

Hello, my friends, and welcome back. It is time to learn and improve your American English. I'm Jim Tedder in Washington. On today's program, two subjects of a serious nature. First, we will tell you about a new book from Amnesty International that aims to make sure trials around the world are fair, and that judges, lawyers, and political leaders are held accountable.

Then we take another look at the fight against the Ebola virus in West Africa. If you live in Guinea or Liberia, or know someone who does, you will want to pay close attention.

Seven days each week, on radio, television, and the Internet, we give you our world ...good or bad ...As It Is.

Amnesty International has produced a new book designed to guide fair trials around the world. The rights group says the book should have an effect even in some of the world's most repressive countries. June Simms has more.

The thick book explores such issues as the “right to liberty” and the “right to equality before the law.” It also investigates subjects like dealing with torture, the rights of children and military courts.

The book is aimed at lawyers and judges. Amnesty International published a similar guide 15 years ago. That book was also used by (other) people to help them press for their rights.

Michael Bochenek heads International Law and Policy at Amnesty International. He says fair trials are mainly a problem in repressive countries. But he says they also exist in developed democracies. He says the problems are most common in countries in crisis.

“We continue to see backsliding year in and year out when it comes to things like how you respond to public protest, how you deal with political opponents, how you avoid reaching for easy solutions in an effort to solve what is actually a far more difficult social problem.”

Michael Bochenek says the guide book is based on international and other legal policies. He says it provides a tool to educate judges, lawyers and political leaders, and to put pressure on them when necessary.

“I think there is a growing recognition of what it takes to adhere to due process. And I think there is more sensitivity than ever before and more opportunity for states to be held to account publicly than ever before.”

He says no official wants to be identified for using torture or for violating widely-recognized rights, even in the most repressive societies.

“It may be that, in particular cases where we’re seeing the most abuses, these kinds of standards that we are pointing to are going to be disregarded. But it makes a difference over time, in the way that more generally they respect the fair trial rights than everybody should have.”

He says no single project can end the many problems in legal systems around the world. But he says it is an important part of the effort to protect what he calls, “one of the basic building blocks of life in a democratic society.” I’m June Simms.

The World Health Organization says one of the biggest tests it has ever faced is fighting the growing number of Ebola cases in West Africa. The WHO reported earlier this week that the Ebola virus has killed more than 100 people in Guinea, and at least 10 others in Liberia. WHO officials are most concerned that Ebola has spread from the forests of southern Guinea to the country’s capital. Bob Doughty has more on the story.

The aid group Doctors Without Borders is helping local health care workers treat Ebola patients. Up to 90 percent of those infected in Guinea have died from the disease.

Many people are frightened. This man says most people had not heard of the Ebola virus before the outbreak. He says now they are very afraid.

The virus has spread to the capital, Conakry, from forests in the south. The World Health Organization is concerned that Ebola is now being reported in an area where it had not appeared before.

Anthony Fauci is one of America's top experts on infectious diseases. He says Ebola's appearance in West Africa should not come as a surprise.

"It's a disease that's spread by direct contact with an infected person, but it's also spread by exposure to an infected animal like a bat. And, since we know those animals are in those areas of those adjacent countries, it's not unusual to see outbreaks in areas of southern Africa that are adjacent to each other."

Fruit bats are the main carriers of Ebola. But the virus does not kill the animals. People get the virus from infected bats or other animals. Dr. Fauci says people need to avoid eating bats or other wild animals when there's a possibility of Ebola.

The signs of the disease are very much like to those suffered by people with influenza. They include a high body temperature, weakness, muscle pain, and pain in the head or throat. But that is where the comparison ends. Individuals infected with Ebola will expel food or fluids from the mouth. Other signs are the expulsion of body wastes and bleeding, either inside or outside the body.

Dr. Fauci says influenza is passed through the air, Ebola is not.

“Ebola is almost invariable spread by direct contact with bodily fluids, particularly blood and secretions- vomit, things like that – of people who are deathly ill and people are taking care of them. So it’s usually family members, health care providers, minister who minister to the sick and to the dead, and to morticians who take care of the bodies.”

The best way to control the virus is to get people with signs of Ebola into restricted areas. Researchers are working to find effective medicines. But for now, the best chances of beating the disease are to drink plenty of fluids and get treated for secondary infections.

A number of patients in Guinea have recovered and been sent home from treatment centers. But that does not mean they are completely free of Ebola. The World Health Organization warns that men who have recovered can still pass the virus to sex partners for up to seven weeks after they recover. I'm Bob Doughty.

And I'm Jim Tedder in Washington. Before we move aside for some more Learning English programs, here is your history lesson for the day. Exactly one week after the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1968, President Lyndon Johnson signed into law the Civil Rights Act. Johnson called it "one of the proudest moments of my presidency."

Today begins the Kentucky Derby Festival in Louisville, Kentucky. The fun lasts for nearly a month as one and a half million people visit the southern city for food, fun, and music, leading up to the famous horse race. It is called the "Run for the Roses" because the winning horse and rider receive roses ...and money ...and fame!

And in Eureka Springs, Arkansas, it is the 26th annual Ozark Mountain UFO Conference, as people from around the world get together to hear the latest information about unidentified flying objects. Many people believe that we are not the only life in the universe, and that space aliens exist and may have even visited Earth.

That's all for today. I'll see you next week for another look at our world ...As It Is.



