



# IJCSL NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 5

APRIL 2005

## CITIZEN PARTICIPATION AND FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

### **BOLIVIA—GOVERNMENT AGREES TO REVISIT LAW ON ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

The Bolivian government and press and journalists associations have agreed to form a commission to revise the current law on access to information and government transparency, according to a news article published by [BOLPRESS](#) on 23 March 2005. The current law is being criticized for restrictive provisions that are said to undermine press freedom. According to [LA PATRIA](#), the commission will be comprised of journalists as well as media owners and government representatives and will begin functioning very soon.

### **GLOBAL—WORLD BANK APPROVES DISCLOSURE OF BOARD MINUTES**

“The World Bank Board of Executive Directors on 8 March 2005 [approved](#) the release of its minutes, but pulled back substantially from several other disclosure reforms that have been under discussion for months,” according to a [FREEDOMINFO](#) news update on 18 March 2005. These board meetings minutes record board decisions, and do not include the full discussion at the meetings. The decision to disclose the minutes is a positive move among multilateral lenders as it creates greater transparency and openness. The World Bank will begin publishing the minutes of board meetings from 1 April 2005.

### **KAZAKHSTAN—LOWER HOUSE OF PARLIAMENT APPROVES AMENDMENTS TO DRAFT LAW ON PUBLIC SOCIAL ORDER**

Amendments and additions suggested to the draft law on Public Social Order were approved by Kazakhstan’s Majilis (lower house of the Parliament) on 23 March 2005. According to a news article published by [KAZAKH INFORMATION AGENCY](#), the bill seeks to devise legal foundation for NGOs to effectively participate and engage in implementing and carrying out the social projects, programs, and campaigns drawing on the public budget.

### **NIGERIA**

#### ● **MEDIA ORGANIZATIONS UNDERScore NEED TO REINFORCE FREEDOM OF ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

Media owners have underscored the urgent need for an enabling law to guarantee access to public information, according to a news article published by [THIS DAY](#) on 4 March 2005. During a [National Conference on Political Reforms](#), conducted by the Newspaper Proprietors Association of Nigeria, media owners urged the adoption of specific legislation making it obligatory for the government to be accountable to the people through the dissemination of information requested by the them.

#### ● **SENATE COMMITTEE HOLDS PUBLIC HEARING ON FOI BILL**

The Senate Committee on Information will hold a public hearing on the Freedom of Information Bill on 12 April 2005 (it was [earlier scheduled](#) on 22 March), according to a news article published by the [MEDIA RIGHTS AGENDA](#) on 23 March 2005. A technical committee has been set up to review the contributions and the inputs from



# IJCSL NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 5

APRIL 2005

citizens. The draft prepared by the committee would be included in the final report to be submitted to the Senate. (For previous coverage on the FOI legislation, see the **March** issue of **IJCSL-Newsletter**.)

## **SOUTH AFRICA—“PROMOTION OF ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT” GUIDE LAUNCHED**

The South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) has launched a guide on how to use the ‘Promotion of Access to Information Act,’ according to a news article published by [BUANEWS](#) on 1 March 2005. The electronic version of the [guide](#) is available under the publication section of [SAHRC](#) website.

## **UNITED STATES— “FASTER FOIA ACT OF 2005” INTRODUCED IN SENATE**

The “[Faster FOIA Act of 2005](#)” was introduced in the Senate on 10 March 2005. Under the bill a 16-member commission would be created to study ways to speed the processing of FOIA requests, according to a [press release](#) on Sen. John Cornyn’s [website](#) on 10 March 2005. This bill follows the “OPEN Government Act of 2005,” which was introduced in the Senate during February 2005. The “[OPEN Government Act of 2005](#)” envisions the revamping of the current Freedom of Information Act and provides for the establishment of an ombudsman office to mediate disputes between the government and FOIA requesters.

## **FISCAL MATTERS**

### **GERMANY—COLLABORATIVE EFFORT TO REFORM TAX REGIME FOR NPOS LAUNCHED**

For the first time leaders of major German umbrella organizations met with academics and other practitioners to discuss the possibility of reform of the tax legislation for civil society organizations. The meeting was held on 30 March 2005 in Berlin, under the auspices of the Maecenata Institut of the Humboldt University and the [Bucerius Law School](#) of Hamburg. Further information can be found on the website of the [Maecenata Institut](#).

### **UNITED KINGDOM**

#### **● CHARITIES RESPOND TO BUDGET 2005**

The Charities’ Tax Reform Group (CTRG) has a mixed response to the Chancellor’s [budget](#), published on 16 March. According to a [press release](#) issued by CTRG on 16 March 2005, the announcements for charities are very modest, and the proposals discussed with the government are not reflected therein. Measures such as allowing Gift Aid on charity-to-charity donation of profits, a new reduced rate for certain supplies of advice or information promoting the welfare of elderly or disabled people or children, and the extension of VAT relief for repairs to places of worship until 2008 were, however, hailed by the group.



# IJCSL NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 5

APRIL 2005

## ● CHARITY COMMISSION RELEASES REVISED ACCOUNTING SORP

The Charity Commission released a revised [Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting for Charities \(SORP\)](#) on 4 March 2005. According to the Charity Commission's recent update, the SORP 2005 is aimed at improving the quality of reporting in the charity sector, and it provides guidance to charities for the preparation of charity accounts and trustee annual reports. The new SORP will apply to accounting years starting on or after 1 April 2005.

## UNITED STATES

### ● IRS WARNS OF COMMON TAX SCAMS INVOLVING CHARITIES

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has released its annual listing of tax fraud schemes called the '[Dirty Dozen](#).' According to IRS news release of 28 February 2005, the 2004 list includes several new tricks that either manipulate laws governing charitable groups, abuse credit counseling services, or rely on refuted arguments to claim tax exemptions. The IRS has advised people to avoid common schemes including trust misuse, and abuse of charitable organizations and deductions.

### ● CONGRESS TO WORK ON CHARITABLE GIVING, REFORM BILL IN SPRING

Congress is likely to work on charity reforms and tax breaks to encourage charitable giving in the spring, according to a news article published by the [Planned Giving Design Center](#) on 7 March 2005. Recommendations to increase transparency and tighten governance of charitable organizations that were included in an interim report released by the Panel on the Nonprofit Sector could be considered as part of charitable giving legislation this spring (see below under Legal Framework).

## FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION AND PEACEFUL ASSEMBLY

### CANADA—FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION FOR TRADE UNIONS DECLINES

According to a news article published by [The National Union of Public and General Employees](#), an extensive study conducted by two Canadian largest labor unions reveals that "the basic human right to freedom of association has been abused and eroded by Canadian governments at all levels over the past two decades." The study titled "Collective Bargaining in Canada: Human Right or Canadian Illusion," was co-published by National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE) and United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW Canada) on 25 March 2005. The study cites 170 pieces of legislation that have denied or undermined these basic rights since 1982. In releasing the study, the unions announced a national labor movement campaign to restore the right to freedom of association.

### GERMANY—BUNDESRAT RESTRICTS THE RIGHT OF ASSEMBLY

Germany's Bundesrat (upper house of Parliament) approved a bill that would ban the neo-Nazi demonstrations. The law tightens the right of assembly and makes changes to the existing criminal code. Under the new law the government would be allowed to ban marches at the new Holocaust Memorial in Berlin. Persons convicted of



# IJCSL NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 5

APRIL 2005

“approving, glorifying or justifying” Nazi Germany could be sentenced to up to three years in prison, according to a news article published by [BLOOMBERG](#) on 18 March 2005. The bill awaits the President’s signature and will come into force after it is published in April.

## **JAPAN—RESTRICTIONS ON FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND ASSEMBLY PROPOSED**

The ruling party is considering new legislation that will restrict the freedom of assembly and expression in its draft proposal for a new Constitution, according to a news article published by [JAPAN TODAY](#) on 1 March 2005. The panel of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party would compile a new Constitution draft by the end of April. The constitution revision process is being [watched closely](#) by Japanese citizens, according to Japan Today.

## **UNITED STATES—MONTANA SUPREME COURT OVERTURNS CONVICTION OF MILITIA GROUP MEMBERS**

The [Montana Supreme Court](#) on 1 April 2005 overturned the convictions of members of the Montana Mountain Man Militia (4M) for violating the state’s unlawful association legislation on the grounds that the legislation violates the First (freedom of expression) and Second (right to keep and bear arms for the purpose of supporting a well-regulated militia) Amendments to the United States Constitution. A spokesperson for the group hailed the decision and said, “This will now allow 4 M to sell guns to all citizens who support our aim to protect the United States as an Aryan Nation.”

## **FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION**

### **AFRICA—ADVOCATES OF FREE EXPRESSION URGE REPEAL OF CRIMINAL DEFAMATION LAWS**

The [African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights](#) (ACHPR) and the [Organization of American States](#) (OAS), has urged the African governments to repeal criminal defamation laws, according to a press release issued by the [Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression](#) on 4 March 2005. In a [joint declaration](#), the ACHPR and OAS assert that the criminal defamation laws are undemocratic, inconsistent with International standards, deprive people of free expression, and “intimidate individuals from exposing wrongdoing by public officials.”

### **BELARUS—OSCE CONCERNED ABOUT MEDIA RESTRICTIONS**

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe’s (OSCE) Special Commissioner for the Media has expressed serious apprehensions on media restrictions in the country. According to an [OSCE press release](#) on 11 March 2005, the OSCE’s special commissioner criticized Belarus’ libel laws, and singled out legislation banning insults against public officials. While criticizing media laws



# IJCSL NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 5

APRIL 2005

giving broad powers to the Information Ministry virtually over the media, he emphasized the need for a more democratic approach to media freedom.

## **BELGIUM—PARLIAMENT ADOPTS SHIELD LAW TO PROTECT JOURNALISTS' SOURCES**

On 17 March 2005, Belgium's Chamber of Deputies adopted a new law regulating the protection of media staff and journalist's sources, according to a news report published by [IFJ](#) on 21 March 2005. The new law provides several legal protections to journalists, including the right to withhold their source in courts, except in cases where the physical integrity of persons or person could be brought into danger. The law also protects them against home searches, seizures, phone tapping and other investigations.

## **ETHIOPIA—FEDERAL HIGH COURT DECLARES GOVERNMENT BAN ON MEDIA ASSOCIATION ILLEGAL**

Ethiopia's Federal High Court has lifted the government ban on the Ethiopian Free Press Journalists Association (EFPJA), which was imposed in 2003. A news report published by [IRIN](#) on 7 March 2005 states that The Ministry of Justice suspended the organization 17 months ago on the grounds that it did not fulfill the legal requirement to register with the ministry and operated illegally after failing to renew its annual operating license for the last three years. Under Ethiopian law, all organizations working within the country must be licensed and are required to provide audit reports detailing financial records.

## **THE GAMBIA—REPRESSIVE MEDIA LEGISLATION ENACTED**

The government of The Gambia has enacted the Criminal Code Amendment Bill 2004 and the Newspaper Amendment Act. The enactment is seen by the media owners and the journalists as being repressive. According to a [protest letter by CPJ](#) addressed to the President of The Gambia on 18 March 2005, the Criminal Code Amendment Bill 2004 imposes mandatory prison sentences for media owners or journalists convicted of publishing defamatory or "seditious" material, and those found guilty of publishing or broadcasting false news. The State is also authorized to confiscate, without judicial intervention, any material considered "seditious." The Newspaper Amendment Act cancels the existing publication and broadcasting licenses and requires media outlets to re-register at five times the cost. (For previous coverage, see the **February 2005** issue of **IJCSL-N**).

## **KENYA—LEGISLATORS AGREE TO REVAMP RESTRICTIVE MEDIA LAWS**

Media owners and legislators have agreed to table a Bill in the Parliament to revamp the current restrictive media laws in the country, according to a news article published by [THE EAST AFRICAN STANDARD](#) on 10 March 2005. Before introduction in the parliament, the bill will be studied and analyzed by a team of experts. The government officials stated that several laws need to be studied and modified, including the Official Secrets Act, Section 194 of the Penal Code, Books and Newspapers Act, Defamation Act, Judicature Act, Kenya Broadcasting Corporation Act and the Communication Commission of Kenya Act.



# IJCSL NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 5

APRIL 2005

## **SOUTH KOREA—GOVERNMENT DISMISSES CLAIMS AGAINST AUTHORS**

According to a story published in the [Korea Times](#) on 1 April 2005, the authors of a best-selling novel and another work about political upheavals around the 1950-53 Korean War, were cleared of charges of violating the National Security Law by the Seoul Central District Public Prosecutors' Office on 31 March 2005.

## **VENEZUELA—AMENDMENTS TO CRIMINAL CODE BRING INCREASED PENALTIES FOR PRESS OFFENSES**

Amendments to Venezuela's criminal code that took effect on 16 March 2005, will bring increased penalties for press offenses. According to a news article published by [REPORTS WITHOUT BORDERS](#) on 23 March 2005, under the amended provisions insulting the president is punishable by six to thirty months in prison, dissemination of inaccurate news with the aim of "causing panic" is punishable by two to five years in prison, and defamation is punishable by up to three years in prison and a fine.

## **ZIMBABWE—INDEPENDENT PAPER CLOSED DOWN FOR ONE YEAR**

Zimbabwean government's Media and Information Commission (MIC) has closed down Weekly Times for one year. Weekly Times is the fourth independent paper closed down by the Zimbabwe government over the last two years, according to a news article published by [THE GUARDIAN](#) on 1 March 2005. The paper is alleged to have violated the "Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act." The closing down follows the flee of several foreign journalists from the country after they were harassed by the law enforcement agencies in Zimbabwe. (For previous coverage of developments in Zimbabwe with regard to the media, see several earlier issues of [IJCSL-Newsletter](#))

## **FREEDOM OF RELIGION AND BELIEF**

### **ARGENTINA—NEW LAW ON REGISTRATION OF RELIGIOUS GROUPS ANTICIPATED**

"The Argentine government is drafting new rules that would put an end to obligatory state registration for religious groups," according to a news article published by [THE CHRISTIAN POST](#) on 18 March 2005. Under current law, the registration of religious groups and churches with the state's Worship Department is mandatory. The new law is expected to be approved by the Congress in mid 2005.

### **CHINA—NEW RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS PROVISIONS COMES INTO EFFECT**

The new legal provisions on religious affairs issued by the Chinese government on November 30, 2004 came into effect on March 1, 2005 (for previous coverage see [January 2005](#) issue of [IJCSL-N](#)). Until now, religious organizations had no legal existence. The new regulations on religious affairs cover several topics for religious institutions such as licensing procedure, acceptance of religious donations, tax exemptions claims, and acceptance of foreign students. According to the state media, the new regulations provide a legal framework to protect freedom of religion as stated



# IJCSL NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 5

APRIL 2005

in China's constitution, and provide a remedy to the aggrieved party to appeal to the Supreme Court against the abuses of the Religious Affairs Office. However, critics assert the new regulations are overly broad and can easily be used to suspend, ban, fine, or suppress religious congregations not in conformity with state definitions of religion. To analyze and discuss the new rules, the [Congressional-Executive Commission on China](#) (CECC) held a roundtable on 14 March 2005. The discussion at the Roundtable is available on the CECC website.

## **GERMANY—COURT RECOGNIZES LEGAL STATUS OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES**

On 24 March 2005, a Berlin court ruled that "Jehovah's Witnesses are entitled to the same privileges enjoyed by Germany's major Catholic and Protestant churches," according to a news article published by [DEUTSCHE WELLE](#) on 23 March 2005. The decision grants the Jehovah's Witnesses right to preach, establish charitable organizations and receive tax breaks. Germany has 166,000 Jehovah's Witnesses.

## **PAKISTAN—CABINET RESTORES RELIGION COLUMN IN PASSPORTS**

"Pakistan reversed a decision to drop a requirement for passport holders to state their religion," according to a news article published by [ABC NEWS](#) on 24 March 2005. The cabinet's decision to reinstate the religion column in passports comes after months-long demonstrations by opposition Islamic parties demonstrating aggressively and asserting that the requirement to declare religion in passport preserves the Islamic identity of the country.

## **UNITED KINGDOM—COURT OF APPEALS ALLOWS SCHOOLGIRL TO WEAR ISLAMIC DRESS**

United Kingdom's Court of Appeal has ruled that a 16 year old Muslim schoolgirl, was denied the right to practice her religion after she was denied wearing jilbab (a traditional Islamic dress that covers the entire body except the face and hands) in the classroom. According to a news article published by [The Independent](#) on 3 March 2005, "the Court of Appeal agreed that the school had a right to set a school uniform policy but said it had failed to consider Shabina's rights under the Human Rights Act." The ruling goes against the trends of other European countries on the same issue.

## **UNITED KINGDOM—LEGISLATION TO PROTECT AGAINST DISCRIMINATION ON GROUNDS OF RELIGION AND BELIEF PLANNED**

The government has published new laws designed to protect people against discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief, according to a news article published by [GovNet 2005](#) on 3 March 2005. The new measures, which will be included in the Equality Bill, would ban direct discrimination on grounds of religion or belief. It also bans indirect discrimination where a requirement, condition or practice has the effect of putting people of a particular religious belief at a disadvantage. The bill, however, contains exemptions for faith schools, activities to meet the special needs of religions and beliefs in education, welfare and training, and for religion and belief organizations and charities, according to the news article.



# IJCSL NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 5

APRIL 2005

## **UNITED STATES—“HOUSES OF WORSHIP FREE SPEECH RESTORATION ACT OF 2005” INTRODUCED IN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

The “[Houses of Worship Free Speech Restoration Act of 2005](#)” was re-introduced in January 2005 in the House of Representatives, and it has gained momentum and support from religious organizations. According to an article published by [CNS News](#) on 3 March 2005, the bill seeks to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to protect churches from being denied tax status, should a pastor, priest, or rabbi speak out on political matters.

## **UNITED STATES—WOMAN PERFORMS IMAMAT OF MIXED-GENDER ISLAMIC PRAYER SERVICE**

A mixed-gender Islamic prayer service led by a woman Imam was held in New York City on 18 March 2005, according to a news article published by [ABC News](#) on 19 March 2005. This was the first recorded case of a woman delivering a sermon and leading the Friday Sabbath Prayer in Islam’s 1400 year history. The event has sparked debate from Muslim leaders around the globe saying Islam permits women to lead other women in prayer but not a congregation with men in it.

## **LEGAL FRAMEWORK**

### **CHINA—MAJOR CONFERENCE HELD TO DISCUSS LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR NPOs**

On 24 and 25 March the NPO Law Center of the Peking University School of Law held a major conference in Beijing to discuss the legal framework for NPOs in China. The conference was principally organized to discuss the Report and Recommendations of the Study Team of the Center, which has been working for more than two years on the development of proposals to amend the current legal system. Government officials speaking at the conference welcomed the report, but they also noted that some of the proposals were too “academic.” Foreign guests included Speakers from Germany, India, Japan, the Philippines, the Netherlands, and the United States. Further reports on the conference will be found in the **April Issue** of the **International Journal of Civil Society Law**.

### **CROATIA—FIRST DRAFT OF LAW ON FOUNDATIONS PREPARED**

A working group consisting of local experts, independent lawyers, and government representatives has prepared a first draft of Law on Foundations, according to an announcement by [Academy for Educational Development Croatia](#) on 16 March 2005. The [Law on Foundations](#) aims to govern the establishment, registration, internal structure, operations and dissolution of foundations. Several public discussions on the draft will take place in the coming days.

### **JORDAN—CABINET PROPOSES NEW LAW FOR PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS**

On 6 March 2005, a new draft of a professional associations’ law was introduced in the Lower House of Parliament, according to a news article published by [THE JORDAN](#)



# IJCSL NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 5

APRIL 2005

[TIMES](#) on 7 March 2005. Government officials stated that the new legislation would expand the scope of participation in associations, achieve a fair distribution of funds, and ensure decentralization in decision-making. The critics of the bill, however, protest that the bill would be a considerable impediment to political development and participation by the associations.

## **NORTHERN IRELAND—MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT PROPOSES ESTABLISHMENT OF CHARITY COMMISSION**

A public consultation exercise to seek views on [proposed changes to the existing laws governing charities in Northern Ireland](#), was announced by the Minister for Social Development of Northern Ireland, according to a [news release](#) of 11 February 2005. The proposed changes provide a mechanism for transparency, accountability, and better governance of the charity sector and recommend the organization of a Northern Ireland Charity Commission. The Department will hold a public consultation on the possible changes to the law until 20 May 2005.

## **SCOTLAND**

### ● **OSCR ANNOUNCES NEW POLICY FOR MONITORING SCOTTISH CHARITIES**

Following the public consultation and pilot monitoring program, the [Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator](#) (OSCR) has [announced](#) a new policy for [monitoring Scottish charities](#). According to a news report published by [SENSCOT ONLINE](#) on 1 March 2005, the policy will be implemented in phases. During the spring of 2005, all recognized charities will be issued an Annual Return, which is required to be submitted within three months. Charities with an annual income of over £25,000 would be required to submit their latest set of accounts with the Annual Return. From April 2006, all charities will complete a basic Annual Return and submit accounts. Charities with an annual income of over £25,000 will be required to complete a Monitoring Return.

### ● **ANOTHER STEP FORWARD FOR SCOTTISH CHARITIES**

The Scottish Parliament agreed to the general principles of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Bill in early March. Legislation being drafted will bring in stricter controls for charities and tougher rules on fundraising. According to a news article published by [BBC News](#) on 9 March 2005, among other changes, the new rules provide a new definition of charity based on the principle of public benefit. However, the MSPs have urged ministers to make some changes to simplify the effect of the prospective new legislation.

## **UNITED STATES—PANEL ON THE NONPROFIT SECTOR RELEASES INTERIM REPORT**

The Panel on the Nonprofit Sector has released an interim report setting forth a number of recommendations to the Senate Finance Committee, according to the [Panel on the Nonprofit Sector](#) press release on 1 March 2005. The [report](#) suggests measures to improve transparency of charitable organizations, enhance governance in charitable organizations, strengthen government oversight of charitable organizations, and enforcement of charitable regulations at the state and federal level. The Panel on the



# IJCSL NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 5

APRIL 2005

Nonprofit Sector is an independent panel of nonprofit and philanthropic leaders formed by the “Independent Sector” at the encouragement of the U.S. Senate Finance Committee in October 2004. The Panel will release the final report in the spring of 2005.

## MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS

### **ANGOLA—AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL HAILS ESTABLISHMENT OF OFFICE OF JUSTICE OMBUDSMAN**

Amnesty International has welcomed the proposed establishment of the office of Justice Ombudsman in Angola, according to a [news release](#) issued on 7 March 2005 by the International Secretariat of Amnesty International. The appointment of Angola’s first Justice Ombudsman [early this year](#) was condemned by human rights activists and civil society in Angola, who claimed they had had no part in the selection procedure. Amnesty International, however, has urged the National Assembly to ensure that the establishment of the Justice Ombudsman’s office conforms with the international and regional human rights treaties to which Angola is a party.

### **GLOBAL—UNHRC CRITICIZED**

“The United Nations Human Rights Commission’s members are more concerned with protecting themselves from criticism than exposing violations,” a high-level panel looking into the workings of the UN concluded, according to a news article published by the [BBC](#) on 14 March 2005. The human rights groups say that among the Commission’s 53 members are Cuba, Sudan, Zimbabwe, China, Russia and Saudi Arabia - all cited for gross violations of human rights. Human rights organizations stress the membership of the body needs to be reviewed.

### **ZIMBABWE—CIVIL SOCIETY AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS HOLD PEACEFUL SOLIDARITY RALLY**

Under the auspices of Amnesty International and CIVICUS, civil rights movements and organizations organized a peaceful regional solidarity with the people of Zimbabwe on 12 and 13 March 2005. A news article published by [THE ZIMBABWEAN](#) on 15 March 2005 indicates that the demonstration was aimed to develop a transparent debate for the restoration of democracy, broad citizen participation and freedom of expression in Zimbabwe.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### **CANADA—REPORT ON CANADIAN NONPROFIT AND VOLUNTARY SECTOR IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE PUBLISHED**



# IJCSL NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 5

APRIL 2005

“[The Canadian Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector in Comparative Perspective](#)” was released on 22 March 2005. The report is part of the Johns Hopkins University Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project, and it compares the Canadian nonprofit and voluntary sector with those of other countries. According to the survey, Canada’s nonprofit and voluntary sector is the second largest in the world when expressed as a share of the economically active population.

## **JAPAN— JACO LAUNCHES ENGLISH VERSION WEBSITE**

The [Japan Association of Charitable Organizations](#) (JACO) has launched its web site in [English version](#). The site provides informative material on charitable organizations including documents such as: legal framework of charitable organizations, regulation, guidance, taxation, and related statistics.

## **GLOBAL—2004 HUMAN RIGHTS COUNTRY REPORTS RELEASED**

The U.S. Department of State released its annual [Country Reports on Human Rights Practices](#) on 28 February 2005. According to U.S. Department of State [press release](#), the introduction to the report indicates that unhindered citizen participation in government creates “momentum for the improvement of human rights practices for all people participating in them.”

## **NEW BOOK—‘A CIVIL REPUBLIC: BEYOND CAPITALISM AND NATIONALISM’**

“[A Civil Republic: Beyond Capitalism and Nationalism](#)” authored by Severyn T. Bruyn and published by Kumarian Press in March 2005, explores ways to implement a new model - one of public policy that builds a civil society beyond the conventions of capitalism and nationalism.



# IJCSL NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 5

APRIL 2005

---

**IJCSL Newsletter** is a publication of the International Center for Civil Society Law. Karla W. Simon, *Chairperson*; Leon E. Irish, *President*. © 2003 - 2005 by ICCSL. All rights reserved. The trademarks IJCSL and IJCSL Newsletter are owned by the International Center for Civil Society Law. Readers are encouraged to use the **IJCSL Newsletter** for all noncommercial purposes (including circulating it or excerpts from it to friends and colleagues) with full credit given to the source. To the extent that the **IJCSL Newsletter** includes links to other publications and news sources, ICCSL is only providing access to sources publicly available on the World Wide Web and is not responsible for the accuracy of the information contained in the linked sources. As a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the promotion of a legal enabling environment for civil society, ICCSL does not permit third parties to present its content with advertising, logos, mastheads, or other content unrelated to the ICCSL. For further information, please contact [zainew@aol.com](mailto:zainew@aol.com). Ms Nasira Razvi, who can be contacted at [nrazvi@law.gwu.edu](mailto:nrazvi@law.gwu.edu), is the *Editor* of the **IJCSL Newsletter**. To unsubscribe to the **IJCSL Newsletter**, please send a blank e-mail to Ms Zaine Watson, *Managing Editor*, at [zainew@aol.com](mailto:zainew@aol.com).

**FAIR USE NOTICE.** This monthly digest contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. ICCSL makes such material available as part of its effort to advance understanding of civil society, democracy, human rights, social justice issues, etc. Because the material in this digest is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes, ICCSL believes that this constitutes a 'fair use' of any such copyrighted material as provided for in Title 17 USC, Section 107, the US Copyright Law.

**Special Note.** As with last year's 1 April issue of **IJCSL-N**, this year's "April Fool's Day" issue include one, but only one, story that is a joke. We hope our readers enjoy finding it.