



IJCSL NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 5 ISSUE 4

MARCH 2008

ANTI-TERRORISM LEGISLATION

BANGLADESH—GOVERNMENT PLANS TO DRAFT ANTI-TERRORISM LAW

The Government of Bangladesh is planning to draft an anti-terrorism law to check all forms of terrorism in the country, according to a news article published by [THE DAILY STAR](#). A high-powered committee – the “National Committee on Anti-money Laundering and Combating Terrorist Financing” -- has been formed for this purpose. Secretaries of the Finance, Home, Foreign Affairs, and Justice ministries, chairmen of National Board of Revenue and Securities and Exchange Commission, an additional attorney general, a deputy governor, and an executive director of Bangladesh Bank are members of the committee.

CANADA—

- **NEWS RULES ON TERRORISM FINANCING ANNOUNCED**

The Government of Canada has announced new in anti-money-laundering and anti-terrorist-financing [rules](#) that impose stricter requirements on real estate developers and casinos, reports [REUTERS](#). Under the new rules, the real estate developers will be required to meet client identification, record-keeping, and transaction-reporting requirements. Casinos will have to report and keep records on any large disbursements to the Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Centre of Canada. Under existing rules, financial institutions and intermediaries must report all cash transactions of \$10,000 or more to the authorities.

- **REVISED ANTI-TERRORISM LAW COMES INTO EFFECT**

Canada’s Senate has passed revised anti-terrorism legislation (Bill C-3) that allows the government to detain foreign terror suspects indefinitely without disclosing the evidence against them. [Bill C-3](#) has received Royal Assent and officially became law before 23 February, reports [THE MCGILL DAILY](#). According to a news article published by the [INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE](#), under the revised provisions, suspects are allowed to have a special advocate appointed by the government who will have access to the evidence against them while the courts review their deportation orders. Neither the suspects themselves, nor the special advocates allowed to discuss the information with them will be able to see the evidence. The measure replaces a law struck down last year by Canada’s Supreme Court, which found non-citizen terrorism suspects should have a right to respond to evidence used against them by intelligence agents.

- **FEDERAL COURT DENIES CSIS WIRETAPS OVERSEAS**

Politicians and legal experts are calling on the federal government to introduce new spying laws in the wake of a [Federal Court of Canada ruling](#)



IJCSL NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 5 ISSUE 4

MARCH 2008

which struck down warrants that would have allowed the [Canadian Security and Intelligence Service](#) (CSIS) to intercept telecommunications involving 10 suspects including 9 Canadians or Canadian immigrants - in unnamed foreign countries, according to a news article published by [GLOBE AND MAIL](#). According to [GLOBE AND MAIL](#), the CSIS has been arguing in recent years for greater control over spying operations overseas. Last year, the Federal Court allowed CSIS to search and eavesdrop on 10 individuals while in Canada. But CSIS wanted to take the warrants further to clarify its position on international surveillance and to protect itself under Canadian law, where it might be accused of infringing the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, or even the Canadian Criminal Code. The [Canadian Communications Security Establishment](#) is authorized under Canadian law to monitor international communications but cannot eavesdrop on Canadians, either domestically or abroad.

GERMANY—COURT PUTS LIMITS ON LAW AUTHORIZING ONLINE SEARCHES OF PERSONAL COMPUTERS

Germany's highest court allowed the state to spy on Internet communications where it could prevent loss of life or an attack on the country, according to a news article published by [AFP](#). The court ruling overturns a controversial law adopted in the western state of North-Rhine Westphalia in 2006 that gave intelligence agencies wide-ranging powers to hack into terror suspects' computers. While saying that the law violates the right to privacy and is null and void, the court ruled that in principle introducing software onto suspects' computers to facilitate surveillance could be allowed in cases where "rights of supreme importance" were at stake. The surveillance, however, had to be approved by a judge. The intelligence agencies would not be allowed to use information pertaining strictly to people's private lives. The German government has described cyber spying as a vital tool in fighting terrorism.

IRELAND—GOVERNMENT TO DRAFT NEW LAW TO COMBAT TERRORISM FINANCING

The Government is to draw up new legislation to combat money laundering and terrorism financing, according to a news article published by [THE IRELAND TIMES](#). The Ministry for Justice had received Government approval for a new Bill intended to transpose the EU's Third Money Laundering Directive into Irish Law. Minister for Justice, Mr Lenihan, is reported to have said that the consultation process on the bill would be open to the public and bodies in the financial services sector.

RUSSIA—NEW CONTROLS OVER FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS BY FOREIGN OFFICIALS COME INTO EFFECT

Russia is tightening its control over financial transactions by foreign officials as a new version of the law on combating money laundering and the financing of terrorism went into effect on 15 January 2008. According to [RIA NOVOSTI](#), the law obliges Russian



IJCSL NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 5 ISSUE 4

MARCH 2008

banks, pawn shops, insurers, and other organizations to ascertain and record the origins and destinations of monies received and sent by foreign public officials and their relatives. The controls are aimed at narrowing the possibilities for foreign officials who may be involved in money laundering to carry out transactions through commercial banks.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION AND FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

GLOBAL—HEARINGS WITH MEMBER STATES AND CIVIL SOCIETY

On 3 March 2008, the second [hearing](#) with civil society and the private sector in the process of meetings leading up to [UNCTAD XII](#) took the form of an interactive debate and provided an opportunity for dialogue and an exchange of views among representatives of UNCTAD Member States and representatives of civil society and the private sector and parliamentarians on issues relevant to the theme of UNCTAD XII: “Addressing the opportunities and challenges of globalization for development.” Further details of the event are available at the [UNCTAD website](#).

INDIA—GOVERNMENT PONDERES ENACTING COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION LAW

The government has requested cabinet approval for enacting a “community participation law,” according to a news article published by [THE TIMES OF INDIA](#). If the cabinet gives its approval and the law is passed by the assembly, it will make it mandatory for the government and its agencies to get the views of citizens, mainly residents’ welfare associations and other citizens’ groups, before starting any project.

UNITED STATES—

- **BILL SHIELDING EMPLOYEES OF VSPI CENTER FROM SUBPOENA AND CIVIL LAWSUITS INTRODUCED**

Employees of a Virginia State Police intelligence center would be shielded from subpoena and civil lawsuits, and people giving information to the center would have immunity from defamation and invasion of privacy claims under a [bill](#) sent to the House of Delegates on 1 February 2008, reports [FREDERICKSBURG.COM](#). The measure also would make it a criminal offense to disclose information given to the anti-terrorism center and make it exempt from the Virginia Freedom of Information Act.

- **OPEN-RECORDS LEGISLATION SIGNED INTO LAW IN PENNSYLVANIA**

For the first time in over 50 years, Pennsylvania will have a modern, responsive open-records law, according to a news article posted by [THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER](#). The new [Right-to-Know](#) law, signed by Governor Ed Rendell, declares that all state and local government records will be public unless specifically exempted. The measure makes sweeping changes to the



IJCSL NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 5 ISSUE 4

MARCH 2008

state's Right-to-Know Law, which was enacted in 1957. The new law also shifts the burden onto a government agency to prove why a record should be shielded from public view. And for the first time, the legislature itself will be subject to the open-records law. Any disputes between the public and a government agency will be handled by a new Office of Open Records that will have its own independent director and staff.

FISCAL MATTERS

UNITED KINGDOM—

- **GOOD FINANCIAL NEWS FOR ANIMAL REFUGE CHARITIES**
Animal refuge charities will be able to claim back hundreds of thousands of pounds from the government based on a tribunal ruling that the sale of stray dogs and cats is exempt from VAT, reports the [THIRD SECTOR](#). Until now, animals were considered to be donations only if they were directly handed over by their owners, meaning that VAT was imposed on sales of strays.
- **PUBLIC BENEFIT GUIDANCE FOR POVERTY AND RELIGIOUS CHARITIES RELEASED**
The [Charity Commission](#) has launched the consultations on draft supplementary guidance for charities on public benefit, reports [GOVERNMENT NEWS NETWORK](#). The draft guidance - [Public Benefit and the Advancement of Religion](#), and [Public Benefit and the Prevention or Relief of Poverty](#), follows the publication of general [guidance on public benefit](#) in January 2008. The draft supplementary guidance explains how the principles of public benefit apply specifically to charities advancing religion and charities for the prevention or relief of poverty. Issues considered include the meaning of advancing religion as a charitable aim, and suitable terminology to use in defining what is a charitable religious belief. The consultation period on the two documents runs until 30 June 2008.

FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION AND PEACEFUL ASSEMBLY

EGYPT—NEW LAW BANS PROTESTS NEAR PLACES OF WORSHIP

The [Shura Council](#) has approved a law banning protests and street demonstrations in the vicinity of places of worship, including churches and mosques, according to a news article published by [ADNKRONOS INTERNATIONAL ITALIA](#) on 6 February 2008. The new law bans demonstrations inside and in front of places of worship.



IJCSL NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 5 ISSUE 4

MARCH 2008

SINGAPORE—GOVERNMENT MAY EASE PUBLIC ASSEMBLY LAWS

The government plans to ease restrictions on public assembly by allowing outdoor demonstrations in designated areas, according to a news article published by [RADIO AUSTRALIA](#). Singapore has tight restrictions on public assembly, and it is illegal to hold a public gathering of five or more people without a permit.

YEMEN—CONFERENCE ON PROTECTING FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

Under the title “[Cooperative work for development – cooperative decisions](#)” the Yemeni organization [Women Journalists Without Chains](#) arranged a conference in Sana’a, Yemen on the topic of protecting freedom of association. The conference took place on 2-4 February 2008. The rules regarding establishment of civil society organizations and their freedom to own media outlets of all sorts, including broadcast rights, freedom of information access, transparency, and funding were the [main points](#) discussed at the conference. The participants represented government, civil society organizations as well as donors.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

ARAB WORLD—CHARTER SEEKING NEW MEDIA RESTRICTIONS ADOPTED

Arab Ministers of Information agreed on the adoption of a Charter setting forth “Principles for Organising Satellite TV in the Arab World” in a meeting convened in Cairo on 12 February 2008 at the request of Egypt and with the support of Saudi Arabia. According to a news article published by the [INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE](#), the Charter prohibits criticism of Arab leaders and religious figures and warns in vague terms of harming social peace, national unity, and public morals, demanding “adherence to objectivity, sincerity and respect to the dignity of the countries, nations and their national sovereignty.” The Charter threatens to “withdraw, freeze or not renew the work permits of media which will break the regulations.” It calls on member states to introduce all necessary measures in their national legislation to ensure implementation. The Charter has been adopted by all member states of the Arab League with the exception of Qatar.

AUSTRALIA—POLICE CHIEF ATTACKS FREE SPEECH ON TERRORISM CASES

Australian Federal Police (AFP) Commissioner, Mick Keelty, has called for a media blackout on coverage of terrorism cases until all legal proceedings and appeals have concluded, according to a news article published by [WORLD SOCIALIST WEB SITE](#). His suggestions include preventing journalists from reporting proceedings in open court and until the case is disposed of, abandoned, discontinued or withdrawn; establishment of a “society of editors” through which media proprietors and editors could join the police and intelligence chiefs in agreeing to suppress information about terrorism cases.



IJCSL NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 5 ISSUE 4

MARCH 2008

CAMBODIA—FREEDOM OF SPEECH IMPROVED, REPORTS LOCAL HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATION

A Cambodian local Human Rights organization says that the freedoms of speech and expression in the Cambodian media environment was improved in 2007 compared to the past years, according to a news article published by [RADIO AUSTRALIA](#). The report says that despite this improvement, civil society organizations still face impediments. They are not given enough air time to use the national radio station to disseminate information on human rights violations and educate people about human rights understanding.

CANADA—COURT RULES REPORTERS DO NOT HAVE A “BLANKET” RIGHT TO PROTECT SOURCES

The Ontario Court of Appeal has ruled that reporters do not have a “blanket” right to protect sources, especially if there is police interest in obtaining information in a criminal investigation, according to a news article published by the [NATIONAL POST](#). [THE STAR](#) reports that the decision resurrects a search warrant giving the Royal Canadian Mounted Police the authority to seize a document from a National Post reporter that went to the heart of the "[Shawinigate](#)" scandal involving former Prime Minister, [Jean Chretien](#). The Canadian Association of Journalists is gravely dismayed by the court ruling and calls the decision a major setback for press freedom and the public's right to know.

CHAD—NEW PRESS LAW ADOPTED

The government has adopted a new press law increasing the prison sentences for press offences and making harder to launch a newspaper, according to a news article published by [ALLAFRICA](#). Under the new law, the maximum penalty for publishing false news and defamation (articles 41 and 47) is increased to three years in prison, while the maximum penalty for "insulting the president" (article 48) is increased to five years. Anyone wanting to launch a newspaper will now have to appear before the Prosecutor's Office and the High Council of Communication. Under article 15 of the previous law they just had to file a declaration with the Ministry of Commerce. The new law also requires that both the publisher and editor have to have graduated from a school of journalism.

KUWAIT—NEW LAW FOR INTERNET CENSORSHIP PLANNED

The Kuwaiti Government plans to introduce a new law for censoring websites. The draft law contravenes democratic values and has the potential to punish those who criticize the government, reports the [Arabic Network for Human Rights Information](#) in a [press release](#).

KYRGYZSTAN—INDEPENDENT MEDIA SELF-REGULATORY BODY LAUNCHED

Journalists in the Kyrgyz Republic have created Central Asia's first independent media self-regulatory body - The Media Complaints Commission. According to OSCE [press release](#) on 12 February 2008, the Commission will handle complaints about alleged



IJCSL NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 5 ISSUE 4

MARCH 2008

breaches of the code of ethics by any media outlet in the country. Composed of nine board members representing the media and the civil society, the body was set up to provide an alternative to court procedures and give moral redress in case of non-respect for ethics guidelines.

NIGERIA—

- **“CROSS-DRESSERS” FACE SHARIA COURT**

The trial of 18 men accused of dressing up as women has started in a Sharia court in northern Nigeria, according to a news article published by [BBC News](#). The men were arrested last year in a hotel room in the city of Bauchi. They were originally accused of sodomy, but the charges were reduced. The 18 are now charged with indecent dressing and vagrancy. Under [Sharia](#) law a man must dress like a man and woman must dress like a woman.

- **BILL ON INDECENT DRESSING INTRODUCED IN THE SENATE**

The Chairperson of the Senate Committee on Women and Youth, Senator Eme Ufot Ekaette, has submitted a bill against indecent dressing in the country. According to a news article posted by [ALLAFRICA.COM](#), the bill envisions jail terms of up to six months for a female offender. The Senator spoke to the press recently noting that indecent dressing amongst Nigerians has continued to promote all manner of vices in the society. She claims that the proposed Bill will address issues of indecency and immorality and aims for the preservation of cultural norms and values. The feminine human rights organizations have expressed grave concerns, claiming the bill is a gross violation of the fundamental human rights of citizens and is not the most effective way to curb moral decadence in the society.

SLOVAKIA—ANALYSIS OF “DRAFT SLOVAK ACT ON PERIODIC PRESS AND NEWS AGENCIES” RELEASED

The [OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media](#), Miklos Haraszti, issued an [analysis](#) of “Draft Slovak Act on Periodic Press and News Agencies” and the draft “Amendment and Supplementing of Certain Acts (the Press Act)” on 14 February 2008. The [analysis](#) recommends bringing Slovak law into line with the country's international commitments to protect media freedom. According to an OSCE [press release](#), the recommendations urge the government to remove Section 6(1) on content restrictions imposed by the Culture Ministry, and cut the three new mandatory remedial duties that the draft imposes on editors: a 'right of correction' for inaccuracies, a 'right of reply' for critical opinions, and a 'right to supplementary information', when a trial's outcome was not sufficiently reported. The draft acts was recently approved by Cabinet and are currently before the Parliament. They include a small number of protections for freedom of expression – such as a right to access information and protection against liability for the publication of



IJCSL NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 5 ISSUE 4

MARCH 2008

certain statements made by others – but it is mostly concerned with regulating periodicals.

TUNISIA—GOVERNMENT LIFTS BAN ON CONTROVERSIAL BOOKS

The Ministry of Culture has allowed the release of a number of previously-censored books, ranging from studies on human rights in the [Maghreb](#) and censorship in the Arab region to a political participation guide for women, according to a news article published by [MAGHAREBIA](#). Academia, researchers, writers, and publishers have applauded the government's decision lifting the ban. The ban on the books has been held in a legal limbo for years.

FREEDOM OF RELIGION AND BELIEF

BELARUS—NEW RESTRICTIONS ON FOREIGN RELIGIOUS WORKERS ANNOUNCED

On 30 January 2008, the Council of Ministers issued a new [decree](#) giving the Plenipotentiary for Religious and Ethnic Affairs complete discretion to refuse -- without giving reasons -- a visa for the travel of invited foreign religious workers to the country, reports [FORUM 18 NEWS SERVICE](#). The decree creates a more detailed application procedure for visits, and permits the government to shorten the time for which a worker is invited to that deemed necessary for achieving the purpose of the visit. The Religion Law already allows only registered religious associations to invite foreign workers. The new rules will have their greatest impact on the Catholic and Jewish communities in Belarus. Meanwhile, a petition with over 50,000 signatures is about to be presented to officials asking for liberalization of the country's 2002 Law on Religion (for previous coverage see [January 2008 issue of the IJCSL-Newsletter](#)).

BULGARIA—GOVERNMENT PLANS RELIGIOUS TEACHINGS IN SCHOOLS

A news article published in [BALKAN INSIGHT](#) reports that the government has plans for the teaching of religion in the country's schools. According to the plans, religion shall be an obligatory subject during the first eight years of schooling, and will include the study of Christianity, Islam, Judaism, and the main Eastern religions. Members of the Association for Parental Activity have expressed concern over the possibility that this will involve the teaching of religious dogma, rather than knowledge about different religions.

EGYPT—COURT RECOGNIZES CONVERSION OF 12 CHRISTIAN CONVERTS

Egypt's Supreme Administrative Court has authorized 12 converts to Islam who then reverted to Christianity to have their original faith marked on their ID cards, reports [ALARABIYA.NET](#). The court ruling overturns an April 2007 lower court decision which said the state had no obligation to recognize a convert to Islam's decision to revert back to his original faith because it violated Islam's ban on apostasy. The higher court's



IJCSL NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 5 ISSUE 4

MARCH 2008

decision now obliges Egypt's Ministry of Interior to issue the plaintiffs with birth certificates and identity papers identifying them as Christians. The ruling comes less than two weeks after a court for the first time [granted Egypt's Baha'i community the right to obtain government identity papers](#).

INDONESIA—MONITORING TEAM ESTABLISHED TO SUPERVISE THE AHMADIYAH SECT

The Religious Affairs Ministry has established a monitoring team to supervise the [Ahmadiyah sect](#), according to a news article published by [THE JAKARTA POST](#). The team includes officials from the Religious Affairs Ministry, Attorney General's Office, Home Ministry and National Police. Ahmadiyah was declared heretical by the Indonesian Ulema Council because the group recognized [Mirza Ghulam Ahmad](#), its founder, as the last prophet, rather than Muhammad. After a recent series of attacks on the group and its properties, the sect was compelled to issue a statement containing a "12 point explanation," which also included the acknowledgement of Muhammad as the final prophet. The monitoring team will gather information on to what extent Ahmadiyah has applied its 12 point of explanation in its teachings.

JORDAN—FOREIGN CHRISTIANS DEPORTED FOR CARRYING OUT MISSIONARY ACTIVITIES

The Jordanian authorities have deported a number of foreign Christians for carrying out missionary activities. According to a news article published by [THE EARTH TIMES](#), the Minister of State for Information and Communication Affairs Nasser Judeh said the deportees entered the country under the pretext of performing voluntary work but were spotted carrying out missionary activities, thus violating the law. The Council of Churches -- the highest Christian body in Jordan -- denounced "missionary groups that presented themselves as charitable organizations" and refuted allegations that the government was cracking down on foreign Christians living in the kingdom. Christians in Jordan represent about 5 per cent of the country's 5.5-million population, elect their deputies to the lower house of parliament, have representatives in the upper house, and are represented by one or two ministers at the cabinet.

MACEDONIA—RELIGIOUS SURVEY RELEASED

[Forum 18 News Service](#) has released [RELIGIOUS FREEDOM SURVEY – MACEDONIA, FEBRUARY 2008](#). The survey notes that in Macedonia state discrimination in favor of one religious confession – the Macedonian Orthodox Church -- is a dominant factor. The survey also notes that there is active discrimination against other religious confessions, especially if officials see them as a threat or as "non-traditional" within the state. The main target for state officials is the Serbian Orthodox Church, but smaller confessions such as Baptists, Hare Krishna devotees, and Jehovah's Witnesses are also discriminated against.



IJCSL NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 5 ISSUE 4

MARCH 2008

TURKEY—PARLIAMENT LIFTS BAN ON ISLAMIC HEADSCARVES

The Turkish parliament has approved a constitutional amendment to lift a ban on Islamic [headscarves](#) at universities, according to a news article published by [CNN](#). The constitutional amendment says everyone has the right to equal treatment from state institutions and “no one can be deprived of [his or her] right to higher education.” The ban, upheld by the country's highest courts, has been implemented with varying degrees over the years, forcing many women to abandon their education and others to hide their headscarves under wigs to attend classes. The government said that it was seeking suggestions on permissible styles of headscarves for female students. However, it is generally agreed that scarves should be tied loosely with a knot beneath the chin, leaving the face exposed. In the next stage, the government plans to change laws governing higher education to specify what type of head covering will be allowed to ensure that students do not attend classes in full-length [chador](#) or [burqa](#).

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

ENGLAND AND WALES—CHARITY COMMISSION ISSUES GUIDANCE ON PUBLIC BENEFIT AND THE PREVENTION OR RELIEF OF POVERTY

The Charity Commission for England and Wales issued its latest [guidance](#) on the meaning of “public benefit” at the end of February.

ETHIOPIA—CHARITIES AND SOCIETIES DRAFT PROCLAMATION UNDER REVIEW

The “Charities and Societies Draft Proclamation No. 00/2007” is currently under review by the Ethiopian parliament, reports [NAZRET.COM](#). The [critics of the draft legislation claim](#) the Proclamation: is extremely intrusive into the affairs of civil society and creates powers that can be exercised arbitrarily and capriciously in the regulation of civil society institutions; provides no judicial or administrative appellate review; micromanages civil society institutions, is extremely burdensome, and demands financial accountability and ethical integrity rarely seen or required of public institutions in Ethiopia; has a chilling effect on civil society membership and participation; is extremely punitive and discriminatory.

RUSSIA—

- **GOVERNMENT SHOULD REFORM REGULATIONS THAT ARE CHOKING INDEPENDENT ACTIVISM, SAYS HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH REPORT**

The Human Rights Watch (HRW) has released a new report “[Choking on Bureaucracy: State Curbs on Independent Civil Society Activism](#)” documenting how new Russian legislation has given authorities broad and intrusive powers over NGOs, according to HRW [press release](#). The report describes how the 2006 NGO law and other restrictive measures used against NGOs by the Russian



IJCSL NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 5 ISSUE 4

MARCH 2008

authorities are in violation of international human rights standards and hinder the effective exercise of basic civil and political rights.

- **AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL REPORT SAYS THAT FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS ARE BEING CURTAILED**

[Amnesty International](#) (AI) has released a report on the human rights situation in Russia, according to an AI [press release](#). The report “[Freedom limited. The right to freedom of expression in the Russian Federation](#)” examines the effect of arbitrary interpretation of vague legislation. It reveals increasing harassment of people in the Russian Federation seeking to express their opinions and to stand up for their rights. The report says that human rights defenders, independent civil society organizations, political opponents, and ordinary citizens have all been victims of this rollback of civil and political rights. Commenting on the “NGO law,” the report says that the 2006 law on NGOs, with its burdensome reporting requirements, is one of the legal instruments being used to target some organizations seen as a threat to state authority. The report also indicates that 2002 law to combat extremist activities, the tax law, and the criminal code of the Russian Federation are some other legal instruments used against human rights activists, independent organizations, and independent media

SCOTLAND—JOINT STATEMENT ON DEFINITION CLAUSE IN THE CONSTITUTIONS OF BODIES SEEKING CHARITABLE STATUS

According to a [press release](#), the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) and Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs (HMRC) have published a Joint Statement on the requirements for ‘definition clauses’ (defining the meaning of the words “charitable,” “charitable purpose,” or “charity”) in the constitutions of bodies seeking charitable status in Scotland and also wishing to apply for charity tax relief.

TURKEY—MINORITY FOUNDATIONS LAW SIGNED

Turkish President, Abdullah Gul, has signed into law a bill returning property confiscated from non-Muslim minority foundations, according to a news article published by [REUTERS](#). According to [TODAY’S ZAMAN](#), the law also allows non-Muslim foundations to engage in international activities and opportunities for cooperation, establish branches and representation offices abroad, set up umbrella organizations, and become members of organizations established abroad, within the framework of their goals and their founding charter. In addition, foundations will have the right to collect donations from local or foreign institutions and persons, and to contribute in kind or money to foundations with similar purposes; will be able to receive foreign monetary donations only through bank account transfers; will also have a right to establish companies or become partners in existing ones, reports [TURKISH DAILY NEWS](#). The country's population of 70 million mostly Muslim, includes 65,000 Armenian Orthodox Christians, 23,000 Jews, and fewer than 2,500 Greek Orthodox Christians.



IJCSL NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 5 ISSUE 4

MARCH 2008

UNITED STATES—FOUNDATIONS DIVERSITY BILL PASSED IN STATE ASSEMBLY

The [California State Assembly](#) has passed the bill [A.B.624](#) that would require foundations with assets over \$250 million to collect certain ethnic, gender, and sexual orientation data pertaining to its governance, staff, and grant making and include this information in their annual report and post this information on their web sites, if available. The information foundations are required to collect includes: a) the racial, and gender composition, and sexual orientation of its board of directors and the private foundation's staff; b) the percentage of business contracts awarded to businesses owned by specified racial minorities; c) the number of grants and percentage of grant dollars awarded to organizations serving specified racial minority communities; and d) the number of grants and percentage of grant dollars awarded to organizations where the grantee's board of directors and/or staff are ethnic minorities.

MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS

ARMENIA—DEADLY CLASHES LEAD TO CONCERNS ABOUT DEMOCRACY

[RFE/RL News](#) reports that for many watching Armenia, the question now is what impact the deadly clashes between police and protesters will have on the resolve of opposition supporters. Seven protesters and one police officer were reported killed in clashes late on March 1 after demonstrators defied a state of emergency and regrouped in a central square in the capital, Yerevan. Earlier in the day, police and Interior Ministry troops had used truncheons, tear gas, and electric stun guns to disperse thousands of opposition protesters. The weekend violence erupted at a point when the daily demonstrations had already begun to lose momentum, after swelling to at least 35,000 people earlier in the week.

CANADA—EMERGENCY WIRETAPS WITHOUT JUDGE’S AUTHORIZATION DECLARED UNCONSTITUTIONAL

The [British Columbia Supreme Court](#) has ruled in [R. v. Six Accused Persons](#) that [Section 184.4](#) of the [Canadian Criminal Code](#) is unconstitutional because it violates “the fundamental freedom to be free from unreasonable search and seizure” protected by the [Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#), according to a news article published by the [NATIONAL POST](#). Section 184.4 allows police to electronically intercept private communications without judicial authorization in “exigent circumstances,” such as when a person’s life is in danger.

CUBA—GOVERNMENT SIGNS TWO HUMAN RIGHTS TREATIES

THE [INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE](#) has reported that the Cuban Foreign Minister, Felipe Perez Roque, signed two international human rights treaties -- the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on



IJCSL NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 5 ISSUE 4

MARCH 2008

Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). At present, Cuba severely restricts the travel of its citizens, bans any political parties other than the Communist Party and prohibits independent political meetings, but the Minister has assured the public that Cuba will take its international obligations seriously.

FIJI—GOVERNMENT DENIES LAWYERS' DELEGATION ENTRY

The government of Fiji has banned a high-level [International Bar Association](#) (IBA) delegation from visiting the country. The delegation was scheduled to visit Fiji from 18 to 22 February 2008 to assess the country's current state of justice and the rights and freedoms of its citizens, using international legal standards as yardsticks. The IBA President has called upon the government of Fiji to reverse its decision immediately and allow the IBA the freedom to enter the country, [reports](#) the IBA press office.

PAKISTAN—CONCERNS OVER SECURITY THREATS FORCE NGOS TO CLOSE

According to [REUTERS](#), non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Mansehra, about 80km north of Islamabad, have suspended their work, wary of a potential security threat after an attack on the office of the UK-based Plan International left four dead. On 25 February 2008 about 12 armed gunmen burst into the office of the NGO, which has been engaged in relief work in Pakistan for 10 years.

SAUDI ARABIA—GOVERNMENT DRAFTS LAW TO PROTECT RIGHTS OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Saudi Arabia is drafting a new law aimed at protecting the rights of women and children. According to a news article published by [NEWS POST INDIA](#), the draft legislation defines child abuse and violence against women. Under the proposed legislation, fines or punishments or both may be imposed upon those found guilty of subjecting women and children to physical or mental abuse. The draft called upon the social affairs ministry to coordinate and cooperate with NGOs and with the education, health and culture and information ministries to launch public awareness campaigns against family violence.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

EUROPE—EUROPEAN LOCAL INCLUSION AND SOCIAL ACTION NETWORK LAUNCHED

The [European Local Inclusion and Social Action Network](#) (ELISAN) was officially launched in Brussels, under the patronage of the [European Committee of the Regions](#). This network involves elected representatives from across Europe who work in the social field at the local level. The goal is to raise awareness of social action at the local level in Europe, and to ensure more account is taken of the extent to which locally elected representatives can participate in the implementation of an effective and coherent social policy at the European level.



IJCSL NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 5 ISSUE 4

MARCH 2008

FORTHCOMING BOOK—

“CREATING CREDIBILITY - LEGITIMACY AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR TRANSNATIONAL CIVIL SOCIETY”

In this forthcoming publication, civil society expert, L. David Brown, provides approaches to assessing and enhancing the legitimacy and accountability of CSOs, allowing them to reach their full potential in contributions to governance and problem-solving. [Creating Credibility: Legitimacy and Accountability for Transnational Civil Society](#) is an essential text for anyone concerned with understanding the challenges to civil society legitimacy and finding ways CSOs can respond to these challenges.

GLOBAL—HUMAN RIGHTS SHORT COURSES 2008

The [Human Rights Tools](#) website now [features](#) more than 60 short courses and summer schools spanning 2008 and 2009, from general introductions to very specialized courses on indigenous peoples, discrimination, women’s rights, and more.

RESOURCES

GLOBAL—HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH WORLD REPORT 2008 RELEASED

[Human Rights Watch](#) (HRW) released its [World Report 2008](#). In the report HRW surveys the human rights situation in more than 75 countries. According to an HRW [news release](#), the report identified many human rights challenges in need of attention, including atrocities in Chad, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia’s Ogaden region, Iraq, Somalia, Sri Lanka, and Sudan’s Darfur region, as well as closed societies or severe repression in Burma, China, Cuba, Eritrea, Libya, Iran, North Korea, Saudi Arabia and Vietnam. Abuses in the “war on terror” featured in France, Pakistan, the United Kingdom, and the United States, among others.

UNITED STATES—MANY AMERICANS SAY CHARITY OVERHEAD COSTS TOO HIGH

A [recent story](#) in the Chronicle of Philanthropy detailed a [new study](#) issued by [Ellison Research](#), a for-profit research group based in Phoenix, Arizona. In addition to being commissioned by clients to conduct market research, Ellison conducts its own [research series](#) on public opinions, perspectives, practices and problems. It has conducted research on the clergy, people in the church, and now charities. Ellison released its [latest study](#) which explores public perceptions of how much money charities spend on overhead. As the Chronicle story states, the study found that “[s]ixty-two percent of the public thinks that charities spend too much money on overhead costs such as fund raising and administration.” The article also contains other findings of the study but most significant is what conclusion flows from the study. The president of Ellison Research is quoted in the article as saying that, “[p]eople who believe nonprofits are spending too much on overhead will tend to make that assumption about any nonprofit they come across.” He is further says that “those assumptions make it tough to raise money, even



IJCSL NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 5 ISSUE 4

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for charities that spend little on overhead, because people's beliefs influence their giving and people who assume charities aren't efficient are less likely to donate to new organizations."

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