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NGO Update

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NGO UPDATE

To foster communication between human rights organizations around the world, each issue of the Human Rights Brief features the "NGO Update." This space was created to aid nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to inform other groups about their programs, successes and challenges.

To submit information on an event or situation in your organization, please send a short description to hrbrief@wcl.american.edu, and include "NGO Update" in the subject heading of the message. The Human Rights Brief reserves the right to edit for content and space limitations.

EUROPEAN TRAINING AND RESEARCH CENTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY (ETC)

<http://www.etc-graz.at>

The European Training and Research Center for Human Rights and Democracy is an Austrian non-governmental organization founded in 1999. Its mission is to make human rights and human security known to a wide audience. Public panel discussions and specialized courses in continuing education for groups such as teachers, police, corporations, and human rights activists constitute the key aspects of the ETC's program. To further promote human rights education, a manual entitled, "Understanding Human Rights," was published in 2003 and is available online at the ETC website. The manual contains an introduction to human rights and thirteen modules on specific human rights areas, implementation, and problems. In addition, the manual includes activities for daily use in human rights seminars.

From August 22 to September 2, the ETC will organize the second International Summer Academy on Human Rights and Human Security. This year, the academy will focus on human rights issues arising in post-conflict situations. The featured topics include the human rights aspects of peacekeeping, post-conflict reconstruction, and the different

means of justice in post-conflict situations. The academy is open to post-graduate students, government officials, and representatives from NGOs and IGOs. A detailed program and the application guidelines can be found online at <http://www.summeracademy2004.etc-graz.at>. The application deadline is May 15.

Last year's participants at the academy came from various countries, including Austria, Croatia, Pakistan, Mali, the Philippines, Argentina, Romania, Macedonia, Senegal, Indonesia, and Bulgaria. Participants came from diverse backgrounds: junior government officials (mostly from the ministry of foreign affairs of their respective countries); doctoral students of law, international relations or economic studies; and young public administrative employees. Past lecturers included Mr. Bertrand Ramcharan, acting UN High Commissioner for Human Rights; Mr. Yukio Takasu, Permanent Representative of Japan to the UN headquarters in Vienna, and Ambassador Raimundo Gonzales Aninat, Ambassador of Chile in Austria.

REVOLUTIONARY ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN IN AFGHANISTAN (RAWA)

<http://www.rawa.org>

On International Human Rights Day (December 10, 2003), more than 100 Afghan women staged a protest in the Pakistani capital of Islamabad, accusing Afghanistan's post-Taliban regime for surpassing their predecessors in violating human and women's rights. One of their spokeswomen stated, "After the Taliban's demolition (two years ago), their fascist brothers were installed into power for the second time and these religious fascist jihadis act in a more bloody and heinous way than their Taliban brethren." This statement was distributed by RAWA protesters outside United Nations offices in Islamabad to mark World Human Rights Day. The organization, which campaigned clandestinely at great risk against the Taliban and their brutal treatment of women, said that violence continues against women under the current regime.

EGYPTIAN ORGANIZATION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

<http://www.eohr.org>

In December 2003, the Egyptian Organization on Human Rights held a workshop entitled, "The Role of Lawyers in Fighting the Crime of Torture," at the Egyptian Lawyer's Syndicate. This workshop was attended by approximately thirty journalists, NGO representatives, and lawyers. Mr. Sameh Ashoor, in charge of both the Board of the Lawyer's Syndicate and the Arab Lawyers' Union, lead the discussion.

The discussions examined the various perspectives on state-sanctioned criminal punishment. At the close of the workshop, the following recommendations were made: 1) spread awareness that torture is a serious crime through general human rights awareness-raising programs; 2) revive the system of the investigations by judges according to the rule of law; 3) develop educational systems in police academies, incorporating human rights documents into the curriculum; and 4) adopt a policy of providing continuous training for government officials on human rights standards.

The participants also called for strengthening the role of lawyers in defending suspects in courts and remaining with them throughout their period of detention. It was also agreed that the lawyer's syndicates should prepare and execute adequate educational programs to enable lawyers to cooperate with the authorities and NGOs concerned with torture victims. These programs should take into consideration the social responsibilities that the lawyers have, including those who provide legal aid free of charge to financially disadvantaged people and those who help torture victims.

THE LEGAL RESOURCES FOUNDATION (LRF)

<http://www.lrf.org.zm>

The LRF is a charitable and educational trust in Zimbabwe, established in 1984 by trust deed and registered under the Welfare Organizations Act. The foundation was established to enhance the accessibility of legal and

information services to all sections of the population. This objective is based on the premise that access to the legal system is fundamental to the strengthening of human rights in Zimbabwe.

The LRF has developed several programs to meet its objective. It provides several publications on Zimbabwean case law and legislation, as well as a practitioner's guide to domestic civil and criminal procedure. The LRF also provides human rights education and training to public service officials in the legal field. For example, the LRF coordinates a human rights training program for officers of the Zimbabwe Prison Service, providing seminars and teaching materials detailing the rights of prison inmates. Finally, the LRF provides legal aid, support, and assistance to individuals and human rights organizations and institutions in Zimbabwe and in the region. *HRB*

Sunita Patel is a J.D. candidate at the Washington College of Law and a staff writer for the Human Rights Brief.

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