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July 16, 2014

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Witness: Deaf, and Shut Out From HIV Information



Photo © 2014 Rashmi Chopra / Human Rights Watch

Faith learned she was HIV positive two years ago, after giving birth to her daughter. The Zambian government prides itself on its HIV prevention outreach, and every pregnant woman is supposed to be tested for the virus, to prevent passing it on to their babies. But Faith, now 25, is deaf, and was never tested before the baby was born. Nor did she receive even basic information about HIV. Now, Faith is on HIV treatment, but it's a struggle. Her 2-year-old daughter is positive too, which might have been prevented if Faith had been tested before the baby arrived.

An estimated two million people with disabilities in Zambia face significant barriers to HIV prevention, testing, and treatment, in part because they are often seen as not engaging in sex, according to a new Human Rights Watch report, "We Are Also Dying of AIDS." Yet the reality is that people with disabilities in Zambia are more vulnerable than others to contracting HIV because of lower education and literacy levels, greater poverty, and greater risks of physical and sexual abuse.

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[In Iraq, Mass Murders of Sunni Prisoners](#)

Iraqi security forces and militias affiliated with the government appear to have unlawfully executed at least 255 prisoners since June 9. In all but one case, the executions took place while the fighters were fleeing Islamic State of Iraq and Sham (ISIS) and other armed groups. The vast majority of security forces and militias are Shia, while the murdered prisoners were Sunni.

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[Boko Haram Kills 2,053 Civilians in Nigeria in 6 Months](#)

The Islamist insurgency Boko Haram in Nigeria killed at least 2,053 civilians in an estimated 95 attacks during the first half of 2014. The figures are based on detailed analyses of media reports as well as field investigations. There has been a dramatic increase during 2014 in the numbers of casualties from bomb blasts.

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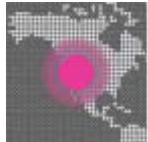


[Unlawful Israeli Airstrikes Kill Palestinian Civilians](#)

Israel's rhetoric is all about precision attacks, but attacks with no military target and many civilian deaths can hardly be considered precise. Recent documented cases in Gaza sadly fit Israel's long record of unlawful airstrikes with high civilian casualties.

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[Dispatches: Revamping the Failing US Prison System](#)

by Natalie Kato

At a hearing this morning before members of the US House of Representatives' Judiciary Committee, Alabama State Senator Cam Ward described what he called the "failed corrections system" in his state: Alabama, with the eighth highest violent crime rate in the United States, has a prison system at 192 percent capacity, which is the most overcrowded in the country.

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