currency and then thy self respect.
4. Thou shalt open up thy economy and allow us to seal your fate forever.
5. Thou shalt not deny our multi-national "angels" the right to sell toothpaste and potato chips to thy people (and also gas them to death occasionally if required).
6. Thou shalt allow us to purchase thy real estate now and thy state later.
7. Thou shalt never commit "default" and shalt continue to serve the debt till thou droppeth dead.
8. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbours low debt service ratio or self-reliant growth.
9. Thou shalt appoint our men as thy policy growth.
10. As a general principle, thou shalt crawl when thou art asked to bend.

*Reprinted from Aikyathatha  
February 1994*

## BRIDE PRICE

*by the Women's Feature Service*

Why should immigration authorities in Sri Lanka worry

about marriage? Because more and more foreigners are marrying local women for a brief fling with the exotic.

Some are interested solely in extending their visas. These mainly western tourists usually target uneducated women from rural areas.

After a brief marriage, they abandon their wives and move on, leaving behind families devastated by the shame of a deserted daughter.

Determined to crack down, the government has designed new rules to combat the practice. Foreigners who want to marry local women must now deposit a non-refundable sum of US\$ 25,000.

*Reprinted from Sister Namibia  
Vol. 7, No. 3, July & August  
1995*

## IMPRISONED BURMESE IN POOR HEALTH

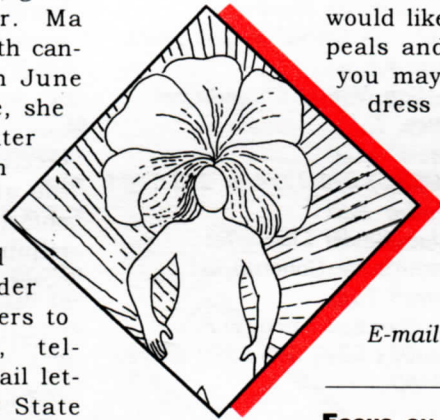
Dr. Ma Thida, a Burmese political prisoner is suffering from tuberculosis and small ovarian tumors.

According to the American Association for the Advancement of Science Human Rights Action Network (AAASHRAN), Dr. Ma Thida, a surgeon, writer and previous assistant to Aung San Suu Kyi, has not been receiving the necessary medical care and has been placed in solitary confinement since 1993.

Dr. Ma Thida was arrested for providing medical treatment to people injured during the pro-democracy demonstrations in 1988. The demonstrations were often violently broken up by the military, resulting in hundreds of people getting hurt. Citing the 1908 Burmese law, the Unlawful Association Act, the Burmese military authority sentenced Dr. Ma Thida to 20 years imprisonment.

According to reports, gathered by AAASHRAN, Dr. Ma Thida was diagnosed with cancer and tuberculosis in June 1995. For a short time, she was hospitalized but later returned to her prison cell where conditions are reported to be poor.

The AAASHRAN and the Women Living Under Muslim Laws urge readers to please send telexes, telegrams, faxes or air mail letters to officials of the State Law and Order Restoration Council in Burma to express concern about Dr. Ma Thida, request information about her hospital stay in mid-June and the treatment she received, seek information regarding her current state of health, and urge her immediate and unconditional release from prison. Please address your letters to:



*General Than Shwe*  
Chairman, State Law and Order  
Restoration Council  
Yangon, Union of Myanmar

*Lieutenant General Khin Nyunt*  
Secretary 1, State Law and Order  
Restoration Council  
Yangon, Union of Myanmar

*Lieutenant General Tin U*  
Secretary 2, State Law and  
Order Restoration Council

Also, please send copies of  
your letters to:

*Vice Admiral Than Nyunt*  
Minister of Health,  
Ministers Office  
Yangon, Union of Myanmar

*Ambassador U Thang*  
Embassy of the Union of Myanmar  
2300 S Street, NW, Washington,  
DC 20008

In addition, the AAASHRAN would like copies of your appeals and any responses that you may receive. Please address them to:

*Elisa Munoz, AAAS*  
Science and Human  
Rights Program  
1333 H. St. NW  
Washington DC 20005  
Tel: (202) 326-6797  
Fax: (202) 289-4950  
E-mail: [EMUNOZ@AAAS.ORG](mailto:EMUNOZ@AAAS.ORG)  
(Internet system)

#### **FOCUS ON WOMEN IN THE MEDIA**

The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) has initiated a major project aimed at researching and documenting issues confronting women working in the media industry in Asia. One of these issues is equal opportunity in promotion.

The project also aims to investigate and report on the portrayal of women in the media. The project, Women in the Media in Asia, focuses on five countries: Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Malaysia and Australia.

The research will gauge the extent of discrimination, both direct and indirect, still being suffered by women. Information on job access, recruitment, pay, and women's promotional chances will be collated. The survey aims to elicit responses on the extent of job segregation, type of training and development, prevalence of sexual harassment and the nature of working conditions, including childcare provisions, at the workplace. Positive changes at workplaces and in women's employment conditions will be identified and credited to the organisation concerned.

The research will be conducted in journalists' workplaces. This will facilitate the prompt completion of the project and allow journalists to be

closely involved in the project. Information is being collected according to state, type of media organisation and employer.

A small group of women journalists assumed to have an understanding and interest in the issues involved in the research have been approached to form a focus group and to assist in offering an insider's perspective on the issues to be surveyed.

Source: The Alliance  
September 1995

#### **MEXICAN MILITARY USE GANG RAPE TO INTIMIDATE PROTESTERS**

Alarming reports from Mexico say that women are being gang raped by the military in San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas. The area is in the grips of a low intensity war being waged by Mexican military against Zapatista peasants protesting the deplorable conditions of the region. The military is using gang rape as a tool of violence and intimidation.

On 25 October 1993, Cecilia Rodriguez, Coordinator of the National Commission for Democracy in Mexico was brutally raped and sodomized by three heavily armed men in Chiapas. She has also received death threats.

On 4 June 1994, three indigenous women were gang raped by 30 soldiers at an army checkpoint. Their mothers were forced to hear the screams of the women as they were raped. Charges have been brought against the soldiers but the case lies inactive at the National Defense Secretariat (SEDENA). Women are demanding that the case be turned over to a civil court so that it may be reopened and investigated.

On 4 October 1995, five