



A weekly e-newsletter for civil society from CIVICUS!

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Poll question

This week's question: The greatest need for civil society to strengthen its work comes from:

- Freedom of Information legislation
 - Strong National Human Rights institutions
 - Lifting of curbs on accessing funding from across borders
- To answer the question, [click here](#)

Previous question: The killing and harassment of protestors in Guinea this week urgently requires:

- an independent, impartial investigation by international experts
- commitment by the military not to interfere with or contest elections
- freedom of expression and assembly
- all of the above

Results: a. - 18.2%, b. - 9.1%, c. - 9.1%, d. - 63.6%

Get involved

It's time to stand and be counted

It is very important to tell the Stand Up Take Action campaign how many people attended your event. Your count helps them know how many people worldwide are participating and is essential to breaking their Guinness World Record for the largest mobilisation in history. These numbers collectively reflect the power of the global movement. Visit <http://standagainstopoverty.org/> for more information on how to register the number of participants at your event.

We Welcome Contributions

e-CIVICUS is a useful channel through which you and your organisation can share your news, publicise your events and articulate the issues you face. Please send us your contributions by Monday for publication in the coming week to editor@civicus.org. To read the contribution guidelines, [click here](#).

From the Desk of the Secretary General



Nobel Omissions and Commissions

As the media storm surrounding last week's announcement of the Nobel Peace Prize erupted, it was easy to forget that the weekend marked the 125th anniversary of the birth of Eleanor Roosevelt. Amidst all the controversy regarding the merits of this year's winner of the prize, it might be apt to remember the woman who is amongst the Nobel Committee's most prominent omissions.

Her work in advancing labour and women's rights and her tireless campaigning against racial discrimination in the USA could, in and of themselves, have merited the honour. Add her leading role in drafting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the award should have been inevitable.

Like several others denied the prize, notably Mahatma Gandhi and Ken Saro-Wiwa, Eleanor Roosevelt did not merely achieve remarkable impact in her own lifetime, but continues to serve as an inspiration decades later. Arguably, Barack Obama owes some of his own opportunities more to Ms. Roosevelt's efforts than to any prior recipient, barring Martin Luther King Jr.

If, in the Nobel Committee's words, multilateral diplomacy, the role of the United Nations, democracy, human rights, a vision of a more just and peaceful world and a concept of values-based leadership are, in fact, some of the criteria for awarding the prize, few candidates were better qualified than Eleanor Roosevelt.

Who do you think are other remarkable individuals the Nobel Committee has ignored? Write in to: editor@civicus.org.

With faith, gratitude and solidarity,

News in brief

Press Release: South Africans join millions worldwide in "Stand Up & Take Action Against Poverty"

"Stand Up, Take Action, End Poverty Now!" mobilisation will take place from 16th to 18th October, bringing together millions of people across the globe to call on world leaders to eradicate extreme poverty and achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Last year almost 117 million people participated in this annual campaign, the majority from poor countries, breaking the Guinness World Record for the largest mobilisation of human beings in recorded history. For details, [click here](#).

CIVICUS Submission to the 2009 Meeting of the Commonwealth Committee of the Whole

CIVICUS has made a submission to the 2009 Meeting of the Commonwealth Committee of the Whole on the occasion of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM). While CIVICUS recognises the commitment of the Commonwealth to democratic rights and fundamental freedoms, we urge the Commonwealth to further strengthen existing human rights mechanisms and explore the possibility of a complaints procedure whereby individuals and civil society organisations can represent pressing human rights concerns. Additionally, CIVICUS calls upon all Commonwealth member states to ratify the core international human rights treaties and their optional protocols as well as support regional human rights mechanisms. To read the full submission, [click here](#).

Letter from CIVICUS to the President of Kazakhstan

CIVICUS Secretary General, Ingrid Srinath has sent a letter to the H.E. President Nursultan Nazarbaev, President of Kazakhstan with regard to the conviction of human rights defender, Mr. Yevgeny Zhovtis. CIVICUS believes that the trial leading to his conviction was impaired by the denial of due process rights protected under both Kazakh law as well as international law. To read the letter, [click here](#).

Civil Society Watch team reflections on strategic human rights advocacy opportunities in Geneva

By: Sonia Zilberman, Civil Society Watch Programme Officer, CIVICUS

In late September, three members of the Civil Society Watch (CSW) programme team of CIVICUS travelled to Geneva to attend the 12th Session of the UN Human Rights Council, and hold a 'side event' at the UN building titled "Protecting Free Voices And Civil Society Freedoms" in partnership with The World Organisation Against Torture. The trip was instrumental for team members to speak about the mission, vision and work of the programme at this important international forum as well as strengthen interactions with the Human Rights Council, delegates, and other civil society representatives. It helped the team to map out strategic engagement opportunities with the Human Rights Council and other human rights

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Events

The Development Marketplace 2009: Global competition on climate adaptation

10 - 13 November 2009, World Bank Headquarters, Washington, D.C.

The Development Marketplace is a competitive grant programme administered by the World Bank. The 2009 global competition is funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and additional DM partners. It aims to identify 20 to 25 innovative, early-stage projects addressing climate adaptation. For details, [click here](#).

5th International Conference on ICT for Development, Education and Training

26 - 28 May 2010, Lusaka, Zambia

Meeting the networking needs of the pan-African eLearning and distance education sector, the annual eLearning Africa conference is the key networking venue for practitioners and professionals from Africa and all over the world. For details, [click here](#).

Book Reviews

From Political Won't to Political Will

Source: Kumarian Press

Despite a recent wave of democratisation around the world, traditional systems of representative democracy seem to be in crisis. Citizens in both the North and the South lack opportunities, rights and access to information and have expressed growing disillusionment with their governments. Ordinary citizens (especially women, poor people and other marginalised groups) are largely excluded from the political processes that directly affect their lives. For details, [click here](#).

For more book reviews, [click here](#)

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You Tube

Check out our video channel:
<http://www.youtube.com/user/civicusworldalliance>

Appointments

This week, new civil society job openings have been added to the CIVICUS website. Please [click here](#). Should you wish to publish a New Vacancy, please click on [Add job](#). Please add an expiry date for applications.

Director, Demand Dignity and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Programme

Application Deadline: 25 October 2009

Amnesty International
Location: Central London
For details, [click here](#).

Civil Society Index Senior Programme Officer

Application Deadline: 30 October 2009

CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation

mechanisms in Geneva. Further, the trip helped underscore the importance of permanent representation for CIVICUS at the UN to promote human rights and civil society freedoms of expression, assembly and association at intergovernmental fora. [click here](#).

Growing journalists from agriculturalists

By: Kris Rampersad

Media Consultant Dr Kris Rampersad focuses on how agriculture has been marginalised in Trinidad and Tobago. Opportunities within the energy sector – gas and oil in particular – are seen as the basis for development. Imported agricultural products and foodstuffs are seen as a measure of status and advancement. She argues that agriculture must develop its own links with the media. A proactive approach that includes making full use of new media and establishing direct contact with individual journalists could lead to a stronger, more positive image of agriculture and its critical importance. For details, [click here](#).

Aid workers must have access to those in need in Yemen, stresses top UN official

Source: UN News Centre

The top United Nations humanitarian official has urged all sides in the conflict in northern Yemen to ensure that aid workers can reach those in need, noting that insecurity is hampering access to several areas. Some 150,000 people have been driven from their homes by fighting between Government forces and Al Houthi rebels that resumed in mid-August. "I urge all involved in the conflict to ensure the protection of civilians in line with international humanitarian law, to allow us to reach those who need assistance, rapidly and without hindrance, and to enable civilians to leave insecure areas," Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs John Holmes said yesterday as he concluded his mission to Yemen. For details, [click here](#).

Four years on, RTI a powerful weapon for ordinary Indians

Source: Thaindian News

Thanks to the Right to Information (RTI) Act, a 30-year-old suffering from kidney stones was finally able to get himself operated on at a government hospital after doing the rounds of the place for nearly a year. Haroon, who lives in a slum cluster in northeast Delhi, had been going to Guru Teg Bahadur Hospital for one year to get his stones removed, but in vain as doctors would put him off with one excuse after another. "He was sent back from the hospital four times - once he had to return home from the operating theatre. With our help he filed an RTI application seeking the details of his case," said Rajeev Sharma of the NGO Pardarshita. For details, [click here](#).

Are Palestinian refugees human enough to warrant protection?

By: Jacob M. Mati, Civil Society Index (CSI) Research Officer

I had an interesting conversation with some colleagues a few days ago where one of them got so infuriated at my insistence that human rights are not universal and nothing in them has ever been universal. Before you cry 'crucify him', allow me to illustrate my argument with the goings on in the world today, and as they have always been, even before the United Nations General Assembly delusion in the proclamation of the 'Universal Declaration of Human Rights' (UDHR) on 10 December 1948. For details, [click here](#).

Behind The Sri Lankan Bloodbath

Source: Forbes

Thousands of noncombatants, according to the United Nations, were killed in the final phase of the Sri Lankan war this year as government forces overran the Tamil Tiger guerrillas. Nearly five months after Colombo's stunning military triumph, the peace dividend remains elusive, with President Mahinda Rajapaksa setting out - in the name of "eternal vigilance" - to expand by 50% an already-large military. Little effort has been made to reach out to the Tamil minority and begin a process of national reconciliation. For details, [click here](#).

Forced to Flee

Source: IRIN Films

IRIN Films is pleased to announce the launch of two more films as part of our ongoing series on internal displacement entitled, "Forced to Flee". Almost two years after election related violence in Kenya forced more than half a million people from their homes, some groups are using government payments to buy land and build new settlements from scratch. Now that the war in Northern Uganda has largely subsided, hundreds of thousands of people have left protected camps and returned to their villages but many of the most vulnerable remain. For details, [click here](#).



Are you one of the missing 85?

One CIVICUS member for every UN member state, that's the goal of CIVICUS' 1 for 1 Membership campaign. [Click here](#).

Resources

Facts and figures of parliament around the world

Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)

The Inter-Parliamentary Union provides some interesting statistics on parliaments around the world. These figures have been based on data from their PARLINE database on national parliaments. For details, [click here](#).

Resources on the International Day of Democracy

Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)

In preparation for the International Day of Democracy in 2008 and 2009, the IPU issued a series of illustrative materials which can be downloaded from this website. Printed materials have been posted to all parliaments. For details, [click here](#).

Location: Johannesburg, South Africa
For details, [click here](#).

Civil Society Index Programme Officer

Application Deadline: 30 October 2009

CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation

Location: Johannesburg, South Africa

For details, [click here](#).

Internship Programme

Africa in Democracy and Good Governance (ADG)

Location: Gambia, West Africa

For details, [click here](#).

Civil Society Advisory Committee Member

Application Deadline: 30 November 2009

Commonwealth Foundation

Location: International

For details, [click here](#).

Commitment to Development Index

Source: Center for Global Development

Rich and poor countries are linked in many ways by foreign aid, commerce, migration, the environment and military affairs. The Commitment to Development Index (CDI) rates 22 rich countries on how much they help poor countries build prosperity, good government and security. Each rich country gets scores in seven policy areas, which are averaged for an overall score. For details, [click here](#).

Opportunities

Call for MDG Good Practices

Deadline: 1 November 2009

The UNDP is now calling for Good Practice cases on the achievement of MD/MDGs, in conjunction with the preparation for the MDG Good Practice book to be published early next year as part of the preparation for the 2010 MDG Review. They are particularly looking for government interventions in which a specific challenge or/and bottleneck has been identified and effectively addressed to contribute to the achievement of a particular Goal. Good practices may include those that have been executed by the government. These may also include those supported by civil society and/or the UN agencies, funds and programmes. To download the template, [click here](#).

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