

AMNESTY NEWS

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May 2008



Terrorism, Security & Human Rights

Members of the Southampton Group Sub-Group updated members on the key issues around Terrorism, Security & Human Rights at the April meeting:

Introduction: “War on Terror” has resulted in a general erosion of HR, specifically there has been an increased use and acceptance of torture. The following countries are particularly culpable: Egypt, Syria, Pakistan, USA and Jordan.

Jordan: Police use incommunicado detention and detention, also involved in rendition.

USA: Bush claims War on Terror is a “fight to save the civilized world”. Torture and enforced disappearance are crimes in international law: USA uses both.

The European Union: UK seeks “memorandum of understanding” with Algeria to enable suspects to be deported, which is against EU prohibition on deportation to such states. Italy in the same position with Tunisia.

UK: Extension of pre-charge detention. There are 10 good reasons why extended pre-charge detention is a BAD idea:

- 1) Undermines one of our most basic rights at the heart of the European Convention on HR, ie the right of anyone detained to be told promptly why they are being held.

**Group Meeting
Monday 12th 2008**

**Ecumenical Accompaniment
Programme
in
Palestine & Israel**

Tom PATTON

**Avenue St Andrew’s
United Reformed Church
The Avenue, Southampton**

**7.30 pm
ALL WELCOME**

- 2) Relations with the Muslim community, in particular, will suffer.
- 3) Has a major impact on individuals detained for long periods.
- 4) Widely questioned by legal experts eg Lord Goldsmith.
- 5) Undermines the presumption of innocence.
- 6) UK already has the longest pre-charge detention.
- 7) Affects UK’s international standing, much more difficult to criticize the human rights records of other countries.
- 8) Historically, shown not to work.
- 9) Statements obtained from suspects could be deemed inadmissible at trial.
- 10) The safeguards discussed are insufficient.

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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

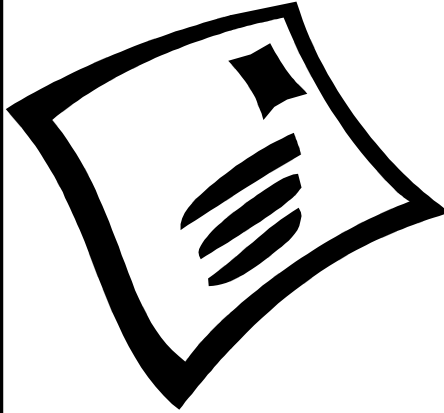
remain those of : international solidarity, effective action for the individual victim, global coverage, the universality and indivisibility of human rights, impartiality and independence, and democracy and mutual respect.

Death Penalty/fear of imminent execution: Bahrain

Mizan Noor Al Rahman Ayoub Mia, a Bangladeshi national, has been sentenced to death by the Court of Cassation in Bahrain. The execution is now pending ratification by the King, His Majesty Shaikh Hamad bin Issa Al Khalifa. If the king ratifies the death sentence, Mizan Noor Al Rahman Ayoub Mia could be executed within weeks.

According to Bahraini media reports, Mizan Noor Al Rahman Ayoub Mia was found guilty of the murder in August 2006 of his employer, a Bahraini woman. It has been reported that he has confessed to the murder. Mizan Noor Al Rahman Ayoub was sentenced to death in April 2007 by the High Criminal Court and has since appealed. His appeal was rejected by the Supreme Criminal Appeal Court in January 2008 and the Court of Cassation upheld this decision on 28 April 2008.

Background Information: The death penalty is rarely used in Bahrain. In recent years several people have been sentenced to death. In December 2006 three Bangladeshi nationals were executed, the first people to be put to death in Bahrain since 1996. Exe-



cutions carried out in Bahrain are usually by firing squad. Amnesty International fears that the death penalty in Bahrain is disproportionately and overwhelmingly used against foreign nationals. In January 2008 a proposed amendment to the 1976 Penal Code to repeal the death penalty for drug trafficking was defeated in the Shura Council. In December 2007, the Bahraini government voted against a UN resolution calling for moratorium on executions. The

resolution was passed by a vote of 104 in favor to 54 against, with 29 abstentions.

Action: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Arabic, English or your own language:

- calling for His Majesty Shaikh Hamad bin Issa Al Khalifa not to ratify the death sentence of Mizan Noor Al Rahman Ayoub Mia;
- expressing sympathy with the victim's relatives and acknowledging that the government has the right and responsibility to bring to justice those responsible for criminal offences, but expressing unconditional opposition to the death penalty;
- urging the King to commute the sentences of all those facing possible execution in Bahrain

Appeals to: The King
His Majesty Shaikh Hamad bin Issa Al Khalifa
King of Bahrain
Office of His Majesty the King
P. O. Box 555
Rifa'a Palace, Kingdom of Bahrain
[Salutation: Your Majesty]

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.

April Group

Jenny (Chair): Welcomed all to meeting, including two new members.

Mary (Secretary):

- ◆ **Monthly Action:** On Gaza's humanitarian situation
- ◆ One off performance of "The lady of Burma" at The Point Eastleigh on Sunday 18th May 6 pm.

Giampaolo (Treasurer):

- ◆ Currently spending more money than income.

Subscriptions (£546) pay for Hall (£300) and News Letter (£100). In year gave £1000 to AI. Currently in bank £660.

Ann & Mary (China):

- ◆ Wide range of issues, AI has produced an activist pack, June rally in London on anniversary of Tiananmen Square.

Paul Humphrey: Did a report back from AGM (details to appear in future News Letter)

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UK cont: Control Orders: These were introduced in 2005, ministers can place terrorism suspects under close supervision. They were introduced when the Law Lords declared that previous policy of detaining foreign terrorism suspects without trial was incompatible with HR legislation. They can include: electronic tagging, no passport, live at specified address, curfews, restrictions on visitors, no access to internet, attend only one mosque, daily reporting to the police, daily monitoring by phone.

There are 14 control orders in force, 8 affecting British citizens, three are on the run! The government says they are essential where it is not possible to prosecute individuals, or in the case of foreign nationals, deport them. Civil liberties groups say they are a blunt and draconian tool, and if someone poses a threat to society they should be brought before the courts.

US Renditions: Renditions have involved the abduction of individuals, the illegal transfer of detainees, enforced disappearance, torture and secret detention. These are violations of human rights and domestic law.

AI has called for a full, independent investigation into any further UK involvement in renditions. The call follows the admission by the US and UK governments that two rendition flights landed in Diego Garcia in 2002. "as recognized by the UK government, the revelation that US planes, involved in the transfers of detainees, landed in Diego Garcia directly contradicts its own repeated assurances and public denials to the contrary", said Claudio Cordone, Senior Director at Amnesty International.

On 6th September 2006 Bush announced the transfer of 14 men from secret CIA custody to military detention at Guantanamo Bay. In September 2007 the CIA Director defended the programme, saying "fewer than 100 people" had been subjected to it. He said the programmes are targeted and selective, and only designed for the most dangerous terrorists and those believed to have valuable information. In 2008 he tried to justify the torture technique of "waterboarding" ie simulated drowning, as a means to gain information. The CIA has operated its secret detention programme in covert prisons outside the USA, known as "black sites". These sites are unknown, however the Parliamentary Assembly of Europe's Committee on legal affairs and Human Rights said in its second report in 2007 that such sites existed in Poland and Romania.

While the US has constructed a network of rendition ie secret detention and enforced disappearance, none of this would be possible without the involvement of other governments and security services around the world.

Amnesty International is campaigning for governments to abandon the practices of unlawful transfers, enforced disappearance and secret detention once and for all.

