



# Southampton Group **AMNESTY NEWS**

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

July 2010

## **JUNE MEETING SPEAKER**

### **TOM DAVIES, AIUK**

#### **Working with Individuals At Risk**

With 2 resolutions passed at the 2009 AGM promoting a stronger link between local groups and individuals at risk, this talk reminded us how Amnesty UK select and work on approximately 500 individual cases across the world.

#### **How are the cases selected?**

- The case has strategic context
- There is enough information for meaningful action
- The campaigning is 'with' or 'for' an individual, not 'on' them
- There is an opportunity for impact
- There is the capacity with the AIUK IAR team

#### **Example case: Patrick Okoroafor, Nigeria**

- Arrested at 14, death sentence at 16
- Tortured: pliers used to pull out teeth
- In prison half his life for robbery he says he did not commit
- High court declared his sentence 'illegal, null & void', but still held
- Prison conditions: poor health (asthma)

#### **Urgent actions**

These are issued in response to critical situations to achieve quick, tactical, mass GLOBAL action.

They are designed to prevent and tackle abuse as it's occurring/about to occur

AIUK issues around 350 urgent actions each year

#### **Long term cases**

They are intended to show solidarity with the individuals through, for example, the greetings card campaign as well as achieve long term results.

#### **Suggested actions**

- Write a letter to the new Nigerian Minister of Justice
- Make a solidarity card for Patrick's 30th birthday
- Use the 50th anniversary of Nigeria's independence to raise awareness in the UK



#### **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 and 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

# ACTION OF THE MONTH

## UK-based mining company is abusing the human rights of indigenous communities in Orissa, India.

Vedanta Resources, through its subsidiary companies plans to mine for bauxite in the Niyamgiri Hills, considered sacred by the Indigenous Dongria Kondh community. The proposed mine will threaten the community's rights to water, food, health and work.

Local communities in nearby Lanjigarh, whose farmlands were acquired for Vedanta's alumina refinery in 2003, are struggling to protect their livelihoods while contamination of their water

sources and dust emissions pose serious risks to their health. Vedanta has ignored these risks and is now planning a six-fold expansion of its alumina refinery.

Vedanta has failed to provide full information and to adequately consult with local communities about its mining and refinery-expansion plans.

Final permission for the projects is pending with the Indian Ministry of Environment and Forests.

**Please send a message to the Indian Minister of Environment and Forests calling on him to refuse permission for the expansion of Vedanta's mining and refinery operations.**

*I am concerned about the impacts of the planned mining in the Niyamgiri Hills by a subsidiary company of UK-based Vedanta Resources PLC and the Orissa Mining Corporation. The project threatens the Dongria Kondh's traditional way of life for whom the Niyamgiri Hills are not only sacred but also a key livelihood source.*

*I am also concerned about the six-fold expansion plan for the refinery in Lanjigarh and its impacts on the human rights of the Majhi Kondh and other marginalised communities.*

*Both mining and refinery-expansion plans have ignored community concerns, flouted state and national regulatory frameworks and failed to adhere to accepted international standards and principles in relation to the human rights impact of business.*

*I urge you to:*

*\* Ensure that free, prior and informed consent of the Dongria Kondhs is obtained before granting clearance to mining in the Niyamgiri Hills.*

*\* Undertake an independent and impartial human rights and environmental impact assessment of the proposed refinery-expansion; ensuring genuine consultation with all those whose rights may be affected by the project.*

*\* Ensure that clearance for the expansion of the refinery is given only after existing human rights and environmental concerns with the refinery are adequately addressed.*

**Jairam Ramesh -  
Minister of State for Environment and Forests**  
Paryavaran Bhavan, CGO Complex,  
Lodhi Road,  
New Delhi 110 003, INDIA

# GROUP NEWS

## FRANCINE TAYLOR 1920-2010



We are sad to report the death on 17th June of Francine Taylor, who for many years was a loyal member of the group, attending meetings until ill-health forced her to move into a nursing home in her mid-80s. In addition to Amnesty, Francine was active in other NGOs including UNA, Shelter, CASE, and the National Council of Women.

Donations in memory of Francine may be made to either Amnesty International or the United Nations Association, and should be sent to J. Lawrence & Sons (Undertakers) Ltd., 17 St Denys Road, Southampton SO17 2GN.

## 2010 - 2011 Programme

We are currently putting the programme together for 2010 - 2011. If anyone has any ideas for speakers, meetings, fundraising or actions, please contact John or Mary. With the closure of Borders, we also require a new venue for our greetings card campaign stall. Any ideas gratefully received.

## 2010 - 2011 Group Positions

These will be decided at the July AGM so if you would like to take a more active role, please give a thought to taking on one of these.

## NEXT GROUP MEETING

Monday 12th July  
7.30pm

### Group AGM

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

**ALL WELCOME**

## Patrick Okoroafor

Many thanks to Valerie for making a card on behalf of the group for the case introduced to us in the talk.

# JUNE GROUP MEETING

## CHAIR

The UNA Southern Regional Conference is 20 – 22nd August at Chichester.

John has details of this.

Please bring all ideas for the programme to the next meeting. If anyone is interested in holding a position please let John know. We are keen to share these positions around so that everyone has an opportunity to take a more active role.

## GIAMPAULO

We have £986.50 in funds currently, boosted by the recent Waitrose tin rattle.

£300 will be sent to AIUK.

We have been asked to use an alternative room for our monthly meetings.

## MARY

Campaign re Burma and ethnic minorities: these groups risk imprisonment/torture/ death if they make peaceful protests. We have information re the case of three men who have been sentenced without trial by a military court. Their sentences range from 35 to 37 years. Postcards urging the release of these men were distributed.

The group supports the urgent action network. We have sent a fax to Turkey to support an individual detained there as a conscientious objector.

Amnesty is asking for volunteers to take on a country and act as coordinators. Please give thought to this.

# 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.

# SOUTHAMPTON GROUP - WHO'S WHO

Group Officers		Subgroups
<b>Chair</b> John Williams	<b>Outreach and Parliamentary Officer</b> Veronica Tippetts	<b>Stop Violence Against Women</b> Trish McPherson
<b>Deputy Chair</b> Rob Atkinson	<b>Press</b> Cheryll Pitt	<b>China &amp; East Asia</b> Giampaolo D'Alessandro
<b>Secretary</b> Mary Brown	<b>Newsletter</b> Rob Atkinson	<b>Death Penalty</b> John Williams
<b>Membership Secretary</b> Kulbir Chahal		<b>Central America</b> Rapinder Kaur
<b>Treasurer</b> Giampaolo D'Alessandro		<b>Demand Dignity</b> Rob Atkinson