

# AMNESTY NEWS

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

December 2006



## Human Rights in Turkey

Gillian Cleverley, Turkey Coordinator, gave a detailed account of the human rights issues in Turkey. Outlined below and continued on page 3 is a summary of her presentation:

When the present Turkish government came to power, it established EU entry as a top priority and made progress in legislative reforms in order for the accession talks to begin. However, the reform process has slowed down considerably and AI still has a number of concerns about some of the new legislation and particularly about the lack of implementation of other legislation.

The recent reforms have included repeal of the repressive Article 8 Anti-Terror Laws, the abolition of: the State Security courts, the death penalty, incommunicado detention; stiffer sentences for torture, less statutory power of the military, precedence given to international conventions over national law, more cultural rights for minorities and a range of legislative changes on gender-related issues.

AI is concerned about new anti-terrorism legislation, restrictions on freedom of expression, harassment of human rights defenders, torture and ill-treatment, excessive use of force against demonstrators, impunity and violence against women.

**Group Meeting  
Monday December 11th 2006**

**“Greetings Card Campaign”  
With UNA**

**Plus  
Christmas Social**

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

Writers, journalists, publishers and HRDs are targeted using the new Article 301 which prohibits “public denigration of Turkishness, the Republic or the Grand Assembly”. Most of these cases are brought by ultra-nationalists, who attend the trials and are very aggressive. Many of those charged have their cases dropped or are acquitted, or receive fines but the court cases take a long time and those concerned have their lives and work disrupted.

Although reports of torture and ill-treatment were decreasing at first, it has recently increased in the South East. There is a lack of compliance with legally prescribed procedures, such as failure to inform detainees of their rights.  
(Cont on page 3)

### 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 for December 2006

### USA: Kuwaiti held in Guantanamo

*"The nurse shoved a tube up my nose so quickly that I began choking, bleeding from the nose and spitting blood. They used no anaesthetic".*

Fawzi al-Odah has been held without trial in the US detention facility at Guantanamo Bay, since May 2002. He was working in Afghanistan until the US invasion when he and four other Kuwaiti nationals fled to Pakistan to escape the bombing in January 2002.

On arrival in Pakistan the five men are said to have taken refuge with a tribal leader who then sold them to the Pakistani authorities. They were later handed over to the US forces in Kandahar, where Fawzi al-Odah says that he was tortured. He was then transferred to Guantanamo.

Fawzi al-Odah joined others in a hunger strike at Guantanamo on 8 August 2005. He says that for the first two weeks of his protest he was given no medical care and no one discussed his reasons for



refusing food. He was force-fed through a nasal tube while shackled. He told his lawyer that some of the hunger strikers were forced to urinate and defecate on themselves because they were strapped to restraint chairs for prolonged periods. Some are also said to have vomited blood.

He ended his protest on 11 January 2006 after reportedly being threatened with force-feeding using a thicker tube. He says that the previous day he had heard the screams of a detainee being force-fed in

an adjacent room. That detainee is said to have advised Fawzi al-Odah that he should eat voluntarily so as not to experience the same pain.

**Please write:** calling for Fawzi al-Odah and all other detainees to be released from Guantanamo unless charged and tried in accordance with international standards of fairness in a court that will not impose the death penalty. Call for the immediate closure of the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay.

#### Send appeals to:

Major General Glenn F Spears  
Deputy Commander United States Southern Command  
3511 NW 91st Ave  
Miami  
FL 33172-1217  
USA  
Fax: +1 305 437 1077  
Email via:  
<http://www.southcom.mil/home/>

#### 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.

## November Group Meeting

Jenny (Chair), welcomed every one to the meeting.

- ◆ **Speaker:** Gillian Cleverley, Turkey Coordinator for AIUK gave a detailed description of Turkey's Human Rights position. A summary is provided at page one and continued at the foot of this page.
- ◆ **Finances:** Giampaolo reported on our current finances: 36 people had renewed their subscriptions; the Tin Rattle at Sainsbury's had raised £193.66p which has been sent to the Amnesty Charitable Trust; our current balance is £798.81; we have sent £500 to AIUK over the year. Giampaolo has made a still from the "Living in a Global World" video for our web site.
- ◆ **Human Rights Day:** Mundy-Turner Concert (see details back page). Fran reported on the organisation, the event will include teas, Christmas card sales and hopefully a Sudan display.
- ◆ **Secretary's report:** The monthly action: Letter to MPs regarding the detention of failed asylum seekers. Mary reminded members of the "Goodies for Christmas" sale.
- ◆ **Greeting Cards Campaign:** this will start next month and will feature at next months meeting. Jenny has a number of non religious cards.

- ◆ **One World Event:** A number of Christmas cards sold.
- ◆ **CASA:** Frank reported that the sub group had been running for some 20 years, and would now like to step down. Heena and Paul will be continuing the subgroup. Frank put out a call for new members. Frank was thanked for all the work he has done over the years.
- ◆ **Outreach:** Veronica reported that there was an advert for AI in this months "Big Issue".
- ◆ **Regional Meeting:** Jenny reported on the meeting. In the morning Richard Williams, gave an account of the current issues facing AIUK. This was followed by a presentation by Craig Murray on his experiences as a British ambassador to Uzbekistan. A key issue addressed in the afternoon was AI's attitude to sexual rights. Members were reminded to complete the questionnaire on this issue.
- ◆ **Good news:** Jennifer Latheef, opposition politician and prisoner of conscience in the Maldives has been released. Helen Behave, Eritrean Gospel Singer has been released.

### Human Rights in Turkey (cont from page 1)

Impunity is still an issue due to inadequate documentation of evidence in medical reports, few prosecutions, no suspension from active duty, chain of command not examined, unsystematic forensic enquiry and slow trials – statute of limitations often reached.

Violence against women is a key issue with between 35% and 50% of women victims of domestic violence and is widely tolerated at all levels. Government reforms have been wide-ranging including increased penalties for rape and honour killings but implementation has so far been weak and more emphasis on public awareness is needed.

AI is focusing its work on Freedom of Expression, unfair trials of political prisoners convicted under old laws, police accountability and impunity and violence against women (particularly trafficking).

**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 Tippetts*

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:**

- ◆ **Sunday 10th December: Human Rights Day:** Mundy-Turner Concert, Hanger Farm Arts Centre, Totton 4.00pm (see below)
- ◆ **Monday 11th December: Group Meeting:** "Greetings Card Campaign with UNA participation" plus Christmas Social. 7.30pm Avenue St Andrew's. All welcome.
- ◆ **TBC: Greeting Cards Event** at film "The Blood Diamond" Harbour Lights.
- ◆ **Monday 8th January 2007: Group Meeting:** "Refugees and Asylum" speaker from Winchester Visitors Group. All welcome.



**MUNDY-TURNER**  
to sing for  
**HUMAN RIGHTS DAY**

Sunday 10th December 4pm

Hanger Farm Arts Centre  
Off Aikman Lane,  
Totton

Tickets £8  
023 8066 7683

Greetings Card Campaign 2006  
The Campaign runs from November 1st to  
31st January  
There will be information at our Group  
meetings or visit the AI web site  
[www.amnesty.org.uk](http://www.amnesty.org.uk)

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**December Group Meeting**  
**Monday 11th**

**Christmas Social**

**Bring some food and  
drink to share**