

International News

Final report on discrimination based on work and descent published by the UN After almost two years of delay, the final report on discrimination based on work and descent containing a set of draft principles and guidelines has finally been published as an official UN document. This is an important milestone in gaining international recognition for caste-based discrimination. [Read the IDSN news item on the report.](#)

IDSN recommendations on caste discrimination and Dalit women to the Human Rights Council

The issue of Dalit women deserves the attention of the Human Rights Council in relevant thematic debates and country reviews. In her report to the 11th session of the Human Rights Council, the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, Ms. Yakin Ertürk, addressed a number of cases of violence against Dalit women. [Read the IDSN news item with recommendations to the Human Rights Council, published ahead of the 11th session.](#)

Norway urged to work against caste discrimination in the UN Human Rights Council With the election of Norway into the UN Human Rights Council, NGOs have urged the Norwegian Government to make the fight against the inhumane practice of caste discrimination one of their main priorities. [Read the joint IDSN/ Rafto press release](#) on this.

The Church of Norway Council on Ecumenical and International Relations aims to get the issue of caste discrimination high on the agenda in Norway and internationally. [Read the news article from the Church of Norway here, including a list of resolutions on caste discrimination.](#)

IHEU presents statement on caste discrimination in the African Human Rights Commission The International Humanist and Ethical Union (IHEU) has made its first statement on caste-based discrimination against Osu people in Nigeria to the African Commission on Human and People's Rights meeting in Banjul, The Gambia. [Read the IDSN news item on the statement.](#)

The killing of a lower caste Sikh preacher, in a temple shootout in Vienna, sparks riots and debate about the issue of caste discrimination. It was widely reported that the attack in Vienna, Austria, on the 24th of May, where at least six men opened fire and drew knives on worshippers, was linked to caste discrimination. The attackers are believed to be upper caste Sikhs and the worshippers attacked were low caste Sikhs. For further information read the news articles on the shooting and its repercussions from [Fox News here](#) and from [Al Jazeera here](#). Read also the Times of India article "[Vienna clash may put caste in the global spotlight](#)" and the [blog on the topic of "Race against caste."](#) A vast array of global newspapers covered the issue and the BBC has launched a '[your views on caste prejudice](#)' debate site. A number of events have also been organized, read for example about how [Sikhs marched in London to protest against caste discrimination.](#)

Amnesty International (Denmark) has featured a four page article on caste discrimination in their June magazine, including a front page photo of a Dalit sweeper in Bangladesh. The article is based on Jakob Carlsen's photos of Dalits in South Asia and sends a powerful message about the dire conditions in which most Dalits live. The article forms part of the global Amnesty International Demand Dignity campaign. [Download a PDF of the article here.](#)

Main National News

India

Indian elections: More of the same – or is India ready to change? The discrimination and abuse against the 200 million Dalits in India, which also prevented many Dalits from exercising their right to vote in the election process, will continue to be one of the major challenges that the ruling Congress Party will face as election fever settles. [Read the IDSN news article on the election outcome.](#)

A Dalit woman, is appointed Speaker of the Lok Sabha (India's House of Parliament) Meira Kumar, 64, was unanimously elected Speaker on the 3rd of June, where Prime Minister Manmohan Singh commented, "For the first time, a woman member of this august house has been elected as speaker and that too, a woman belonging to the Dalit community." IDSN hopes that this will lead to increased political focus on caste discrimination in future, and will be monitoring the developments. Read the [news article from Straits Times](#), an [interview with Ms. Kumar in the Times of India](#), and the article "[First Dalit woman elected to Indian Parliament](#)," in Christianity Today, for more information.

National seminar on Dalits and the Media in India raises awareness of how to use the media to further the rights of Dalits. The seminar took place from the 12th June to 14th June at ISI, New Delhi, and was organized by the Peoples Media Advocacy & Resource Centre (PMARC). Participants included journalists from electronic and mainstream media and Dalit activists. For more information about the event please contact Vilas Sukhadeve sukhadeve.vilas@gmail.com, or Arun Khote arun.khote@gmail.com.

Public Discussion on Internationalising Caste, organized by [Cacim](#) and [Navayana](#), was held on the 4th of June 2009 at the Indian Social Institute. The discussion focused on bringing international attention to caste discrimination and the need for a public debate in India on the issue. The event involved reflections on the Durban Review Conference and analysis of the obstacles and opportunities in bringing caste discrimination on to the International agenda, on par with racial discrimination. [Read more about the event and find useful references here.](#)

Selected Press Clippings: [The Hindu has brought an article on 'Caste and the World'](#), which looks at the debates raised at the DRC and have also run a story on Mayawati's statement – "[Justice for Dalit victims on same day](#)".

Pakistan

The Women's News Network has published an article on the problems faced by Dalit women in the Sindh province of Pakistan. [Read the article here.](#)

Bangladesh

The book "Caste based Discrimination in South Asia: A Study of Bangladesh" was released at an event in Chittagong, Bangladesh on June 6th, 2009. The book (available in English and Bengali) is written by Dr. Iftekhar Uddin Chowdhury, Professor and former Chair of Sociology, University of Chittagong, and published by Center for Social Research (CSR), Chittagong, Bangladesh. The book outlines the nature and extent of caste discrimination in Bangladesh with analysis and case studies. [Read the full report from the book release by Md. Nazim Uddin, Coordinator of CSR.](#)

Nepal

The Prime Minister of Nepal has committed to working towards eliminating caste discrimination in Nepal In an address on the *Untouchability Free Nation Day* on the 4th of June in Nepal, Prime Minister, Mr. Madhav Kumar, outlined a number of specific commitments to improve the situation for Dalits in the country. The Dalit NGO Federation (DNF) and its member organizations had presented the Prime Minister with a memorandum, including the demands of Dalits in relation to human rights, justice and living conditions, ahead of his address, and had also arranged a variety of events during the day. [Read the full DNF report from the event, including a bullet point list of the PM's commitments.](#)

Events/ Deadlines coming up

The National Convention on Dalit Women, organized by the National Federation of Dalit Women (NFDW), will take place on the 26th of June in India. The theme of the event is *Dalit Women Leadership: Combat Persistent Poverty, Protection from Violence and Powerlessness*. [Read more about the Convention and about NDEW, on the invitation for the event.](#) For any enquiries and clarification please call Dr. Ruth Mahorama, National Convenor (NDEW, on mobile (+91) 9844057734 or (+91) (0)80-26642053.

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