

SPECIAL BULLETIN - OCTOBER 2008

UN Torture Rapporteur: Forced Treatment Against Disability Convention, May Be Torture
The World Network of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry is pleased to receive the Interim Report of the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture Manfred Nowak. The report, available on the web at the url shown below, states that:

"the Special Rapporteur notes that the acceptance of involuntary treatment and involuntary confinement runs counter to the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities" and that such practices may constitute torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/disability/torture.htm>

Also at this url you will find the report of an expert seminar on Torture and Persons with Disabilities, in which WNUSP co-chair, Tina Minkowitz, was one of the speakers.

The Special Rapporteur on Torture is a human rights expert on the issue of torture, appointed by the Human Rights Council. Individuals and organizations can send information to the Rapporteur about individual cases and systemic practices of torture and ill treatment.

See <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/torture/rapporteur/>

The World Network of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry urges all states, international and regional human rights monitoring mechanisms, national human rights institutions and non-governmental organizations to take account of this report and ensure that involuntary treatment and involuntary confinement are stopped.

UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights: Detention Based on Disability Violates Human Rights

The UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights is including disability-based

detention as a human rights violation, as part of the Dignity and Justice for Detainees week, Oct. 6 - 12.

The Information Note on Persons with Disabilities, issued for this week-long initiative, states:

"The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) states clearly that deprivation of liberty based on the existence of a disability is contrary to international human rights law, is intrinsically discriminatory, and is therefore unlawful. Such unlawfulness also extends to situations where additional grounds—such as the need for care, treatment and the safety of the person or the community—are used to justify deprivation of liberty."

The Information Note also addresses legal capacity, saying that restricting legal capacity violates human rights and that legal capacity also has implications for criminal responsibility and the insanity defense.

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Pages/DetaineesWeekInitiative.aspx>

No. 4: Persons with Disabilities in Detention

UN staff are planning to interview WNUSP members Karl Bach Jensen and Myra Kovary for their personal stories of detention. The stories will be posted on the UN website. Organizations can participate in Dignity and Justice for Detainees Week with their own activities. For users and survivors of psychiatry, this could include rallies, blogs, speak-outs, media work, publicizing more of our stories, going inside institutions, educating people about our human rights.

MEMBERS' NEWS NOTICE

The WNUSP Newsletter aims to present the global struggles and achievements of users and survivors of psychiatry. We invite all members of the WNUSP to write in, sharing your views and giving news about your activities. News reports must be in English, brief (250 words) and giving your name and contact details. You may also submit ideas or proposals for articles to be considered for publication in the newsletter. Write to the Editor, WNUSP-News at newsletter@wnusp.net

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