

# Amnesty International

## Miami Chapter

### Local Group 248

## Newsletter – October 2005

Meetings are at 8 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month:  
**October 12, November 9, December 14, ...**

Join us at **Books and Books**, 265 Aragon Avenue, Coral Gables, 305-442-4408

Visit our website at: <http://www.aimiami.org/>

For newsletter submissions: [ai248ai@netscape.net](mailto:ai248ai@netscape.net) (by the first week of each month.)



October 6, 2005

[10/12/05 update](#)

### A Victory Towards Stopping Torture and Ill-Treatment

Dear Amnesty International USA activist:

Last night we had an important victory in our work to stop torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment in the context of the U.S.-led “war on terror.” By an overwhelming vote of 90-9, the Senate passed an amendment offered by Senator John McCain to the Department of Defense appropriations bill to establish uniform guidelines for treatment of detainees and affirm the prohibition on torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment.

This success would not have been possible without the help of grassroots activists like you. Our collective efforts through petitions drives, phone calls, emails, letters, and lobby visits to Members of Congress are making a difference – last night reinforced that fact!

While this is a victory for which we should all be proud, there is still significant work to be done. The House and Senate have different versions of the Defense appropriations bill, requiring the legislation to go a “conference committee” that will reconcile the two versions and agree on a final text. It is crucial that the Senators and Representatives who are assigned to the conference committee retain the McCain amendment as is. There is a danger that the amendment could be revised to be harmful and contrary to the treaty against torture. We will need to keep the pressure on to ensure the “conferees” retain the McCain amendment as is for the final version of the bill and that the President signs it into law.

Amnesty also believes it is important for us to redouble our efforts in urging Congress to establish a fully independent commission to investigate all allegations of torture and ill-treatment by agents of the U.S. Government and end the practice of extraordinary rendition or “outsourcing of torture.” Such a commission would help ensure the abuses do not happen again in the future.

What you can do next:

1. Call your Senators. Simply call the Capitol Hill Switch Board: 202-224-3121 and ask to be connected to the office of the Senator you want to reach.

- Either thank them for their support of the McCain amendment or express your disappointment in their vote against it. You can view a list of how your Senator’s voted here: [http://www.amnestyusa.org/stoptorture/amendment\\_vote.html](http://www.amnestyusa.org/stoptorture/amendment_vote.html)
- Ask them to ensure the McCain amendment is retained as is by the conference committee and to encourage the President to sign it into law.
- Also, take the opportunity to reiterate your support for Congress to establish a fully independent commission to investigate all allegations of torture and ill-treatment by agents of the U.S. Government around the world.

2. Keep the momentum building towards an independent commission and an end to extraordinary rendition by holding a teach-in to educate and activate people in your community on these issues.

Download the Denounce Torture teach-in guide: [http://www.amnestyusa.org/stoptorture/pdf/teach\\_in\\_guide.pdf](http://www.amnestyusa.org/stoptorture/pdf/teach_in_guide.pdf)

Thank you for your efforts in securing this victory!

Sincerely,  
Eric Sears

Project Manager, Denounce Torture Initiative  
Amnesty International USA

- [Abolish](#) the death penalty
- [Oppose](#) abuses related to the “War on Terror”
- [Denounce](#) Torture: Stop it now!
- [Stop](#) violence against women
- [End](#) the uncontrolled proliferation and misuse of arms
- [Encourage](#) change in multinational corporations

## Why We Do Human Rights Work

AI's current Urgent Action Network newsletter (at <http://www.amnestyusa.org/urgent/newslett.html>) has this entry:

**Mexico:** Amnesty International has received with pleasure the news of the acquittal of **Felipe Arreaga Sánchez**, environmental activist, founder of the Peasant Environmentalist Organization of the Sierra de Petatlán (OCESP) and prisoner of conscience. He was released on September 15<sup>th</sup>. However, he, his family and other environmental activists in the region remain in grave danger. After considering his case, Amnesty International believed that the arrest and prosecution of Felipe Arreaga was in retaliation for his peaceful struggle to prevent excessive logging of the region's forests.

**"I will continue to walk in the mountains and advocating for human rights and a healthy environment. I will work very hard with my wife, caring for the forests and planting trees..."**

-- Felipe Arreaga, an environmental activist and former prisoner of conscience in Mexico.

## Human Rights After 9/11

(More information on AI's concerns can be found at: <http://www.amnestyusa.org/waronterror/index.do>.

Actions can be seen at <http://www.amnestyusa.org/waronterror/actions.do>)

We can all be glad that the U.S. Senate, on October 5<sup>th</sup>, voted to approve an amendment by **Senator John McCain** to the 2006 Defense Authorization bill. The amendment bars cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment of those in U.S. military detention. We should note, however, that the C.I.A. is not covered by this amendment. We still have much work to do, as the House version of this bill contains no similar language, as the issue moves to a House / Senate conference. Please contact your member of the House of Representatives and urge that they take a stand against torture. Contact information for members of the House is on page 22 of the White Pages. If you're unsure who your Representative is, you can find out at: <http://www.house.gov/>.

Egyptian national **Sami al-Laithi** was returned, over the October 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> weekend, to Egypt, where he is now feared to be at grave risk of torture, ill-treatment, unfair trial and other serious human rights violations. Amnesty International does not know what, if any, assurances the U.S. authorities obtained from the Egyptian authorities about how he would be treated. Please send the letter included below, urging **Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice** to monitor the treatment of Sami al-Laithi. This action can also be seen at: <http://takeaction.amnestyusa.org/action/index.asp?step=2&item=12244>.

## The Crisis in Sudan

(AI's main web page on Sudan is at <http://www.amnestyusa.org/countries/sudan/index.do>)

Over 300,000 people are believed to have lost their lives since the conflict in Darfur, Sudan erupted in February 2003. Systematic human rights abuses have been committed by all parties involved in the conflict, but primarily by the Sudanese government and government-backed Janjawid militia. Over 2 million civilians have been displaced by the conflict. The conflict in Darfur has witnessed some of the worst human rights abuses imaginable, including systematic and wide-scale ethnic-cleansing, murder, rape, torture, and enslavement.

The flow of arms to Sudan is exacerbating the armed conflict in that country and directly contributing to a worsening of the human rights crisis. In the coming days, the United Nation's Security Council will decide whether to impose a full or partial arms embargo on Sudan. The United States formally supports an embargo but has not exerted significant leadership in the Council to ensure a full embargo is approved. Please send the letter below (which is also available at: <http://takeaction.amnestyusa.org/action/index.asp?step=2&item=11501>) to Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and encourage her to support a full mandatory arms embargo on Sudan with a strong monitoring mechanism.

## Death Penalty News (Can You Make One Appeal?)

(Further material on capital punishment is available on the websites of Amnesty International's Program to Abolish the Death penalty, at <http://www.amnestyusa.org/abolish/>, and the National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty (NCADP), at <http://www.ncadp.org/>.)

During September, this nation executed four more people: **Alan Matheney** in Indiana, **Herman Ashworth** in Ohio, **John W. Peoples, Jr.** in Alabama and **Frances Newton** in Texas. Since 1977, there have been 985 people put to death. It is chastening to imagine that we will presumably see in the next few months the one-thousandth such execution.

Can you find time to make **even one appeal** against capital punishment? We ask that, in each case, you seek a commutation of sentence to life in prison. Where you see a web link after the name of someone now facing execution, you can, if you are connected to the Internet, activate a link to an NCADP web page, from which you can send an appeal. Of course, you can use the contact information below to send a letter or fax, or make a phone call. It's helpful to make different types of appeals.

**Texas:** Now scheduled for execution are: **Ronald Ray Howard** [http://www.demaction.org/dia/organizations/ncadp/campaign.jsp?campaign\\_KEY=1300](http://www.demaction.org/dia/organizations/ncadp/campaign.jsp?campaign_KEY=1300), 10/6; **Luis Ramirez** [http://www.demaction.org/dia/organizations/ncadp/campaign.jsp?campaign\\_KEY=1305](http://www.demaction.org/dia/organizations/ncadp/campaign.jsp?campaign_KEY=1305), 10/20; **Pedro Sosa** [http://www.demaction.org/dia/organizations/ncadp/campaign.jsp?campaign\\_KEY=1307](http://www.demaction.org/dia/organizations/ncadp/campaign.jsp?campaign_KEY=1307), 10/25; **Jaime Elizalde**, 11/2; **Melvin White**, 11/3; **Marion Dudley**, 11/8; **Charles Thacker**, 11/9; **Robert Rowell**, 11/15; and **Shannon Thomas**, 11/16. Please request of **Governor Rick Perry** that he grant a 30-day stay of execution (the most he is allowed to do on his own under Texas law), as well as clemency, if it is recommended by the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles. Please request of the Board that it make a recommendation to the Governor in favor of a commutation of sentence to life in prison, which is required before the Governor may grant one. Appeals may be made to: Governor Rick Perry, Office of the Governor / P.O. Box 12428, Austin, TX 78711-2418, phone: 512-463-1782 / fax: 512-463-1849, e-mail: Fill out the form at the bottom of the page at: <http://www.governor.state.tx.us/contact>. You may reach the **Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles** at: Attn: **Ms. Rissie L. Owens**, Presiding Officer, Executive Clemency Section: PO Box 132401, Capitol Station, Austin, TX 78711-3401, phone: 512-406-5852, fax: 512-467-0945, 512-406-5482, email: [bpp-pio@tdcj.state.tx.us](mailto:bpp-pio@tdcj.state.tx.us).

**Ohio:** **William Williams, Jr.** is scheduled to be executed on 10/25 [http://www.demaction.org/dia/organizations/ncadp/campaign.jsp?campaign\\_KEY=1306](http://www.demaction.org/dia/organizations/ncadp/campaign.jsp?campaign_KEY=1306), and **John Spirko** on 11/15 [http://www.demaction.org/dia/organizations/ncadp/campaign.jsp?campaign\\_KEY=1133](http://www.demaction.org/dia/organizations/ncadp/campaign.jsp?campaign_KEY=1133). On September 9<sup>th</sup>, **Governor Bob Taft** granted Mr. Spirko a delay of his execution date from 9/20 to 11/15. This followed a decision by the Ohio Parole Board to rehear his case. There is some question regarding Mr. Spirko's guilt, as no physical evidence ties him to the crime in question. Please make appeals to Governor Taft at: Vern Riffe Center / 77 S. High Street, 30 Floor / Columbus, OH 43215 / phone: 614-644-0813 / fax: 614-466-9354 / e-mail: <http://governor.ohio.gov/contactinfopage.asp>.

**Missouri:** Now facing execution, on 10/26, is **Marlin Gray**. Please make appeals to: **Governor Matt Blunt**, 216 State Capitol, P.O. Box 720, Jefferson City, MO 65102, Fax: 314-751-1495, Tel: 573-751-3222. Email can be sent via: <http://www.gov.mo.gov/constituentform.htm>.

## **China / Tibet Human Rights News**

News capsules provided by TibetInfoNet - Tel: +44 (0)20 7814 9011 - Fax: +44 (0)20 7814 9015 - email: [tin@tibetinfo.net](mailto:tin@tibetinfo.net)

20 Sept 2005

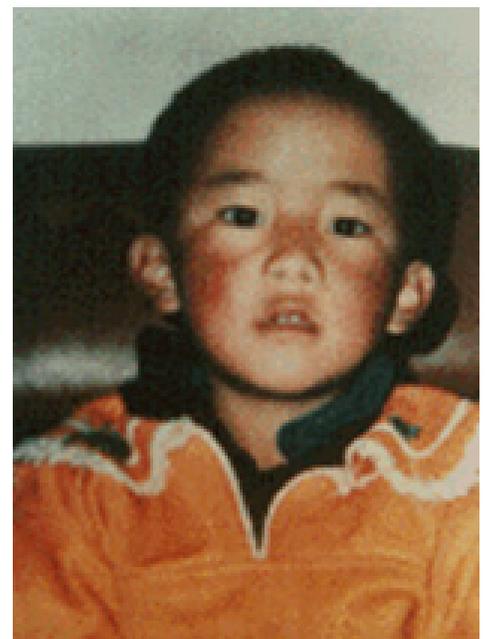
### **CRC Chair demands access to Panchen Lama**

(ICT) **Prof. Jacob Doek**, Chairman of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) asked the Chinese authorities to receive an independent body to verify the current status of **Gedhun Choekyi Nyima**, the boy recognised by the **Dalai Lama** as the eleventh Panchen Lama. The head of the Chinese delegation to the CRC stated that he would pass on the request to higher authorities in Beijing. Doek described the case of the Panchen Lama as a "thorny issue because that particular boy has been taken against his and his parents' will from Tibet to China." He added, "I still fail to understand why it is so difficult for China to allow access to the boy by an independent body." He also highlighted that the regular denial of requests for access to the Panchen Lama makes "lawyers assume that there is an appearance of something being wrong" and requested a "candid, open and frank answer" from the Chinese authorities.

30 September 2005

### **UN urges China to allow visit to Panchen Lama**

(Reuters) The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child called on China to allow independent experts to visit and "confirm the well-being" of the boy chosen by the Dalai Lama as the 11<sup>th</sup> Panchen Lama. In the conclusion of its recent meeting held in Geneva, the committee, which consists of 18 independent experts, stated "the Committee notes the information provided about Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, but remains concerned that it has not yet been possible to have this information confirmed by an independent expert." It called on Beijing to "allow an independent expert to visit and confirm the well-being of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima while respecting his right to privacy and that of his parents." China's delegation told the body that Gedhun Choekyi Nyima and his family did not wish to be interfered with by outside visitors.



## **Dalai Lama's public talk at Rutgers**

Amnesty International supports the Dalai Lama's efforts as a champion of human rights throughout the world.

From: tsewang phuntso <phuntso2004@yahoo.com>

To: latin-america@tibet.ca

Subject: His Holiness the Dalai Lama's public talk at Rutgers University, New Jersey

Date: Mon, 26 Sep 2005 22:38:53 -0500 (CDT)

Dear friends,

His Holiness the Dalai Lama gave a public talk at the Rutgers University's Football Stadium yesterday, September 25<sup>th</sup>, morning.

(At the beginning of the lecture H.H. spoke against the death penalty and mentioned the work of Amnesty International to this regard. — Silvia)

The complete video recording His Holiness' public talk, "War, Peace and Reconciliation," is available on the Rutgers University website <http://www.president.rutgers.edu/dalailama/>. Please click the "View the Lecture" in the Video Archive dialogue box on the left hand navigation.

I am leaving for Texas tomorrow early morning and from there to Mexico, Chile, Argentina and Brazil to accompany Mrs. Jetsun Pema, a sister of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, in her speaking tour to the above countries. I can always be contacted through the email.

Tsewang Phuntso

Liaison Officer - Latin America

Amnesty International does not promote any religion, but we do support human rights for all, especially in areas like Tibet, where the Chinese have so devastated the Tibetan people. AI has worked with the Dalai Lama in past campaigns.

## **International Campaign of Tibet (ICT)**

We have great news to share resulting from your support!

Last week, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) sat face-to-face with Chinese officials in Geneva and pressed them to respond directly to questions about the Panchen Lama, urging that independent verification of the Panchen Lama's current status be allowed.

And you helped put China in the hot seat! We know that tens of thousands of email, petitions and faxes were received by the CRC from ICT members and Tibet supporters around the world this year -- the 10th anniversary year of the Panchen Lama's disappearance.

Why is this great news? Because the abduction of the Panchen Lama is a crime against a child -- and religious freedom in Tibet. And because the CRC took a strong position on this case in an international arena -- the United Nations -- where China is working hard to expand its influence.

In 1996, during the last CRC examination of China's treaty obligations towards children, China first admitted to holding the then 6-year old Panchen Lama. Again, this year, China is being held accountable according to international standards for the treatment of a child -- one who is extraordinarily precious to the Tibetan people.

At this time, the welfare and whereabouts of the Panchen Lama are still unknown. We must still work for his freedom and religious freedom for all Tibetans! Here are two things that you can do to help.

1. Please give a donation to support ICT's campaign to free the Panchen Lama, whose abduction symbolizes China's control over religious freedom in Tibet.
2. Ask your friends sign up for our email action list to help this stolen child of Tibet.

We are so thankful to you -- and the thousands who have joined you -- during this 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary year. We ask for your continued commitment to this very important campaign.

Sincerely,

Mary Beth Markey

Executive Director

P.S.: To learn more about the Panchen Lama, please visit <http://www.savetibet.org/campaigns/pl/index.php>.

To read more about what happened in Geneva, visit <http://www.savetibet.org/news/newsitem.php?id=816>.



# CHINA REGIONAL ACTION NETWORK (CHIRAN)

[HTTP://WWW.AMNESTYUSA.ORG/COUNTRIES/CHINA/INDEX.DO](http://www.amnestyusa.org/countries/china/index.do)

October 2005

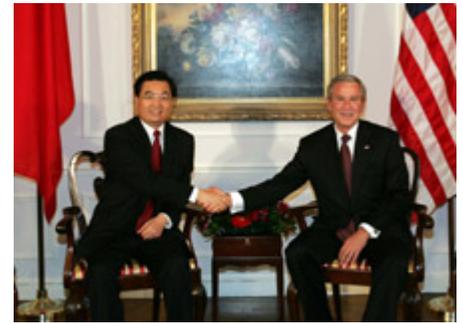
## CHINA:

### Upcoming Visit of President Bush to the People's Republic of China

**AI Concerns:** numerous, but we focus here on Reeducation through Labor, Freedom of Expression, and Ratification of the ICCPR

#### Summary:

**President George W. Bush** will visit China in November after a summit of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation in the Republic of Korea on November 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup>. The arrangements were made when **Hu Jintao**, President of China, attended the summit in New York on the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations. A planned visit by Hu to the U.S. was cancelled due to Hurricane Katrina.



Presidents Hu Jintao and G.W. Bush

**Goal of Action:** To ensure that President Bush critiques China's human rights record during his visit to China

#### Background Information: "Re-education through Labor" (RTL)

Moves by the Chinese authorities to abolish or reform RTL appear to have slowed over recent months. The main obstacle to reform appears to be the Ministry of Public Security, which seems reluctant to give up its broad powers of detention and sanction under RTL. A proposal for a new law entitled "Illegal Behavior Rectification Law" (IBRL) replacing RTL is currently believed to be on the agenda of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress. However, no draft of the law is currently publicly available and it is unclear if or when the law will be introduced.

Amnesty International understands that the new IBRL will offer more precise definitions of types of behavior deemed 'illegal' than is currently the case under legislation covering RTL. Nevertheless, the organization remains seriously concerned that moves to replace RTL with a system which continues to parallel the formal criminal justice system by penalizing 'behavior' rather than 'offences' or 'crimes' are incompatible with the general legal principles of 'no crime without law' (*nullum crimen sine lege*) and 'no punishment without law' (*nulla poena sine lege*) which are also provided for in international human rights treaties, such as Article 15 of the ICCPR. People should not be punished on the basis of their subjectively assessed 'behavior'. Individuals should only be punished for activities clearly defined in law as offences and recognizably criminal under international law, following trials that meet international standards of fairness. Amnesty International is concerned that attempts to hone definitions of 'illegal behavior' in the draft ICBL as distinct from 'crimes' under the Criminal Law will merely serve to exacerbate the contradiction between what does and does not constitute a crime in China.

#### Freedom of expression

Contrary to earlier hopes that the Hu Jintao / Wen Jiabao administration would relax controls over the press, investigative reporting, the internet, radio and other forms of broadcasting, the trend has been towards a restriction of freedoms including even retrenchments in areas where citizens had earlier enjoyed freedoms, such as on private blogs on the internet. In the last six months the authorities have added new legal, technological and political means of monitoring, controlling and restricting the flow of information and expression in various media. The spate of recent detentions and sentencing of individuals — based on vaguely worded charges including "illegally leaking state secrets," "disturbing social order," "subversion" and "defamation," among others — for the peaceful exercise of their right to free expression — sends a clear message to the citizenry of China of the risks they run in exercising their rights.

Both Chinese and foreign journalists operating in China — because of their ability to expose information and to investigative and uncover cases of corruption that implicate core institutions of the political system such as the police, the judicial system, prisons, and local government — have continued to run enormous risks in carrying out their work and to be targeted by the authorities. In addition to formal prosecution journalists also continue to be subjected to informal intimidation and harassment. Both journalists and citizens who cooperate with them are often harassed and badly mistreated, including by the police.

In a move apparently aimed at tightening control over Internet use the Ministry of Education launched a campaign in March 2005 to tighten control over college bulletin boards (BBS). Beginning in early March, China's major universities, including Beijing University, Nankai University, Qinghua University, Wuhan University and Nanjing University successively restructured their campus BBS to prohibit access to IP addresses off campus. Some universities, including Nanjing University, transformed their BBS into read-only sites, shutting down a valued channel of expression and communication among university students.

## **Ratification of the ICCPR**

China signed the ICCPR in October 1998. Since then Chinese authorities have repeatedly expressed their intention to ratify the Covenant. They have not, however, provided any concrete timeframe for ratification. Whilst recent piecemeal proposals for legal reform have been presented by officials or legal academics as moves towards compliance with the ICCPR, the government has yet to present a coherent plan of reform that would bring Chinese institutions and practice in line with the standards contained in the Covenant.

The ICCPR is a key human rights instrument that provides, within a legally binding treaty, for fundamental human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The PRC's ratification of this covenant is thus an important step in committing the Chinese government to the protection of these internationally recognized rights, and to following through on its earlier promises to fully commit to the terms of this covenant. The areas in which China would need to bring its institutions and practices in line with international standards are many.

China's arbitrary detention of human rights defenders solely on account of their peaceful and legitimate human rights activities violates key rights protected, for instance, in articles 18 (freedom of thought, conscience and religion) and 19 (freedom of expression) of the ICCPR. Articles of China's Criminal Law that can be used to violate the rights to freedom of expression, association or assembly, including Articles 102, 103, 105, 106, 107, 110 and 11, would also need to be amended or repealed to bring China's laws and practices into line with international standards.

China's extensive use of the death penalty and the lack of procedural safeguards built into its laws infringe on key fundamental rights protected by the ICCPR, including Article 6 of the ICCPR (right to life). Amnesty International is opposed to the imposition of the death penalty in all cases, considering it a violation of the right to life and the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment. AI urges China to impose an immediate moratorium on executions and, alongside ratifying the ICCPR, accede to its Second Optional Protocol aiming at the abolition of the death penalty.

Furthermore, under Chinese law detainees are not guaranteed immediate access to legal representation; confessions extracted through torture and other ill-treatment are often used as evidence against the accused in court despite being outlawed; and a defendant in court is effectively required to prove their innocence rather than the prosecution being required to prove the defendant's guilt, all in violation of several provisions of the ICCPR, including Articles 7 (freedom from torture and other ill-treatment), 9 and 14 (fair trial rights).

## **Recommended Actions:**

Please send appeals in English, raising some or all of the following points:

- Urge President Bush and other representatives of the U.S. to raise concerns with their Chinese counterparts about grave human rights abuses in China
- The Chinese government should be encouraged to abolish the "Re-Education through Labour" detention system. More than 250,000 are detained in re-education through labor camps. (You may use details from the section on RTL above, if you wish.)
- U.S. representatives at all levels should emphasize that freedom of expression, of the press and private individuals, in verbal form, print, and on the internet, must be respected by the Chinese government
- Hu Jintao should be urged to present a coherent plan of reform that would bring Chinese institutions and practice in line with the standards contained in the ICCPR, and to guide the Chinese government toward ratification of the Covenant.

## **Addresses:**

President George Walker Bush  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

FAX: 202-456-2461  
Email: [comments@whitehouse.gov](mailto:comments@whitehouse.gov)

## ***Please send a copy to:***

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice  
US Department of State  
2201 C St. NW.  
Washington, DC 20520

Postage: 37 cents

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Hi everyone,

The October CHIRAN action is a letter-writing action to President Bush, prior to his visit to China in mid-November. I'm sending this out to the Chinatibet-activists list because I thought that those groups with Chinese POCs might also want to contact the President and Secretary Rice, raising the concerns in this action and perhaps also mentioning the case(s) on which you work.

Letters need to reach the White House / Department of State before the APEC meeting, so please write by November 10<sup>th</sup> at the latest. Let's make sure the administration hears from us.

Thank you, Suzanne

## Pakistan / India

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Public Statement

AI Index: ASA 33/027/2005 (Public)

News Service No: 270

10 October 2005

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### **Pakistan / India: Human rights must be central to response to massive earthquake**

Amnesty International is greatly saddened by the devastating impact of Saturday's massive earthquake on areas in Pakistan and India. We wish to extend our condolences to the bereaved and sympathies to those still searching for their loved ones and to all those who have had their lives torn apart. According to current estimates the death toll may rise to over 30,000 people. Some 60,000 others are reportedly injured.

The organization wishes to express its solidarity with all those struggling to respond to the crisis. Past emergencies like the tsunami which hit South East and South Asia at the beginning of the year have pointed to the need to place human rights protection at the centre of the relief effort right from the start. This includes adherence to the principle of non-discrimination in aid provision and principles guiding protection of human rights in situations of internal displacement.

Amnesty International is calling on all those involved in the relief effort to respect international human rights norms. All assistance should be provided on the basis of need, without discrimination based on race, colour, sex, language, religion, political and other opinion, national and social origin, property, birth or other status of recipients. Amnesty International is calling particularly for the protection of those with specific needs, including children, people with disabilities and women in vulnerable situations. Thousands of the dead and injured are schoolchildren. Amnesty International remains greatly concerned about the welfare of the surviving children in the affected areas.

Human rights are most in jeopardy in situations of crisis and emergency. It is therefore crucial for governments and other agencies to recognize and support the central role of human rights defenders, including those engaged in humanitarian work and relief and reconstruction efforts.

### **Religious Persecution of Ahmadis**

8 October 2005

At this time, Amnesty International has released no official statement concerning the horrific shooting (Friday 7 October 2005) of Ahmadi Muslims in Pakistan at prayer in a mosque during the holy month of Ramadhan that has killed eight and seriously wounded 20 others. Reprinted here are excerpts of the reports from the sources listed below:

#### **Small sect's mosque attacked in Pakistan**

MONG, Pakistan — (AP) — Armed assailants opened fire inside a mosque belonging to a small Muslim sect in eastern Pakistan ... The attack on the mosque belonging to the Ahmadiyya sect, a frequent target of persecution, happened in the village of Mong, 150 miles southeast of Islamabad.

“So far we only know that three men riding on a motorcycle suddenly came in the village Friday morning,” said Mohammed Arif, a police official. “Two of them went inside the mosque and started firing.”

An estimated 150 people from the Ahmadiyya sect live in Mong, which has 18,000 people.

#### **Eight die in Pakistan sect attack**

(BBC NEWS) — Police in Pakistan say at least eight people were killed and 20 injured when gunmen opened fire as worshippers gathered for Friday prayers.

Human rights groups have constantly highlighted the persecution suffered by the Ahmadiyya in Pakistan.

#### **Victimisation of Ahmadi Muslims in Pakistan**

(Ahmadiyya Muslim Association U.K.) — Speaking during the Friday Sermon at the Baitul Futuh Mosque London, the Spiritual Head of the Worldwide Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, **Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad** said: “Our heartfelt prayers go to the victims and the families of those killed and injured, and to the community in Mong Rasool and Pakistan.

“It should be understood that this is not a general act of religious terrorism. It's actually a part of a heinous scheme being perpetrated by radical groups led by some crazed Mullahs in Pakistan. Masquerading as the men of puritan Islam, these groups continue to advocate systematic victimization of Ahmadi Muslims because of their beliefs, all in the name of Allah.”

“We ask the authorities in Pakistan to apprehend the perpetrators of today's crime and bring them to justice, and also to address the root cause of the problems that Ahmadi Muslims are continuously facing in Pakistan.”



**Pakistan's government has condemned the attack**

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[Go to original](#)

## Sample Letters

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Madam Secretary:

I am writing to urge immediate and strong US support for a full, mandatory arms embargo on Sudan — and to urge that you press other UN Security Council members to do likewise. Arms transfers and logistical / security supplies continue to reach gross human rights violators, and it is time for the UN Security Council to impose a mandatory embargo with a strong monitoring mechanism.

Despite the government of Sudan's promises to maintain a cease-fire, the government reportedly continues to conduct aerial bombings of civilians. According to the BBC, Sudan's Air Force has bombed a town in the Darfur region killing about 100 people, mostly women and children. Deputy Spokesperson George Somerwill with the UN Advance Mission in Sudan told IRIN (Integrated Regional Information Networks) that the village of Hamada was almost totally destroyed due to the raids.

This news report is unsurprising. Amnesty International has found evidence that the Sudanese Air Force conducted aerial bombings on civilians and civilian objects and provided cover for militia ground troops with MiG jet fighters or other aircraft during the last two years in Darfur as well as during the North South conflict. The government of Sudan has also used dual-use aircraft to drop off arms and ammunition to supply the militia.

Yet, despite strong evidence of the Sudanese government's culpability, several countries provided arms and logistical or related security supplies to the government of Sudan. The Sudanese government, for example, announced in July 2004 the import of 12 MiG-29 jet fighters from Russia. In the past few years other countries such as China, France, and Saudi Arabia have provided large quantities of small arms and light weapons to Sudan.

Madam Secretary, to stop these transfers, I urge you to press all UN Security Council members to impose a full mandatory arms embargo with a strong monitoring mechanism.

Sincerely,

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Madam Secretary,

I am deeply concerned that Egyptian national Sami al-Laithi was forcibly returned to Egypt over the weekend of October 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup>. On May 10<sup>th</sup>, US authorities decided that Mr. al-Laithi, a Guantánamo Bay detainee, was not an "enemy combatant," and could therefore be returned to Egypt. But Egyptian authorities reportedly deny that he has been handed over to them. Now Sami al-Laithi is feared to be at grave risk of torture, ill-treatment, unfair trial and other serious human rights violations.

US authorities are obliged not to forcibly return anyone to a country where they might face serious human rights violations, including indefinite detention without charge or trial, unfair trial, torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. The State Department's own report on human rights in Egypt in 2004 states that torture of prisoners is "common and persistent." According to Amnesty International, a worldwide human rights organization that works to promote and protect human rights, there are growing allegations of torture and severe mistreatment of individuals in U.S. custody, and reports that the U.S. Government has sent or been complicit in sending individuals to countries such as Syria, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Uzbekistan – all countries the U.S. has criticized for practicing torture. These "extraordinary renditions" are cloaked in secrecy, making it difficult to know how many individuals are affected. Detainees have been denied legal recourse to challenge their detentions, or prevent their transfer to a country where they might be tortured. Congress must ensure compliance with U.S. and international law and protect basic human rights.

I urgently request that the US government take measures to monitor the treatment of Sami al-Laithi now that he is in Egypt. I would appreciate a response from the U.S. State Department regarding what, if any, assurances the department had obtained from Egyptian authorities about how he would be treated. I further request that the U.S. government uphold international law against all "extraordinary renditions," and require stringent standards for transferring a detainee to a country that has a history of torturing.

Sincerely,

**Announcement**

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Michael Andrews, Cello

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“All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.”

Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights