



Association for the Defense of Human Rights

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### **In Africa...**

#### **1 – Horn of Africa: Refugee crisis still dire**

Humanitarian aid organizations have alerted to the need to keep giving assistance to Somali refugees in Dadaab, Kenya.

Dadaab is the world's biggest refugee settlement, sheltering almost 500000 Somalis who have fled across the border. Despite Kenyan authorities closing it to any new arrivals, Somali refugees continue to crowd into Kenya's Dadaab refugee camp, so people already living there have to squeeze the newcomers into their makeshift homes.

Also in Somali, during February, UN Independent Expert on the situation of Human Rights in Somalia, Shamsul Bari, said that the smuggling and trafficking in innocent Somalis must end. This alert came after he expressed deep shock over the recent boat disaster in the Gulf of Aden that resulted in the death of 11 people. These journeys are usually made in inhospitable conditions: the number of occupants in the boats exceeds by large its capacity, and many times, when threatened, the leaders of the traffic network tend to throw the passengers overboard.

#### **2 - Ethiopia: – Future of last remaining human rights monitoring NGO in the balance**

Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and other important organizations have expressed deep concern at the obstacles and the restrictions to which Human Rights Council – Ethiopia's oldest human rights organization – and other organizations are now subjected.

The introduction of the Charities and Societies Proclamation (CSO law), adopted by the Ethiopian parliament in 2009 to regulate domestic and international civil society organizations, is prohibiting human rights organizations in Ethiopia from receiving more than 10 percent of their funding from foreign sources, which is resulting in a discontinuation of their work.

#### **3 – Congo: ICC condemns Thomas Lubanga for using child soldiers**

The International Criminal Court's (ICC) guilty verdict against rebel leader Thomas Lubanga Dyilo for recruiting and using child soldiers under age 15 to fight in conflicts in Congo between September 2002 and August 2003.

"The verdict against Lubanga is a victory to the thousands of children forced to fight in Congo's brutal wars", said Géraldine Mattioli-Zeltner, from Human Rights Watch.

#### **4 – Libyan armed groups accused of abuse**

According to Amnesty International, Libyan armed groups in the country are committing widespread human rights abuses that are fuelling insecurity and blocking the rebuilding of government institutions.

A report published by that organization documents serious abuses including war crimes, by militias against suspected al-Gaddafi loyalists and reports many cases of people being unlawfully detained and tortured sometimes to death.

At least 12 detainees held by militias have died after being tortured since September. Their





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bodies were covered in bruises, wounds and cuts and some had had nails pulled off. Individuals held in different cities told Amnesty International they had been suspended in contorted positions; beaten for hours with whips, cables, plastic hoses, metal chains and bars, and wooden sticks and given electric shocks with live wires and taser-like electro-shock weapons.

### ***In the Middle East...***

#### ***5 – Yemen: United Nations warns of humanitarian crisis***

“There is a growing humanitarian crisis in the country”, Jamel Benomar (United Nations envoy to Yemen) said.

Benomar also said that about three million people are in need of immediate assistance and urged for international donors to help the Arab world's poorest country.

It is estimated that up to 6.8 million Yemenis have been left without enough food during months of political turmoil and that Yemen has the second-highest rate of chronic child malnutrition in the world. Benomar also said that 500.000 children were likely to die from malnutrition or suffer life-long consequences if adequate support was not provided.

#### ***6 – Iraq: 65 Executions in first 40 days of 2012***

Since the beginning of 2012, Iraq has executed at least 65 prisoners, according to Human Rights Watch.

The Iraqi government “seems to have given state executioners the green light” to those executions, said Joe Stork, deputy Middle East director at HRW. Many criminal trials in Iraqi violate International human rights law since that most of the times the defendants are unable to pursue a meaningful defense or to challenge evidence against them, and their confessions are obtained under coercion.

In Iraqi, death penalty is authorized for close to 50 crimes, including terrorism, kidnapping, and murder, but also including such offenses as damage to public property. It is estimated that more than 1200 people have been sentenced to death in the country since 2004.

#### ***7 – UN Human Rights Council deplores “brutal” actions by Syria against civilians***

In the beginning of March, the United Nations deplored the brutal actions of the Syrian authorities in response to the popular uprising that began nearly a year ago and called for

an immediate end to attacks against civilians and other abuses.

In a resolution adopted by the 47 members of the Human Rights Council, the systematic violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms by the Syrian authorities against civilians were strongly condemned. These include the use of force against civilians, arbitrary executions, the killing and persecution of protestors, torture and sexual violence, including of children.

#### ***8 – Syria: Stop torture of children***

According to Human Rights Watch (HRW), Syrian army and security officers have detained and tortured children with impunity during the past year. HRW has documented at least 12 cases of children detained under inhumane conditions and tortured, as well as children shot while in their homes or on the streets.

“Syrian security forces have killed, arrested, and tortured children in their homes, their schools, or on the streets. In many cases, security forces have targeted children just as they have targeted adults”, said Lois Whitman, children's rights director at Human Rights Watch.

HRW urged the United Nations



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Security Council to demand that the Syrian government end all human rights violations and the school and hospital occupations in the country.

### **In Burma...**

#### **9 – Election observers may be allowed**

Burma's government has signaled that it may allow the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to send observers during upcoming by-elections in April, in order to enhance its transparency.

Both United States and European Union have been supporting the reforms in the country during the last year, and they promise now to review the economic sanctions applied to Burma if the April elections occur in a free and fair way.

In another context, Burma

and UNICEF have agreed on a country program action plan in the country. The agreement will cover projects aimed at protecting and promoting the well-being of children. The program covers six areas, including water, environmental sanitation and hygiene, health and HIV, nutrition, education and child protection.

#### **10 – Teenage boys tell of forced labor horror**

The Burmese army is using underage boys for forced labor and is coercing porters to fight on the front line against the Kachin Independence Army (KIA).

According to The Irrawaddy these teenagers were coerced into joining the Tatmadaw (the common name for the Burmese army), after being promised jobs by army officers at different

locations and at different times during 2011.

Burma's government forces have long been accused of forcing civilians to work as porters and for using child soldiers in its campaigns against ethnic militias in the country's borderlands.

#### **11 – People desperate for HIV and TB drugs**

Some 85000 HIV-infected people in Burma are not getting treatment due to a lack of funding.

Doctors Without Borders warned in its report that the situation in Myanmar could worsen after the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria cut funding worldwide because of a shortfall in donations.

*\*News collected from the Human Rights Watch news services and Burmese newspapers on the exile*

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