

# AMNESTY NEWS

[www.amnesty-volunteer.org/uk/southampton-city](http://www.amnesty-volunteer.org/uk/southampton-city)

January 2005



## 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.

## **Problem? What problem?** (taken from AI web site)

This is a campaign that aims to confront:

- ◆ The way we tolerate violence against women,
- ◆ The way we justify violence against women, and
- ◆ The way we ignore violence against women.

Most of us probably think that we don't do these things. But when over 30% of us think that violence against women is OK, and when 50% of us think domestic violence should be kept behind closed doors, and when more of us would report a dog being abused than a woman, it quickly becomes clear we do.

All of us-every single individual person-needs to understand that violence against women is a massive problem in the UK, and that it is NEVER acceptable, that it should NEVER be tolerated, and that it should NEVER be justified.

Until that happens, our mothers, partners, daughters, sisters, friends and colleagues will continue to suffer at the hands of violence and suffer under the weight of our silence.

On 4th November 2004 the first advertisements went up in 100 tube stations throughout London. These advertisements have been designed to confront people's reticence about violence against women and to force them to think about the issue.

**Group Meeting  
Monday January 10th 2005**

**International Criminal Court**

**Prof Howard Davies  
University of Bournemouth**

**Avenue St Andrew's  
United Reformed Church  
The Avenue, Southampton  
(Use main Church entrance)  
7.30pm  
ALL WELCOME**

### **Global Statistics:**

- ◆ At least 1 out of 3 women has been beaten, coerced into sex, or otherwise abused in her life time.
- ◆ The Council for Europe has stated that domestic violence is the major cause of death and disability for women aged 16 to 44 and accounts for more death and ill-health than cancer or traffic accidents.
- ◆ More than 60 million women are "missing" from the world today as a result of sex-selective abortions and female infanticide.
- ◆ In the USA, women accounted for 85% of the victims of domestic violence.
- ◆ Up to 70% of female murder victims are killed by male partners.

## Worldwide appeal: MEXICO: Raped with impunity

Valentina Rosendo Cantú and Inés Fernández Ortega, members of the Tlapaneca indigenous group, were reportedly raped by members of the Mexican army in February and March 2002 respectively in the state of Guerrero, Mexico. Four other indigenous women also filed complaints of rape by soldiers in Guerrero in the last 10 years. However, in none of the cases have those responsible been brought to justice. Instead of taking steps to carry out full and impartial investigations, military investigators have attempted to disprove the rape allegations, placing the burden of proof on the victim, and flouted international standards.

Serious flaws in the investigation procedures have been reported in all cases. There has been virtually no oversight of the proceedings and no accountability. As well as a military judicial system that is incapable of delivering justice, Valentina Rosendo and Inés Fernández have also been



*Raped with impunity*  
**STOP**  
*Violence against women*

subjected to poor medical care and substandard forensic examinations. The impunity and discrimination that surrounds these cases have a direct impact on women and indigenous communities in Guerrero, where the heavy presence of the military acts as a re-

minder of their trauma and generates fear. Other women are reluctant to report complaints.

**Please write**, asking the government to ensure that the cases of Valentina Rosendo Cantú and Inés Fernández Ortega are investigated and tried in the civilian justice system as recommended by international human rights mechanisms. Call upon the government to restrict military justice and take action to prevent violence against women by introducing accountability, transparency and an end to impunity.

### **Send appeals to:**

President of the Republic of Mexico  
Lic. Vicente Fox Quesada  
Presidente de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos  
Residencia Oficial de "Los Pinos"  
Col. San Miguel Chapultepec  
Mexico D.F.  
C.P 11850

### 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: December Group Meeting

Jenny McConnell, Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

The Group wrote letters on Death Penalty cases and cards for the Greetings Card Campaign.

Business meeting:

**1) Greetings Card Event at Marlands:** Becky reported on the Greetings Cards Event at the Marlands: over 150 cards were written; £123 of donations were received; Sandra Gidley MP, Alan Whithead MP, Chris Huhne, the Mayor of Southampton and Chris Packham all came along to lend support and had photos taken. Chris Huhne offered to write a press release for us and sent it out to his contacts in the press. As a result Becky was contacted by Saint radio (the local football team's station) and was interviewed about the event. The Marlands were very happy with the event too and will help us publicise it next year, and offered the venue for other times too.

A very big thank you to all who participated and especially to Becky for the planning and arranging.

**2) Southern Region Conference:** Jilly reported on the Southern Region Conference, with particular focus on the workshop regarding Amnesty's position on the use of force. Should Amnesty ever, sometimes, or never take such a position. All Regions had been asked about this by the UK Section, who were at pains to point out that this was not a top down imposition, nor a rubber stamping of a decision that has been already been taken, but rather a real examination at grass roots level of what the membership feels. The workshop concluded that the preference of the Southern Region was to take no position. This will be fed back through the Section and discussed further at the AGM. Note-this was the first time the Conference had been open to individual members, and a number attended.

**3) House Sale:** Mary reported on her Sale, which made £28 from Amnesty Cards and £240 from various sales eg Jams, biscuits cakes etc. Thanks Mary.

**4) AI AGM:** Becky and Giampaolo will represent the Group at the AGM in Lancaster, Jenny will also attend for a day "under her own steam".

**5) Amnesty Affiliate Cards:** Richard has information if people are interested.

**6) CASA:** Richard Green reported that he has stepped down as CASA co-ordinator within the Southampton Group. Frank Cappocci will replace him. Many thanks to Richard for all his work. Richard also asked that the organisers of the Southern Region Conference should be contacted to advise them that the venue was not DDA compliant and accessible to him.

**7) Viewpoint:** Veronica brought copies of the University publication, containing the advert placed by Becky for cards, plus an article by Mary.

**8) Finances:** As a result of the various fund raising events we have £1200 in the bank. Allowing for the anticipated expenses of postage etc, we will give £250 to the Section and £50 to the Urgent Action Network.

**9)** Becky received a Christmas Card to the Group from Sandra Gidley.

The Groups Social Event Followed.

**HAPPY NEW YEAR  
TO ALL OUR READERS.  
HELP AMNESTY CONTINUE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN 2005**

