

AMNESTY NEWS

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

June 2007



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 Report 2007

The following are some key messages from 2007 report:

Powerful governments and armed groups are deliberately fomenting fear to erode human rights and to create an increasingly polarised and dangerous world, said Amnesty International today as it launched 'Amnesty International Report 2007', its annual assessment of human rights worldwide.

Secretary General of Amnesty International Irene Khan said:

"The politics of fear are fuelling a downward spiral of human rights abuse in which no right is sacrosanct and no person safe."

Scarred by distrust and division, the international community has been too often impotent or weak-willed in the face of major human rights crises in 2006, whether in forgotten conflicts like Chechnya, Colombia and Sri Lanka or high profiles ones in the Middle East.

The UN took weeks to muster the will to call for a ceasefire in the conflict in Lebanon in which approximately 1,200 civilians lost their lives. The international community showed no stomach to tackle the human rights disaster resulting from severe restrictions on freedom of movement of Palestinians in the Occupied Territories, reckless attacks by the Israeli army and inter-factional fighting among Palestinian

**Group Meeting
Monday June 11th 2007**

Refugees in Hasler

Michael Woolley

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

groups.

Irene Khan continued:

"Through short-sighted, fear-mongering and divisive policies, governments are undermining the rule of law and human rights, feeding racism and xenophobia, dividing communities, intensifying inequalities and sowing the seeds for more violence and conflict.

"The 'war on terror' and the war in Iraq, with their catalogue of human rights abuses, have created deep divisions that cast a shadow on international relations, making it more difficult to resolve conflicts and protect civilians.

Continued on page 3

Worldwide Appeal:

Agricultural engineer ‘Abdullah Sultan al-Subaihat, aged about 46, was arrested while at work on 8 February by officers of Amn al-Dawla (State Security), the United Arab Emirates’ (UAE’s) security police. They took him to his house, searched it and confiscated some books, then took him away handcuffed and blindfolded. He is thought to be held in the capital, Abu Dhabi, but this has not been confirmed. He has not been charged with any offence and is being held incommunicado. He is at risk of torture or other ill-treatment while in custody.

‘Abdullah Sultan al-Subaihat is the head of the agricultural administration department in the Emirate of ‘Ajman. He was previously arrested in August 2005, along with two other people. All three were detained without charge or trial and held incommunicado until their release in October 2005. The reasons for his arrest and detention on both occasions are unknown and the authorities have provided no explanation.



Political suspects in the UAE are commonly held incommunicado and in undisclosed locations. Those detained by Amn al-Dawla are reportedly often also kept in solitary confinement and may be subjected to torture or other ill-treatment, including sleep deprivation, suspension by the wrists or ankles followed by severe beatings to various parts of the

body. Some former detainees have alleged that at times their food was drugged, causing them to lose consciousness, and that they were denied access to the toilet.

Please write, calling on the authorities to release ‘Abdullah Sultan al-Subaihat immediately unless he is to be charged with a recognizably criminal offence and brought to a prompt and fair trial. Urge that in the meantime he be given access to lawyers of his choice, his family and any medical care necessary.

Send appeals to:

Vice President and Prime Minister, His Highness Shaikh Mohammad bin Rashid Al-Maktoum,
Office of the Prime Minister,
POB 73311,
Dubai,
United Arab Emirates.

Salutation: Your Highness

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.

May Group Meeting

Jenny welcomed all to the meeting.

Letter Writing Activity:

In the first part of the meeting the Group wrote letters to China (cases provided by Judy); CASA (cases provided by Paul) and on the Death Penalty (cases provided by Giampaolo).

Business Meeting:

1) **Finance:** Giampaolo reported that he had handed over the accounts for audit.

A donation of £20 had been received from a friend of Jean Christie. Jenny has written to thank the donor.

Giampaolo is currently working, gradually, on new web site, hosted by AIUK.

2) **Fundraising:** Paul reported that the concert he is organising will now be in the autumn.

3) **Outreach:** Veronica reported that she had been to London to the Fair Trade demo, in memory of Eileen Sharp, of whom people spoke with much affection and of how affecting the Woodland Burial was.

Veronica had also been to a diamond auction held in a Southampton Hotel and requested notices to be put into all jewellers to say they had signed up to the Kimberley Process.

"Blood Diamonds" to be suggested for the Phoenix Film Society.

4) **Refugees:** Jilly talked about Refugee Week (18th -24th June) and things we could do: "Destitution Sleep-Out" to be organised by a group, if people willing. Jilly has leaflets, so contact her for more information or with other

ideas. A lot is going on in Southampton to help refugees-Jilly will bring a pro forma to send to MPs/The Echo to the June meeting.

5) **Secretary's report:** Mary reported that she had received an e-mail from AIUK for confirmation of what we want to opt into (Southern Region replies have "got lost" according to Valerie Agar)! We asked for a new action PoC, but I.S. has decided to assign long-term individuals at risk cases within areas we're actually working on (ie CASA/China)-this is not likely to happen for quite a while.

Speaker Training Day- 23rd June: on Violence Against Women; Terrorism, Security and HR.

Mary's letter on Darfur appeared in The Echo.

Mary also reported that she had sent a V.S.O. Global Exchange person some AI information for a talk on Human Rights.

6) **Next Years Programme:** We shall be meeting to plan next years programme very soon, all suggestions welcome.

AI Report 2007: key messages continued from page 1

"Darfur is a bleeding wound on the world's conscience. The UN Security Council is hampered by distrust and double-dealing by its most powerful members. The Sudanese government is running rings around the UN. Meanwhile 200,000 people have died, more than ten times that number have been displaced, and militia attacks are now spreading to Chad and the Central African Republic.'

"Unless governments address the grievances on which these groups feed, unless they provide effective leadership to bring these groups to account for the abuses they have committed and are ready to hold themselves accountable, the prognosis for human rights is dire.' (View full report on AI's web page)

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:

Stop Violence Against Women:

Jo Dixon

Terrorism, Security and Human Rights

John Williams

Long-term Action File

Mary Brown

Death Penalty:

Giampaolo D'Alessandro

Control Arms Campaign:

Barbara Lupton

Refugees:

Jilly Cooke

Central America:

Paul Humphrey

China & East Asia:

Judy Horton

- Diary:
- ♦ Monday 11th June: 7.30 pm Group Meeting: Refugees at Hasler. Speaker: Michael Woolley. Avenue St Andrew's. All welcome.
 - ♦ 17th-24th: Refugee Week (see May Group Report page 3)
 - ♦ Monday 9th July: 7.30 pm Group Meeting: Southampton Group AGM. Avenue St Andrew's. All welcome.

Issues from AI Web Page
Check "www.amnesty.org.uk" for more details

- ♦ Amnesty International's 2007 report.
- ♦ Crisis in Sudan: find out more about the conflict raging in the Sudanese region of Darfur.
- ♦ UK Government signs up to Convention offering protection to victims of trafficking.
- ♦ Write for stage - enter the Protect the Human playwriting competition.
- ♦ Israel: New report condemns Israel's "blatant violation of International Law" in West Bank
- ♦ The Hague: Charles Taylor Trial: This trial must deliver justice for the victims.
- ♦ China: Tiananmen Anniversary- Looking forward means facing up to the past.
- ♦ UK: New Survey: UK retailers not doing enough to combat conflict diamonds.
- ♦ Hungary: Justice denied to victims of rape in the home.
- ♦ Iraq: Urgent appeals as two women face imminent execution.

Southampton Group

We will be meeting soon to plan next year's programme. Any ideas would be very welcome. Please let Jenny or Mary know your ideas (see who's who above) Or bring ideas to June's meeting

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