

## **News from the ICA Human Rights Working Group**

**April 2010**

Trudy Huskamp Peterson, Chair

**Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 4.** *No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.*

Article 4 begins the Declaration's list of specific rights. While slavery as an accepted system of labor has been eradicated, slave-like forms of labor continue to exist. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has a Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, its causes and consequences. Calling slavery a "grave and persistent problem," UNHCHR defines contemporary slavery as including "debt bondage, serfdom, forced labour, child labour and child servitude, trafficking of persons and human organs, sexual slavery, children in armed conflict, sale of children, forced marriage and the sale of wives, migrant work, the exploitation of prostitution, and certain practices under apartheid and colonial regimes." UNHCHR recently expressed its concern, for example, that some Haitian children are being sold, trafficked or kept in slave-like conditions.

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/slavery/rapporteur/index.htm>

A current, well documented case of slavery is the abduction and enslavement by North Korea of at least 17 Japanese citizens during the 1970s and 1980s. Since 2002 five of the abductees have returned to Japan, but twelve are still unaccounted for. For a discussion of the case, see the article, "Help Bring Them Home," in the April 2010 issue of *The Japan Journal*, pp. 20-21.

Many records in archives reflect the world's legacy of slavery and the slave trade. But what records document the slavery that exists today? Government records of police and border patrols, of social services and human welfare agencies, of labor ministries and agriculture ministries, all are sources of information on forced labor and trafficking. Diplomatic correspondence, too, may document the struggle against slavery. At least as important as the government records are the records of organizations—particularly faith-based groups and nongovernmental organizations—that try to help those unfortunate people caught in slave-like conditions. Journalists document some cases of bondage, as do social scientists and human rights activists; these may be in records of their employers or in personal papers. The UN and its entities that focus on labor, human rights, children and women all have records relating to the forms and practices of the contemporary scourge of slavery. We archivists are far from through appraising, managing, describing and preserving records relating to the practice of slavery.

**Series of videos on international criminal justice.** Skylight Pictures is producing a series of eight brief videos, each 5-7 minutes long, highlighting issues in international criminal justice. These videos were created from the filmed proceedings of the Consultative Conference on International Criminal Justice, held at UN Headquarters in New York in September 2009. The titles of the videos are:

- Colombia and the International Criminal Court,
- Victim Participation and Fair Trials at the International Criminal Court,
- The Emerging System of International Criminal Justice,
- The Role of Preliminary Examinations,

The International Criminal Court and International Relations,  
Kenya and the International Criminal Court,  
Humanitarian NGOs and the International Criminal Court, and  
Domestic and Regional Complementarity.

These videos will be useful for anyone seeking a brief primer on the topics.

<http://www.internationalcriminaljustice.net/>

## **News.**

Armenia. In an interview with a Turkish newspaper, the director of the National Archives of Armenia invited Turkish historians to do research in the Armenian archives. The article garnered hostile comments. <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=armenian-archive-chief-invites-turkish-historians-2010-04-22>

Chile. The National Commission on Political Detention and Torture is collecting testimonies from victims of human rights violations committed under the Pinochet regime (1973-1990) to ensure that persons are not excluded from reparations. More than 2800 cases were opened in the month following the Commission's reopening on February 17. These testimonies are significant archival records of the Commission. <http://pais24.com/index.php?go=n&id=30039>

Guatemala. The Historic Archives of the National Police (Archivo Historico de la P.N.) joined the Latin American Sites of Conscience Network.

<http://www.sitesofconscience.org/resources/networks/south-america/en/>

Kenya. The International Criminal Court (ICC) opened a formal criminal investigation of the violence in Kenya following its disputed 2007 election. Kenya's government previously established an international commission of inquiry, which reported in 2008, and the commission's "boxes full of documents" were delivered to the ICC prosecutor. "International Court Authorizes Inquiry of Kenyans Linked to 2007 Political Clashes," *New York Times*, 2010-04-01, p. A11.

Mexico. A petition filed in March before the Inter-American Human Rights Commission by a Mexican woman who was orphaned when her parents were "disappeared" by government forces included government records from both Mexico and the United States. The woman, Aleida Gallangos Vargas, tracked down her brother in 2004 through intelligence records found in Mexico's national archives. The National Security Archive posted copies of the documents included in the petition.

<http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB307/index.htm>

Russia. Russia published on the Internet documents on the Katyn massacre of 1940, in which over 20,000 Polish military men were killed. The records had been declassified in 1992. The Russian government has not opened the records of an investigation into the massacre that it began in the 1990s and closed in 2004.

[http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20100428/ts\\_afp/russiapolandpoliticshistorywwiikatyn\\_20100428093343/print](http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20100428/ts_afp/russiapolandpoliticshistorywwiikatyn_20100428093343/print)

Rwanda. The gacaca courts are in their final stages, having disposed of "about 1.5 million cases," according to *The New Times*. On March 31 the newspaper editorialized on the need for proper preservation of the gacaca archives, saying the "records will serve as a reference for future generations, who would want to understand the true context of our country's

history.” <http://allafrica.com/stories/201004010630.html> The courts, based on a model of traditional justice, were established in 2004 to prosecute and try the perpetrators of the crime of genocide and other crimes against humanity, committed between October 1, 1990, and December 31, 1994. <http://www.inkiko-gacaca.gov.rw/pdf/Organic%20Law%2027062006.pdf>

United States. On April 16, the Board of Directors of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) adopted a statement "On the human right to the benefits of scientific progress." According to the statement, "An international process is currently underway that will take into account different perspectives and diverse interests in defining with greater clarity the meaning of the right and in determining how best to implement the right in practice. Recognizing that this right lies at the heart of the AAAS mission and the social responsibilities of scientists, AAAS will pursue opportunities to collaborate with the global scientific community so that the voice, interests and concerns of scientists can be brought to this process." [http://shr.aaas.org/Programs/program\\_article15.htm](http://shr.aaas.org/Programs/program_article15.htm)

Columbia University's Center for Human Rights Documentation and Research announced that it will house the archives of the Committee to Protect Journalists. It also announced that it has developed a "Human Rights Web Archive" which is collecting "free and at-risk web resources" that are related to human rights.

<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/indiv/humanrights/hrwa/index.html>

Senegal. In an April 16 article lamenting the state of Senegal's archives, a Senegalese historian pointed out, "The archives of Senegal contain much information about the colonial and even post-colonial slave trade."

[http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5in\\_IbQ4pWoGjUhZ1vnBXH-3lxm7w](http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5in_IbQ4pWoGjUhZ1vnBXH-3lxm7w)

Zimbabwe. Photographs of violence during the 2008 elections that were to go on display in a exhibit organized by the Zimbabwe Human Rights Organisation were seized by police before the exhibit opened in Harare on March 24. The head of the Organization was also arrested. The leader and the photographs were released the next day after a high court ruling. Later that week an exhibit in an art gallery in Bulawayo, showing pictures from the 1980s Matabeleland massacres, was raided by police. The photographs were confiscated and the organizer was arrested.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/apr/04/zimbabwe-david-smith-political-violence>

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/mar/24/zimbabwe-human-rights-violations-picture>

**Please write.** If you have any information or news that you would like to share on archives and human rights issues, please write!