

AMNESTY NEWS

www.amnesty-volunteer.org/uk/southampton-city

January 2006



Greetings Card Campaign Update

Each year Amnesty has a greeting Card Campaign in December and January, outlined below is a summary of information from Amnesty's web site of its 2003 campaign.

Tunisia: Death of Zouheir Yahiaoui. Zouheir was conditionally released from prison in November 2003. But sadly died of a heart attack in March 2005. AI will be sending a message of condolence to his family.

Uzbekistan: Ruslan Sharipov. In June his prison sentence was reviewed and changed to 2 years community service.

USA: Ryan Matthews. Ryan was 17 when charged with capital murder, after spending 5 years on death row, Jefferson Parish District Attorney's Office dropped the charges and he is now rightfully a completely free man.

Tibet: Phuntsog Nyidrol. AI welcomed her release from prison in February 2004, she was Tibet's longest serving political prisoner.

USA: Lionel Tate. He was freed in January 2004, he pleaded guilty to second degree murder and was sentenced to 3 years juvenile custody, followed by 1 year house arrest and 10 years probation.

**Group Meeting
Monday January 9th 2006**

**UK ANTI-TERRORISM
LEGISLATION**

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

Viet Nam: Thich Thien Minh. His two life sentences have been reduced to 20 years imprisonment.

Nikolay Shelekhov. Was released in January 2004 and is now preparing for his marriage.

Roberto de Miranda Hernandez. Was released in June 2004, due to health concerns.

Zakiya Abd Jiyad 'Uwaysi was released in July 2004.

Thank you to all who wrote greetings on behalf of these and many other prisoners of conscience.

Once AI produce information about the 2004 campaign more information will be shared.

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.

Worldwide Appeal: EQUATORIAL GUINEA: “Disappearance” after unfair trial.

Navy Commandant Juan Ondo Abaga, Lieutenant Colonel Florencio Ela Bibang and Felipe Esono Ntumu “Pancho”, soldier, have reportedly “disappeared” while in custody.

The three men, tried by military court in Bata, Equatorial Guinea in September, were sentenced in their absence to 30 years in prison. They were among a group of some 70 people tried at the same time in an unfair trial for an alleged attempted coup in October 2004. When announcing the sentence the state-controlled Radio Nacional said that the three men and others also tried in their absence were not in the country.

However, Juan Ondo Abaga was allegedly abducted from Benin in February 2005 by security personnel from Equatorial Guinea. In July 2005, Florencio Ela Bibang, Felipe Esono Ntumu “Pancho” and another man, Antimo Edu, were also reportedly ab-



ducted from prison in Abuja, Nigeria, with apparent connivance of the prison authorities. The three had been arrested in late April in Lagos, Nigeria. AI members wrote to the Nigerian authorities urging them to protect the men and not to forcibly return them to Equatorial Guinea. All four men are believed to have been taken to Black Beach prison in the capital of Equatorial Guinea, Malabo, where they have been held incommunicado and report-

edly been severely tortured since their abduction. Florencio Ela Bibang is known to be seriously ill with hepatitis C and may not be receiving the medical attention he needs.

Please write, calling on the authorities to say immediately where Colonel Juan Ondo Abaga, Lieutenant Colonel Florencio Ela Bibang, Felipe Esono Ntumu “Pancho” and Antimo Edu are being held. Call for all allegations of torture and ill-treatment to be independently investigated.

Send appeals to:

President General Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo,
Presidente de la Republica,
Gabinete del Presidente de la Republica,
Malabo,
Equatorial Guinea

Fax: +240 09 3313/3334

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

The first part of the meeting was devoted to the Greetings Card campaign. Please see page one for some of the outcomes of 2003 Campaign

Business Meeting:

1. Mary Brown took the chair and welcomed all to the meeting.
2. All present signed a card for our chair, Becky, wishing her best wishes.
3. A number of people had attended Richard Green's funeral. We were reminded that Richard's family and friends had set up a Trust in his memory, to enable one person suffering from MS to sail on a Tall Ship. £61.50 was collected at the meeting, thank you. If any one else would like to donate, cheques should be made payable to "The Jubilee Sailing Trust" and sent to Nigel Chamberlain and Partners Ltd., Upton House, Bank Street, Bishops Waltham, SO32 1AN.
4. Reported that a window display had been held in October Books.
5. The Greetings Card Public Signing at the Marlands on 10th December did well, with 68 cards signed. The event was attended by the Mayor.
6. There will be a policy discussion at AI on "Sexual & Reproductive Rights & Issues around Abortion" on 15th to 23rd February.
7. The AI AGM will be held in Warwick University from 7th to 9th April. This is an inspiring experience. Anyone wishing to go please contact one of Who's Who (see back page) at or by the January meeting.

8. Attention was drawn to "Peace Matters -Challenges and Opportunities for Peace-Making in 2006" Speaker Pat Gaffney (General Secretary of Pax Christi) to be held on Saturday 14th January 2pm -5pm at St George Catholic School, Leaside Way, Swaythling, Southampton, SO16 3DQ. All are welcome.
9. Group Action: Nepal: "Children in Conflict" letter handed out for people to take away and sign.
10. Giampaolo (treasurer) reported that we had recently had a number of successful fund raising events : Sainsbury's Tin Rattle had raised £230.60 (collected for AI Charitable Trust); Mary Brown's kitchen sale had raised £317.65. Thank you to all who worked so hard on these events. In addition we sold £430 worth of Christmas cards at the University, this is not predominantly a fund raising event as the cards cost £410, however it is excellent for raising the profile, again thanks to all who helped. We currently have £1300 in the bank and it was agreed that £400 should be sent to the AI UK Section. It was noted we only have one more planned fundraising event for the year.

The Business meeting was followed by a brief well earned social event.

SEEKING ASYLUM IS NOT A CRIME

The UK Government claims that detention is pivotal to their removal policy for those whose asylum claims have been rejected.

In reality AI has found that people were detained even though the prospect of their forcible expulsion within a reasonable time was slim.

The Government also claims that detention will only be used as a last resort.

However, AI believes that many thousands were detained in 2004, some for the duration of the asylum process.

WHAT DO YOU THINK? Please visit the report on line www.amnesty.org.uk/asylum/takeaction.shtml

