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ANTI-TERRORISM LEGISLATION

PHILIPPINES—ANTI-TERRORISM LAW COMES INTO FORCE

New anti-terrorism law entitled “[An Act to Secure the State and Protect Our People from Terrorism](#)” was implemented and launched on 15 and 20 July 2007, respectively. The law was signed by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo on 6 March 2007. According to a news article published by [SUN STAR](#), human rights advocates and militant and progressive organizations are strongly opposed to implementation of the law. The law’s provisions that sparked fears and apprehensions among the progressive sectors are those dealing with surveillance and arrest (for previous coverage see [IJCSL-Newsletter April, 2007](#) issue).

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION AND FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

CAYMAN ISLANDS—DRAFT FOI BILL PRESENTED TO LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

A draft Freedom of Information Bill has been sent to the Cayman Islands Legislative Assembly for debate, according to a news article published by [CARIBBEAN NET NEWS](#). Debate on the bill will start during the second meeting of the House beginning 31 August. If the draft FOI bill becomes law, it would apply to public authorities and all records, regardless of when they were created. Exempted from disclosure are records affecting sensitive aspects of security, defense, international relations, confidential information, the national economy, government’s deliberative process, and commercial interests. The law, however, allows for the release of such information if it is determined to be in the ‘public interest’. Regulations for the law, which are yet to be submitted, will define ‘public interest.’ The bill envisions an independent Freedom of Information Commissioner with the power to order release of certain information, based on a complaint from a member of the public. The Commissioner will report to the Legislative Assembly only. More commentary on the draft bill is available at [CAYCOMPASS](#).

NEPAL—RIGHT TO INFORMATION BILL PASSED

On 18 July 2007, the Nepalese legislature passed the Freedom of Information bill. According to a news article published by [IFEX](#), a Nepali citizen is eligible to receive information within 15 days of submitting an application seeking the same. Imparting information has been made mandatory, the violation of which draws a fine of between Rs 1,000 (approx. US\$15) and Rs 25,000 (approx. US\$388) on the responsible official. The new law also has a provision for a three-member National Information Commission to guarantee the right to information.

UNITED STATES -- SENATE APPROVES BILL LIBERALIZING FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

[Senator Patrick Leahy announced on 3 August 2007](#) that the Senate has unanimously approved a measure that would extend the open-government requirements of the Freedom of Information Act to private contractors and increase penalties for federal



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agencies that do not comply. The voice vote advanced the bill to the House of Representatives. Advocates said the bill would make it easier for people who seek information from the labyrinth of federal government.

FISCAL MATTERS

SCOTLAND—ROLLING REVIEW OF CHARITIES LAUNCHED

The [Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator](#) (OSCR) has launched its Rolling Review of Scotland's 23,500 charities, according to a [news article](#) published by OSCR. Following the successful pilot review of 16 charities using new standards, OSCR said that all 23,500 of Scotland's charities will face a rolling review of their charitable status over the next 10 years. The charities, which volunteered for the pilot, were the first existing charities to be assessed by OSCR under the new charity test specified in the [Charities and Trustee Investment \(Scotland\) Act 2005](#). The 16 volunteer charities assessed demonstrated that they provide public benefit, although 2 got directions on technical constitution matters. All new applicants for charitable status have been assessed against the test since April last year.

UNITED STATES—PROPOSED AND TEMPORARY PROHIBITED TAX SHELTER REGULATIONS ISSUED

According to [EO update on 20 July 2007](#), the [Treasury Department](#) and the [Internal Revenue Service](#) have issued [proposed and temporary regulations](#) under Internal revenue code section 4965, which impose excise tax and disclosure requirements with respect to prohibited tax shelter transactions to which tax-exempt organizations are parties. The new regulations provide (1) rules regarding the form, manner, and timing of disclosure obligations; and (2) return requirements accompanying payment of excise taxes. Comments on the proposed regulations must be submitted by October 4, 2007.

FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION AND PEACEFUL ASSEMBLY

BAHRAIN—NEW ITUC REPORT ON CORE LABOR STANDARDS RELEASED

A new [ITUC](#) report draws attention to problems regarding core labor standards in Bahrain including the right to organize trade unions and the right to strike, according to a [news article](#) published by [INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION](#) (ITUC). The [report](#), released on 18 July 2007, notes that some progress has been made since 2002 to ensure that workers can enjoy their fundamental rights to form and join a trade union and to bargain collectively, but workers in the public sector are still denied the right to organize. At least six public service unions have seen their registration repeatedly refused. Another source of concern is the long list of sectors in which strikes are prohibited.

CHINA—HUNDREDS ARRESTED IN ETHNIC TIBETAN REGION OF CHINA

[The New York Times](#) has reported that Chinese police have arrested hundreds of



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people in western China after residents there called for the return of exiled Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama. Soldiers and police were dispatched to Lithang, an ethnically Tibetan part of Sichuan province, after locals gathered Wednesday to celebrate a traditional horse festival, said rights group International Campaign for Tibet and Radio Free Asia (RFA). The incident occurred when local Tibetan, Runggye Adak, 53, was detained after speaking in public about the Dalai Lama and social issues, the reports said.

RUSSIA – SUPREME COURT UPHOLDS BAN OF NATIONAL BOLSHEVIK PARTY

The Supreme Court upheld the Moscow City Court's ban of the National Bolshevik Party as an extremist organization. As reported by the [New York Times on 8 August 2007](#), the small fringe party has gained notoriety for its vocal and theatrical antigovernment demonstrations. The group's leader, the writer Eduard Limonov, said in a telephone interview that he did not expect the latest ruling to affect its activities, including participation in the Other Russia coalition, a loose movement of anti-Kremlin forces that includes the former chess champion Garry Kasparov. "They will not shut us up," Mr. Limonov said. "We have no fear." He said the party would appeal the ruling to the European Court of Human Rights.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

ARMENIA -- WORRIES NOT OVER FOR RADIO LIBERTY

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) and its oversight agency, the U.S. Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG), expressed dismay on 24 July 2007 at Armenian Public Radio's rejection of a new contract to continue carrying programs of RFE/RL's Armenian Service. RFE/RL Armenian programs have been aired on Armenian Public Radio -- Armenia's top radio network -- since 1998, where they have earned the trust of a significant number of listeners. Survey data shows that 15 percent of Armenian adults listen to RFE/RL programs each week. Three days of discussions in Yerevan, Armenia last week between U.S. and Armenian broadcast officials ended without agreement on a new contract to replace one that had lapsed in February. See earlier story on page 4 of [the July 2007 IJCSL Newsletter](#).

CHINA—GOVERNMENT SHUTS DOWN NONPROFIT NEWSLETTER

The Chinese government shut down an influential publication that had helped promote the country's burgeoning not-for-profit sector, according to a news article published by [LOS ANGELES TIMES](#). Among other issues, the Beijing-based China Development Brief (CDB) served as a crucial link between Chinese nonprofit groups and potential foreign funders. The government officials alleged that CDB conducted unauthorized surveys.



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COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES—ANALYSIS OF THE STATE OF PRESS FREEDOM RELEASED

On 19 July 2007, Freedom House released an analysis of the state of press freedom in the former Soviet Union since the end of the cold war. The analysis entitled "[Muzzling The Media: The Return Of Censorship In The Commonwealth Of Independent States](#)" found that the media landscape across most of today's [Commonwealth of Independent States](#) (CIS) differs in some respects from that of the Soviet era but in important ways is imposing a no less repressive news media environment. The contributing factors include broadcast monopolies, oligarchic power, corrupt judiciaries, and internet censorship.

GREECE—NEW RADIO LICENSING LAW PASSED

A new Greek radio licensing law endangers media pluralism by making it difficult for minority, community, or low-cost broadcasters to obtain licenses. The law was passed by the Parliament and signed by the president on 5 July 2007. The law on "Concentration and Licensing of Media Enterprises and other Provisions," sets forth rigid requirements for obtaining a radio broadcasting license. According to an [OSCE](#) press release, for music radio stations the conditions for obtaining a license include a minimum of 3 to 5 full-time staff members; for news channels with a bigger outreach a minimum of 20 staff and a minimum deposit of between 30,000 euros (USD 41,356) and 100,000 euros (USD 137,854) are required. Additionally, a license will only be granted to 24-hour broadcasters, and the main transmission language must be Greek.

INDONESIA—CRIMINAL DEFAMATION AGAINST GOVERNMENT DECLARED UNCONSTITUTIONAL

The Indonesian Constitutional Court has ruled that articles 154 and 155 of the Penal Code, criminalizing defamation of the government, are unconstitutional and therefore void, according to a news article published by [SEAPA](#). Articles declared unconstitutional related to the "hate sowing" offences criminalizing "public expression of feelings of hostility, hatred or contempt toward the government" and prohibited "the expression of such feelings or views through the public media." The articles allowed for prison terms of up to seven years for "inciting hatred" against the government.

IRAN – ANOTHER REFORMIST PAPER CLOSED

[The Guardian](#) reported on 7 August 2007 that the authorities in Tehran shut down Shargh, a leading reformist newspaper, after it published an interview with an Iranian poet who lives in exile and writes about female sexuality, Saghi Ghahraman. It was the third time the paper has been ordered closed, and it was unclear when it might be allowed to resume publishing. The closing was another sign of the increasing pressures on press freedom. In May, the authorities shut down the reformist newspaper Hammihan, and last week, a journalist and blogger, Soheil Assefi, was arrested.



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KENYA—MEDIA BILL 2007 PASSED

The Kenya Parliament has approved the media bill, according to a news article published by [KENYA BROADCASTING CORPORATION](#). The bill, which is now awaiting presidential assent to become law, compels the media industry to regulate itself through by requiring strict adherence to the journalism code of conduct. Under the new legislation, the Kenyan journalists will be compelled to reveal their confidential sources if stories lead to court cases, according to a news article published by [VOA](#). Those who refuse to reveal their sources could be fined to fines not exceeding 50,000 shillings or prison terms. The Kenyan President has until October to decide whether to sign the new amendment into law or to return it to Parliament.

MALAYSIA

- **GOVERNMENT PREVENTS MEDIA FROM REPORTING ON ISLAMIC DEBATE**

Malaysia's government has banned the mainstream media from reporting on on the highly sensitive issue of whether the country is an Islamic state, according to a news article posted by [INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE](#). Deputy Prime Minister Najib Razak sparked a storm when he declared that mostly Muslim Malaysia was not a secular but an Islamic state that protects the religious rights of minority groups. Government leaders, opposition parties, lawyers and activists condemned Najib's comment, saying Malaysia was set up as a secular state by the country's first leaders after independence from Britain in 1957. Under the government directives, any media outlet that violated the ban could be suspended.

- **MUSLIMS CALL FOR BAN ON MOVIE**

Malaysian Muslims have called for a ban on the blockbuster movie "Evan Almighty," saying it is offensive to their religion, according to a news article published by [YAHOO NEWS](#) on 13 July 2007. The movie refers to the big flood during the time of Prophet Noah, but this has been turned into a comedy which is alleged to be insulting to Islam. Another allegation is that featuring a human being as God in the movie is also against Islam. Other foreign movies to have been banned from public screening on religious grounds include "Brokeback Mountain" and "The Passion of the Christ." "Evan Almighty" was scheduled to be screened in Malaysian cinemas from 23 August 2007.

OSCE—REGION REPORT ON INTERNET CENSORSHIP PUBLISHED

The [Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe](#) (OSCE) published a report on Internet censorship entitled "[Governing the Internet - Freedom and Regulation in the OSCE Region](#)." According to an [OSCE](#) press release, the report profiles how some countries are restricting access to information on the Web.

THAILAND—GOVERNMENT DECIDES TO SOFTEN INTERNET CENSORSHIP

Thailand's cabinet has agreed to lift a controversial law which was put in place after the military coup to censor sites deemed dangerous to the nation, according to a news article published by [ABC NEWS](#). If the law is repealed, the Minister for



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Communications will no longer have discretion over shutting down sites, and sites could then be close sites by court order.

UGANDA AND ZIMBABWE – TWO PRESIDENTS SPELL BAD TIMES FOR MEDIA

A report from the [Monitor in Kampala](#), published on allAfrica.com, says that the castigation of the press by President Yoweri Museveni and his Zimbabwean counterpart Robert Mugabe spell dark times ahead for journalists in the two countries. During the recent meeting of leaders from Africa and Southeast Asia in Malaysia the two Presidents faulted the press for what they described or alluded to as “lack of objectivity and honesty”. In fact, what the two Presidents understand as “objectivity” is actually “subjectivity or propaganda.” The press was locked out of all the meeting’s sessions in Langkawi and the only one they were allowed to cover was characterized by attacks on the media.

UNITED KINGDOM—GOVERNMENT PLANS TO ANNOUNCE NEW CODE TO RESTRICT GAMBLING ADS AND SPONSORSHIP

The gambling industry has agreed that the logos of betting companies will not be printed on children's replica football shirts. This decision is in compliance with a new advertising code to be announced by the government soon. According to a news article published by [GUARDIAN UNLIMITED](#), the new gambling law gives the Secretary of State wide powers to limit advertising. The new code will commit gambling companies which sponsor top-tier soccer clubs to remove their branding from children’s kit. Under the new code, there will be no gambling adverts before the 9pm cut-off, after which adult content programming is permitted. Any such ads will carry 'social responsibility signposting' similar to that in alcohol advertising.

UNITED STATES—BILL AMENDING FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE SURVEILLANCE ACT SIGNED INTO LAW

U.S. President, George W. Bush, has signed into law a an amendment to the [Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978](#) expanding government’s authority to spy on Americans’ phone calls and emails without warrants, whether or not they are involved in terrorism, according to a news article published by [DAYTONA BEACH NEWS-JOURNAL](#). So long as the government has “reasonable belief” that one of the parties in the communication is overseas, it can spy. According to [THE NEW YORK TIMES](#) article, previously the government needed search warrants approved by a special intelligence court to eavesdrop on telephone conversations, e-mail messages, and other electronic communications between individuals inside the United States and people overseas. Civil liberties groups and many Democrats [say it goes too far](#), by enabling the government to wiretap U.S. residents communicating with overseas parties adequate court oversight. The Act will sunset in 6 months.

ZIMBABWE—NEW EAVESDROPPING LAW PASSED

Zimbabwe's President, Robert Mugabe, has signed into law new regulations allowing the communications minister to issue warrants to senior officials from the police, security, and revenue agencies to bug phones and snoop on emails and letters of specific people or organizations, reports [REUTERS](#). The law also compels internet



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service providers to install equipment to facilitate interception "at all times or when so required" and ensure that its equipment allows full-time monitoring of communications. The law also provides for the creation of a monitoring centre through which all electronic communications deemed threatening have to be channeled. Officials have said the new law is designed to protect national security and prevent crime, but human rights groups fear it will muzzle free speech and intensify the crackdown on dissent.

FREEDOM OF RELIGION AND BELIEF

ASIA AND NORTH AFRICA—RELIGIOUS FREEDOM AT RISK, SURVEY REVEALS

The [Hudson Institute's Center for Religious Freedom](#) presented its [initial findings regarding world trends in religious freedom](#), ranking countries' religious intolerance on a scale of one to seven and naming radical Islam as the greatest threat to religious freedom worldwide, according to a news article published by [CATHOLIC NEWS SERVICE](#). The findings are part of the center's latest book, "Religious Freedom in the World, 2007," which will be released next year and analyzes 100 countries, focusing on those countries where religious freedom is least protected.

CAMBODIA—GOVERNMENT BANS CHRISTIAN GROUPS FROM DOOR-TO-DOOR PROSELYTIZING

Cambodia has banned Christian groups from door-to-door proselytizing and is seeking to limit other religious activities by non-Buddhist organizations, according to a news article published by [SUNDAY TIMES](#) on. Under the directives issued from the Ministry of Cults and Religions, distribution of religious literature will also be confined to churches and churches now must be approved by the ministry before they can be built.

EUROPE—ECHR RULES IN FAVOR OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

In the case of [Barankevich v. Russia](#), (ECHR, July 26, 2007), the European Court of Human Rights found that Russian government officials violated the European Convention on Human Rights when they refused to permit the pastor of the Christ's Grace Church of Evangelical Christians to hold a worship service in a park in the town of Chekov. The Chekov Town Council had taken the position that services should be held only on the Church's own premises. The European Court rejected the town's argument that because the religion was practiced by only a minority of the town's residents, a public service might provoke a violent counter-demonstration. According to a news article published by [FORUM 18 NEWS SERVICE](#), in its judgment (No. 10519/03 [2007] ECHR 648 (26 July 2007)), the ECHR ruled unanimously that the Russian state authorities had violated [Article 11](#) (freedom of peaceful assembly and of association with others) read in the light of [Article 9](#) (freedom of thought, conscience and religion) of the Council of Europe's Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. The Court awarded damages of 6,000



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Euros (USD 8,271) to compensate the pastor, Petr Ivanovich Barankevich, for the violation.

INDIA –GUJARAT GOVERNOR RETURNS FREEDOM OF RELIGION TO PARLIAMENT

Gujarat Governor Nawal Kishore Sharma on 31 July 2007 returned the controversial Gujarat Freedom of Religion (amendment) Bill, 2006, saying the legislation violated the right to religious freedom. According to newKerala.com, the bill, meant to check religious conversions, sought to replace the definition of convert by a new one under which a person renouncing one denomination and adopting another denomination of the same religion was to be excluded from the meaning of “convert.” Returning “The Gujarat Freedom of Religion (amendment) Bill, 2006”, the governor said “what made it more objectionable were three stipulations that the Jainism and Buddhism shall be construed as denominations of the Hindu religion, Shia and Sunni faiths as denominations of the Muslim religion, and Catholic and Protestant faiths as denominations of the Christian religion.”

KYRGYZSTAN—STATE AGENCY FOR RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS DRAFTS BILLS TO TIGHTEN REGULATION AND SURVEILLANCE OF RELIGIOUS GROUPS

Kyrgyz State Agency for Religious Affairs is working on five draft bills aimed at tightening control over the activities of religious organizations, according to a news article published by RFE/RL. The head of the Agency said some 500 religious organizations were operating in the country illegally. Current laws require that all religious groups be officially registered and present an operating charter. Authorities are obligated to monitor the groups to ensure they do not violate laws. It is claimed that new legislative proposals would help tighten the current oversight of extremist groups.

MOLDOVA—FINAL VERSION OF NEW LAW ON RELIGION APPROVED

The Moldovan parliament has approved the final version of new religion law on 26 July 2007. According to a news article published by FORUM 18 NEWS SERVICE, the new Law declares that “the state recognizes the special importance and leading role of the Christian Orthodox religion and of the Orthodox Church of Moldova [under the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate in the life, history and culture of the people of the Republic of Moldova.” Some religious minorities have expressed concerns about conferring this special and leading role and the controversial ban on “abusive proselytism,” which many fear could be misused. The law is expected to be promulgated and published by 10 August 2007. The promulgation of the Religion Law will be automatic because the Law was initially vetoed by the President and was sent back to him again after it was revised and approved by the Parliament. If the President has vetoed a law once he cannot do so again.

PAKISTAN—NEW EDITION OF BIBLE IN URDU INTRODUCED

The first ever computer printed edition of the Catholic Bible in Urdu was introduced on 29 July 2007 during a solemn mass celebrated by Msgr. Joseph Coutts, bishop of Faisalabad. According to a news article posted by ASIANEWS, the edition was reviewed by the Catholic Bible Commission, whereas printing, composing and



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publishing was done with the cooperation of [Pakistan Bible Society](#). In [Faisalabad](#), as in all of the Churches, the bible's publication was accompanied by a mass and solemn procession, complete with incense and prayers.

SINGAPORE—NEW RULING ASSUMES ALL MUSLIMS ARE WILLING ORGAN DONORS UNLESS THEY OPT OUT

The city state has approved a law which considers Muslims as willing organ donors unless they expressly refuse permission, according to a news article published by [ASIANEWS](#). Until now they had to give affirmative consent. Under Singapore's laws, hospitals can remove the kidneys, liver, heart, and corneas of all non-Muslim citizens or permanent residents when they die. Now the new law includes Muslim citizens. After years of discussion, Muslim leaders in Singapore approve the norm compatible with Islam. Muslims the world over can choose to donate their organs, but are exempted for religious reasons. Many Muslims believe that the dead should be buried with their organs intact.

TAJIKISTAN—CITY OFFICIALS IMPOSE NEW REQUIREMENTS FOR ISLAMIC LEADERS

The Dushanbe municipal Department for Religious Affairs has announced new licensing requirements for [Imams](#) (Islamic leaders). According to a [news article](#) published by [EURASIANET](#), the requirements include a new "appraisal commission" formed to supervise the process which shall be comprised of representatives from the Council of Ulemas, as well as "prosecution bodies and law-enforcement agencies." The formation of the appraisal commission follows a number of public complaints over "the illiteracy" of Islamic leaders in the city.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

AZERBAIJAN – ICNL PUBLISHES NGO LEGAL FRAMEWORK ASSESSMENT

ICNL's [PRESS RELEASE OF 20 JULY 2007](#) indicates that it has published an [ASSESSMENT OF THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN](#). ICNL states that the publication provides the foundation for the development of future civil society strategies for legal reforms.

INDIA— KARNATAKA GOVERNMENT PLANS TO REGULATE NGOS

The government of Karnataka has decided to regulate NGOs and other voluntary organizations that receive funds from government and external agencies. According to a news article published by [THE TIMES OF INDIA](#), the government is contemplating new legislation to control NGOs. "As majority of these NGOs and trusts are not accountable for the funds they receive and use, it is high time a regulatory mechanism is put in place. We are contemplating bringing in a new legislation to control these NGOs," chief minister H D Kumaraswamy told the legislative assembly. NGOs receive tens of millions of rupees annually but are not financially accountable. Further, bureaucrats (both serving and retired) are associating themselves with NGOs.



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These bureaucrats, who are adept in the art of sourcing funds, use the NGO tag to hide their personal financial details. A majority of bureaucrats or their family members are directors or members of some NGO.

UNITED KINGDOM—GOVERNMENT OPENS CONSULTATION ON LEGISLATION FOR COOPERATIVES AND CREDIT UNIONS

A government review of legislation for cooperatives and credit unions in Great Britain is open to consultation. According to [HM TREASURY press release](#), the review of legislation aims to provide a cost-effective legislative framework to ensure the sector has the best toolset to operate in the modern economy. The [consultation](#) runs until 12 September 2007.

ZAMBIA—NGO BILL INTRODUCED IN THE PARLIAMENT

Justice Minister George Kunda has introduced the NGO bill in the [Zambian Parliament](#). The bill calls for “the registration and co-ordination of NGOs [and] to regulate the work, and the area of work of NGOs operating in Zambia.” If the bill becomes law it would empower the Interior Minister to form a 10-member board, comprised of government members and two representatives from civil society, which would “receive, discuss and approve the code of conduct [of NGOs], and provide policy guidelines to NGOs for harmonizing their activities to the national development plan of Zambia.” According to a news article published by [NEWS24](#) on 18 July 2007, the legislation will also enable the government to suspend civil society groups that fail to submit quarterly or annual returns or when they misapply funds they receive from donors. Civil society groups have opposed the bill saying it is draconian and targeted at NGOs seen by the government as being overly-inclined to enter into political debate.

MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS

AUSTRALIA—NEW BREASTFEEDING LAW PASSED

The [New South Wales Government](#) has announced new laws making it illegal to discriminate against breastfeeding mums. The law is aimed primarily at café and restaurant owners. The measures mean it will be illegal for mums to be refused service or asked to move on while they breastfeed. Breaching new anti-discrimination laws protecting mothers who want to breastfeed in public or at work could attract a \$40,000 penalty, according to a news article published by [THE SYDNEY MORNING HERALD](#) on 3 August 2007. Similar kind of law entitled “Infant Feeding Bill” is [set to launch in New Zealand](#) as well.

ENGLAND AND WALES -- UPDATED CHARITY ACCOUNTING GUIDANCE PUBLISHED

The [Charity Commission](#) has published a guidance entitled “[CC15 - Charity Reporting and Accounting: The essentials](#).” The guidance issued in May 2007 is aimed primarily at updating the framework for all charities and setting out guidance for trustees to help them understand what charities are required to do in terms of



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preparing Annual Reports, accounts, and Annual Returns. It also signposts to other helpful information.

EUROPEAN UNION—AGENCY FOR FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS PUBLISHES TRENDS REPORT ON RACISM AND XENOPHOBIA

EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) has published “[Trends and Developments on Racism and Xenophobia 1997-2005 - Combating Ethnic and Racial Discrimination and Promoting Equality in the European Union](#),” summarizing and analyzing relevant data and information collected by the RAXEN network since 2000. According to a news article published by [PLATFORM OF EUROPEAN SOCIAL NGOS](#), the report provides a concise overview of multi-year trends in the fight against racism inside the EU, tracing the development of racism and related discrimination in the period from 1997 to 2005. It takes stock of the progress of EU and Member State initiatives to combat these phenomena. [RAXEN](#) is the European Racism and Xenophobia Network, established in the year 2000 by FRA’s predecessor, the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC). It consists of national focal points in all EU Member States.

INDIA

- **SUNNI MUSLIM SEMINARY ISSUES FATWA BANNING COEDUCATION IN SCHOOLS**

One of South Asia’s most influential Sunni Muslim seminaries, [Dar-ul-Uloom](#), has issued a religious Fatwa against teaching girls and boys at the same schools past age 10, claiming it is against Islamic law, according to a news article posted by [THE NEW YORK TIMES](#). While the [fatwa](#) is only a religious guideline that cannot be legally enforced, it is likely to pressure some conservative Muslim parents into removing their daughters from coeducational schools. Dar-ul-Uloom is in the town of Deoband, about 80 miles north of the capital, New Delhi, in Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state. About 3 million of the state's 180 million people are Muslim.

- **UPA GOVERNMENT DRAFTS NEW LAW REVAMPING MADRASAS EDUCATION**

Aiming to modernize the estimated 2,500 madrasas across the country and encourage the growth of a “Muslim vox populi unmediated by clerics,” the United Progressive Government, the present coalition of political parties ruling India, is considering a new law that will bring sweeping changes in the madrasa system. According to a news article published by [INDIA EXPRESS](#), there will be a Central Madrasa Board on the lines of the Central Board of Secondary Education. There will be a Madrasa Fund with an initial 5 billion of rupees to be invested with returns used to pay for teachers and grants.. Financial experts will advise the Board on how this money should be invested. Salaries of madrasa teachers and staff will be brought on par with those of government school teachers and staff. Initially, affiliation with the Board will not be mandatory but madrasas will have to meet specified quality standards if they wish to continue their association with the Board. A central purpose of this plan is to enable students to get into universities and colleges not otherwise available to madrasa graduates. Curriculum for deeniyat (religious studies) will not be touched but



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controls will kick in for affiliated madrasas when it comes to the non-religious end of the curriculum. Science, technology, and computers will be part of the curriculum. The Board will advise madrasas every five years on updating the syllabus and the National Council for Educational Research and Training will advise the Board on writing Urdu textbooks and teacher training as well as relevant aspects of curriculum.”

SOUTH AFRICA—PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE DRAFTS WITCHCRAFT SUPPRESSION BILL 2007

The Mpumalanga Legislature has presented a draft [Witchcraft Suppression Bill 2007](#) in the Parliament. The bill makes the practice or admission of witchcraft a criminal act in the province of Mpumalanga. According to a news article published by [REUTERS](#), the bill also seeks to set the code of conduct for traditional healers (witch doctors) and to provide for the responsibilities of traditional healers. According to the draft bill, witchcraft is defined as “the secret use of muti (traditional concoctions), zombies, spells, spirits, magic powders, water, mixtures, etc, by any person with the purpose of causing harm, damage, sickness to others or their property.” A [group representing South African witches](#) has raised voice against proposed bill. The group claims the draft bill violates their constitutional rights including the right to equality, freedom of association, choice of occupation or profession, and the freedom to choose a religion or culture, among others.

UNITED KINGDOM – NATIONAL AUDIT OFFICE CRITICAL OF GOVERNMENT FUNDING OF VOLUNTARY SECTOR

Responding to a [National Audit Office report on Government funding](#) for the voluntary sector published on 8 August 2007, Shadow Charities Minister, Greg Clark, said that the NAO had delivered “a powerful indictment of Government policies.” The [Public Funding of Large Charities](#) report contained condemnation of “the baroque complexity of current funding arrangements” whose effect was to “severely limit charities’ potential involvement in public services.” According to [Yahoo News UK & Ireland](#), Greg Clark said: “The NAO describes the funding system as 'baroque' – a polite way of saying that it’s a dog’s breakfast.” Ed Miliband, as the cabinet minister responsible needs to pull his finger out and deal with this mess. Unfortunately, the Government’s strategy – as set out in the Third Sector Review, is clearly not up to the job.”

ANNOUNCEMENTS

UNITED KINGDOM—DSC TO HOLD ANNUAL CHARITY ACCOUNTANTS’ CONFERENCE

[Directory of Social Change](#) (DSC) annual “[Charity Accountants Conference](#)” will be held at Crowne Plaza Hotel, Nottingham from 13 – 14 September 2007. This year’s conference aims to enhance the skills of charity finance professionals and provide



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them with the tools to improve their contribution to their organization's strategic objectives.

RESOURCES

CENTRAL EUROPE AND EURASIA—NATIONS IN TRANSIT 2007 REPORTS RELEASED

Freedom House has released [Nations in Transit 2007 \(NIT\)](#) report. Each year Freedom House assesses democratic development in 29 countries and territories from Central Europe to Eurasia. According to a Freedom House [press release](#), Nations in Transit 2007 (NIT) shows that populism and anti-liberal trends are on the rise, and judicial independence is coming under increased pressure. Insular party politics hamper the fight against corruption and practices to combat corruption in these countries are falling short.

UNITED KINGDOM—NEW BOOK ON FUTURE OF THE THIRD SECTOR LAUNCHED

The U.K Prime Minister Gordon Brown has launched his new book entitled "Britain's Everyday Heroes" on 24 July 2007. According to [CHARITY TIMES](#), the book outlines his vision for the future of the third sector and highlights proposals laid out in the new Third Sector Review. At the launching ceremony, the Prime Minister also announced the creation of a new Council on Social Action to advise government, as well as support for the development of an annual global forum on social leadership.



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