



The Good News Roundup

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Turmeric enters traditional library
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Preventing bio-piracy, No evidence from torture, Lesotho Aids test

India's digital library will stop biopiracy

India passed a milestone toward completing a library to prevent biopiracy that indigenous rights workers around the world could copy. The [Traditional Knowledge Digital Library \(TKDL\)](#) is a \$2 million research project to cull medicinal information from the literature of doctors who practice ayurveda, unani and siddha, and produce a fully illustrated and exhaustively referenced database that secures this traditional wealth in the public domain. The [BBC](#) reports, "according to the WHO, 70% of the people living in India use traditional medicine for primary health care." Protecting this vital health information from patents will also benefit consumers of alternative medicines from India in the rest of the world. So far [36,000 formulations have been published](#) in a retrievable source in five international languages, so that patent examiners can readily access records transcribed from ayurvedic texts.

Brazilian activist's assassins convicted

Sister Dorothy Stang, murdered in February, spent [30 years advocating sustainable development](#) projects and fighting for the rights of peasants in Brazil. She is one of [772 land rights campaigners murdered](#) in the rainforest state of Para within these 30 years, and before this trial only nine of the killers had been convicted. Brazil is slowly turning around to tackle this cycle of violence. "This is the start, now we're going to get the masterminds," [said Senator Ana Julia Carepa](#), who led the government's probe into this assassination. She means the ranchers who allegedly offered these convicted killers 50,000 reais (\$22,100) to kill Dorothy Stang.

UK will not take evidence obtained by torture

The highest court in the UK, the Law Lords, ruled that [information obtained using torture will not be accepted](#) as evidence in any British court, no matter where in the world torture was conducted to obtain that information. This ruling refutes the government's argument that a secretive anti-terror tribunal, the Special Immigration Appeals Commission (SIAC), should operate outside the law banning torture. Human rights groups greeted the ruling as an important signal to the world on the fundamental illegality of torture.

Nasa defend seized farms against police

They seized 10,000 acres of land on 19 farms two months ago, on Columbus Day. When Colombia's police tried to evict the 2,000 [Nasa Indians](#) from this protest occupation, they resisted with slingshots, stones and sticks. The Cauca Regional Indian Council told [Reuters](#) that about 100 Nasa were injured in skirmishes with the police, and one man has been gunned down. But leaders promise that their stand-off will continue until the government cedes 545,000 acres of traditionally held land.

Getting everyone in Lesotho tested

King Letsie III of [Lesotho](#) will be the first African monarch to take the test publically, a milestone for the continent where stigma against confronting sexually transmitted disease openly is still the biggest obstacle to stopping the pandemic. With support from the WHO, [every person in the kingdom](#) over age 12 will have the opportunity to be screened for HIV within two years. The tests will not be mandatory, but program organizers expect most of Lesotho's 1.9 million people to give consent, encouraged by the example of their king and through traditional public gatherings in each village.

The battle over USAPATRIOT begins

The White House wants you to believe a [compromise reached with GOP leaders](#) means the Patriot Act has already cleared Congress for reauthorization. Not quite. No Democratic leaders in either house endorsed this 'winning compromise', which has bipartisan detractors in the Senate. [Feingold will filibuster the extension](#) until 60 Senators can be moved to oppose him.

Private hospitals must offer rape victims the pill

A Massachusetts law requiring hospitals to provide emergency contraception to all rape victims previously allowed private hospitals to opt-out, and 12 hospitals in the state would not offer the pill (Plan B). Governor Romney reversed his earlier decision to allow these exceptions, and now [all hospitals must give rape victims the choice](#), including those run as Catholic charities.