

# AMNESTY NEWS

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

May 2006



## Worldwide: Annual death penalty report

*Execution numbers down in 2005, trend toward abolition continues.*

There are around 20,000 prisoners on death row around the world, said AI.

The Report shows that at least 2,148 were executed last year—the vast majority in China (1,770), Iran (94), Saudi Arabia (86), and the USA (60). The four countries alone accounted for 94% of executions recorded during 2005.

The figure for the preceding year (2004) was 3,797 executions, indicating that last year saw a substantial drop in recorded executions as well as a fall in the number of countries carrying out executions (22, down from 25).

The number of countries carrying out executions has halved in the last 20 years and has dropped for the fourth consecutive year.

AI's report however cautions that these figures are minimum figures only, as countries like China refuse to publish full official statistics on executions. Vietnam, for instance, has made death penalty information a "state secret".

A Chinese legal expert has estimated that China actually executes about 8,000 people every

**Group Meeting  
Monday May 8th 2006**

**“New Structures & Focus  
in Amnesty”**

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

year, while a Chinese state official said in 2004 that “nearly 10,000” people are executed in China each year.

A person in China can be sentenced to death for 68 different crimes, including non-violent ones like tax fraud, embezzlement and drug offences.

AI UK Director Kate Allen said: “The death penalty is a cruel and unnecessary, does not deter crime and often comes after torture, false “confessions” and deeply unfair trials.”

Speaking about his predicament last year, Kenny Richey said: “It's a 24 hour a day torture. You have no life. You're just existing from one day to the next...”

### 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: MEXICO: Human rights defender's life at risk

*"Take care, all of you, and take care of Martin because a person has been hired and is going for Martin's head".*

Warning to Martin Barrios' family by a friend. The information apparently came from a source close to the textile industry.

Human rights defender Martin Barrios Hernandez has been warned that his life is at risk if he continues to defend and publicise the poor labour conditions of the textile workers in maquilas (assembly plants) in the State of Puebla. His family and colleagues at the Human and Labour Rights Commission of Tehuacan Valley may also be in danger.

Barrios was detained and charged in December 2005 after a local textile plant owner made allegations that he had tried to blackmail him. Barrios is coordinator of the Human and Labour Rights Commission of Tehuacan Valley which has recently been supporting workers after the Calidad de Confecciones tex-



tile plant in their campaign for recognition of their rights. His detention appeared to be an attempt to prevent him from carrying out his legitimate rights work.

When released in January, after being pardoned by his accuser, Barrios stated he had never asked for a pardon because he is innocent. He said that he would not be deterred from carrying out his work. He has previously been threatened and intimidated as a result of his hu-

man rights activities. In December he was seriously assaulted, no one has been brought to justice. Friends and relatives have been told that an individual linked to the textile plant industry has reportedly been paid to kill him.

The Inter-America Commission of Human Rights has instructed Mexican authorities to guarantee their safety.

**Please write**, calling for the authorities to take action to guarantee the safety of Martin Barrios Hernandez, his family and members of the Human and Labour Rights Commission of Tehuacan Valley, in accordance with their wishes.

### **Send appeals to:**

State Governor of Puebla,  
Lic Mario Marin Torres  
Gobernador del Estado de Puebla,  
14 Oriente, No 1006  
Colonia El Alto  
Puebla  
Mexico

### 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

The meeting started with a “letter write” on the “Administration of Justice, (Death Penalty)”

Business Meeting:

1) **Jenny McConnell** took the chair and welcomed all to the meeting.

2) **Mary Brown** (secretary) outlined the **Monthly Action:** Two letters on Rendition.

On Saturday June 3rd we have been invited to run a stall in Hedge End, Church Youth Event.

All are looking for country coordinators, Mary has details.

The Group has ballot paper for elections to the Board.

Lobby of Parliament regarding “Control of Arms” May 10th, please contact Mary if interested. You will need to contact your MP in advance.

3) **Jilly reported on the AGM:** A very enjoyable and inspiring experience. Very well organised, well chaired meetings with 500 plus delegates, of all ages.

One of the main events had been the “Control Arms Campaign”, they almost have a million faces.

Highlighted the Child Soldiers of Sudan, Emanuel Zal, speaker who is now a musician, he spoke movingly of his experience of being caught up in fighting at the age of 7 years.

The motion on “Sexual Reproductive Rights” was referred to the Chairs Group.

The motion on “Position on Use of Force”, AI will take a position on force in exceptional circumstances. There should be some mechanism for people to raise their objection.

The motion “calling for AI to have an extra coordinator for asylum seekers and refugees”, al-

though the Board’s view was there were enough resources already the motion was carried.

The key note speaker was Bobby Muller a “Vietnam Vet”, he was wounded in Vietnam and has been horrified by his treatment on return. Now very involved in landmine campaign, USA not signed up.

Panel discussion on “End Violence Against Women”. Reps from TUC, Southall Black Sisters, AIUK and a man whose sister was killed in domestic violence. Southall Black Sisters concentrated on women brought to this country with no status, under the control of their husbands, women like that have no where to go if victims of domestic violence. AIUK rep spoke about trafficking issues. TUC rep talked on sexual harassment. Relative of woman killed in domestic violence queried if police did enough to help.

4) **Refugee Week 19th to 25th June:**

Jilly to check refugee web site for local activities.

5) **Becky:** Jenny reported that she was continuing to get better and would be interested in shadowing someone as Chair next year. Jenny prepared to help.

6) **Fran:** Has booked Arts Centre in Totton for December 10th for Folk Concert, Jay and Cath, on Human Rights Day.

7) **Jenny:** reminded that Virginia Segal from Amnesty International Secretariat would be speaking at May meeting.

### More Details on Death Penalty (from AI Report)

Executions in 2005:

China: 1,770+	Iran: 94+	Saudi Arabia: 86+	USA: 60	Pakistan: 31	Yemen: 24
Vietnam: 21	Jordan: 11	Mongolia: 8	Singapore: 8	Kuwait: 7	Libya: 6
Palestinian Authority: 5		Taiwan: 3	Iraq: 3	Bangladesh: 3	Uzbekistan: 2+
Indonesia: 2+	North Korea: 1+		Somalia: 1+	Belarus: 1	Japan: 1

Note “+” symbol indicates that the figure is a minimum one; the true figure may be higher but information was limited.

Iran was the only country in the world in 2005 to execute child offenders

**Southampton Group Who's Who:**

**Group Officers:**

Chair:

*Becky John*

Vice-Chair:

*Jenny McConnell*

Secretary & Press:

*Mary Brown*

Treasurer:

*Giampaolo D'Alessandro*

Membership Secretary:

*Jenny McConnell*

Outreach:

*Veronica Tippets*

Parliamentary Officer:

*Frank Capocci*

News Letter Editor:

*John Williams*

Subgroups:

CASA/Victor Pineda Henestrosa:

*Frank Capocci*

CHINA:

*Judy Horton*

Administration of Justice (Death Penalty):

*Giampaolo D'Alessandro*

*John Williams*

Refugees:

*Jilly Cooke*

Stop Violence Against Women:

*Becky John*

Business and Human Rights:

*Becky John*

Control Arms Campaign:

*Barbara Lupton*

Korea:

*Avenue St Andrew's Church Group*

- Diary:
- ◆ **Monday 8th May:** Group Meeting, New Structures and Focus in Amnesty: Virginia Segal AI International Secretariat. 7.30pm, Avenue St Andrew's. All welcome.
  - ◆ **Monday 12th June:** Group meeting: Update on North Korea, from Fran Stanfield. Plus letter writing focusing on Prisoners of Conscience worldwide.
  - ◆ **19th to 25th June Refugee Week**
  - ◆ **Monday 10th July:** Group Meeting, Southampton Group AGM, and "Stop Violence Against Women" videos.

**Highlights from Amnesty's web page**

**If you are interested in any of these topics and have access to the internet, dial up to:**  
**[www.amnesty.org.uk/news/](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/news/)**

Algeria: New report reveals torture in Algeria as UK starts proceedings to return "at risk" detainees.

Israel/Occupied Territories: Gaza shelling must stop.

UK/USA: New report reveals fresh details of CIA rendition flights and black site detentions.

UK: Nine in ten people in Britain back tougher rules for business, as new campaign for company law reform is launched.

Ethiopia: Amnesty International condemns treason trial opening in Addis Ababa.

Sri Lanka: Amnesty calls for respect for human rights as violence escalates.

Colombia: Civilians could be forced to live next to human rights abusers, warns Amnesty.

Annual death penalty report reveals 20,000 on death row.

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☆☆ HAVE YOU PAID ☆☆

☆☆ YOUR ANNUAL ☆☆

☆☆ MEMBERSHIP FEE? ☆☆

☆☆ If not please contact Giampaolo or ☆☆

☆☆ Jenny see Who's Who above ☆☆

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