

# AMNESTY NEWS

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

May 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.

## Death Penalty Worldwide 2004

AI issued a fresh condemnation of the death penalty, as it released a new report showing that world executions last year were at their second-highest rate in 25 years.

The report shows at least 3,797 people were executed in 25 countries and at least 7,395 were sentenced to death in 64 countries. This was the highest rate since 1996.

Four countries accounted for 97% of all executions, as China executed at least 3,400 people, Iran executed at least 159, Vietnam at least 64 and the USA executed 59 prisoners.

AI UK Director Kate Allen said: "This is an alarming rise in executions and the figures from China are genuinely frightening...The death penalty is cruel and unnecessary, does not deter crime and runs the risk of killing the wrongly convicted. It is time to consign the death penalty to the dustbin of history".

AI's report also focuses on executions of child offenders. These are illegal under international law yet in 2004 Iran allowed the execution of 3 child offenders, including a 16-year-old girl-Atefeh Rajabi-who was publicly hanged in the street

**Group Meeting  
Monday may 9th 2005**

**A Film Crew from  
Open University will film us  
writing letters on behalf of  
Mexican Women**

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

for "acts incompatible with chastity".

China also allowed the execution of a farmer aged below 18 at the time of the crime.

In March this year the US Supreme Court ruled that imposing death sentence against child offenders contravened the US constitution.

This means that all countries have now formally rejected the application of the death penalty to child offenders.

Five countries abolished the death penalty for all crimes in 2004. This means that 120 countries have abolished the death penalty.

## SUDAN: Incommunicado detention of Darfurians

Ma'mun Issa Abdel Gader, a Fur community leader from Niyertiti in war torn Darfur, remains detained incommunicado, a year after his arrest in the Sudanese capital, Khartoum. He has been allowed one visit from his family, during Eid in November 2004.

He is being held in Kober prison in Khartoum, after being transferred between several detention centres. He is reportedly in poor health and suffers from a fractured arm which has not healed properly.

A lawyers' petition to the National Security Forces called for him to be charged or released, as his detention contravenes even the Sudan National Forces Act, which allows incommunicado detention without charge for up to nine months. The Authorities claim that he is linked to armed groups in Darfur, at war with the government. AI believes that he is held because of his high status



among the Fur community- he is a senior civil servant in the Ministry of Environment in Darfur- and for his concerns about human rights crisis in the region. He is one of many Darfurians detained because of their origin by the Sudanese authorities, who have used the State of Emergency to justify detentions without due process. Ci-

vilians sharing the same ethnicity as armed groups, mainly composed of Fur, Zaghawa and Masalit, bear the brunt of the government's military and political repression. They risk arbitrary arrest, prolonged incommunicado detention and torture, not only in Darfur, but also in other government-controlled areas, particularly in Khartoum.

**Please write:** calling for Ma'mun Issa Abdel Gader and other Darfurians held without charge to be released immediately or charged with a recognizable criminal offence and tried according to international standards for fair trial.

**Send appeals to:**  
Mr Ali Osman Mohamed Taha  
First Vice-President and  
Presidential Envoy for Darfur  
People's Palace  
PO Box 281  
Khartoum  
Sudan

### 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 Group Meeting

Jenny McConnell, Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

During the first part of the meeting members wrote letters on behalf of various human rights cases.

## Business:

**1. Giampaolo D'Alessandro (treasurer):** Reported that our financial year ends in March. The total income and expenditure for the financial year (April 2004-March 2005) was £2,663.23 and £2,358.29 respectively, with a net surplus of £304.94. The current balance is £1,234.37.

The main sources of income have been fundraising (£1,238.78 gross, £1028.10 net), donations (£602.50), saleable goods (£386.95 gross, £170.51 net) and subscriptions (£435.00).

The main items of expenditure have been donations to AIUK (£1,100 plus £50 for urgent actions), campaigns (£224.80), fundraising (£210.68), saleable goods (£216.44) and the group running costs (£505.79).

At the last AGM we agreed to raise the subscription fee to £10.00 per year to cover our running costs. This has been reasonably successful: we have 46 paying members with a total subscription of £435. The running costs of the Group have been £505.79 (Newsletter £142.29, meetings £223.50 and AI AGM £140). It is expected that the Newsletter costs will be reduced because many copies are sent by e-mail, but AGM costs will probably be higher.

All in all, the financial state of the Group is healthy; we have given £1,150 to AIUK in line with our average contributions and our reserve should give us a breathing space to think of new fundraising activities for the new financial year.

A full copy of the balance sheet is available on request.

## **2 Becky John, gave a report on the AGM:**

Azmat Begg and his son Moazzam Begg (ex Guantanamo detainee) opened the conference. Azmat had opened the conference last year and read out a letter from Moazzam who was in Guantanamo at the time.

Houzan Mahmood spoke on her role as head of the women's organisation in Iraq.

Rashida Bee (Bhopal) and Ken Wiwo spoke on corporate abuse.

There was a telephone link with Mordecai Vanunu.

Dan Jones, rumoured to be his last conference, was given a presentation.

Karen Williams stood down as treasurer and Peter Mills was elected to nominations committee.

The motion on "The Use of Force"-position of neutrality agreed.

Motion asking for increased action on Falun Gong was soundly defeated, the China coordinator spoke against it.

A play was presented on Saturday night called "Speak truth to Power".

**3 Frank Capocci:** Reminded us that next month a film crew from Open Uni will be filming us writing letters about Mexico

**4 Mary Brown (secretary):** Mary has placed a message on the on-line guest book for Peter Benenson.

2005 AI report now available, agreed we would get one for the Group.

Monthly action: focussed on Bhopal.

A small local company bringing out CD, launching at "Talking Heads" on Sunday May 22nd, money will go to AI.

General Election: we have an election pack, which we will send to the main candidates in our area.

The pack calls on the next government to:

- ◆ Develop a strategy to stop violence against women
- ◆ Support an international arms trade treaty
- ◆ Protect the rights of refugees
- ◆ Guarantee human rights while countering "terrorism"
- ◆ Hold companies to account for their impact on human rights
- ◆ Protect human rights through the EU
- ◆ Promote human rights abroad.

**Southampton Group Who's Who:**

**Group Officers:**

Chair:

*Jenny McConnell*

Vice-Chair:

*Becky John*

Secretary:

*Mary Brown*

Treasurer:

*Giampaolo D'Alessandro*

Membership Secretary:

*Jenny McConnell*

Outreach:

*Veronica Tippets*

Press Officer:

*Mary Brown*

Parliamentary Officer:

*Frank Capocci*

News Letter Editor:

*John Williams*

**Subgroups:**

CASA/Victor Pineda Henestrosa:

*Frank Capocci*

CHIRAN:

*Judy Horton*

Death Penalty:

*Giampaolo D'Alessandro*

*John Williams*

Refugees:

*Jilly Cooke*

Korea:

*Avenue St Andrew's Church Group*

Southampton University Link:

*tbc*

**Fair Trade**

Support Southampton's Fair Trade Shop

106 Shirley High St

(opposite Shirley Precinct)

Free parking in Vincent St Car park

Distinctive food, crafts and cloths from  
around the world

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Diary:

- ◆ **Monday 9th May:** Group Meeting: Open Uni Film Crew will film letter writing regarding Mexican Women. 7.30pm Avenue St Andrews United Reformed Church, The Avenue, All Welcome.
- ◆ **Saturday 14th May:** Fund-raising walk plus Pub Lunch in New Forest (see directions below)
- ◆ **Sunday 22nd May:** "Talking Heads" a CD launch supporting AI.

**A Walk in the New Forest**

**SATURDAY 14TH MAY**

**10.30am start**

Join members of the Southampton Group for a walk across Fritham Plain and the Valley of Dockens Water.

(around 2 hours)

**£5 donation to AI**

(afterwards a drink and lunch at the Royal Oak at your expense!)

Fritham is approx 30mins from Southampton

**DIRECTIONS**

From Junction 1 of M27 follow signs to: Fordingbridge, Brook and Fritham B3079 Enter Brook, Green Dragon Pub on left, Bell Inn on right.

At junction immediately after Bell Inn (approx 1 mile from motor way junction) follow signs, slight left, to Fordingbridge and Fritham B3078. Uphill past golf course on left.

At next cross roads, at the top of the hill, in approx 1.5 miles turn left signed Fritham

After approx 3/4 mile take right turn to "Fritham and Eyeworth only".

Continue to Fritham, passed Royal Oak on right (approx 1 mile), and turn left into "Forestry Commission Fritham" Car Park.

**Dogs welcome**

**NB Stout foot wear advised, some very muddy areas, one slight slope!**

**The walk will take place regardless of weather!**

**Any one requiring lift or more details ring John**