

# AMNESTY NEWS

[www.amnesty-volunteer.org/uk/southampton-city](http://www.amnesty-volunteer.org/uk/southampton-city)

March 2009



## Central America

AI campaigns on Guatemala, Mexico, Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama.

In this region, crime levels remain high due to the availability of weapons and the legacy of civil wars. Governments respond with tougher legislation, often blurring military and police roles by deploying military forces to deal with crime and social unrest. Vigilantism and mob lynching of suspected criminals is common in Mexico and Guatemala.

Members of human rights groups, trade unions and indigenous groups face intimidation, harassment and death threats. The reluctance by the authorities to investigate present and past human rights violations perpetuates impunity.

Violence against women persists across the whole region. Despite some efforts by the Mexican government, killings continue in the state of Chihuahua, and the rise in killings in Guatemala is bringing increasing condemnation in the international community. In Honduras, violent deaths of children and young adults are common.

Forced evictions and disputes over land and labour conditions fuel conflicts. The Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) raises concerns

**Group Meeting  
Monday 9th March 2009**

**Countries of the  
Former Soviet Union  
Barry HAY  
(AIUK Country Coordinator for  
South Caucasus Region)**

**Plus  
Group Planning Pack  
Avenue St Andrew's  
United Reformed Church  
The Avenue, Southampton**

**7.30 pm  
ALL WELCOME**

over the lack of guarantees on labour rights, on protection of the environment and on continued access to affordable medicines.

Recent AI reports available on Amnesty web site include the following:  
Guatemala: Amnesty gives mixed review to Colom's first year in office;  
12th Jan 2008

Honduras: Transgender women beaten, threatened and murdered:  
05 Feb 2008

40th Anniversary of Tlatelolco massacre: Amnesty International Calls for Justice:  
02 Oct 2008.

Plus reports on activists in Guatemala and Honduras.

### 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.

## Honduras: Transgender human rights defender threatened with death

Police officers are alleged to have beaten up a transgender woman, who is an HIV/AIDS campaigner and sex worker, after she refused to give them her money. They subsequently threatened her with death if she reported the incident. Her life is at risk. Three other transgender women have been killed in a nearby area in the last three months.

Four police officers in a police car approached the transgender woman, who has asked Amnesty International to withhold her name, at about 12.40 am on 20 December 2008 in the Palmira district of the capital, Tegucigalpa. She was working as a sex worker at the time. The police officers tried to rob her but, when she resisted, they grabbed her by the hair and repeatedly smashed her head against a nearby window, breaking the glass. She received numerous cuts to her face and knees.

The officers then said that they were arresting the woman for breaking a window in order to gain forcible entry to private prop-



erty. The officers took her to the local police station, and then to a local health center to be treated for her wounds. Since she was bleeding, she informed the officers that she was HIV positive and the officers replied by saying "AIDS bitch, people like you should be in a separate place" (perra sidoso, gente como Ustedes tiene que estar en un lugar aparte) While on their way, the officers also told her "if you speak out, we will leave you dead in the countryside" (si hablas, te dejaremos muerta en el monte). She was taken back to the police sta-

tion and was released without charge at around 11.30 am. She has recently filed a formal complaint with the Human Rights section of the Public Prosecutor's Office about this incident.

**Please send appeals:** to the Honduran authorities urging that they guarantee the safety of the transgender human rights defender.

Please select a recipient (s):

Sr. Jose Manuel Zelaya Rosales -  
President of the Republic  
Presidente de la Republica  
Casa Presidencial  
Boulevard Juan Pablo II  
Tegucigalpa  
HONDURAS  
Fax: 00504 239 3298

Coronel Jorge Alberto Rodas  
Gamero - Minister of Security  
Ministro  
Ministerio de Seguridad Publica  
Cuartel Casa Mata  
Tegucigalpa  
HONDURAS  
Fax: 00504 237 9070

### 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.

# February Meeting


Mary Brown took the chair as both Madeleine and Kulbir were unwell.

- ◆ **Courtlye Musick Concert:** Arrangements for the concert on 21st March were discussed, publicity material was shared out for distribution. A rota of helpers was started, anyone who can help on the afternoon or at the event itself should contact Mary (see Who's Who page 3). The Sheriff of Southampton will be our guest, the Mayor being unavailable.
- ◆ **Redbridge Community School:** is planning a human rights day on Friday 20th March, and asked for advice and ideas, with possible participation by Group Members if any available.
- ◆ **Christmas Cards:** a positive response received from AIUK regarding our comments on the designs and price. More varied and original designs are being sought, but increasing costs may make price reductions difficult.
- ◆ **Free West Papua:** a letter has been received, thanking us for inviting them to speak at last month's meeting.
- ◆ **Car Boot Sale:** Trish has agreed to organise, and will suggest a suitable date so that a pitch can be booked at Bursledon.
- ◆ **Group Planning Pack:** has arrived, and our plans for the 12 months from April will be discussed in March meeting, there is a particular need to find coordinators for the "Dignity" campaign and for "Central America".
- ◆ **Financial Report:** we have £481.93 in the bank, having sent £0 to the Free West Papua Campaign. A Tin Rattle will take place at Sainsbury's in Shirley on 26th September. Giampaolo reported that despite the closure of the University Staff Club, several organisations seemed keen to organise the Craft Fair where we can market our Christmas Cards.
- ◆ **AIUK Conference and AGM:** Rob Atkinson will represent the Group.
- ◆ **Terrorism, Security & Human Rights:** Giampaolo will attend a conference on The Global Perspective in London on 7th March.
- ◆ **Refugees:** Jilly reported on the formation of Citizens Sanctuary, which will campaign to implement the findings of Independent Asylum Commission in each locality. A meeting in our area will be held on March 30th, from 18.45 to 21.00

at Avenue St Andrews. More information on: [www.citizensforsanctuary.org.uk](http://www.citizensforsanctuary.org.uk)

- ◆ **Letters and Cards:** Appeal letters were sent to the authorities in Central America as follow-up action to cases in the Greetings Card Campaign. Cards were also sent to children, husbands and parents of women in Zimbabwe who are regularly arrested and ill-treated for their activities on behalf of Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA).

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 ★ CAR BOOT SALE ★  
 ★ Please collect and save stuff for ★  
 ★ our future car boot sale ★  
 ★ Date to be advised shortly ★  
 ★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★


  
**Courtlye Musick**  
 Present  
**"Time to Pass  
 with Goodly Sport"**  
 Songs and instrumental music  
 reflecting the vibrant Court of  
 King Henry VIII  
 Performed in costume on authentic instruments  
 Saturday 21st March 2009  
 St Michael's Church, Bugle  
 Street, Southampton  
 Tickets £8 from  
 Tourist Information or at  
 the door.

