

AMNESTY NEWS

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

March 2007



Israel and the Occupied Territories

John Lilly spoke at the February meeting on Israel and the Occupied Territories, some of his key points: The recent AI report “Road to Nowhere” painted a very depressing picture. However, the Saudis have brokered a deal between Hamas and Fatah, and this could be the foundation for a better future. Jews throughout the world are beginning to question the policies of the Israeli government. The defeat in Lebanon has forced ordinary Israelis to question their views.

AI campaigns on: 1) House Demolitions-working closely with the Israeli Committee against House Demolition. 2) Administrative detentions-including Israeli conscientious objectors. Individuals at risk are the bedrock of our work. 3) Convincing UK and EU politicians to support the Palestinian cause.

Recently, AI appealed to the EU to exert its political influence to deploy an “effective international human rights monitoring mechanism across Israel and the Occupied Territories”, urging human rights as a “common language” that can cross the deep divide. This is a good time for such a call, if only because 2006 was the most violent year in the region for more than a decade, and serious voices in the international community are recognising the lethal threat to

**Group Meeting
Monday March 12th 2007**

**Group Letter Write
On
Women
Plus
Group Planning Pack**

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

world security. The EU remains the biggest donor to the region.

The Individuals at Risk campaign in Israel and the Occupied Territories throws a spot-light on an insidious, local precursor of the “emergency powers” now common currency around the world, as part of the so-called “War on Terror”. The use of Administrative Detention by Israeli authorities breaches the Geneva Convention and UN Declarations by its denial of fair trials and repeated extensions of periods of detention without the evidence against the individuals ever being made available for challenge. The goals in this campaign are ultimately the end of this power or, sooner, the immediate and unconditional release of targeted individuals. (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.

Amnesty International-Worldwide Appeals

EGYPT: Freedom of expression denied

Tal'at Sadat, was sentenced by a military court to one year's imprisonment with labour on 31 October for "defaming the armed forces and spreading false rumours". Nephew of the assassinated former Egyptian President Mohamed Anwar Sadat and a member of parliament for the small opposition Al-Ahrar Party, he was stripped of his parliamentary immunity during the investigation. AI considers him a prisoner of conscience imprisoned solely for exercising his right to freedom of expression.

On the 25th anniversary of the former President's assassination, Tal'at Sadat gave a series of media interviews in which he accused the armed forces and senior officials of the Republican Guards of involvement in the plot to kill his uncle, which was carried out during a military parade held on 6 October 1981. In the interviews he suggested



that Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, then Vice-President, might also have been involved. The gunman who assassinated President Sadat was tried and executed in April 1982.

Tal'at Sadat was denied full rights to legal defence and, although a civilian,

was tried before a military court, from which there is no right of appeal to a higher court. After his trial, several Egyptian human rights groups expressed concern about the case and condemned his imprisonment.

Please write, calling for the immediate and unconditional release of prisoner of conscience Tal'at Sadat imprisoned solely for exercising his right to freedom of expression.

Send appeals to:

General Habib Ibrahim El Adly
Minister of the Interior
Ministry of the Interior
25 Al-Sheikh Rihan Street
Bab al-Louk
Cairo
Egypt
Fax: +20 2 579 2031
Email: moi@idsc.gov.eg or
moi2@idsc.gov.eg or
moi1@idsc.gov.eg

Salutation: Dear Minister.

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.

February Group Meeting

Jenny welcomed every one to the meeting.

- ◆ Jo spoke about Sudath, who has had his asylum claim rejected.
- ◆ Mary (secretary) introduced the Planning Pack. The information will be circulated and final agreements on our key areas of Campaigning for the next year will be agreed at the March meeting. This is an important discussion please come along and participate.
- ◆ **Tin Rattle:** this will be held at Waitrose, Portswood on 3rd March.
- ◆ **Death Penalty:** A letter was circulated for signing.
- ◆ **Finances:** The Folk event organised by Fran had raised £889.17. Thank you Fran and all

who supported the event. The Hall has been paid up to July, and our current balance is £1316.69. A further £400 sent to Amnesty.

- ◆ **AGM:** Ellis Brooks and Gemma Davies will be attending the AGM. A meeting will be held on 20th March at Jenny's to consider the AGM motions.
- ◆ **CHIRAN:** Judy circulated the AI briefing provided for Ian McCartney's visit to China.
- ◆ **Monthly Action:** On Blood Diamonds, a letter for MEPs and World Diamond Council plus postcards for Jewellery retailers. Veronica agreed to follow this up.

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 March's Group Meeting

Israel and the Occupied Territories (cont from page 1)

John showed a very powerful film which highlighted the issue of House Demolitions. Jeff Halper, who is an Israeli academic now spends most of his time, energy and courage actively campaigning for Palestinians in danger of having their homes demolished. Jeff Halper works with the "Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions" (ICAHD). He makes the point that successive Israeli governments have sought to annex the whole of Palestine through repression, house demolitions, settlements, roads controlled by the Israelis and more recently the Wall. These acts "mark on the ground" their intentions. The aim is to leave the Palestinians only isolated "Bantustans" through a process that now openly uses the term "apartheid".

20 years ago, Ali Ammar was taken by the Israelis and held in administrative detention for more than a decade. One hour after his release, a picture was on John Lilly's email saying simply "Thank you Amnesty!". In the recent invasion of Lebanon, he reappeared as a democratically elected Hezbollah member of the Lebanese government. During the visit to Beirut of Segolene Royale, he asked her response to "unlimited American insanity" and compared the Israeli invasion to the Nazi occupation of France.

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:

Paul Humphrey

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:
- ◆ Thursday 8th March: International Women's Day.
 - ◆ Monday 12th March : Group Meeting: Letter writing on Women. Plus Group Planning Pack. Avenue St Andrew's. All welcome
 - ◆ Friday 23rd-Sunday 25th: AIUK National Conference and AGM at Herriot-Watt University, Edinburgh
 - ◆ Monday 16th April: Group Meeting: Update on Campaigns. Avenue St Andrew's. All welcome.
 - ◆ Monday 14th May: Group Meeting: Letter writing on China and South America

Issues from AI Web Page

Check "www.amnesty.org.uk" for more details

- ◆ Darfur: Check the web site to see how you can help
- ◆ Blood diamonds: Details of the Amnesty Action.
- ◆ Protect Victims of Trafficking: Sign the petition on the web site, to keep up the pressure on the Government.
- ◆ Brazil: Government must work to tackle root causes of violence.
- ◆ Iran: Arrests of women may be an attempt to prevent International Woman's Day calls for equality.
- ◆ Sri Lanka: Two journalists detained without trial, many more threatened and intimidated.
- ◆ China: The human cost of the economic "miracle"
- ◆ EU: Torture instruments trade regulations flawed and inadequate.
- ◆ Sudan: Significant moves towards justice in Darfur.
- ◆ UK: AI celebrates ten years of "breaking the silence" and campaigning for LGBT rights.

GROUP PLANNING PACK

Important discussion to be held at March meeting. This will set our agenda for campaigning for the next year.

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