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Sudan: ICC Names First War Crimes Suspects in Darfur

In an important step toward justice for the victims of ethnic cleansing in Darfur, on February 27, International Criminal Court (ICC) Prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo [named](#) Ahmed Haroun and Ali Kosheib, the first suspects accused of committing war crimes and crimes against humanity in Darfur. He submitted evidence of their alleged crimes for consideration by the ICC pre-trial judges, who are likely to subsequently issue summonses for the suspects' appearance in court. Human Rights Watch played a [vital role](#) in the UN Security Council's decision to refer the situation in Darfur to the ICC in March 2005 and we have continued to provide regular consultations to the ICC based on our nearly three years of [research](#) on the conflict in Darfur. The ICC's movement towards prosecuting these cases is the first step towards ending the impunity that perpetrators of war crimes in Darfur and elsewhere around the world have too long enjoyed. [Read More.](#)

Canada: Abusive Counterterrorism Measures Struck Down

On February 23, the Canadian Supreme Court unanimously ruled against the provisions of a Canadian immigration law that enabled the government to detain foreign terrorism suspects, often for years, without charge or trial and to deport them. Human Rights Watch and the University of Toronto had [intervened](#) in the case and delivered oral arguments before the Court in June. Human Rights Watch has long contended that Canada's treatment of terrorism suspects violates the prohibition against indefinite detention, internationally recognized procedural guarantees, and the absolute obligation not to send a person to a country where he or she would be at risk of torture. The Canadian press has labeled the Court's recent decision as easily the most important one to be issued during the 2006 term. The Court's ruling sets a precedent for the reform of similarly abusive laws worldwide, sending a clear message that fundamental human rights must not be sacrificed in the name of counterterrorism. [Read More.](#)

US/Iraq/Afghanistan: Accountability for Detainee Abuse



A young man seeks treatment in hospital in Goz Beida, Chad, after Arab militias attacked his village. © 2006 Kadir van Lohuizen/Agence VU on assignment for Human Rights Watch

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IN THE NEWS - Op-Eds by Our Staff

[UK Should Work Toward Cluster Munitions Ban](#)

In the [Guardian Unlimited](#), London Director Tom Porteous urges the British government to support negotiations begun in Oslo this month for an international treaty to ban the use of cluster munitions.

[Kosovo's Status in Question](#)

In [Foreign Policy in Focus](#), Senior Emergencies Researcher Fred Abrahams discusses the uncertain prospects for the recently revealed UN plan for Kosovo's final status, arguing that, in any event, Kosovo will need international assistance to build democratic institutions.

[US Should Aid Iraqi Refugees](#)

Refugee Policy Program Director Bill Frelick, writing in the [Wall Street Journal](#), calls on the United States to provide assistance and, in as many cases as possible, refuge to the tens of thousands of refugees fleeing Iraq each month.

The US Army in January ordered the court-martial of Lieutenant Colonel Stephen Jordan, a key official allegedly implicated in detainee abuse at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq. Jordan is the first military officer to be charged under the doctrine of command responsibility, whereby officers can be held responsible for the crimes of their subordinates if they knew or should have known about the crimes but failed to prevent or punish them. Human Rights Watch has long pressed for the investigation and prosecution of abuses against detainees in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Guantanamo Bay. We released a [report](#) showing that since the Abu Ghraib scandal broke, the military has failed to hold any officers accountable for detainee abuse under the doctrine of command responsibility. In the same report, we also documented the utter failure of the US Justice Department to prosecute civilians implicated in cases of detainee mistreatment. In February, in a step forward, a US federal court sentenced [sentenced](#) CIA civilian contractor David Passaro to eight-and-a-half years in prison for the 2003 beating of an Afghan detainee, who died of his injuries. To date, Passaro is the only civilian who has been held accountable for detainee abuse in Afghanistan, Iraq, or at Guantanamo Bay. [Read More.](#)

China: Activist Freed

Under pressure from Human Rights Watch and colleague organizations, the Chinese government on February 17 agreed to lift its house arrest of prominent HIV/AIDS doctor Gao Yaojie. Dr. Gao had been detained for weeks to prevent her from obtaining a visa to travel to Washington DC to accept an award for her work to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS in China. Human Rights Watch has [long pressed](#) Beijing to end the persistent harassment of human rights advocates and their families. Human Rights Watch is working for the development of a more open environment in which Chinese activists and grassroots organizations may operate without fear of government retaliation. [Read More.](#)

[Indonesia Shirks Military Reform](#)

Business and Human Rights Program Senior Researcher Lisa Misol in the [Jakarta Post](#) presses the Indonesian government to make good on its promises to reform the Indonesian military.

[UK Sanction of Torture Breeds Terrorism](#)

In the [Guardian Unlimited](#), London Director Tom Porteous criticizes the UK's decision to send a terror suspect back to Jordan where he faces serious risk of torture, undermining human rights and exposing the UK to greater threat of terrorism by further damaging its reputation in the Middle East.

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