

- email newsletter of Civil Liberties Australia (ACT Assn. No. A04043)
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CLA will talk liberty and rights issues within Defence

CLA in May is taking part in a breakthrough opportunity to stretch the minds of new Australian Defence Force Academy (ADFA) students on civil liberties and human rights issues.

ADFA's new Politics lecturer Linda Botterill, with the help of Professor Carl Thayer, has responded to an approach by CLA to give regular lectures to students at the military academies in Canberra.

These include ADFA, Duntroon and the two staff colleges.

CLA president Dr Kris Klugman and member Vic Adams will deliver a 25-30 minute lecture, followed 25 minutes for questions and answers, to the ADFA cadets on Wednesday 24 May.

Vic is a former Army officer with top level experience also in both the Australian Federal Police and Australian Protective Services.

Kris's background includes senior executive positions in civil emergency authorities.

The aim will be to get the students thinking about what civil liberties means in national and local terms for future officers, with particular emphasis on current terrorism issues.

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Members rake through government reports with fine tooth combs

In the 'holiday' season, members of CLA have been busy with a range of activities aimed at keeping our politicians and bureaucrats honest.

Ten members volunteered to review the annual reports of major government departments.

The reviews monitored in particular their civil liberty and human rights practices, but in some cases also called into question other aspects of management which impinge of performance of duties, which can have an impact on government or department clients.

For example, the ACT Policing annual report appears to contain anomalies where ACT Policing pays the salaries of Australian Federal Police (AFP) officers working on AFP matters, not ACT matters.

If so, ACT taxpayers are subsidizing national taxpayers, and ACT is effectively being under-resourced in police services for the \$90m a year the Territory is paying the AFP and therefore the Australian Government.

This is just one of a many potentially serious problems identified in the ACT Policing annual report.

CLA members have analysed the reports of the:

ACT: Justice and Community Services, including the prisons official visitor; Urban Services; Chief Minister's Dept, ACT Policing.

Federal: Attorney-General's Department; Prime Minister and Cabinet; Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs; Defence; Employment and Workplace Relations; Education, Science and Training; Foreign Affairs and Trade; Health and Ageing (and Medicare); Human Services; Agriculture; Environment and Heritage; Employment and Workplace Relations; Australian Taxation Office; Veterans Affairs; Industry, Tourism and Resources; Family and Community Services; Australian Federal Police.

Problems or anomalies identified in these reports will be taken up in several ways over the coming months.

In some cases, CLA will draw media attention to the issue; in other cases, opposition Parliamentarians in the ACT Legislative Assembly or the Australian Parliament will be given the

opportunity to ask formal questions from the floor of the houses; and in some cases CLA will take the matters up directly with departmental secretaries.

If anyone has an issue which may be covered in an annual report, please get in touch to see whether CLA can include your matter along with others that CLA members have identified.

The CLA board is extremely appreciative of the hard work, behind the scenes, that some members have put in to wade through the less-than-exciting prose of most government annual reports.

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Members can bone up on 'Providing Advice to Government'

A Senate Occasional Lecture in February will be of interest to anyone thinking about lobbying parliamentary committee or public inquiries, or making submissions to royal commissions.

Dr Scott Prasser will give the lecture on Friday 24 February. Attendance is free.

Details are in the Events and Opportunities section, at the end of this email.

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CLA intern provides lead on climate refugee issues

Brooke Horne, an ANU Law student and CLA member about to enter the legal profession, has produced an important research paper as part of a joint ANU-CLA internship initiative.

The 6000-word paper is due for submission on 9 February to Tom Sherman, the ANU Law Faculty's internship supervisor.

The paper addresses the international and Australian legal status of climate or environmental migrants/refugees.

Brooke has apparently found that there is no clear-cut legislation appropriate to people such as Pacific Islanders, forced from their islands by rising sea levels.

His research – and ultimately his recommendations – fits with CLA's strategic aim, which is to anticipate civil liberty and human rights issues and promote the initial debate on them.

CLA is aiming to shape debates in future, rather than being forced to react to the excesses of governments whose actions are provoked by the latest media headlines.

Brooke's three-month internship with CLA was aided by lawyer Mr Gerald Santucci of Stacks/Snedden Hall Gallop, who volunteered his time and expertise as legal supervisor.

The supervision arrangement was organised by Richard Faulks, managing partner of S/SHG and a member of CLA.

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People with extensive public legal experience join the CLA team

CLA has been fortunate in January to welcome two new members with noted legal and liberties backgrounds into our ranks.

The current Australian and ACT Ombudsman, Professor John McMillan, joined CLA early in the month before leaving for an overseas vacation. Apart from his Ombudsman roles (and also from time to time acting as the Inspector General of Intelligence and Security), he is a noted academic lawyer with a long-term interest in liberty and access issues.

Later in January, former Chief Justice of the ACT, Mr Jeffrey Miles, and his wife Patricia joined CLA.

Mr Miles' background in civil liberties goes back 40 years to the early days of the NSW Council for Civil Liberties, when he and other now-senior legal figures donated their time and talents for no financial reward in the period before there was such a thing as Legal Aid, or Legal Aid for Aborigines, and the NSW Police Force ruled in NSW.

The Miles family is already contributing to CLA's activities: reviewing the

ACT's proposed anti-slap writ legislation, formally known as the Court Procedures (Protection of Public Participation) Amendment Bill 2005, sometimes known as the Gunn's Timber Tasmania legislation.

CLA is due to lodge its submission on the Bill by 28 February.

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– from an email from Judith Deland, 30 January 2006

Committee's security legislation reviews slips beneath radar

With the volume of federal anti-terrorism legislation campaigning, submissions, meetings and lobbying, some important associated hearings have slipped underneath the monitoring radar without appropriate attention by most – if not all – civil liberty groups.

For example, an important committee meets from 9.30am to 4.30pm on Friday 3 February in Canberra to hear oral evidence on security legislation in general.

The committee will hear further evidence in Melbourne on 7 February and in Perth on 20 February.

Under s4 of the *Security Legislation Amendment (Terrorism) Act 2002* the Attorney-General must hold a public and independent review of the operation of security acts relating to terrorism.

A-G Philip Ruddock established the Security Legislation Review Committee on 12 October 2005 to review the operation, effectiveness and implications of amendments made by the:

Security Legislation Amendment (Terrorism) Act 2002

Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism Act 2002

Criminal Code Amendment (Suppression of Terrorist Bombings) Act 2002

Border Security Legislation Amendment Act 2002

Telecommunications Interception Legislation Amendment Act 2002

Criminal Code Amendment (Terrorism) Act 2003

Further information is available from: <http://www.ag.gov.au/slrc>

It has been reported that the committee was, as late as Monday 30 January, still looking for people to make submissions.

Anyone interested in appearing before the committee, or making a submission, can contact Lisa Fox on 0407441528 in the A-G's office.

After the public hearings, the committee has six months to give the A-G and the Parliamentary Joint Committee on ASIO, ASIS and DSD a written report of the review, including an assessment of the Acts and "alternative approaches or mechanisms as appropriate".

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CLA produces first brochure, website is next

CLA has produced its first promotional brochure for use at the ANU's open day for new students in February.

The brochure, an A4 page printed back and front, can be sent electronically if you would like to print off copies for friends or colleagues. Just email the secretary for a copy to be sent to you.

We're now working on CLA's first website. Any ideas or suggestions gratefully received.

Other major activities during January included:

- submission to the ACT Standing Legal Affairs Committee hearing into the proposed ACT Anti-Terrorism legislation. Director Anthony Williamson and Secretary Bill Rowlings subsequently gave oral evidence at the hearings, as did CLA member Dr Helen Wiles, who made a private submission.
- following up the analyses by members of annual reports. Letters and requests for information have

been sent to a number of departments and Ministers.

- preparing for Market Day, part of Orientation Week, at the ANU. CLA will have a stand promoting membership among students. Anyone with an hour to spare on Wednesday 15 February might volunteer their time to help man the stand. Contact Anthony Williamson on 0412 629 035. ANU Law student members of CLA are particularly invited to volunteer.
- briefing Greens MLA Dr Deb Foskey on ACT Policing's annual report; arranging a similar meeting with the Liberals Shadow Attorney-General, Bill Stefaniak.
- writing a number of CLA letters, in the President's name, to the editor of the Canberra Times, with many CLA members also strongly addressing important issues in letters to the paper. CLA member Keith McEwan drafted a letter to go under the President's name on Australia Day.
- assembling and analysing responses to a Freedom of Information (FOI) request to several ACT authorities in relation to possible use/abuse of speed cameras.
 - contacting noted songwriter Eric Boyle and briefing him with a view to a new song highlighting the anomalies of the recently-passed anti-terror legislation, and how Australian society is being changed.
 - arranging a meeting with Tasmanian Council of Civil Liberties president Paul Storr in Hobart in February. This is part of bringing to fruition an Australian Council of Civil Liberties during 2006.
 - radio interview with shock jock Stan Zemanek on the national ID card issue. Stan declined the offer for CLA to take over his program on a regular basis.
 - writing and posting the first in the newly-conceived CLA Australia Day letters series, on the death penalty (see story below).

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– from UNity, e-bulletin of the UN Association of Australia, 27 Jan 2006,

Professor criticises Australia's approach to death penalty in Asia

In the light of Australians facing the death penalty in South East Asia, the Australian Government should take a much harder line against capital punishment. according to Philip Alston, adviser to the UN and a professor of law at New York University.

He told the ABC's AM program on 25 January that Australia hasn't done enough to prevent the death sentence being used against Australians accused of drug trafficking in Asia.

While agreeing that Australian Federal Police should assist countries such as Indonesia to deal with trans-national crime, as it has done in the case of the Bali 9, Prof Alston says it should do so on the condition that no Australian can be sentenced to death.

<http://www.abc.net.au/am/content/2006/s1554755.htm>

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CLA lodges formal requests for AFP death penalty protocols to change

CLA has formally asked Justice Minister Chris Ellison and Foreign Minister Alexander Downer to change the Australian Federal Police's guidelines in relation to death penalty offences overseas.

CLA's Australia Day letters to the two Ministers point out that formal guidelines permitted the AFP to pass information to Indonesian authorities in a way that resulted in Bali 9 alleged drug smugglers facing the death penalty.

The letters highlighted that the Australian Government was opposed to the death penalty, but the Australian Government's police force was apparently in favour of handing over intelligence to Asian countries regardless of the obvious potential consequences for Australians to face the death penalty.

The letters asked for an immediate review of all protocols and guidelines, and for them to be changed so that the AFP was not permitted to hand over intelligence in such a way again.

The two letters are the first in what CLA plans will be a series: each Australia Day, CLA will issue one or more letters targeting important and topical civil liberties and human rights issues needing urgent action.

We await responses from Mr Ellison and Mr Downer.

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ID cards, despite denials, are now almost a certainty

The Australian Government is consulting with the left brain...and indicating it has already made up its mind with the right!

The issue? Whether or not to introduce a national identity card (ID card).

If introduced, it will become mandatory to carry the card, even if that is not the case in the first instance.

In January, Prime Minister John Howard and Attorney-General Philip Ruddock each indicated their support for an ID card. Its time has come, they claim.

However, on 5 December 2005, the Special Minister of State, Senator Eric Abetz, released a discussion paper on the proposal to extend the Australian Government e-Authentication Framework (AGAF) to individuals.

Senator Abetz was at pains to claim that the AGAF was NOT an ID card system.

"The AGAF is not a national ID system or a central registry of personal information," the Senator said.

"It is a policy framework that provides guidance to agencies whose electronically delivered services require e-authentication of individuals' identity and/or other assertions.

"It seeks to provide individuals with safe and convenient access to services they are entitled to receive,

without exposing either individuals or government to avoidable risks.

"The AGAF is a whole-of-government approach to e-authentication."

Senator Abetz's denial of the obvious – that his proposed scheme lays the ground for an ID card – was trumped just six weeks later by the Attorney-General, Philip Ruddock.

In a speech on terrorism on 21 January, Attorney-General Ruddock said:

"The Government will also be undertaking an independent review of the national identity card proposal.

"After the London bombings the Prime Minister made it clear that everything was back on the table, including the possibility of a national identity card.

"We will be asking what are the benefits of a national identity card, what are the associated costs of a national identity card and do the benefits of the card outweigh the costs or vice versa?"

"In relation to terrorism, the question we will be asking is not would an ID card prevent terrorist attacks or terrorist activities, but would it help in carrying out investigations into terrorist activities? Would it make it easier to track down people engaged in terrorist activities and would it make it harder for people who are engaged in terrorist activities to assume false identities?"

Mr Ruddock carefully-crafted questions carefully preparing the ground for adopting a national ID card.

There is no doubt we will all be card-carrying members of a terrorised Australia before the end of the current Howard government.

CLA plans to fight for introduction of world's best guidelines and data privacy protocols to apply to both the government and private sector if a national ID card is introduced.

Also, we will be campaigning for a role for civil liberties groups in regular, robust monitoring of the ID card in

particular and data privacy in general as part of a supervisory council.

There is currently no practical protection of either government or privately-held data in Australia, apart from the somewhat irrelevant provisions of the Privacy Act.

What is urgently needed are strict rules on data matching by government and the private sector, and on where and how data is held and safeguarded.

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– from a report by Tom Zeller Jnr. In NY Times, 27 January 2006

US company pays up \$15m after leak of consumer data

The US Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has reached a \$15 million settlement with ChoicePoint Inc., a commercial data broker which last February disclosed that thieves had duped the company and gained access to private data on more than 145,000 people.

“That revelation touched off a year of national debate over data privacy and security and generated a raft of tough new state laws on data security as well as several bills in Congress,” Tom Zeller Jnr wrote in the New York Times.

The settlement includes \$10 million in fines — the largest civil penalty ever imposed by the FTC — as well as \$5 million in consumer compensation.

The compensation stems from accusations that its handling of consumer data and its inadequate security procedures amounted to violations of consumer privacy rights and federal law.

The company, based in Georgia, will also be required to overhaul its security program and submit to independent audits of its procedures every two years for the next 20 years.

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– from a report by Katie Hafner, with David Bernstein and Michael Falcone, in the New York Times, 25 Jan 2006

US Govt plans ‘big brother’ search monitoring...including our searches

The US Justice Department is asking a federal judge to make Google turn over records on millions of its users' search queries... presumably including searches by Australians.

Google is resisting the request, but three competitors – Yahoo, MSN and America Online – have turned over similar information, presumably including searches by Australians.

The US Government and the cooperating companies say the search queries cannot be traced to their source, and therefore no personal information about users is being given up.

But the US move is one of several recent episodes that have caused some people to think twice about what they type into a search engine, or the opinions they express in an email message.

The US Government has been more aggressive recently in its efforts to obtain data on Internet activity, invoking the fight against terrorism and the prosecution of online crime, according to the New York Times report.

A surveillance program in which the National Security Agency intercepted international phone calls and email in the USA without court-approved warrants prompted an outcry among civil libertarians.

And under the anti-terrorism USA Patriot Act, the US Justice Department has demanded records on library patrons' Internet use.

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– from ACLU email, 26 January 2006

US Patriot Act up for vote this week.

The US counter-terrorism legislation, the ‘Patriot Act’, will be renewed or will lapse early this month.

A temporary, five-week extension ends on 3 February.

“The Bush administration has presented Americans with two all or

nothing choices: keep a conference report that contains no common sense reforms to protect civil liberties, or let the Patriot Act expire. This is a false choice," says Anthony D. Romero, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union.

"Congress can and must pass a Patriot Act reauthorization bill that contains real reforms to protect our civil liberties," Romero says.

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– from Toronto Star, 21 Jan 06, reported by Phinjo Gombu, through CLA member Robert Briggs

Man charged over attack on reporter in 2002 Afghanistan blast

An Afghan man held at the US detention facility in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, has been charged in connection with a grenade attack in Afghanistan four years ago that seriously injured then Toronto Star journalist Kathleen Kenna.

The US military has just charged Abdul Zahir with conspiracy, aiding the enemy and attacking civilians.

Zahir was arrested four months after attack and transferred to Guantanamo. Some reports claim he is a key Al Qaeda operative, a translator and courier who funnelled money to a terrorist cell in Afghanistan.

Kenna, then the Star's correspondent in Afghanistan, was travelling through the eastern town of Zormat on 4 March 2002 with her husband Hadi Dadashian and Star photographer Bernard Weil when a hand grenade was hurled at their car.

She sustained extensive injuries to her right leg. Dadashian and Weil escaped unhurt.

"This story is news because it may represent the first time in 10 'presidential military commissions' that the Bush Administration has charged someone with something actually accepted as a war crime under international law, ie, count three: 'harming civilians'," says CLA member Robert Briggs.

"All the other charges of course are unknown to the Geneva Conventions or international humanitarian (war) law, customary international law, etc," Briggs said.

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– from a report by Muningsari Saraswati, Jakarta Post, 13 Jan 2006

Time 'ripe' for judicial reform in Indonesia, Jakarta Post says

The Indonesia government, the House of Representatives and the public should keep up their pressure on the judiciary after the recent arrests of a district court judge and several Supreme Court officials, a legal watchdog has said, according to a report in the Jakarta Post.

The Indonesian Judicial Monitoring Society (MaPPI) at the University of Indonesia's School of Law said public pressure was vital if there was to be a comprehensive reform of the judiciary.

"Institutions like the Supreme Court and the Attorney General's Office (AGO) were focussed on dealing with periphery problems, like information systems and administrative reform, but were ignoring the key issue -- corruption and crooked officials," MaPPI head Asep Rahmat Fajar said.

"The number of violations committed by judicial officials remain as high as ever,"

The newly-formed Judicial Commission, set up by the President to investigate the courts last year, received 388 complaints between August and December. Twelve of the complaints have already been processed, while 94 are still ongoing.

Changes in or the reform of human resources was key to restoring public faith in a system most people now believed was morally bankrupt, he said.

In his election campaign in 2004, President Bambang Yudhoyono pledged to root out graft in the courts. More than a year later, neither the Supreme Court nor the Attorney

General's Office has started its pledged internal reforms.

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– from a report by Roger Pearson. UK Press Gazette, 19 January 2006

Protecting journalists' sources is a human right, UK High Court is told

A UK freelance journalist, Robin Ackroyd, is fighting to protect his sources for a London Daily Mirror story about Moors murderer Ian Brady by claiming the protection is a 'human right'.

The case began in the UK High Court in mid-January.

Ackroyd's claim will test whether the UK Human Rights Act can help journalists to protect their sources.

His QC Gavin Millar's written submission argues that the disclosure of the information by the sources was an act of expression within the Article 10 right to "freedom of expression" in the European Convention on Human Rights, which was "justified in the public interest".

He claims Ackroyd's disclosure to the newspaper was an exercise of his right to freedom of expression which was also justified in the public interest, and so Ackroyd should be entitled to retain the right to keep his source anonymous under the 1981 Contempt of Court Act.

Mersey Care NHS Trust, which runs the top security Ashworth Hospital where Brady is locked up, claims the need to protect medical records overrides the right of expression.

The hospital is asking Mr Justice Tugendhat to order Ackroyd to reveal his source for a story he wrote in the Daily Mirror in December 1999, which quoted from confidential patient records following the killer's hunger strike.

<http://www.pressgazette.co.uk/article/190106/>

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– 1 January 2006, from a report by Warren Hoge in the New York Times

UN wants quick fix for ailing, embarrassing HR Commission

UN heavies have decided to act in the first few months of 2006 to solve the problem of the discredited Human Rights Commission.

Countries like Cuba, Sudan and Zimbabwe – full members of the HRC – are themselves accused of major rights abuses, which is embarrassing for the core UN body.

"Highly abusive governments flock to the commission to prevent condemnation of themselves and their kind, and most of the time they succeed," according to executive director of Human Rights Watch, Kenneth Roth.

Mr Annan begins his last year as UN General Secretary with a mandate to bring fundamental and lasting change to the HRC.

Negotiators must settle on a resolution for the new council soon after to have it in place by March, when the commission reconvenes in Geneva.

The current commission has 53 members serving staggered three-year terms. It meets each year in Geneva for six weeks.

The proposed council would exist year-round, be free to act when rights violations are discovered, conduct periodic reviews of every country's human rights performance and meet more frequently throughout the year, according to the New York Times report.

Still in dispute are the council's size, the procedures for citing individual countries, how often the panel would meet, a possible two-term limit for membership and whether members would be chosen based on agreed criteria of human rights performance or by a two-thirds vote of the UN General Assembly as a way of weeding out notorious rights-violating countries.

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– from a report by Helene Zuber in Der Spiegel (Germany), 9 Jan 06, as translated by Christopher Sultan

Morocco's King aims to build a modern Islamic democracy

Morocco's 42-year-old King Mohammed VI is using religion innovatively to help modernise his society, according to reporter Helen Zuber in Der Spiegel.

"By granting new rights to women and strengthening civil liberties, the ruler of this country of 30 million on Africa's northern edge, which is 99 per cent Muslim, plans to democratize Morocco through a tolerant interpretation of the Koran," she writes.

The country, just south of Spain, depends greatly on western tourism for income.

Morocco's dynasty is 350 years old, second only to the Japanese imperial dynasty. It claims direct descent from prophet Mohammed. And as "Amir al-Muminin," or leader of the faithful, the country's ruler enjoys absolute authority.

The Conseil Supérieur des Oulémas, or council of religious scholars, which the king installed a year and a half ago, has been issuing fatwas on the most pressing questions of the 21st century -- and, surprisingly, they've been well-received by both young people and hardened Islamists, according to Zuber.

"If the king's reform plan succeeds, Morocco could become a model of democratic Islam.

"Five decades after his country declared its independence from its French and Spanish colonial rulers and six years after the death of his father, Hassan II, Mohammed VI is trying to achieve a delicate balance between thousands of years of Islamic tradition and the demands of a globalised world.

"Eight weeks ago Mohammed VI, as Morocco's 'citizen king' and 'first servant', addressed his 'dear people' during festivities to celebrate the anniversary of his grandfather's return from exile.

"The path we have irrevocably chosen," said Mohammed, "is to strengthen civil rights for the benefit of all Moroccans - whom I view as equals, regardless of their status."

Article: <http://www.spiegel.de/international/spiegel/0,1518,394869,00.html>

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– from FIDH email, 09 Jan 2006

Ethiopia danger increases for HR activists

Since elections on 15 May 2005, human rights violations in Addis Ababa and other Ethiopian cities and towns have escalated – killings, arbitrary and incommunicado detentions, beatings, torture, harassment and disappearances by security forces – according to the International Federation of Human Rights Defenders (FIDH).

More than 40 people died in protests in June 2005 when the main opposition parties accused authorities of election rigging to return the ruling party, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front led by the Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi.

According to the 6 December 2005 Special Report No 90 of the Ethiopian Human Rights Council (EHRCO), at least 34 unarmed protesters, including students and children, were killed by police forces, 62 injured, 28 disappeared and thousands arrested in November.

At least 300 people were still in detention, including civilians, leaders of the opposition parties, human rights defenders and journalists.

The situation is now deteriorating and the repression is continuing notably against journalists, according to FIDH. Since 1 November, 15 journalists have been arrested and an unknown number of others detained incommunicado. Their family members have been threatened and in some cases also detained by security forces, who have also raided the offices of several newspapers and seized documents and computers.

According to Prime Minister Zenawi, the journalists were trying to instigate violence through their newspapers. They will be charged with treason, an offence that carries the death penalty in Ethiopia.

http://www.fidh.org/article.php3?id_article=2921

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– from Human Rights First email, 19 Jan 05

One convicted, four go free, over HR lawyer's disappearance

On January 12 a Thai judge found a mid-ranking policeman guilty of coercion in the case of the disappearance of human rights lawyer Somchai Neelaphajit.

Police Major Ngern Thongsuk was sentenced to three years in jail.

But the other four defendants, all policemen, were acquitted due to lack of evidence, and the charges of robbery and coercion never matched the seriousness of the crime, Human Rights First says.

The Prime Minister of Thailand, Thaksin Shinawatra, had earlier doubted justice would be served.

"We know that he is dead, as we have found some evidence. Government officials were definitely involved in this, and there were more than four, but whether the evidence will lead to punishment in court is another thing," the PM said.

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– from a BBC report by Brendan O'Neill, 4 Jan 2006

Jewish academic says Holocaust denier Irving should be freed

Notorious historian David Irving is in an Austrian jail, facing trial for denying the Nazi Holocaust, but an American Jewish academic says he should be set free.

Professor Deborah Lipstadt, an American Jewish academic, says: "Let him go and let him fade from everyone's radar screens."

She says that the Austrian authorities should let him go, lest he is sentenced to jail and becomes a 'martyr'.

Irving became a cause celebre in Australia, when the Government denied him the right to lecture here.

Now 67, he made his name as a World War Two historian but then became infamous for claiming the Holocaust didn't happen.

In November 2005 he was arrested in Austria for two speeches he made in 1989, during which he allegedly claimed there had been no gas chambers at Auschwitz.

It is a crime in Austria to minimise the atrocities of the Third Reich and the historian faces up to 10 years imprisonment if found guilty, O'Neill reports.

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– from Human Rights first email, 25 Jan 06

Russian court to decide whether peace call is criminal

On 3 February, a Russian court will decide whether human rights activist Stanislav Dmitrievsky committed a crime when he published articles calling for peace in Chechnya.

If convicted, he faces up to five years in prison.

A conviction would also set a dangerous precedent for all Russians – including human rights defenders and independent journalists – who exercise their right to question and criticise government policies.

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– from MEAA email, 27 Jan 2005

Three media people killed each week on average during 2005

Of 150 media staff killed, 36 were from the Asia Pacific region according to the International Federation of Journalists' (IFJ) annual report into media people killed in 2005.

There were 89 media people killed "in the line of duty" – many assassinated by political gangs or criminals.

The full report is at
<http://www.ifj.org/default.asp?Index=3660&Language=EN>

* *MEAA is the Media Arts and Entertainment Alliance (union)*

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– as above

Chinese authorities ban newspapers, imprison journalists

The South China Morning Post reports that Chinese authorities banned 79 newspapers during 2005 and two journalists were imprisoned for up to 10 years for "publishing an unauthorised magazine that exposed local land disputes."

Full story at
<http://www.theage.com.au/articles/2006/01/25/1138066865147.html>

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Events and Opportunities:

1 February 2006, Canberra: Politics in the Pub: *The Price of Power – Economics of Energy Reform*. Economist Richard Dennis (of the Australia Institute, Australian Democrats and now Australian Greens fame); Wig and Pen back room. Canberra House Arcade, Alinga St, Civic. 6.30pm Further info: MLA Dr Deb Foskey, ACT Greens, 6205 0161.

1 February 2006, Canberra: United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) moves from Sydney to Canberra at Level 1, 7 National Circuit, Barton ACT 2600.

3 February, 2006, Canberra: Security legislation review hearings (see story and contact details in text above).

24 February, 2006, Canberra: Providing Advice to Government: the role and use of parliamentary committees, royal commissions, public inquiries and other advisory instruments. Dr Scott Prasser, Main Committee Room, Parliament House, 12.15-1.15pm, Admission free. Inquiries to Senate Procedures Officer (02) 6277 3074.

Until March 2006, Sydney: The Face of Human Rights photo exhibition, Justice & Police Museum, Cnr Phillip & Albert Streets, Circular Quay. Celebrating 150 years in Australia by the the Consulate

General of Switzerland. Human rights and their violation have many faces – what do these faces look like? Weekends 10am – 5pm, open daily in January. Cost: Free with museum entry. More information: www.eda.admin.ch/australia_all/e_home/cult/present.html or phone the Consulate General of Switzerland on 02 8383 4010

10-12 April 2006, Sydney: Australasian Law Reform Agencies Conference (ALRAC) 10–12 April 2006. Details: <http://www.alrc.gov.au/events/events/alrac/index.html>

19-22 April, Melbourne: *Community Development in a 'Global Risk Society'* conference www.deakin.edu.au/cchr/cd or contact Anne OKeefe, Centre for Citizenship and Human Rights, Deakin U. **03 5227 2113** or email: anne.okeefe@deakin.edu.au

23 April, World: World Book and Copyright Day www.unesco.org

3 May, World World Press Freedom Day www.unesco.org

June/July, Melbourne: Civil Liberties dinner honoring Brian Fitzpatrick, the man credited with initiating public emphasis on liberty and rights issues, and sowing the seed for CL and HR organisations, in Australia.

26 June, World: International Day in Support of Victims of Torture www.un.org/rights

10 December, World: Human Rights Day www.ohchr.org

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CLArion welcomes contributions. We particularly welcome news from our own members, and from interstate CL and other bodies. Please send any items by email. See top of document for email address. Include your name and membership details (eg, CLA, NSW CCL, or Qld CCL, or whatever) and details of where the story came from so we can credit the original source, if it is not you.

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