

# AMNESTY NEWS

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April 2004



## War Prevention Works : Iraq one year on

Dr Frank Boulton of the Oxford Research Group spoke at the April meeting about the conflict in Iraq and more generally about the alternatives to conflict. The points below are taken from Dr Boulton's talk and a publication produced by "Peace Direct" and "Oxford Research Group" written by Dr Scilla Elworthy. The publication, plus "War Prevention Works" (which describes 50 stories of people resolving conflict) are available from the Southampton group.

Prior to the invasion of Iraq, several NGO's familiar with Iraq detailed plans to the US and UK leadership for addressing the problems posed by the Saddam Hussein regime without military invasion. These included:

- ◆ Extension of UNMOVIC inspections for WMD
- ◆ Addition of an inspection force to check on the constitutional changes claimed by the regime.
- ◆ Installation of TV and radio broadcasting networks to provide non-regime information to Iraqis.
- ◆ Introduction of methods to protect opponents of the regime.
- ◆ Provision of non-military support to opposition groups.
- ◆ Agreement and policing of a bidding code not to supply arms to any faction.
- ◆ Introduction of effective boundary

**Group Meeting  
Monday 10th May 2004**

**Central America Special Action  
(CASA)  
An Update**

**Avenue St Andrew's  
United Reformed Church  
The Avenue, Southampton  
(Use main Church entrance)  
7.30p.m.**

**ALL WELCOME**  
(Please note date of meeting)

controls on gun-running with severe and enforceable penalties, to curtail opposition groups fighting each other.

- ◆ Substantial increase in human intelligence gathering, to provide accurate information on levels and quality of internal opposition.

Whilst it is accepted that these proposals would have undoubtedly taken some time to work, they would have resulted in fewer civilian and military casualties, little physical destruction, and none of the current bitterness and hatred for occupying forces.

Non-military support for progress to a multi-party state could eventually have produced an Iraq opposition capable of government, as happened in South Africa, Poland etc.

### AI's VISION

is of a world in which every person enjoys all of the human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international standards.

### AI's MISSION

is to undertake research and action focused on preventing and ending grave abuses of the rights to physical and mental integrity, freedom of conscience and expression, and freedom from discrimination, within the context of its work to promote all human rights.

### AI's CORE VALUES

remain those of : international solidarity, effective action for the individual victim, global coverage, the universality and indivisibility of human rights, impartiality and independence, and democracy and mutual respect.

This News Letter is produced by The Southampton Group of AI. It may not necessarily represent the views of Amnesty International.

More details from  
John Williams Editor

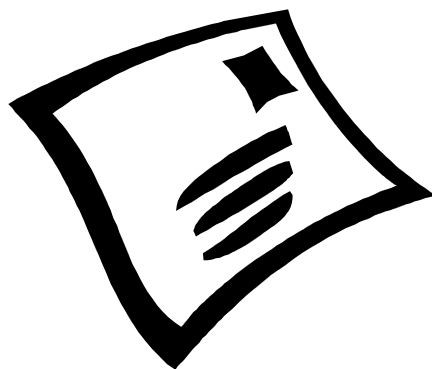
## Control Arms Campaign-Update and Action

In the first six months of the campaign AI has had a positive response from governments in many different world regions to the call for international Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). The UK government has welcomed the campaign but has yet to publicly endorse the ATT.

The number of visual sign-ups is rising and supporters have joined from over 150 different countries, the total number of sign-ups is somewhere in the region of 100,000. There are many MPs, celebs, public figure and sports-people who have also signed the petition. For more details visit: <http://www.controlarms.org/famous-faces/index.htm>

### What action can you take next:

The Irish government is taking a positive approach to arms exports control. They now need to take the next step and pledge their support for an Arms Trade Treaty. There is a window of opportunity now, whilst Ireland holds the Presidency of the EU. Please use the sample letter below to encourage the Irish gov-



*Every minute someone is  
killed by armed violence*

ernment to take the lead in publicly pledging support and show responsibility for global security and human rights. Please add your own points to the letter if you can.

### **SAMPLE LETTER**

**Please send the following letter to:**

Brian Cowen  
Minister for Foreign Affairs

Department of Foreign Affairs  
80 St Stephen's Green  
Dublin 2  
Ireland

Dear Mr Cowan,  
Re Ireland's support for an Arms Trade Treaty  
I am encouraged by the Irish government's work to keep the issue of arms exports on the EU agenda.

One person dies every minute from armed violence around the world. Current regulations are inadequate to control this deadly trade. A legally binding international Arms Trade Treaty would set one standard for export controls, ensuring that all states operate under the same rules, respecting International Law.

Please take the next step and pledge Ireland's public support for an Arms Trade Treaty. Use the Presidency of the EU to show Ireland's strong leadership on human rights and global security at this uncertain and critical time.

Yours sincerely,  
XXXX

### Letter writing guide

\*Always be polite. This rule is essential and invariable. Your aim is to help, not to relieve your own feelings. Governments don't respond to abusive or condemnatory letters (however well deserved!)

\*Always write your letters on the basis that the Government concerned is open to reason and discussion.

\*It is important where possible to stress a country's reputation for moderation and justice, to show respect for its constitution and judicial procedures, and to demonstrate an understanding of current difficulties. This will give you more scope to point out ways in which the human rights situation can be improved.

\*Follow strictly the instructions given by AI.

\*Never use political jargon. Don't give the impression that you are writing because you are ideologically or politically opposed to the government in question. It is far more effective to stress that your concern for human rights is not politically based in any way, but in keeping with basic principles of international law.

\*If appropriate, explain who you are and what you do. It shows your letter is genuine, and that people from varying walks of life are following events in the country concerned.

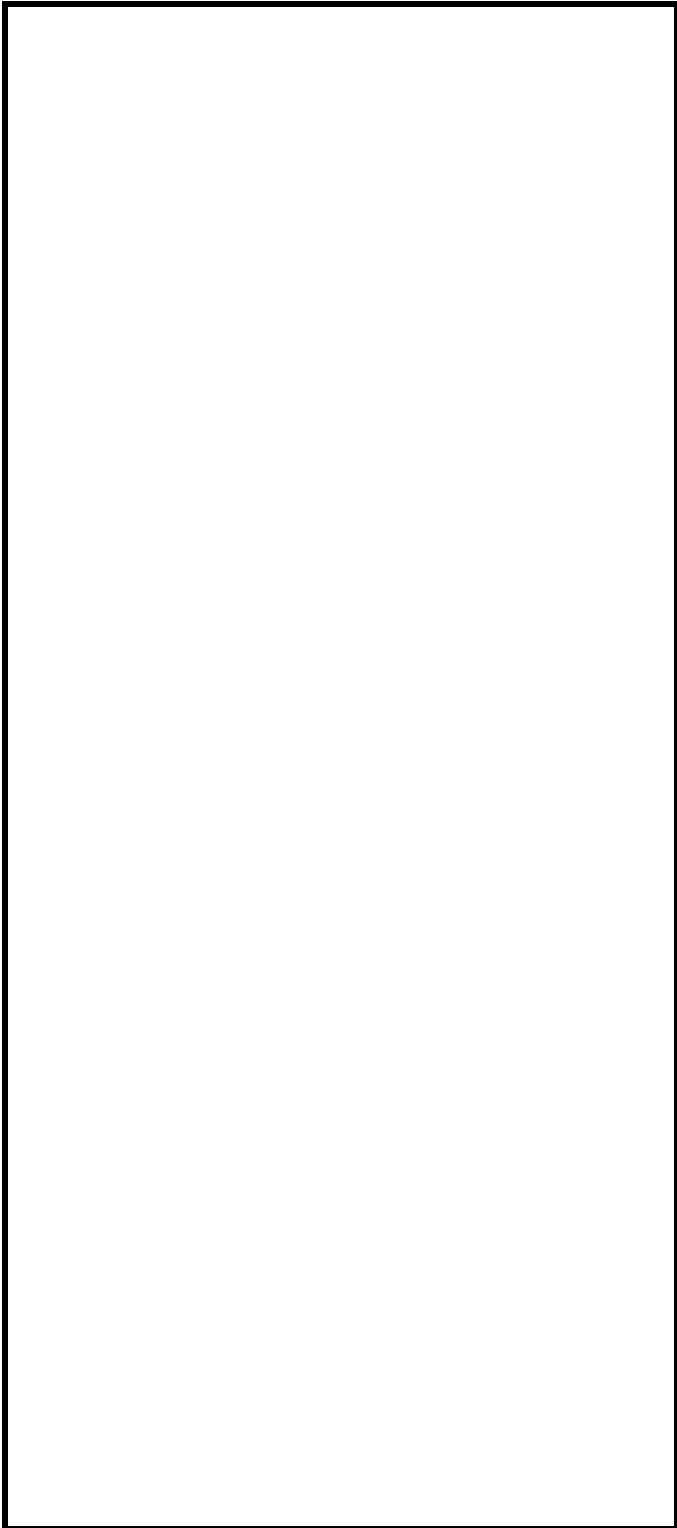
## Group News: April 2004

**Business meeting:** Mary Brown took the chair in the absence of Veronica Tippetts.

1. **The Segalula concert** had raised £400. There had been a small amount of publicity, and 49 letters had been signed for the "Stop Violence Against Women" campaign. Thanks to all those who helped.
2. **Cards** on the "Stop Violence Against Women" campaign were available at the meeting.
3. **Action of the Month:** a letter and petition was available on "China: execution of child offenders".
4. **European Elections:** AI has issued a manifesto for the elections. The Brighton Group had volunteered to do a hustings. Soton group agreed to write to candidates, more information at next meeting.
5. **Campaign for Controlling Arms Trade:** Two new reports are available from Mary. **See also page two of this News for Letter writing action.**
6. **Fundraising:** The next fundraising event will be a stall at Totton Charity Market on May 3rd.
7. **Finances:** Frank reported in Giampaolo's absence. Current balance £900, agreed to send £300 to AIUK.
8. **Raffle Tickets:** Because of the other activities we get involved in we will not, as a group, be taking part in this fundraising activity.
9. **Sub Groups: Death Penalty:** nothing new to report; **CASA:** information at next meeting; **CHIRAN:** Nothing new to report; **Refugees:** a new video is available; **North Korea:** The idea of Soton twinning with a city in North Korea had been discussed with the City Council. As there is little contact with NK they declined the suggestion. However, they would be prepared to help with any further cultural contact. Cards etc had been sent to NK via Suzannah Clark, who is again visiting NK.
10. **Report form AIUK AGM/Conference,** see next News

**Speaker: Dr Frank Boulton (Oxford Research Group)** The key ideas of the Oxford Research Group on alternatives to conflict are outlined on page one. Some additional points made by Dr Boulton are outlined below:

- ◆ Since the 2nd World War there has been a significant period of peace in Europe and USA.
- ◆ The rest of the world has had 120 major conflicts.
- ◆ The cold war cost up to one thousand billion dollars; diverted two generations of scientific effort.
- ◆ Military spending continues e.g. UK is considering a replacement for Trident.
- ◆ The UN is now in a difficult position in Iraq, because of its involvement in the sanctions.
- ◆ There are currently 100,000 troops in Iraq.
- ◆ 12,000 civilians and 1000 military are dead.
- ◆ Peaceful conflict resolution is much cheaper than conflict, let alone the lives it saves.
- ◆ The British Government does operate conflict resolution via the MOD, Foreign and Commonwealth Office and DIFID, which has good partnerships with NGO's.
- ◆ We should encourage the Government to develop this approach.
- ◆ Iraq represents a series of lost opportunities e.g. getting real information to people, non military support to opposition groups and agreements on an arms embargo.
- ◆ A key mistake of the USA in Iraq was the disposal of the Iraq army and allowing porous borders, not calling for a weapon amnesty, keeping faith with mediators and engaging in active reconciliation.
- ◆ We could start the reconciling approach now, with the expertise of the military.
- ◆ By establishing a "UK Civilian Peace Service" to harmonise the training, recruitment and deployment of civilian peace professionals for international conflict work, to work with research centres to develop best practice and to liaise with NGO's/civil society organisations.



- Diary:
- ◆ **Monday 10th May:** Group Meeting: Central America Special Action (CASA). 7.30 pm, Avenue St Andrew's United Reformed Church, The Avenue. All Welcome.
  - ◆ **Monday 14th June:** Group Meeting: Doing Business with Unpleasant Regimes (e.g. China). Andrew Parish (CBI Member) from the Lymington Group. 7.30 p.m., Avenue St Andrew's United Reformed Church, The Avenue. All welcome.
  - ◆ **Monday 12th July:** Group Meeting: Group AGM and Focus on Human Rights in UK and how may we work in partnerships. 7.30 p.m. Avenue St Andrew's United Reformed Church, The Avenue. All welcome

Any one interested in holding office in 2004/5 please contact Veronica Tippetts.

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Southampton Group

Have you got any ideas for fundraising next year?

If so please let Veronica Tippetts or Giampaolo D'Alessandro know by phone or at our monthly meetings.

Funds raised go to support the work of Amnesty International