

AMNESTY NEWS

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

February 2006



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.

UK Anti-Terrorism Legislation

Doug Jewel of LIBERTY spoke at the January meeting on UK Anti-terrorism legislation.

On 5th of August Tony Blair made his now famous statement "*Let no one be in any doubt, the rules of the game are changing*", as he laid the ground for the current Terrorism Bill, one of the most counter-productive pieces of anti-terror legislation ever to come before Parliament. The use of the statement was especially chilling as it came in the context of discussing how to deport people to countries where the use of torture by the state is system wide and routine.

This government has long been concerned that its international commitments, especially the European Convention on Human Rights and the UN Convention Against Torture, prevent it from easily deporting people whom it considers not conducive to the public good.

He also took the opportunity to argue that anyone now opposing the argument was guilty of trivialising the terrorist threat. On this point he was, once again, mistaken. Liberty, for example, always stated that the terrorist threat to this country was real. However the undermining of the complete pro-

**Group Meeting
Monday February 13th 2006**

Central America

**Open University
Video on Mexico**

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

hibition on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment can never be accepted.

The Government's assurances that the Memoranda of Understanding it has agreed with states such as Jordan and Libya and is seeking to agree with others, such as Algeria and Syria, give sufficient guarantees of safety to allow for deportation to take place do not uphold this principle. No such guarantees can be taken when international human rights organisations and monitors continue to report torture as systemic in these countries.

(cont on page 3)

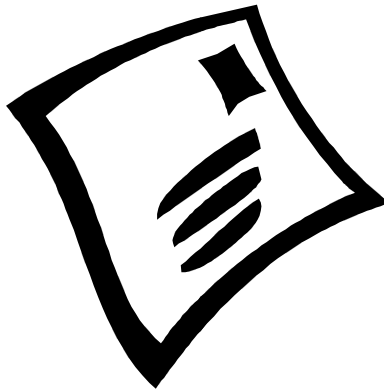
Worldwide Appeal: EL SALVADOR: Impunity for murders of young women

The body of 17 yr old Marian Isabela Rivas Martinez was found on 4th December 2002 in San Bartolo, San Salvador. She had been raped, killed and dismembered.

Five days later the decapitated head of another young woman was found in a rucksack in the Libertad Park in San Salvador. Later on the same day her leg was found in a plastic bag in a bus station. Her full identity has still not been established, and she has since been referred to as Rosa N.

In January 2003, a group of gang members were arrested on suspicion of involvement in the killing of Rosa N. It appears that the charges were brought against the gang members on the basis of little or no evidence. The case collapsed in August 2004 when the accused were acquitted on the grounds that they had been in prison at the time of the killing.

Some of the gang members arrested on suspicion of in-



volvement in the murder of Rosa N were also charged in relation to the killing of Marian Rivas. These charges were also dismissed in August 2004 for lack of evidence. No other lines of inquiry seem to have been pursued; all original evidence is thought to have been lost or destroyed and the cases archived. Between the end of 2002 and the middle of 2004 at least 20 women were killed and their bodies mutilated in El Salvador. Some victims

showed signs of having been raped prior to death. According to reports, only a few cases have been properly investigated and those responsible brought to justice. Investigations into the remaining cases appear to have been closed.

Please write, calling for the murders of Marian Isabela Rivas Martinez, Rosa N and other cases to be properly investigated and those responsible brought to justice.

Send appeals to:

President Elias Antonio Saca,
President of the Republic of
El Salvador,
Casa Presidencial,
Alameda Dr Manuel Enrique
5500,
San Salvador,
El Salvador.

Fax: +503 2243-9947

E - m a i l : B e l i -
sario_artiga@hotmail.com

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: January

Business Meeting:

1. **Jenny McConnell** took the chair and welcomed all to the meeting. She informed the meeting that we had received a letter from the **Mayor**, thanking us for being able to take part in the Marlands Card Signing Event. She had also been in touch with **Jack Rogers** who continues to work for AI and is also working for street children in various parts of the world, he sent his best wishes to the group. A collection box had been placed in **October Books**.
2. **Giampaolo D'Alessandro** (treasurer) informed the meeting that our current bank balance was £904; £400 had been sent to AIUK. This year we had sent £1500 to AIUK and £246.60 to the AI Charity.
3. Frank Capocci reminded the group of the **TIN RATTLE** in Morrison's Portswood on Friday 24th and Saturday 25th February.
4. **CHIRAN**: Judy drew our attention to a recent news report on China. On Saturday 18th February Philip Entwistle will be speaking at **UN Association** about his experiences in China, and Barbara Bubb will

be speaking on her experiences in Afghanistan on 4th March. Both events at Edmund Kell Hall.

5. Mary Brown (secretary) outlined the **monthly action**. It was a letter to Charles Clarke regarding men detained as suspects regarding international terrorism. Update on **Woman's Campaign** there had been suggestions of various actions. Our aim to have a stall in Civic Centre on Wednesday March 8th. We have received official notice of the **National Conference** on 7th to 9th April. Will need to register by 10th March. Any one interested please contact at next meeting. There is a **training day** for speaking at schools on 21st June, any one interested contact Mary. **October Books** is interested in hosting a book tour and publicity on the **Remember Ken Saro-Wiwa** event.
6. Frank put out an invitation for anyone to join the **CASA** sub-group.

(cont from page 1): Unfortunately this is not the only way in which the Government is undermining its commitments. Evidence is growing that the Government is complicit in the extraordinary rendition of people by the USA to third countries by allowing the use of British Airports. The Council of Europe and European Parliament are so concerned that they have launched formal investigations. Fortunately other Parliamentarians have formed a cross party group to press for action on this.

There has been some good news, parliament threw out plans which would have allowed the detention for ninety days without being charged; the House of Lords ruling that it is not permissible to use information gained by torture in the legal process.

The Governments complicity in torture must end. It claims that the ECHR, and therefore Article 3, is the product of a passed age. It needs to adapt to fit new circumstances, it is not flexible enough. Yet the people who wrote the Convention built in flexibility to allow for emergency situations; but allowed no such flexibility on the question of torture. Under no circumstances, not even a real emergency threatening the life of the nation, can a Government derogate from Article 3. The reason for this is obvious. The generation who wrote the ECHR fought the second-world-war, saw people liberated from concentration camps and witnessed unimaginable acts of barbarity. This is why they saw the prohibition of torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment as an absolute. They would have understood that the Government's undermining of its obligation to struggle against torture throughout the world is so counterproductive and dangerous; producing not only information of no worth, suspects will tell torturers anything in order to stop the process, but also recruiting terrorists.

“No one shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment” Article 3 European Convention on Human Rights.

