

AMNESTY NEWS

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

October 2008



Speaker from Medaille Trust on Trafficking

Initially we were shown a powerful DVD “The Fields of Mudan” the story of Mudan, a young girl who was trafficked.

2-4 million people are trafficked in our world. Each one of these people has dreams for their life, and each one is totally betrayed. They believe that they are coming to a better situation and they will be able to help their families.

It is estimated that there are 1.8 million child sex-slaves in the world today, 5,000 of whom are said to be in the UK. Trafficking, the buying and selling of people is the fastest growing criminal international activity. Every country in the world is involved in trafficking. Even though we celebrated the bi-centenary of the Abolition of Slavery last year, we have more slaves in our world today than ever before.

The Medaille Trust is a Charity founded by people from Catholic Religious Orders to help women, children and young men who have been trafficked to the UK.

The Trust has opened 2 Safe Houses in the past 18 months and have helped more than 40 women and their babies. Each house offers: safety, comfortable accommodation, therapy, English tuition, opportunities to learn new skills, help with asylum claims and help to move on.

**Group Meeting
Monday September 13th 2008**

**Southampton Group
“Terrorism & Human Rights
in the UK”
Dr Ed BATES
(School of Law,
University of Southampton)**

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

The work of the Medaille Trust staff in the houses is extremely demanding but highly rewarding.

The stories of a number of trafficked women were described. For those wishing to read the details please contact John Williams.

The Medaille Trust, as well as running 2 Safe Houses, has focussed on three areas: Firstly, an awareness-raising and campaign group; secondly, a fund-raising group; and recently a Schools’ group, which has produced a pack to send to all Catholic Secondary Schools.

A recent major break-through has been their close working relationship with a Women’s Housing Association resulting 10 move-on apartments.

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.

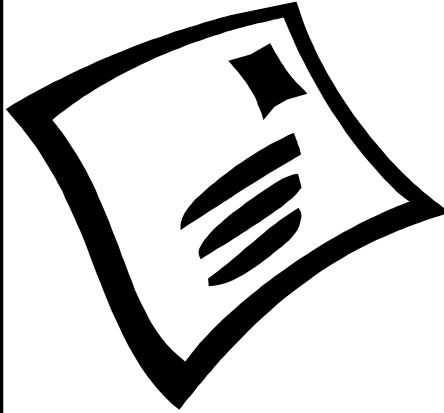
Abolish the Death Penalty

In October AI is asking us to mark World Day Against the Death Penalty by urging Asia to abolish the death penalty.

JAPAN: halted executions in November 1989 but resumed executions in March 1993. There is an increasingly strong movement campaigning against the death penalty. Furthermore, several parliamentarians, from a variety of political parties, are abolitionist and have formed a parliamentary group against the death penalty.

Hakamada Iwao is facing execution for the 1966 murder of an executive of a miso factory, his wife and two children. Hakamada was interrogated by police over a period of 22 days without a lawyer present. He signed a confession. He retracted his confession and testified during his first trial that he had been beaten and threatened during police interrogations to force him to sign a confession. He was found guilty and sentenced to death in 1968. The decision was upheld by the Tokyo High Court in 1976 and Supreme Court in 1980. Subsequent petitions for retrial were rejected.

In 2007 Kumamoto Norimichi, a



judge on Hakamada's original trial, publicly stated that he believes Hakamada to be innocent. Kumamoto claims that at the trial in 1968 he argued with the other two judges to find the defendant not guilty.

Apart from the alleged forced confession there is little evidence to support the case. The cloths which Hakamada is said to have worn during the crime did not fit him. According to Hakamada's lawyer, the knife he allegedly used was too small to make

the wound and the door, which Hakamada supposedly used to enter and leave the victim's house, was locked.

Please write to the Minister for Justice urging him to:

Call on the Japanese authorities to commute the death sentence against Hakamada Iwao;

Urge the Japanese authorities to grant Hakamada a retrial where his case is considered within international fair trial standards, during which time he has full access to lawyers;

To immediately establish a moratorium on executions with a view to abolishing the death penalty as provided by UN General Assembly resolution 62/149.

Write to:

Yasuoka Okiharu
Minister of Justice
Ministry of Justice
1-1-1 Kasumigaseki
Chiyoda-ku
Tokyo
100-8977,
Japan

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.

September Meeting

Kulbir & Madeleine (Joint Chairs) welcomed all to the meeting and introduced the Speaker from the Medaille Trust.

Business:

Action of the Month: A pre-printed letter on the "Arms Trade Treaty" was circulated.

"Secret Policeman's Ball" this is to be screened at

Harbour Lights on 4th October, we will have a stall.

Christmas Card Stall: Mary will run a stall at Lyndhurst on 4th October 10.00 am to 1.00 pm.

Giampaolo (treasurer): Reported we had £495.18 in the bank

ADDITIONAL GROUP INFORMATION

- ◆ Subscriptions: The minimum amount for annual Group Subscription is £10. This information was left out of the subscription letter previously circulated.
- ◆ Changes to Calendar:
 - ◆ Wednesday 22nd October: We will have a stall at the Phoenix Film Society's showing of Persepolis. The Stall will open at approx 7.30 pm and the Film will be showing from 8.00 pm.
 - ◆ Monday 13th October: "Group Meeting". Dr Ed Bates of the School of Law of the University of Southampton. 7.30 pm at Avenue St Andrews. All welcome.
 - ◆ Sunday 30th November: Christmas Card Stall at University of Southampton Craft Fair.
- ◆ Requests for Support (further details at October Meeting):
 - ◆ Sunday 30th November: We will need volunteers for our Christmas Card Stall.
 - ◆ Saturday 6th & Sunday 7th December: We will need volunteers for our Greetings Card Campaign event in Borders Bookshop. On Saturday from 10.00 am to 5.00 pm and Sunday 10.00 am to 4.00 pm.
- ◆ Fundraising information:
 - ◆ We currently have a collection box at October Books, Portswood. This raises a significant amount of money, last time checked £76.08. We would like suggestions of where to place other Tins. Bring ideas to October meeting.

