

AMNESTY NEWS

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

December 2008



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.

Domestic Violence: A speaker from the Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy Service

The speaker outlined key statistics, the Government's agenda on tackling violence against women and the need for a coordinated community response.

Some Key Statistics: two women a week are murdered by their current or ex-partner; domestic violence accounts for 16-25% of all violent crimes; police receive a report every 60 seconds; 750,00 children witness domestic violence each year; only 3% of victims are successfully given protection through the civil justice system and only 1% of all perpetrators are convicted and given sentences.

Key points of the Government's

Agenda: In 2003, the government published a consultation paper "Safety & Justice". This was the first time in 30 yrs that this issue was put on the political agenda. In 2004 the "Domestic Violence Crime and Victim Act" was published. In 2005 specialist Domestic Violence Courts were established and in 2006 a Coordinated Community Response model was initiated. In 2007-2008 the Home Affairs Select Committee Inquiry into Domestic Violence, Forced Marriage, "Honour" Based Violence and Female Genital Mutilation, was published.

The key points of the "Safety & Justice" paper were the need for:

- ◆ Prevention & Early Intervention: including the involvement of health, education; outreach and advocacy schemes; community

**Group Meeting
Monday December 8th 2008**

**Greeting Card
Writing
&
Christmas Social
(bring some nibbles to share)**

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

awareness.

- ◆ Protection: including police positive action, multi agency risk assessment conferences, crisis accommodation.
- ◆ Support: including counselling, work place policies, ongoing legal protection.

Coordinated community response: seen as a series of concentric circles. At the centre the individual and their family; then their friends, colleagues and neighbours, next comes the more specialist organisations with the various specialised systems.

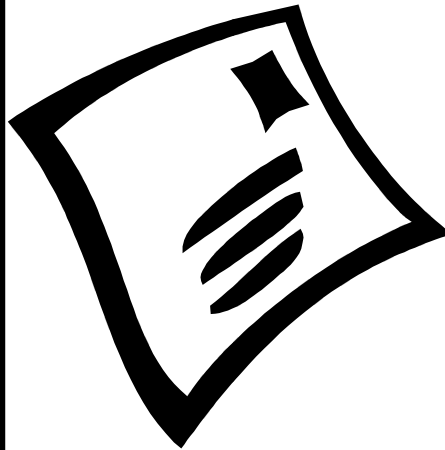
The future: there is now an Action Plan for Tackling Violence (2008-2011), this includes the doubling of special domestic violence courts, increase in the risk conferences, and roll out of the Independent Domestic Violence Advocates.

USA: Adriana Perez and Olga Salanueva (Prisoners' wives refused visits)

The USA Government has repeatedly refused to grant temporary visas to Olga Salanueva and Adriana Perez, Cuban nationals whose husbands are serving prison sentences in the USA. The husbands, Rene Gonzalez and Gerardo Hernandez, were imprisoned in 1998 for "acting as unregistered agents of a foreign government".

Olga Salanueva was deported from the USA shortly after August 2000. She was granted a visa to visit Rene Gonzalez in March 2002, but it was revoked on 23 April 2002. In 2002, Adriana Perez obtained a visa to visit her husband but was detained on arrival in the USA and expelled 11 hours later. Since then, the US authorities have denied visa applications from both women, claiming that they were involved in terrorism, espionage and issues of national security. However, neither has faced charges over such claims.

Amnesty believes that denying prisoners visits from their family is unnecessarily punitive, and contrary to standards for humane



treatment of prisoners and states' obligations to protect family life.

APPEAL: Call on the US Government to promptly grant temporary visas to Olga Salanueva and Adriana Perez so that they can visit their husbands. Note that by denying temporary visas for these visits, the USA is imposing unnecessary punishment on the prisoners in contravention of international human rights standards.

SEND APPEALS TO:

Stephan McFarland,
Head Office of Cuban Affairs,
US Department of States,
2201 C Street NW,
Washington DC 20520,
USA

His Excellency
Mr Robert Holmes Tuttle,
Embassy of the United States of
America,
24 Grosvenor Square,
London,
W1A 1AE

Fax: (020) 7495 4035

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.

November Meeting

Kulbir and Madeleine (joint chairs) welcomed every one to the meeting: The business issues dealt with as follows:

- ◆ Opportunity for members to sign cards supporting victims who have no access to any public funds available to support domestic abuse victims. Cards to be sent to the Home Secretary, Jacqui Smith.
- ◆ In Southampton the Group held two events: **Stall at Phoenix screening of Persepolis**. Thanks to Mary, Jill, Veronica, Trish and Kulbir who helped with the stall. 108 signatures were collected on a petition for human rights for Iranian women, these will be sent via AI to women in Iran so they can see the level of International Support. Secondly a **Stall at the screening of "In Prison My Whole Life"** which was about the background to the trial of a Black Panther being held on Death Row. Leaflets on the Death Penalty were handed out.
- ◆ Two events are coming up in November: **Regional Amnesty Conference** in Basingstoke on Saturday 29th November. Arrangements were made for transport. Secondly, **The Craft fair at Southampton Uni** on 30th November where AI Christmas cards will be sold.
- ◆ In December there will be an event at **Borders, "The Greetings Card Campaign"** This will be held on 6th & 7th December. Thanks to all those who have volunteered, and please encourage family and friends to come along and sign a Greeting Card.
- ◆ The Greeting card Campaign was discussed in more detail: there are some 30 people to choose from; please note Christmas cards are not suitable for some regions of the world eg Middle East and Communist countries. Please contribute/use any

small notelets or tiny cards weighing less than 10 grams which can be slipped into airmail envelopes. Posters regarding the Greeting card Campaign will be displayed in Borders, Southampton Civic Centre Library, October Books, Southampton Uni, Shirley Library, RSB call centre. Cheryl will arrange advertisement in Daily Echo.

- ◆ Tin Collection Update: Viv put Tin in Shirley shop, Amelia to place Tin in Ordinance Survey and Troy to put Tin in Borders. Also a request to be made to Solent University Shop.
- ◆ Southampton & Winchester Visitors Group AGM on 1st December at St Andrew's Church at 7.30 pm. Annual report available to be read.
- ◆ Several Death penalty cases are being forwarded to those on e-mail list. Please do not feel pressured to respond to all cases. Please advise if you would like to be added to John's e-mail list
- ◆ Giampaolo (treasurer) reported that our current account balance was £671.18. 30 people renewed membership to date. Last year we had 50 members by end of calendar year.
- ◆ Associated Convention of Human Rights meeting on 29th November to be attended by Veronica and Jean. The best ways for us to work together to promote Human Rights in Southampton to be discussed.
- ◆ Next meeting: Greeting Card writing and letter writing, plus small Christmas social-feel welcome to bring some nibbles, any leftovers to be given to YMCA.

Information on AI Web site www.amnesty.org.uk

Iraqi prisoners at risk: 16,000 prisoners currently held in Iraq by US forces, are at risk of torture and potential execution after unfair trials when they are handed over to Iraqi custody

Protect the Human: The finalists: Don't miss your chance to see performances of the three short listed

plays in this year's playwriting competition.

Congo: UN Troops must deploy as soon as possible: The UN Security Council's decision to deploy an extra 3,000 troops, to bolster its peacekeeping force, is a welcome step. However it is the implementation that matters. We are still receiving reports of killings, rape and sexual violence against women and girls, and the recruitment of child soldiers.

