

# AMNESTY NEWS

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

March 2005



## The Use of Armed Force: AI's Position

Becky John (AI Southampton Group) led a discussion on Amnesty International's position on the "Use of Armed Force".

This issue has been discussed at Regional Conferences through out the country, so that the membership can participate in the decision about AI's position on this issue.

The current attitude is essentially a debate between the following two positions: "No Change ie not supporting the armed force" or "Sometimes supporting the use of armed force and sometimes opposing it, depending on the situation".

At the Southampton meeting almost everyone present expressed a view recognising the difficulties of the various stances. Most people felt that **impartiality** was a very important stance for AI to take. However, there was also a strong feeling that AI should "shout louder" before a conflict starts. AI's reports often highlighted abuses and preconditions etc that might lead to conflict and that such concerns should be brought before the ICC.

The overwhelming view of Group was that there should be "No Change" in Amnesty's position.

**Group Meeting  
Monday March 14th 2005**

**"Female Refugee Experience  
in UK"**

**Soraya Raousi from Afghanistan**

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

### 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.

## SEGALULA

**A Celebration in Song for  
International Women's  
Day**

**In support of  
Amnesty International**

**Tuesday 8th March at 7.30 pm  
Avenue St Andrew's United  
Reformed Church  
The Avenue, Southampton**

**Tickets £5, £4 (concessions)  
PAY ON THE DOOR**

## Worldwide Appeal: Saudi Arabia: Possible death sentence for 13 Nigerian men

Thirteen Nigerian men are at risk of being sentenced to death and executed in Saudi Arabia. They were among hundreds detained in Jeddah on 29 September 2002, after a policeman was killed following an alleged dispute between local men and African nationals who were working as car cleaners. All the others have been deported.

The 13 Nigerians were brought before 3 judges in a closed court session on 22 November. They could not fully understand the proceedings, which were conducted in Arabic with no translation. They have had no lawyers or consular representation since their arrest over 2 years ago.

The 13 men were reportedly tortured and ill-treated when they were arrested, including being suspended by their feet and beaten. One of the men allegedly received electric shocks to his genitals.

It is not known whether the policeman had children. If he did, and the 13 Nigerians are sentenced to death, they must



**Write to Saudi  
Arabia on behalf of  
13 Nigerians facing  
execution**

remain in prison until the eldest child reaches the age of 18, when they can accept or reject the payment of *diya* (blood money) in place of the death penalty. If the policeman had no children, the 13 are at risk of imminent execution.

**Please write**, calling for the 13 Nigerians not to be sentenced to death. Seek assurances that the men will not be tortured and call for them to be given immediate access to a lawyer, consular representation and adequate translation facilities.

### **Send appeals to:**

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Abdullah bin 'Abdul 'Aziz Al-Saud,  
Deputy Prime Minister and Commander of the National Guard,  
Royal Court,  
Riydah,  
Saudi Arabia

### 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: February Group Meeting

Jenny McConnell, Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. **Planning:** Giampaolo led a discussion on “Planning for the year April 2005 to March 2006. Next year there will be a change of policy in planning, reflecting a change in policy in the movement itself. The change is to focus on some countries with limited resources dedicated to others, however global campaigns will continue eg “Violence against women” and Death Penalty”.

This change in policy is controversial but local Groups need to take it on board, we don't have to change, we can decide to do other things. The Group opted to work on the following areas in the year April 2005-March 2006:

- ◆ Violence against women
- ◆ Administration of Justice (Death Penalty)
- ◆ China (instead of CHIRAN)
- ◆ CASA (Central America)
- ◆ N Korea (Avenue Church Group)
- ◆ Refugees
- ◆ Control Arms Campaign
- ◆ Business and Human Rights

2. **Finances:** The Tin Rattle at Safeways/Morrisons raised £403.99; the profit from Christmas card sales at the University was £171.56. It was agreed that £400 should be sent to AI UK Section.

3. **Change of address:** AIUK's new address from 20th February will be; “17/25 New Inn Yard, London, EC2A 3EA.

4. **New members:** Two new members were welcomed to the Group, Jo Dixon-Trifonor and Sudath Kannangara.

5. **Outreach:** Veronica informed the meeting that Rev David Haokip will shortly be leaving Southampton to take up a new post in East Ham London. She said that information about AI has been put in mosques and St Mary's Church.

6. **CASA:** Frank informed the meeting that an OU film will be made at the May meeting on CASA.

7. **Asia Conference:** Judy and Fran attended the AI Conference on “Culture, History and Human Rights in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region” on 5th February 2005.

Christian Tyler, a travel writer, gave a brief history of the area. It is now a land of exile/labour camps and has drug and alcohol problems. A peaceful demonstration by the Uighurs in the city of Gulja in 1997 ended in violence and serious human rights violations, torture and executions.

Mark Allison from AI's International Section told the conference that there are 5 people working at IS on China. AI has made a formal complaint to the Chinese Government on the Gulja massacre but have not received any acknowledgement. TB is rampant among prisoners and medical aid is not adequate.

Erkin Alptekin as President of the Uighur National Congress spoke of their efforts to gain independence. Their great fear is national extinction due to assimilation of the HAN who receive extra money and are allowed three children per family if they relocate to Xinjiang.

The final speaker was Enver Tohti, an oncologist. He talked about severe cases of cancer due to atomic dust in the area. The Chinese say they stopped nuclear testing in 1996. The Japanese have complained due to atomic dust over their islands.

## Death of Amnesty International Founder

Peter Benenson, the founder of Amnesty International, died on the evening of Friday 25th February. He was 83.

AI will be holding a public memorial service, further details will be announced shortly

