



BI-MONTHLY LEGAL NEWS

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Updates from the UN

Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders releases report on country visit to India

The Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, Margaret Sekaggya released her report of her country visit to India from 10 to 21 January 2011, to assess the current situation of human rights defenders in India. On her visit she met human rights defenders across the country as well as representatives of civil society, government and national and state human rights commissions.

Working Group on Human Rights who facilitated her visit for meeting civil society groups presented an Oral Statement at the 19th session Human Rights Council on the report. The [statement](#) was delivered on the occasion of Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights defenders on 7th of March in Geneva.

Report: <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Defenders/A-HRC-19-55-Add1.pdf>

UN Special Rapporteur on housing releases report on women and adequate housing

The UN Special Rapporteur on Housing released his latest report on women and adequate housing. The report focuses on progress to date and further efforts needed to ensure that women are able to enjoy this right in practice. Specifically, and so as to build on work previously done under the mandate, this report focuses on recent legal and policy advancements in the area of women's right to adequate housing, including issues related to inheritance, land and property, as well as strategies for overcoming persistent gaps in implementation of those laws and policies. The report also presents a gender-sensitive analysis of the right to adequate housing and concludes with specific recommendations to States and United Nations agencies and human rights mechanisms to improve the enjoyment of this right for women worldwide.

Source: http://xa.yimg.com/kq/groups/3503205/1153746431/name/A.HRC.19.53_English.pdf

UN Secretary General releases report highlighting conflict related sexual violence

The Secretary General released his report to the General Assembly pursuant to paragraph 18 of Security Council resolution 1960 (2010) asking him to submit a report on the implementation of that resolution, as well as resolutions 1820 (2008) and 1888 (2009). The report updates progress made in the implementation of the monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangements and the placement of women's protection advisers; provides information on parties to conflict credibly suspected of committing or being responsible for acts of rape or other forms of sexual violence; highlights major outcomes of missions and political engagements undertaken by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict; describes key initiatives taken by the United Nations to address conflict-related sexual violence; and outlines recommendations.

Source: http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2012/33

International Developments

Asia

Pakistan Senate unanimously passes Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill

Pakistan's Senate has passed the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill making violence against women and children an offence carrying jail terms and fines. The Act was passed unanimously in the National Assembly, the lower house of parliament, in August 2009. It will come into effect after the President's assent. The law classifies as acts of physical, sexual or mental assault, force, criminal intimidation, harassment, hurt, confinement and deprivation of economic or financial resources under 'domestic violence'. Besides children and women, the act also provides protection to the adopted, employed and domestic associates in a household.

Source: <http://tribune.com.pk/story/339308/senate-unanimously-passes-domestic-violence-bill/>

Pakistan women's commission gains autonomous status

The Pakistan Senate unanimously approved the "National Commission on the Status of Women Bill 2012" to protect women's rights against every kind of discrimination. The new bill replaces the National Commission on the Status of Women Ordinance from 2000 and strengthens the Commission by giving it financial and administrative autonomy through an independent Secretariat.

The Commission will investigate and gather information on issues regarding women's rights, as well as have increased responsibilities to oversee the international commitments made by the government on all women's issues. The newly adopted bill also changes the status of the Commission's Chairperson who will now have the seniority of a State Minister, making recommendations directly to the national cabinet. Women's groups have lobbied for the strengthening of the Commission for years, and the bill underwent many revisions in the National Assembly, before amendments were introduced. While previous governments had consolidated temporary Commissions into one permanent body in 2000, the main drawback was that the Secretariat of the Commission was placed in the Ministry of Women's Development, leading to lengthy bureaucratic procedures and red-tape.

Source:

<http://www.unwomen.org/2012/02/historic-gain-for-women-in-pakistan-as-womens-commission-gains-autonomous-status/>

Political instability in Maldives leads to stepping down of democratically elected, liberal President

In a setback to democracy and civil rights Mohammad Nasheed, President of Maldives whose historic victory in 2008 ended 30 years of authoritarian rule by the then leader Maumoon Abdul Gayoom was forced to resign following a coup in early part of Feb. Nasheed has been lauded as an activist who galvanized a protest movement that ousted the longstanding corrupt and autocratic regime through the election process.

The coup was reportedly plotted by followers of Gayoom after President Nasheed had attempted to launch a corruption investigation into Gayoom. When a senior judge blocked the probe, Nasheed asked the army to arrest the judge, igniting antigovernment protests. In addition, in the weeks leading to the coup his political adversaries' fomented opposition among conservative Muslims by claiming Nasheed's government was trying to undermine their faith. Following Nasheed's ouster, Maldives saw unrest and bloody clashes between Gayoom's and Nasheed's supporters with the Army resorting to extreme violence.

Source: <http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/regions/asia-pacific/120213/maldives-coup-mohamed-nasheed-godfather-arab-spring>, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia/2012/02/201228593123326.html>

Nasheed's Op-ed in NYT after his resignation: <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/08/opinion/in-the-maldives-strangled-democracy.html>

Beyond Asia

Ontario Superior Court of Justice awards life sentence condemning killings in the name of honour

Condemning killings in the name of honour, Ontario Superior Court of Justice held three members of a family guilty for first degree murder of four women co-family members believed to be in the name of 'honour'. The judgement read, "The apparent reason behind these cold-blooded, shameful murders was that the four completely innocent victims offended your twisted notion of honour - a notion of honour that is founded upon the domination and control of women, a sick notion of honour that has absolutely no place in any civilized society." Zainab (19), Sahar (17) and Geeti Shafia (13) were three sisters in a family of seven siblings who lived in Montreal, Canada. The family was originally from Afghanistan. The girls' father Mohammed Shafia had two wives; Rona Mohammed (50) and Tooba Yahya. On June 30th 2009, Zainab, Sahar, Geeti and Rona were found dead, allegedly killed by the father, brother and second wife.

Source: <http://news.nationalpost.com/2012/01/29/shafia-accused-guilty-of-first-degree-murder/>
<http://m.indianexpress.com/news/canada-jury-finds-afghan-family-guilty-in-honour-killings/905563/>

France drops 'mademoiselle' from official registries

In a welcome move, the Prime Minister of France has ordered to banish the use of the title '*mademoiselle*' from official forms and registries. The order stated that terms "made reference without justification nor necessity to a woman's matrimonial situation, whereas 'monsieur' has long signified simply 'sir'." As early as 1690, the terms *mademoiselle* and *demoiselle* were used to signify 'unmarried female'. *Mademoiselle* entered into official use under Napoleon I, but came into broader use only in the 20th century.

The campaign was spearheaded by two French feminist organizations, *Osez le féminisme!* (Dare to be feminist!) and Les Chiennes de Garde (The Watchdogs). Their campaign calls attention to the fact that single men are never addressed as *mondamoiseau*, or even, 'young male virgin?' Further the group argued that men were often called *jeune homme* or young man, through their 20s, and not *monsieur*, and suggested a similar distinction be made between the young woman (*jeune femme*) and more senior madame, thus avoiding *mademoiselle*, a term that harkens to notions of female subjugation.

On state forms in France, the terms 'maiden name,' 'patronymic' and two expressions meaning 'married name' are to be replaced by 'family name' and 'used name'. However, hoping to avert waste, the Prime Minister instructed that old forms should remain in circulation until the 'exhaustion of stocks' which might mean a long time till the order comes into force.

Source: <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/23/world/europe/france-drops-mademoiselle-from-official-use.html>

Open letter to Kenneth Roth, executive director of Human Rights Watch

Scholars and activists representing organizations from across the world have written an Open letter to Kenneth Roth, criticizing him for failing to emphasize and seek accountability for increasing human rights violations and failure of the states to protect basic rights in Egypt and Tunisia. The letter is in response to the Introduction to the Human Rights Watch's World Report 2012 where Roth has "urged support for the newly elected governments that have brought the Muslim Brotherhood to power in Tunisia and Egypt", according to the letter, Kenneth Roth's tone in the introduction is more "of a state than a senior human rights advocate". Further, the letter points to glaring misses in the introduction where he does not call for a separation of state and religion nor highlight the threat to right of women, sexual and religious minorities, or examine record of growing Muslim fundamentalism in the West. In not stating upfront the responsibility of the newly elected states towards women, sexual and religious minorities the introduction of HRW indicates an interest in promoting relations between states, reflecting that its "vision is still rooted in the period before the Vienna Conference and the great advances it made in holding non-state actors accountable and seeing women's rights as human rights."

Open letter and reply by Human Rights Watch:

<http://www.nybooks.com/blogs/nyrblog/2012/feb/23/women-islam-debate-human-rights-watch/>

Report is available at: <http://www.hrw.org/world-report-2012>

Netherlands cabinet to make it easier to change sex on birth certificate

In a positive development, the cabinet in Netherlands has decided that people who feel they are actually of the other sex will no longer first have to undergo a sex-change operation or hormone treatment to be recognised as transgender on official documents. According to the order, "People who are transgender will in future be able to have the registration of their sex altered more easily. They will not have to have an operation or hormone treatment first. The sterilization requirement, stipulating that trans-genders must be infertile before the birth certificate can be changed, will also be dropped."

According to the changed guidelines, in the future, it will sufficient for an expert to determine that the conviction of a transgender is permanent. The cabinet said it expects that the transgender will be able to "function better in society because obstacles will be removed" as a result of the proposed bill.

Source: http://www.nisnews.nl/public/060312_1.htm

National

Judgements/ Orders

Rape accused seeks FIR quashing as he agrees to marry the victim

After spending a year in jail on charges of rape, a man has approached the Delhi high court seeking quashing of the FIR against him on the ground that he and the victim have decided to get married. The Delhi High Court has granted him partial relief in the form of interim bail till February 14, for getting married to the victim. Justice Suresh Kait also directed the accused to produce the proof of marriage, and only after the court is assured, will it consider his plea to quash the FIR lodged by the woman against him. After a year in custody, the couple had an out of court settlement where the accused agreed to marry the victim so that she doesn't face any ostracism in life. Once the couple came to a settlement, the woman indicated she was willing to withdraw her allegations against the man and both approached the court.

Source: http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-02-20/delhi/31079400_1_sanjay-fir-victim

Supreme Court: PWDVA applicable in cases where marriage and separation took place before the commencement of the Act

In a positive development, the Supreme Court of India on 7th February 2012, comprising bench of Justice Altamas Kabir and J. Chelameswar while hearing a complaint under section 12 of Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005 (PWDVA) said that, “a wife, who lived with her husband before the law came into force but got separated after the law was enforced, will be entitled to the right to share her husband’s house under the law.” The initial petition under the PWDVA Act was filed by the wife before the Magistrate. The marriage was solemnized between the parties on 2nd August 1980 and till 4th July 2005, they lived together and then separated.

The judgment can be accessed at <http://judis.nic.in/supremecourt/helddis3.aspx>

Supreme Court upholds right to protest

The Supreme Court has pronounced a landmark judgement on the incident that took place on the midnight of June 4-5, 2011 at Ramlila Maidan, Delhi where Baba Ramdev and his supporters were carrying on a protest against corruption and prevalence of black money in India. The Supreme Court in its judgement has upheld the right to peaceful protest as a Constitutional right. The Court has observed – “Freedom of speech, right to assemble and demonstrate by holding dharnas and peaceful agitation are the basic features of a democratic system. The people of a democratic country like ours have a right to raise their voice against the decisions and actions of the Government or even to express their resentment over the actions of the Government on any subject of social or national importance.”

The Court while asserting the right to protest as a fundamental right has termed right to sleep a fundamental right while ruling that the police action on a sleeping crowd at Baba Ramdev’s rally at Ramlila Maidan amounted to violation of their crucial right.

Source: <http://www.indianexpress.com/news/sc-order-on-right-to-sleep-welcomed/916813/0>,
<http://dailypioneer.com/nation/45862-govt-must-encourage-democratic-rights-not-police-power-jaitley-.html>

High Court of Punjab and Haryana rules that husband cannot force wife to conceive

In a significant development, the Punjab and Haryana High Court has ruled that a husband cannot compel his wife to conceive and give birth to his child. The high court has asserted that intimacy is one thing, giving birth to a child another, “mere consent to conjugal rights does not mean consent to give birth to a child for her husband.”

The ruling came on revision petitions filed by Chandigarh-based gynaecologist and others petitioners. The controversy in the case hovered around the decision of a wife to go in for medical termination of pregnancy without her husband’s consent. Married in April 1994, the couple and their son were initially staying in Panipat. Due to “hostilities and strained relations”, the wife started staying with her parents, along with her son, at Chandigarh. The wife conceived after she agreed to accompany her husband to Panipat during the pendency of her application for maintenance. She then terminated her pregnancy.

Source: <http://www.tribuneindia.com/2012/20120212/main7.htm>

Sessions Court in Delhi comments on live-in relationships

A 31-year-old woman who stabbed her live-in partner to death in a fit of rage was sentenced to seven years imprisonment by a Sessions court in Delhi which also observed that live-in relationships are “an infamous western cultural product” which despite being accorded a level of legal legitimacy by the Supreme Court

and Parliament is “still perceived to be an immoral relation in our society”. Additional Sessions Judge convicted the woman under Section 304 of the Indian Penal Code.

Source: <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/tp-newdelhi/article2809918.ece>

News

The Supreme Court begins final hearing of Naz Foundation v Union of India

The Delhi High Court passed a historic judgement that decriminalized private adult and consensual sexual acts in 2009. The case is now up before the Supreme Court. There are 15 Special Leave Petitions (SLP) opposing this land mark victory of human rights in the country. Almost all of them are from different religious groups and other such affiliations. The MHA and the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare have taken the stand in support of the Delhi High Court Judgement of reading down Section 377. The Union Home Ministry has filed a formal affidavit in the Supreme Court, coming in support of decriminalisation of gay sex among consenting adults saying the decision was taken as early as July 2009 by a GoM comprising Union ministers of Home, Law and Family Welfare. The Delhi High held that read down section 377 to decriminalize private consensual sexual activity between adults.

Army cannot invoke AFSPA in cases of rape and murder: Supreme Court

In a welcome and overdue development the Supreme Court questioned the extent to which the Army can claim blanket immunity under the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA). The Supreme Court said that rape and murder committed by its personnel should be considered a “normal crime”, and that there is “no question of sanction” from the government before prosecution of offenders in such cases. The court was hearing the CBI challenge against the Army invocation of AFSPA, allegedly to stall prosecution of eight officers chargesheeted in the Pathribal fake encounter in March 2000. While the five men were identified as Lashkar-e-Toiba mercenaries by the Army, they had turned out to be locals from nearby villages of Brariangan, Halan and Anantnag.

Under AFSPA, prior approval is required before prosecution or any other legal action can be initiated against armed forces personnel operating in areas declared “disturbed” by the government.

Source: <http://www.indianexpress.com/news/cannot-invoke-afspa-in-rape-murder-sc-to-army/907776/>

Norwegian Child Welfare Committee controversially removes two Indian children from their parent’s custody on grounds of ‘bad parenting’

Two Indian children were taken away from their parents by a child welfare service in Norway in May last year after they concluded that their mother was not capable of bringing up the children well. Among the reasons listed by Norwegian child welfare authorities for taking away the three-year-old son and one-year-old daughter of the couple were unsuitable toys and clothes, insufficient room for the children to play in the house and the son not having his own bed. Following separation from their parents, both siblings were put into two separate foster homes, linguistically and culturally different from their own. The authorities ordered that the parents could meet their children only once a year.

The case came to light when the parents visa to was going to expire and they refused to leave Norway without their children. The grandparents of the children then visited the President to exert pressure the release of their grandchildren. After constant and persistent demands from the Indian government, Norway agreed to hand over the children to their uncle, who would be their “primary caregiver and give them an upbringing that meets their needs.”

While Indian government's position has been more diplomatic claiming that the children are not orphans nor stateless, the Indian civil society critiqued Norway for a culturally insensitive authoritarian, stand that seeks to protect the Child Welfare Services more than the children.

Source: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/article2831465.ece>,
<http://www.thehindu.com/news/article2831465.ece>,
<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/article2823438.ece>

Callousness by the police and administration towards rape victims continues

The response of the police on the rape case in Kolkata where a woman was raped in a moving car by 5 men has been shockingly callous. Officers at Park Street police station not only wasted crucial time in the investigation but allegedly passed insensitive and lewd remarks at the traumatized woman. The police initially ignored her complaints when she mustered courage to report the incident two days after the incident and even mocked her for going to a night club. The Chief Minister of West Bengal went on to further victimise the woman by stating that whole rape was a politically fabricated to tar the image of her government.

A similarly shocking incident also came to light in Rajasthan where the Jaipur Police have arrested a paraplegic woman. The 22-year-old has been arrested in Jaipur on charges of conspiracy in connection with abduction and rape of her friend and denied bail by a local court. The girl had been summoned in January last year by the police for interrogation in this case but was molested by policemen following which she attempted suicide by jumping before a moving train leading to the disability.

Source: <http://www.tribuneindia.com/2012/20120220/main6.htm>,
<http://www.indianexpress.com/news/rajasthan-police-arrest-paraplegic-woman-they-had-tortured-in-abuse-case/918999/>

Soni Sori's hearings get postponed by the Supreme Court despite evidence of sexual torture

The Supreme Court has been hearing of Soni Sori's case and has continued to postpone it for nearly two months. Soni Sori, a teacher, tribal woman accused by the Chhattisgarh police of being a supporter of the naxalites. Fearing for her life after an attack on her in her village by the local police, Soni had arrived in Delhi to seek anticipatory bail. Soni pleaded for bail, failing which she asked to be held in custody in Delhi to face all investigations as she feared for her life in Chhattisgarh. Her plea was rejected and she was handed over to Chhattisgarh Police with instructions to ensure her safety and to produce her at the local court. The Delhi High Court also directed them to inform it of measures taken to keep her safe. As per Sori's letter, when she was brought to the Dantewada Court she could not get down from the police van to go to courtroom and the Magistrate passed an order without even seeing her.

Soni Sori's representatives then brought a writ petition in the Supreme Court, seeking adequate medical examination and treatment. She alleged that she has been subjected to sexual torture, electric shocks, and beatings while in custody and denied necessary medical treatment. The Supreme Court ordered an independent medical review that was conducted in NRS Medical College Hospital in Kolkata. The report, presented in court states that two stones had been found inserted in her vagina and one in her rectum. The MRI scan showed that she had annular tears on her spine.

Human rights activist's and organisations like Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch (who has also written a letter to PMO) have repeatedly been demanding that the Indian government release Soni Sori. Ironically, the Indian government announced gallantry award for Ankit Garg, policeman Sori has accused for torturing her in custody.

Source: <http://news.outlookindia.com/items.aspx?artid=737918>,
<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/article2798877.ece>,
<http://www.thehindu.com/news/states/article2971330.ece>

Discrimination against persons with disability by airlines

Activists have severely criticised the discrimination and mistreatment of disabled persons citing aviation security procedures. In the recent past two such have been reported. In the first case, a faculty of Indian Institute of Cerebral Palsy was deplaned by Spicejet as the Pilot claimed it wasn't safe to have her on board. In the same week another person suffering from muscular dystrophy complained harassment by the Jet Airways personnel. Calling such behaviour as being insensitive, outright insulting and violation of the human rights of persons with disability, groups have demanding a thorough investigation and assurance of non repetition of such incidents.

Source: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/article2964443.ece>,
<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/article2925162.ece>

NCPCR makes public the guidelines on corporal punishment in schools

In significant move NCPCR has passed guidelines of corporal punishment in schools. The guidelines provide detailed definition of what constitutes corporal punishment which includes physical punishment and mental harassment. Discrimination been very well defined as prejudiced views and behaviour towards any child because of her/his caste/gender, occupation or region and non-payment of fees or for being a student admitted under the 25% reservation to disadvantaged groups or weaker sections of society under the RTE, 2009. It can be latent; manifest; open or subtle. The guidelines also provide international standards on corporal punishment and also the different Indian legal provisions that are and can be applied in cases of corporal punishment.

The guidelines can be accessed [here](#)

Government targets NGO's for people's protests against the Koodankulam nuclear power plant

The government is cracking down on non-government organisations in Tamil Nadu, suspecting them of diverting foreign funds to the protests against the state's nuclear plant project. While the Centre that it had taken action against four NGOs for allegedly funding the protests against the Koodankulam nuclear power plant, three of the NGOs held that the Union Home Ministry had not cited any reason for the crackdown. The ministry has frozen the foreign contribution accounts of the Nagarcoil-based Rural Uplift Centre (RUC) and the Tuticorin Diocesan Association (TDA) of the Latin Catholic Diocese of Tuticorin. The Tuticorin Multi-Purpose Social Service Society (TMSSS) of the diocese is also under the scanner. The protests against the power plant has been by the people and villagers living around the plant and not instigated or initiated by the NGOs. However the government without giving sufficient cause is cracking down upon the NGOs working in that area.

In October 2011, thousands of protesters and villagers living around the Russian-built Koodankulam nuclear plant in the southern Tamil Nadu state, blocked highways and staging hunger strikes, preventing further construction work, and demanding its closure as they fear of the disasters like the environmental impact of nuclear power, radioactive waste, nuclear accident similar to the radiation leak at Japan's Fukushima nuclear disaster. The protests are still on.

Source: <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/kudankulam-row-government-lodges-criminal-cases-against-ngos/1/175745.html>, <http://www.thehindu.com/news/states/kerala/article2954430.ece>.
<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/article2964711.ece>

RESOURCES

Tools of Justice: Non Discrimination and the Indian Constitution: Kalpana Kannabiran

The book argues that the breaking down of discrimination in constitutional interpretation and the narrowing of the field of liberty in law deepen discriminatory ideologies and practices. Instead, it offers an intersectional approach to jurisprudence as a means of enabling the law to address the problem of discrimination along multiple, intersecting axes. The argument is developed in the context of the various grounds of discrimination mentioned in the constitution — caste, tribe, religious minorities, women, sexual minorities, and disability.

Section 498 A: A Report Based Upon Analyzing Data from NCRB: 2005-09: Swayam

Swayam has conducted a study by examining data from National Crimes Record Bureau (NCRB) for review by the Committee on Petitions, Rajya Sabha on the perceived ‘misuse’ of Section 498A. The report analyses all India statistics of NCRB on Section 498A and Section 304B from 2005-2009. The results of the study highlight continuing and increasing cases of marital violence on women. It concludes that making 498 A compoundable, cognizable and bailable would make women completely vulnerable defeating the purpose of the law.

The report is available at:

<http://xa.yimg.com/kq/groups/25274660/1782653302/name/498A%20Report%20for%20NCW%20final.pdf>

Staying Alive: Fifth Monitoring and Evaluation Report of the PWDVA: Lawyers Collective and ICRW

Lawyers Collective, Women’s Rights Initiative released Staying Alive: Fifth Monitoring and Evaluation Report of the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (PWDVA). The report has been jointly prepared by Lawyers Collective Initiative (LCWRI) and International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) The report documents the availability of infrastructure under the PWDVA and evaluates the functioning of the Act by analysing the orders passed. The section by ICRW documents the attitudes, knowledge and practice of stakeholders under the act over a period of three years from 2008 to 2011.

Our Pictures, Our Words: A Visual Journey through the Women’s Movement: Laxmi Murthy and Rajashri Dasgupta

This book constructs a pictorial history of the complex and multi-layered women’s movement through its visual representation: posters, drawings, pamphlets, reports, brochures, stickers, all writing and photographs. The posters reproduced here are part of Zubaan’s Poster Women project, which has attempted to locate and archive as many posters of the movement as possible to be able to visually map the women’s movement and its concerns.

The Poster Women archive can be accessed at www.posterwomen.org

FeministsIndia is now a website

In addition to running a blog FeministsIndia is have created a website which is aimed to be an online platform for all those who are committed to gender equality and justice. It focuses primarily on women’s issues in India and aims to create a unique and outspoken feminist space. The website intends to celebrate this diversity and spread the ideas of equality, justice, compassion and non-violence.

Contributions, thought can be sent to feministsindia@gmail.com

The link of the website: <http://feministsindia.com/>

New website on Optional Protocol to CEDAW

The website <http://opcedaw.wordpress.com/> is intended as a freely accessible resource of all OP CEDAW material. The website is intended for academics, lawyers, advocates, individual ‘victims’, students, NGOs, OHCHR etc. Communications and inquiries are listed by country, decision type, subject matter and year. The website also included decisions, summaries of the communications and inquiries, submissions, amicus briefs and case commentaries.

Musawah’s Strategic Direction: Setting the Foundations for a Dynamic Movement

The book describes Musawah’s vision for equality in the family and how, as a global movement. It outlines Musawah principles, strategies, activities and the many ways that people can engage with Musawah. The book includes descriptions on: how local groups are organising themselves; Musawah’s Young Women’s Caucus; Musawah understanding of ‘equality’; how decision-making happens in Musawah; why knowledge building is so important to Musawah; what do the Advocates say about equality and Musawah; achievements since Musawah’s launch in 2009; and Musawah’s indicators for success over the next four years.

Global Report on the Situation of Women Human Rights Defenders: Women Human Rights Defenders International Coalition’s

The Global Report on the situation of women human rights defenders is primarily an advocacy and capacity building tool, for WHRDs’ protection and the prevention of further abuses. The report is a contribution to the ongoing documentation of the situation of WHRDs that will enable informed advocacy from the local to regional and international level.

Source: http://www.defendingwomen-defendingrights.org/pdf/WHRD_IC_Global%20Report_2012.pdf

Web archives and new reports by ICRHP

International Council on Human Rights Policy has released two new reports: **No Perfect Measure: Rethinking Evaluation and Assessment of Human Rights Work (2012)** and **Sexual Health and Human Rights in the European Region (2012)**. The first report builds on an approach paper and a research workshop with experts examining questions of power and accountability, results-based cultures, the particularities of human rights work. The report also points to approaches that widen the frames of evaluation and assessment and place a greater emphasis on learning rather than judgement, including ideas such as peer review. The second report builds on ICHRP’s 2009 publication *Discussion Paper on Sexuality and Human Rights*, which mapped the confusions and dilemmas in the area of sexual rights and suggested principles to guide future work. The reports are available at: <http://www.ichrp.org/en/projects/181> and <http://www.ichrp.org/en/projects/140>

In addition to these reports, ICHRP has also created a new web archive that will include 35 multi-disciplinary research initiatives, including all reports, summaries, translations and nearly 200 working papers, covering a wide range of policy issues, will continue to be freely accessible for the benefit of researchers, policy makers, human rights practitioners and others.

http://www.ichrp.org/?utm_source=+Newsletter+2012&utm_campaign=feb2012&utm_medium=email

EVENTS

WRAG Consultation on Current Challenges to Democracy, Secularism & Fundamental Rights

Women's Research & Action Group (WRAG) conducted a consultation on Current Challenges to Democracy, Secularism & Fundamental Rights on 3rd March 2012. The major themes have identified for discussion during the Consultation were progress on economic, physical and legal security of minorities, women human rights defenders, Security forces and the need for accountability and Gender-based violations

Sex Workers organise a Pride March in Sangli

Sex Workers' Pride March is held in Sangli on the eve of the International Sex Workers' Rights Day, the 3rd of March. Every year for the past five years march has been conducted together to declare to the world the rights of sex workers with pride claiming their right to self worth, dignity and livelihood, a right that no agency can confer or deny.