

AMNESTY NEWS

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

Sept 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.

A message from Jenny McConnell (Group Chair)

First of all, let me thank you for your much valued support over the last year.

Enclosed with this month's mailing is a subs. Form for 2007-8 which we are sure you will be happy to return (with sub., of course!)

The forthcoming year should be a great opportunity to try and change some things in China in the run-up to the Olympics. We don't need to tell you how bad Human Rights abuses still are, so the Chinese authorities need to be reminded of their commitment to help the development of Human Rights.

When China made its bid for the 2008 Olympics, authorities promised improvements in Human Rights. But six years on, serious Human Rights violations continue across the country, fuelling instability and discontent. Amnesty International are calling on the Chinese authorities to make concrete reforms in four key areas:

- ◆ The death penalty

**Group Meeting
Monday September 10th 2007**

**Key Human Rights Issues in
CHINA**

**Jenny McConnell & Mary Brown
Southampton Group**

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

- ◆ Detention, fair trial and prevention of torture
- ◆ Ensure the freedom of human rights defenders, and
- ◆ Freedom of expression

As you will see from the calendar, we have a range of interesting speakers lined up for our meetings, including one from Anti-Slavery International. We usually have a good turn out for the evenings when we have speakers which is very encouraging-long may it continue.

May I wish you a good year of successful campaigning.

Mexico: Concerns for the safety of Fortunato Prisciliano and his wife Inés Fernández

Inés Fernandez Ortega's husband, Fortunato Prisciliano, a civilian volunteer with the local police, was attacked by two men whom he knew, in front of the Municipal Police Station on 30 June and has since been threatened several times.

Fortunato Prisciliano later reported the attack to the municipal police chief, who ordered the attacker to come to the *Comisaría Municipal*. The attacker apologized for the incident and explained that he was drunk. However, following this, the harassment and threats against Fortunato Prisciliano have continued. On 27 July, when Fortunato Prisciliano was walking home, he was approached by the uncle of the man who had previously beaten and threatened him. The uncle said: "stop your action against the *guachos*, we know that you want to go to the US to denounce them, and if you do not stop it, something bad could happen to you..."

On 1 August 2007, the attacker's uncle again threatened Fortunato Prisciliano, saying: "Son of a bitch, stop saying that your wife



was raped by *guachos*, I already told you that we are going to beat you up, you already know what [my nephew] did to you".

Two days later, after a meeting at the *Comisaría Municipal* related to Fortunato Prisciliano's work with the police in his community, the attacker's uncle told him: "I already told you to stop any action against *guachos* or something really bad is going to happen to you; what [my nephew] did to you was not

enough; you continue to do it..." On 8 August Fortunato Prisciliano filed a complaint against the three men who have beaten and harassed him before the Public Prosecutor in Ayutla municipality, Guerrero state. Amnesty International is not aware of any protection measures for Fortunato Prisciliano and his wife Inés Fernández ordered by the Mexican authorities.

Please write: calling on the Guerrero authorities to protect Fortunato Prisciliano and Inés Fernández

Send appeals to:
 Zeferino Torreblanca Galindo
 Governor of Guerrero
 Palacio de Gobierno
 Edificio Centro
 piso 2
 Ciudad de los Servicios
 CP 39075
 Chilpancingo
 GUERRERO
 MEXICO

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.

July Group AGM

Jenny welcomed all to the AGM.

Review of the year:

- ◆ 62 people on our local mailing list.
- ◆ On average 18 people attended each group meeting.
- ◆ The film we collaborated on with the Open University had been a great success.
- ◆ November: we hosted the Southern Regional Meeting featuring Craig Murray.
- ◆ November: A very successful fund raising event-Kitchen Sale.
- ◆ December: The Mundy-Turner Concert held in Totton was a great success.
- ◆ February's Group meeting featured John Lilly speaking on the middle east.
- ◆ June's meeting on Hasler was most informative.

Finances: Giampaolo (treasurer) reported:

- ◆ That we had sent a record amount to AL-£1900.

Refugees: Jilly (Refugees sub group)

- ◆ Reported that our work was progressing well.

China and East Asia: Judy (China and East Asia sub group) reported:

- ◆ Olympic campaign website to be launched in August.
- ◆ AI meeting in London 29.09.07 featuring Human Rights in China and Violence Against Women. Venue: Human Rights Centre, contact Judy for details (see who's who page 4)

CASA: Paul (Central America sub group) reported:

- ◆ Mexico-Change of Government, clash between government and trade unions including imprisonment of demonstrators, murders of women.
- ◆ Peru-no new actions.
- ◆ Guatemala/Honduras: Issues of homosexuals human rights and lawyers attacked.

Outreach: Veronica (Outreach sub group) reported:

- ◆ 10.12.07 Human Rights Day, which may include anti-slavery speaker.

- ◆ 08.08.07 Hiroshima Day at Riverside Park speaker Rev Ian Johnson.
- ◆ 01.09.07/02.09.07 Anti-slavery conference in Chichester.
- ◆ 21.09.07 International Peace Day.
- ◆ Diamond trade-work still going on.

Death Penalty: no update.

Terrorism, security and human rights: no update.

Suggestions for fund raising:

- ◆ Collection tins in suitable alternative locations.
- ◆ Information in Fair Trade Directory.

Suggestions for group activity:

- ◆ Team up with other NGO Groups to attract more members.
- ◆ Look at funding for voluntary groups.

Group Roles:

- ◆ Jenny to continue as chair for one more year.
- ◆ Cheryll agreed to take over Press.
- ◆ Veronica to take over Parliamentary Officer.
- ◆ Mary agreed to stay on as secretary.
- ◆ Giampaolo agreed to stay on as treasurer.
- ◆ Veronica agreed to stay on as Outreach.
- ◆ John agreed to stay on as News letter editor.
- ◆ Sub Group leads to stay as last year.
- ◆ Dropped Long Term Action File.

Sub Groups:

- ◆ Discussed at previous meetings.

Other business:

- ◆ Amnesty Report "State of Human Rights" costing £20 to be ordered.
- ◆ AI to do a local group survey, this will be included with September News letter posting.

