

# AMNESTY NEWS

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

May 2010



## Gaza: International investigation of flotilla deaths

Outlined below is a summary of Amnesty International's response to the Gaza flotilla deaths. The full article can be read on the Amnesty web site: <http://www.amnesty.org.uk>

Amnesty International is calling for a prompt and credible international inquiry into the deaths caused by Israel's military action against the aid flotilla in international waters outside Gaza on 31 May. This, the organisation insists, is necessary to ensure accountability.

Amnesty emphasised that those individuals selected to conduct the inquiry should be recognised for their impartiality, competence and expertise, and Israel should cooperate fully with it. The organisation is also urging the immediate lifting of the Israeli military blockade on the Gaza Strip.

On the second of June the UN Human Rights Council adopted a resolution that provides for the dispatch of an independent international fact-finding mission to investigate violations of international law, including international humanitarian and human rights law, arising from Israeli actions against the flotilla of ships on 31 May. The resolution authorises the President of the Human Rights Council to appoint members of this international fact-finding mission, adding that they should report their findings to the Council at its 15th

### Group Meeting

**Monday 14th June 2010**

**Working for  
Individuals at Risk  
Tom DAVIES AIUK**

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

**7.30 pm**

**ALL WELCOME**

session in September 2010.

Amnesty is urging the President of the Council to ensure that those appointed to the mission are appropriately qualified to carry out the task, in order to ensure that the investigation is comprehensive, thorough, credible and independent and thus provide a basis for establishing full accountability.

In an oral intervention to the Human Rights Council before the resolution was adopted, Amnesty said that the Israeli authorities have the primary responsibility to investigate the conduct of their forces, including their use of lethal force and the circumstances in which it was used, and to hold to account those responsible for human rights violations.

### 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.

# BURMA

## 37 YEARS IN PRISON FOR A SMALL ACT OF DEFIANCE

Khun Bedu, Khun Kawrio and Khun Dee De-young political activists from Karenni ethnic group in Burma-were arrested in 2008 for peaceful protest. They had organised a group of local dissidents to release balloons, launch paper boats and spray-paint walls with peaceful political messages.

After 15 days of interrogation, during which they were repeatedly tortured, the three men were sentenced by the military- without trial, judge or defence. Khun Kawrio and Khun Bedu were sentenced to 37 years and Khun Dee De 35 years in prison. They are just three of Burma's estimated 2.200 political prisoners.

Activists from minority groups, like their counterparts in the country's mainstream political opposition, risk arrest, imprisonment, torture and even death at the hands of the regime, simply for attempting to carry out their legitimate



work. This year Burma plans to hold the first National elections in 20 years. Most of Burma's political opposition are behind bars, and in the lead up to the election attacks on activists are likely to intensify as the junta seeks to stamp out any political challenge to its rule.

### Take Action

Demand the release of prisoners of conscience Khun Bedu, Khun Kawrio and Khun Dee De. They are detained in Taungoo, Meiktila and Mandalay prisons, which are remote and far from their family homes.

Stress in the letter your concern for their welfare, and the fact that pending their release they should be transferred to prisons closer to their family homes, so that they can receive the support they need urgently.

### Write to:

Nyan Win  
Minister of Foreign Affairs  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Bidg. (19)  
Naypyitaw  
Union of Myanmar

You can find out more about the Burma election campaign and take action online:

[www.amnesty.org.uk/burma](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/burma)

### 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.

## MAY meeting:

- ◆ A number of letters were written on China issues.
- ◆ Tom Davies, who was due to speak at the cancelled January meeting, will speak at the June meeting on the topic "Individuals at Risk".
- ◆ The Waitrose tin rattle raised £313.50 ie £20.90 per person per hour! Thanks for all those who took part. Unfortunately, two collectors did not attend, this was a particular shame as they were pm sessions when Waitrose was very busy.
- ◆ Cath Gregg (Porchester Group) e-mailed to say that there is a play concerning the Burma campaign on Saturday June 19th at Freemantle community centre (see below).
- ◆ The Free West Papua Group needs help. Benny Winder, who spoke at the group last year, says his village is in danger from Indonesian police and military.
- ◆ It was noted that the Southampton Group's membership is shrinking. Action needs to be taken to remedy this. Various strategies were discussed (e-mailing members, press releases etc). It was decided to pursue this once next year's programme has been finalised. Any suggestions contact Mary or John (see who's who on page 4).
- ◆ The Eling Tide Mill Walk and Lunch organised by Mary was very much enjoyed by all. Thanks Mary.
- ◆ Replies from various MPs as to how they intended to tackle various Human Rights issues was discussed. Alan Whithead, replied regarding issues such as woman's refugees, immigration and asylum seekers saying he intended to continue working with these groups. Replies were also received from MEP's regarding the Ethiopian politician.
- ◆ Refugee week is 14-20 June. Local events will be advertised on the AIUL website.
- ◆ This month's AIUK urgent action is on behalf of workers in Turkey denied their human rights.

### The Burma Play

A comedy of terror

Saturday 19th June 7.30 pm

Freemantle Community Centre  
Randolph Street  
Southampton SO15 3HF

For tickets write to:  
The Co-operative Group,  
Freepost SWB31171,

