

# AMNESTY NEWS

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

October 2006



## End The Death Penalty-AI Information Pack

### What is the Death Penalty?

The death penalty is the execution of a prisoner as punishment for a crime. Methods of execution vary between countries. Those used most frequently include hanging (China, Iran), electrocution (USA), lethal injection (USA), shooting (Uzbekistan) and stoning (Iran).

### Is the Death Penalty Dying?

The number of countries using the death penalty is decreasing. At the start of the 20th century, only 3 countries had abolished the death penalty; at the start of 2006 the figure stands at 87. More than half the world's countries have chosen to abolish the death penalty in law or practice. Once a government has abolished the death penalty, it is rarely reintroduced. This trend reflects the growing awareness of alternative punishments, which are effective and which do not involve the premeditated killing of a human being by the state in the name of justice.

### AI's Position

AI opposes the death penalty in all cases without exception. The death penalty is a denial of human rights. It is the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. It is irrevocable and can be in-

**Group Meeting  
Monday October 9th 2006**

**Southampton Group  
"Living in a Globalised World"  
DVD produced by the  
Open University  
Plus Letter writing**

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

flicted on the innocent. Its use is often racist and arbitrary, and it has never been shown to be a greater deterrent than other punishments.

### Executions in 2005

At least 2,148 people were executed in 22 countries.

94% of all known executions in the world took place in:

China, executed at least 1,770 people (the actual number is almost certainly higher, legal experts estimate approx 8,000)

Iran, executed at least 94 people

Saudi Arabia, executed at least 86 people, and

USA, executed 60 people.

### 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.

## Peru: Proposed extension of death penalty laws

The Congress of Peru is considering three pieces of legislation which would broaden the scope of the death penalty in the country. One draft bill also suggests that Peru should withdraw from its commitment to the American Convention on Human Rights (ACHR), which expressly prohibits the extension of death penalty laws for its state parties.

AI is seriously concerned at any proposal to extend the death penalty in law or practice in Peru.

The proposed reform is of Article 140 of the Peruvian Constitution, to extend the death penalty for those convicted of certain offences. On 11th September the first of the draft bills proposed extending Article 140 to include those convicted of the rape of children under nine; the rape of mentally or physically disabled people or children between the ages of 9 and 18 where the perpetrator goes on to kill the victim. Two



other draft bills, introduced on 19th September, proposed the use of the death penalty for those convicted of raping and killing a child under 7. The draft bills will now be discussed by the Constitution and Congress Regulations Commission, which has the power either to reject them outright, or pass them on to other legal commissions for comment, before the bills go to a vote in the Congress.

AI acknowledges the serious nature of the crimes in question, but is concerned that the draft bills run counter to international standards seeking to narrow the scope of the death penalty, and that the death penalty is an ineffective method of tackling

crime prevention.

Article 4(2) of the ACHR reads: “the application of.. [the death penalty] should not be extended to crimes to which it does not presently apply”. Peruvian withdrawal from the ACHR would constitute a serious setback for the protection of human rights in Peru. Without the ACHR, people in Peru would not have recourse to the Inter-American system when domestic courts failed to provide effective remedies for human rights violations.

**Send an appeal letter to the Peruvian Congress expressing your concerns at the proposed extensions of death penalty laws.**

**Write to:**

Mercedes Cabanillas  
Bustamente-President of the Congress  
Presidenta del Congreso  
Congreso de la Republica  
Plaza Bolivar s/n  
Av. Abancay  
Lima 1  
PERU

### 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.

## September Group Meeting

Jenny (Chair), welcomed every one to the meeting

**Mary (Secretary):**

- ◆ Introduced 2 monthly actions: "Equatorial Guinea", a detainee since 2003 and "Companies Bill": write to your MP about holding corporate companies to account.
- ◆ AI Group News from now will be quarterly.
- ◆ Consultation on Abortion, pack will be available by October meeting.
- ◆ Control Arms Action: post cards available to be sent; AI is focussing on armed violence in Brazil as part of the Campaign.
- ◆ Darfur: AI will be gearing up its response over the coming weeks.
- ◆ Protect the Human Week 14th-20th October, throw a party, sell a badge etc.
- ◆ Moazzem Begg: talking at Guildford as part of the Guildford Book Festival on 28th October, tickets from Tourist Information tel:01483444334, £7.
- ◆ Southern Regional Conference 11th November, Highfield Church Centre, Southampton (see below)
- ◆ Mundy Turner Concert: Sunday 10th December at 4.00pm in Hanger Farm Arts Centre.
- ◆ AI Christmas cards, Mary will be ordering, please let her know if you want anything in

particular.

- ◆ Christmas Sale 25th November (see below)
- ◆ University Group: agreed Giampaolo should be contact person at University on 4th October.
- ◆ Message from Becky, good news she is much improved.

**Frank:**

- ◆ Tin Rattle at Sainsbury's Shirley, rota circulated. Please contact Frank for further information. (see Diary)
- ◆ Open University DVD "Living in a Globalised World" will be shown at next Group meeting. It includes a sequence shot last May at the Southampton meeting.
- ◆ CASA: John Warry, AI coordinator wants to increase the number of coordinators to 3, if any one is interested contact Frank.

**Veronica:**

- ◆ Noted that Harbour Lights had been very supportive.
- ◆ Blackwell's Book shop a display on Protect the Human.
- ◆ International Peace Day 21st September. UNA event at Peace Fountain.

### SOUTHERN REGIONAL CONFERENCE

SATURDAY 11TH NOVEMBER  
HIGHFIELD CHURCH CENTRE  
10.00 FOR 10.30 TO 3.00

We are the hosts for this event and need helpers for coffee, lunch and washing up.  
Volunteers at next Group meeting

Jack Rogers (1916-2006)

Jack Rogers who worked for Amnesty for a number of years, died recently.

There will be a collection in his memory for Amnesty International at the next Group meeting. A more detailed tribute will appear in next months News



**Southampton Group Who's Who:**

**Group Officers:**

Chair & Membership Secretary:

*Jenny McConnell*

Vice-Chair :

*Becky John*

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*

**Walk in the New Forest**

This event has been postponed to  
14th October

Details will be available at next  
Group Meeting

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023 8055 2680

- Diary:
- ◆ **Monday 9th October:** Group Meeting, DVD "Living in a Globalised World" plus letter write. Avenue St Andrew's at 7.30pm all welcome.
  - ◆ **Saturday 14th October:** Walk in the New Forest (postponed from 30th Sept) details at October meeting.
  - ◆ **Saturday 21st October:** An event in Protect the Human Week, Tin Rattle at Sainsbury's Shirley.
  - ◆ **Saturday 11th November:** Southern Region Conference, Highfield Church Centre (see page 3)
  - ◆ **Monday 13th November:** Southampton Group Meeting: "Human Rights in Turkey" Gillian Cleverley, AIUK Turkey Coordinator. Avenue St Andrew's at 7.30pm all welcome.

**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**

**Secret Policeman's Ball:** Saturday 14th October 2006, at Royal Albert Hall, London. Tickets via Royal Albert Hall Box Office (0207 589 8212) and Ticketzone.

**NB** There will be a simultaneous Cine Cast at Harbour Lights, doors open 7.00pm, tickets £12.

**Iran:** Continuing crackdown against peaceful critics.

**China:** New report slams Chinese failure to make promised human rights reforms.

**Caught in the Crossfire:** A Control Arms Photography Exhibition. 5/10 to 22/10 The Bargehouse, Oxo Tower, London

**Protect the Human Week:** Film Screening- "This is Spinal Tap". Prince Charles Cinema, 7 Leicester Place, London. 1pm, 07/10/06.