

AMNESTY NEWS

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

July 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.

Update on North Korea: Fran Stanfield

AI has monitored the human rights situation in North Korea for many years. In the late 80's the Soton Group started to get involved. Fran Stanfield of the Soton Group became a co-ordinator for the UK Section on this area. In the 90's the Soton Group had a visit from Soh-Sung, a prisoner of conscience and at that time our Amnesty Tree was planted. In the 90's a letter writing Group was set up in Avenue St Andrew's and it took on the educational file for North Korea.

Access to North Korea remains tightly restricted, information on specific human rights violations are therefore difficult to verify. AI's information is based on a number of sources, such as testimonies from North Koreans who have fled the country, inter-government organisations, NGOs, academics, journalists and experts who are involved in issues relating to human rights in North Korea.

In 2005, the UN special rapporteur on human rights reported that there was still plenty of evidence of torture, detention without trial, public executions and capital punishment for political dissidents. There is also concern about the lack of an independent judiciary, which makes the rule of law im-

**Group Meeting
Monday July 10th 2006**

**Southampton Group
AGM
&
Videos on Violence Against
Women**

**Avenue St Andrew's
United Reformed Church
The Avenue, Southampton
7.30pm
ALL WELCOME**

possible.

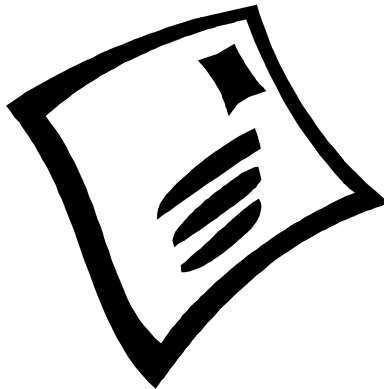
Food Crisis: the people of North Korea have suffered from famine and acute food shortages for more than a decade. Thousands of people have died and many millions have suffered from chronic malnutrition. AI believes that the denial of the right to food is at the core of many human rights problems. Reports reaching AI suggest that food aid is distributed in the following order: First priority are the military personnel; second, special undisclosed organisations ie those that produce weapons; third, strategically important factories and work places and fourth,

Cont on page 3

Action on Individuals: End impunity in Guatemala

In recent years, hundreds of women have been murdered in Guatemala. The precise number of women is unknown and disputed. But in 2004, the police recorded 527 murders of women—more than ten a week. In a large number of cases there is evidence that women have been raped and subjected to other sexual violence before they died.

During the course of its research into the recent wave of killings of women and girls, Amnesty International has identified a range of serious failings and shortcomings that it believes the Guatemalan authorities must urgently address. The organisation concurs with other national and international experts that the number of killings of women is increasing, that it has increased beyond national averages usually associated with killings of both men and women and that it should be considered as a priority within the issue of public and human security. AI



has found that many of the killings of women in Guatemala were exceptionally brutal often bearing signs of mutilation and disfigurement associated with killings during the internal armed conflict.

Despite the lack of detailed forensic information, there is significant evidence to suggest that sexual violence, particularly rape, is a strong component characterising many killings. AI believes that the level of brutality, mutilation and sexual vio-

lence evidenced in many of these cases amounts to torture. AI has also found that many of the victims were from vulnerable sectors of society, including minors, with no access to formal mechanisms of redress. This is particularly true in the case of minors.

Send: a letter calling on the Guatemalan authorities to take immediate action to prevent further killings and to bring perpetrators to justice.

Urge the Guatemalan authorities to publicly condemn the abduction and murder of women and girls.

Write to:

Licenciado Oscar Berger Perdomo-Presidente de la Republica de Guatemala
Casa Presidencial
6 a. Avenida
4-41 zona 1
Ciudad de Guatemala
Guatemala
An e-mail letter is available on the web.

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: June

Jenny welcomed all to the meeting and highlighted:

- ◆ Two letters to Nepal
- ◆ The 2006 Annual Report, which the Group will and Veronica will ensure there is a copy in the library
- ◆ An Urgent Action has been sent to Iran with the money provided by the Group
- ◆ A new regional representative, Ros Topley from Cirencester, who would like to job share.
- ◆ A request was made for people to put forward their names to stand for office in the Group
- ◆ If acceptable, Becky would like to shadow the Chair for a year with a view to taking on the role in 12 months. Jenny said she would be prepared to stay on in this capacity.
- ◆ Noted that Amnesty was working with the

Observer on an internet campaign.

- ◆ A request that all consider ideas to be brought to next months AGM, particularly on ways we can raise public awareness
- ◆ Hedge-End event had been very successful, thanks to all.

CASA:

- ◆ Heena had produced details of a number of CASA cases for people to take away.

Veronica: Highlighted:

- ◆ The help Africa partition
- ◆ An article in Viewpoint
- ◆ The annual Peace Walk (18th June)

Jilly: highlighted:

- ◆ The activities for Refugee Week
- ◆ Letter writing: A credit to the nation
- ◆ Pukaar concert

An Update on North Korea (cont from page 1)

a hierarchical distribution of food in every city.

Plight of North Koreans outside North Korea:

Acute food shortages have forced tens of thousands to cross the border “illegally” into China’s north-eastern provinces. They face heavy penalties, and “illegal” North Koreans residing in China live in appalling conditions and are vulnerable to physical, emotional and sexual exploitation. If caught they are generally forcibly repatriated and then sent to labour camps. In July 2004, at least 468 North Koreans fled from Viet Nam to South Korea, and at the end of 2005, some 7,000 North Koreans had reached South Korea and been granted South Korea nationality.

Executions:

AI has received reports of public executions carried out at places where large crowds gather, with advanced notice given to schools, enterprises and farms. Some prisoners are executed in front of their families.

Torture and ill-treatment:

Reports from a variety of sources suggest that torture and ill-treatment are widespread in North Korea. Torture in prisons, labour camps, as well as in detention centres is a common occurrence. Reports indicate that women detainees continue to be subjected to degrading prison conditions.

Freedom of expression:

Opposition of any kind is not tolerated. Any person

who expresses an opinion contrary to the position of the ruling Korean Workers’ Party face severe punishment and in many cases their families are also punished. The domestic news media is strictly censored and access to international media broadcasts is restricted. Any unauthorised assembly is regarded as a “collective disturbance”, liable to punishment. Religious freedom, although guaranteed by the constitution, is in practice sharply curtailed.

AI calls on the North Korean Government to:

- ◆ Abide by principles laid out in the international human rights treaties it has ratified;
- ◆ take steps to abolish the death penalty; release all people detained or imprisoned for peaceful exercise of fundamental human rights;
- ◆ guarantee freedom of expression and freedom of movement for all;
- ◆ review legislation to ensure it conforms with international human rights standards;
- ◆ invite the UN human rights mechanisms to visit & grant free access to independent human rights monitors;
- ◆ respect, protect and fulfil the right to food.

Southampton Group Who's Who:

Group Officers:

Chair:

Becky John

Vice-Chair & Membership Secretary:

Jenny McConnell

Secretary & Press:

Mary Brown

Treasurer:

Giampaolo D'Alessandro

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

End Violence Against Women:

Jo Dixon

Business and Human Rights:

Gareth Davies

Control Arms Campaign:

Barbara Lupton

Terror, Security and Human Rights

Fran Stanfield

North Korea:

Avenue St Andrew's Church Group

- Diary:
- ◆ **Monday 10th July:** Group Meeting, Southampton Group AGM, and "Stop Violence Against Women" videos. 7.30 pm Avenue St Andrew's.
 - ◆ **Monday 11th September:** The first meeting of the new year. A good opportunity to get friends to hear about AI. 7.30pm Avenue St. Andrew's. All welcome.
 - ◆ **Group Meetings,** will be held on the second Monday of the month through to July at Avenue St Andrew's at

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**

Pride comes to London on Saturday 1st July. Find out more about Europe's biggest Pride Parade on the web site.

Stop internet repression: join the irrepensible.info campaign.

Israel/Occupied Territories: Palestine armed groups must release abducted Israeli soldier.

AK-47 is world's worst regulated weapon according to new report.

Jamaica: Political will needed to end violence against women and girls.

Read about Amnesty's successes eg: Nestor Rodriguez Lobaina a political Cuban activist.

Rehab Abdel Bagi Mohamed Ali, an X-ray technician from Sudan.

Thich Quang Do a Buddhist monk from Viet Nam.

Jenni Williams a human rights defender with Women of Zimbabwe Arise, who has faced many arbitrary arrests.

**SOUTHAMPTON GROUP AGM
10TH JULY**

We would welcome any one who would like to take office

We would welcome any ideas to raise the public profile of Amnesty

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