

# AMNESTY NEWS

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

February 2007



## Southampton & Winchester Visitors Group

Anne Vinnell from Southampton & Winchester Visitors Group (S&WVG) spoke at the January Group meeting about Asylum Seekers.

### Who are Asylum Seekers?

Men women and children who:

- \* have a well grounded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion;
  - \* are outside the country they normally reside in;
  - \* are unable or unwilling to return home through fear of persecution;
  - \* are waiting for their application to remain in the country to be assessed.
- If granted, the asylum seeker will then be given refugee status.

The UK signed 1951 Convention on Refugees, anyone has a legal right to come here, apply for asylum and remain in the UK until a final decision is made on their asylum application. By definition there is no such thing as illegal asylum seeker. Entry using false documents recognised as the only way many can reach a safe country.

### Where do they come from?

Areas of conflict/human rights abuse eg Somalia, Eritrea, Iran, China, Afghanistan, DRC (Congo).

### Where do they go?

Usually adjacent, often poor countries eg from Afghanistan to Pakistan. UK hosts less than 3%, the 9th in Western

**Group Meeting  
Monday February 12th 2007**

**Israel &  
the Occupied Territories**

**Speaker  
John LILLY**

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

Europe per 1000 population, or 78th in the world.

### What happens in the UK?

67% arrive at a port or by lorry; then detained by police and passed to immigration, they then ask for asylum. Immigration may decide:

- \* application not applicable-deported or
- \* given emergency accommodation or \* may be put in detention centre. If in emergency accommodation they will be dispersed with no choice of destination, may take up to months.

### Dispersal:

Accommodation is primarily in areas where accommodation is cheap. A single person is given £38/week, and they are not allowed to work. They have lots of time on their hands to brood (cont 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.

## Algeria: Two men at risk of torture following deportation from UK



Two Algerian men known as “Q” and “K” have been arrested and detained incommunicado just days after being deported from the UK. The two men are in custody of the DRS, Algeria’s military police, and are at risk of serious ill-treatment.

Detainees held by the DRS are routinely held in secret places of detention, and allowed no contact with the outside world. AI has extensively documented the DRS’s record of torture.

The UK authorities deported “Q” on 20 January and “K” four days later, on the grounds that they presented a “threat to the nation’s security” of the UK.

“K” was arrested on arrival at the airport. “Q” was initially detained, released and then arrested. Both men appear to have been taken to a military barracks in central Algiers, part of which is used as a secret detention centre. They have not been allowed access to their relatives or

relatives.

“Q” and “K” faced a stark choice: either to continue to challenge their deportation to Algeria and face continued detention in high-security prisons away from their families, friends and communities for years on end, or face an uncertain future fraught with risks by returning to Algeria. Last year, they withdrew their appeals against the deportation orders because they believed that, in the circumstances, they would never get justice in the UK. They preferred to return to Algeria, despite the risks they would face.

Anyone suspected of involvement in terrorist activities, or who is believed to possess information about terrorist activities in

Algeria or abroad, faces a real risk of secret detention and torture in Algeria. AI has received dozens of reports of detainees treated in this way.

Under Article 51 of the Algerian Criminal Procedures Code, detainees suspected of “terrorist or subversive act” may be held without charge for a maximum of 12 days. The arresting authorities must immediately give them the opportunity to communicate with their families and to receive visits from them. In addition, any detention beyond 4 days has to be authorized by the public prosecutor.

**Write to:** His Excellency Abdelaziz Bouteflika-President  
President de la Republique  
Presidence de la Republique  
El Mouradia

Alger

Algeria

Urging him to protect “Q” and “K” from torture and ill-treatment and implement Article 51.

### 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.

## January Group Meeting

Jenny welcomed every one to the meeting.

- ◆ **Mary: Secretary's report:** we have received thanks from Amnesty for our work on Control Arms Campaign, the first step in getting an arms treaty has been achieved. Action of the month was a letter to sign about Conflict Diamonds. Details of the conference in Edinburgh 23rd to 25th March. Ann expressed an interest.
- ◆ **Giampaolo: Treasurer's report:** Sent £1000 to AI, total of £1500 sent this year. We are still awaiting the ticket monies from recent concert.
- ◆ **Central America:** Paul reported that there

were still significant issues in Mexico.

- ◆ **CHIRAN:** No recent information.
- ◆ **Refugees:** Letter regarding taking action on destitution in refugees. Letter for MPs asking the Home Office to change their policy.
- ◆ **Tin Rattle:** Frank announced that the next Tin Rattle will be at Waitrose, Portswood on 3rd March.
- ◆ **Annual Subscription:** Please arrange to pay this years subscriptions, you know who you are (including me, Ed!!!)

### The Big Book Sale

Calling all book lovers  
Amnesty's big book sale

We will be discussing ideas of how we can participate in  
this major fundraising event for Amnesty  
If you have any ideas of how to join in bring them to  
February's Group Meeting

#### Asylum Seekers (cont from page 1)

...and worry about the future; they are vulnerable to extremist groups and prey to crime.

**Legal Process:** Arrive-Interview-(wait)-Decision-Either leave to remain for 5yrs, as a refugee or leave to remain for up to 3yrs on human rights grounds or Refused (88%)-Appeals-(wait)-Appeal decision-Leave to remain granted in 33%-Refused to remain in 67%-either deported immediately or delayed deportation, in which case they become destitute. At any stage they can be taken into detention. The legal procedure is extremely complex, and the rules are constantly changing.

**Asylum Granted:** gain refugee status, however stress of not knowing what will happen after 5yrs.

**Asylum Refused:** Deportation or destitution-no money, no accommodation and no work.

**Southampton & Winchester Visitors Group:** Provide support for asylum seekers referred by refugee action, social services, City college, Homeless Health Care, MPs, Drs, Red Cross etc. The support includes befriending, regular visiting, listening ear and provide practical help and campaign on behalf of asylum seekers.

**Summary:** In summary asylum seekers are traumatised, marginalised, lead a wasted life-not able to use their skills, yet often remain positive.

For more details contact: David Vinnell: Tel: 01962 864099, email: [dvinnell@cix.co.uk](mailto:dvinnell@cix.co.uk)

**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*

- Diary:
- ◆ Monday 12th February 2007: Group Meeting: "Israel & the Occupied Territories", speaker: John Lilly. Avenue St Andrew's All welcome.
  - ◆ Saturday 3rd March: Tin Rattle: Waitrose, Portswood.
  - ◆ Thursday 8th March: International Women's Day.
  - ◆ Monday 12th March 2007: Group Meeting: Letter writing on Women. Avenue St Andrew's. All welcome
  - ◆ Friday 23rd-Sunday 25th: AIUK National Conference and AGM at Herriot-Watt University, Edinburgh

**Issues from AI Web Page**

Check "[www.amnesty.org.uk](http://www.amnesty.org.uk)" for more details

- ◆ Guantanamo Bay: Five years of injustice. Find out more about Guantanamo Bay and sign AI's petition calling for the closure.
- ◆ Death Penalty in the USA: Kenny Richey is a dual UK/US national who has spent more than 20yrs on death row in Ohio. Get on the web site to take action to stop his execution.
- ◆ Thailand: Urge the Thai government to call off the deportation of 153 Lao Hmong refugees.
- ◆ Protect victims of trafficking. On 22 January the UK Government announced that they will sign the European Convention Against Trafficking. This is good news.
- ◆ USA/Germany: Jennifer Lopez to receive AI's award for producing "Bordertown".
- ◆ UK: AI's reaction to proposed extension of pre-charge detention.
- ◆ USA: Iraq "refusnik" should not be put on trial.

**2006/7 SUBSCRIPTIONS**

**IF YOU HAVN'T  
CAN YOU PAY UP  
AS SOON AS POSSIBLE  
PLEASE!**

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