

IPU E-BULLETIN

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New and Old Human Rights Abuses Come Before IPU Human Rights Committee –

New cases on the human rights violations of MPs around the world as well as entrenched on-going ones will be the focus of next week's meeting of the IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians. The Committee, meeting in Geneva between 20-23 July, will examine and take decisions on next steps on several new cases involving the alleged intimidation, attacks, wrongful and politically motivated arrests or disqualification of MPs that have emerged in recent months. It will also examine on-going public and confidential cases. Among those that are public knowledge include Anwar Ibrahim in Malaysia, Birgitta Jonsdottir in Iceland and Sam Rainsy in Cambodia. The on-going detention of nearly 20 per cent of Palestinian MPs, the lack of developments in Rwanda as well as some positive news in Burundi will also feature during the four-day meeting. The IPU Committee, which will elect a new president to follow the presidency of Belgian Senator Philippe Mahoux, will revise its working methods in a bid to yield more results on the more than 200 cases it currently deals with. This includes more field visits and the greater involvement of the IPU membership in addressing human rights violations of parliamentarians in their countries.

Ray of Hope for Burundi's Victims of Gender-Based Violence –

Wide-ranging consultations are to take place in the Burundian capital, Bujumbura, on 18-19 July in the first of several steps that should eventually result in new legislation being adopted to tackle gender-based violence in the East African country. The IPU-Burundian Parliament organized consultations, which will bring together up to 100 people from the Burundian parliament, government ministries, human rights bodies, law enforcers, civil society and media, are part of an IPU gender support programme to the Burundian parliament funded by USAID and Irish Aid. The creation of a law to address gender-based violence has been identified as an urgent priority by Burundian MPs keen to provide greater protection and rights for women in the country, in particular the Association of Women MPs. The consultations will focus on the types of violence, their causes, their scale and their impact as well as on what structures and laws are already in place to deal with the issue. There is little up-to-date information on the scale of the problem in Burundi although one centre in Bujumbura providing support to victims of sexual violence including rape takes in about 110 women and girls each month, more than 68 per cent of them minors. Among them, 17 per cent of the girls are under five years of age. Following the consultations, a committee established to draft a law against gender-based violence will begin its work, using IPU expertise. IPU's Burundi programme is one of several addressing violence against women that the Organization is working on in African countries. Currently support is being given to developing and adopting legislation in Burkina Faso and Togo with plans to extend the support to other countries at the end of the year.

Raising the Profile of HIV and AIDS in Your Parliament – Practical advice for MPs wanting to set up cross-party groups in their parliament to tackle HIV/AIDS has been put together in a new IPU publication, *Raising the Profile of HIV and AIDS in Your Parliament*. The guidelines will be launched at a parliamentary meeting organized by the IPU on 23 July at Capitol Hill in Washington D.C., during the XIXth International AIDS Conference that takes place between 22-27 July. The IPU guidelines will complement the

theme of the IPU meeting *AIDS in 2012: What will it take to stop the epidemic?* with MPs also discussing how HIV science can be translated into policy and practice and how to transform concern over HIV into laws and political leadership. *Raising the Profile of HIV and AIDS in Your Parliament* currently available in English, also provides advice to civil society organizations on how to best work with MPs on HIV and AIDS. To access the guidelines online, please go to: <http://www.ipu.org/pdf/publications/hiv-aids-guide-e.pdf>

National Parliaments Urged to Strengthen IPU Efforts on Protecting Human Rights – IPU members are being asked to respond to a new survey that will help the Organization to strengthen its efforts in enhancing parliamentary contribution to the promotion and protection of human rights. The survey, available in English, French and Spanish, aims to assess parliaments' current involvement in national reports to the UN on how human rights are being respected in their respective countries. These reports contribute to the monitoring of individual human rights conventions and also result in country-specific recommendations being made. Among the key contributions parliaments can make on human rights are discussing the draft national report before their governments submit them to the UN and debating and taking action on UN recommendations through legislation and holding governments to account. To respond to the survey in English, please go to: <http://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/954328/IPU-SURVEY> In French, please go to: <http://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/957848/ENQUETE-UIP> and in Spanish, <http://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/956886/ENCUESTA-UIP>