



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Midwifery Today announces groundbreaking conference:
“Birth Is a Human Rights Issue”
Strasbourg, France, 29 September – 3 October, 2010**

Every mother and baby has the right to be treated with reverence and respect during the birth process, including pregnancy and beyond.

Pregnancy and birth are the most crucial and powerful passages in a woman’s life. Most births around the world lead to preventable traumas for the mother and baby. We call such traumas preventable because many of them are iatrogenic, caused by unnecessary and scientifically unjustifiable interventions performed by hospital staff due to lack of understanding of the normal physiology of birth and how to properly facilitate it. In hundreds of thousands of cases, if the mother, baby and birthing process were treated with respect and evidence-based care, these traumas would never take place, and birth outcomes would be significantly improved.

Fundamental medical misunderstandings of the normal physiology and psychology of birth are causing mothers and babies to miss out on the healthiest possible beginning. Their human rights to respectful and evidence-based care are being violated. We need birth practices that promote optimal birth, such as those put forth in the International Motherbaby Childbirth Initiative (available at www.imbci.org/ShowPage.asp?id=209). As an encouraging first step, in June of 2009 the United Nations Human Rights Council adopted a landmark resolution acknowledging maternal mortality and morbidity as a human rights issue. Yet the effects of practices on maternal and perinatal mortality and morbidity remain widely underestimated and ignored.

At Midwifery Today’s upcoming conference in Strasbourg, France, which is the seat of the European Court of Human Rights as well as the European Parliament, we plan to thoroughly examine these issues and to make plans for replacing current, harmful birth practices with supportive, evidence-based care. Our theme is “Birth Is a Human Rights Issue.”

Let us commit to an optimal birth for every mother and baby.

We hope to report back to you about this event. Please consider joining or sponsoring us in our continuing efforts to create change and educate the world about these ongoing human rights violations. Please share this information with your network and colleagues, and help us to spread this important movement around the world.

For more information about this event, please visit our Web site at
www.midwiferytoday.com/conferences/Strasbourg2010/

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