

# Amnesty International

## Miami Chapter

### Local Group 248

## Newsletter - December 2005

Meetings are at 8 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month:  
**December 14, January 11, February 8, ...**

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.)



Story from BBC NEWS: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/asia-pacific/4491026.stm>  
Published: 2005/12/02 15:17:01 GMT © BBC MMV

### BBC reports that "China torture 'still widespread'"

Torture remains widely in use across China, a top UN envoy has said. **Manfred Nowak**, who has spent nearly two weeks in the country, added that some officials had tried to obstruct his fact-finding efforts.

Mr. Nowak - the first UN rapporteur on torture allowed in the country - said abuse was declining in cities, but that "more structural reform" was needed. Beijing outlawed torture in 1996, but human rights organisations report it is still used to extract confessions.

Mr. Nowak visited detention centres in the capital Beijing, and the restive western regions of Tibet and Xinjiang. Torture methods cited in a statement at the end of his visit included use of electric shock batons, cigarette burns, and submersion in pits of water or sewage. Mr. Nowak spoke of one detainee forced to lie on a bed in a particular position for 85 days. He also raised concern about psychological torture, particularly in labour camps, which he said was designed to alter the personality of the detainees.

Asked about the prevalence of torture, he answered: "I consider it on the decline, but still widespread." Mr. Nowak said the continuing use of torture was due to pressure on police officers to provide evidence in the form of confessions.

#### Interference

The UN official also accused Chinese officials of systematically interfering with his investigations. He said the authorities frequently monitored his interviews with relatives of prisoners.

"Victims and family members were intimidated by security personnel during the visit, placed under surveillance, instructed not to meet with him [Mr. Nowak] or physically prevented from meeting with him," the statement said.

While interviewing inmates, Mr. Nowak said he had observed "a palpable level of fear and self-censorship."

Mr. Nowak said that until major legal reforms allowed for an independent judiciary, the problem of torture could not be brought under effective control in China.

"There is much that still needs to be done, there is a need for many more structural reforms," he said.

Mr. Nowak's visit came at a time when a public debate is going on in the Chinese media about the use of torture and coercion by the police. In one recent case, a man who had been sent to prison for murdering his wife was released after she was found alive. The man, **She Xianglin**, said he had been tortured into confessing to the murder, and had already served 11 years of his sentence.

A BBC correspondent in Beijing says the fact Mr. Nowak was allowed to visit Chinese prisons - after a decade of failed attempts - does indicate the country's leaders are willing at the very least to acknowledge the problem.

**Join us at our December 14<sup>th</sup> meeting to vote on requesting permission from the AIUSA Board of Directors to file a lawsuit over our treatment at the 2003 FTAA summit. Your vote really counts!**

## Why We Do Human Rights Work

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

The following updates relate to some of the 190 political prisoners in Syria released under a presidential amnesty to mark the Muslim 'Eid holiday. Among the 190 were prisoners of conscience, whose unconditional release Amnesty International had been demanding for years.

**SYRIA: Seraj Khalbous**, aged 19, was released in October. He had been hospitalized for emergency treatment, because of the torture he had been subjected to at the Political Security Branch in al-Fayha in the capital, Damascus. He was allowed to return home, and is reported to be seriously ill. (*UA 246/05 issued Sep. 21<sup>st</sup>, 2005 & re-issued Oct. 11<sup>th</sup> & Nov. 28<sup>th</sup>, 2005*)

**SYRIA: Muhammad Ra'dun**, aged 56, lawyer, head of the Arab Organization for Human Rights-Syria, was released on November 3<sup>rd</sup>. He had been arrested on May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2005 in connection with statements made by the human rights organization he heads, on human rights in Syria. (*UA 140/05 issued May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2005 & re-issued Jun. 3<sup>rd</sup>, Jun. 20<sup>th</sup>, Jul. 14<sup>th</sup>, Aug. 18<sup>th</sup>, & Nov. 9<sup>th</sup>, 2005*)

### The Crisis in Sudan

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

Given that an estimated 300-400,000 people have been killed and over two million made homeless, in what many have termed genocide in Darfur, Sudan, we ask that you take action against to end these appalling abuses of human rights.

Please urge the African Union to protect the women of Darfur from violence. Ask that the AU support efforts to stop attacks on women and — by supporting the work of the International Criminal Court — support efforts to bring perpetrators of sexual violence and other crimes to justice. You can do so by sending the appeal included below. This action also appears at <http://takeaction.amnestyusa.org/action/index.asp?step=2&item=11400>.

### 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>.)

As reports of secret CIA torture facilities around the world dominate the headlines and the detainees at Guantánamo Bay continue their hunger strike, the U.S. Congress should affirm the absolute prohibition against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment and reject attempts to strike core principles of justice and due process.

The Senate recently voted on two important bills: the Defense Appropriations bill and the Defense Authorization bill. Amnesty International is urging its members and supporters to weigh in with their elected officials to support and oppose specific provisions. See the [Denounce Torture initiative](#).

We hope that you will contact your members of Congress and speak out against torture. Our Senators can be reached at: **Senator Mel Martinez**, 800 Douglas Road, Suite 148, Coral Gables, FL 33134, Phone: 305-444-8332, Fax: 305-444-8449, [mel\\_martinez@martinez.senate.gov](mailto:mel_martinez@martinez.senate.gov); **Senator Bill Nelson**, 2925 Salzedo Street, Coral Gables, FL 33134, Phone: 305-536-5999, [senator@billnelson.senate.gov](mailto:senator@billnelson.senate.gov). Identify your congressman at: <http://www.house.gov/>. You can also take action online at: <http://www.takeaction.amnesty.org/action/index.asp?step=2&item=12428>.

Call the Capitol Hill switchboard at **1-800-426-8073** and ask for your Representative, and if you have more time call again to ask for your Senators. Once you are connected to the appropriate office, ask for the staff person who handles defense issues and tell them:

- As a constituent, I am calling regarding bills that are very important to me: the Defense Appropriations bill and the Defense Authorization bill.
- On the Defense Appropriations bill, I urge you to support the Anti-Torture Amendment as passed by the Senate 90-9 and offered by Senator John McCain. Please do not accept any revisions to the Senate passed version of the amendment. This country must not allow any exceptions for torture or inhuman treatment.
- On the Defense Authorization bill, I urge you to support the Anti-Torture Amendment there too, but not as an alternative to the Appropriations bill. This is an important amendment that belongs on both bills.
- I also urge you to oppose the Graham Amendment to the Defense Authorization bill and to ensure that Congress protects core principles of justice and due process, especially the basic right to *Habeas Corpus*. The ability to challenge one's detention in a court of law is absolutely critical to protect the human rights of anyone in custody.
- The United States must stand without exception for the principle of human decency and against the use of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. The world is watching.

## Summary of Action Request

**Defense Appropriation bill:** The Defense Appropriations bill funds US forces around the world and must pass the House before it recesses for the year. Because this bill must pass, Amnesty International strongly supports inclusion of the Anti-Torture Amendment in this bill.

### Support the McCain Amendment as passed by the Senate:

The version adopted by the Senate will reaffirm the United States' prohibition against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment and also establish uniform guidelines for the treatment of detainees in the custody or control of Department of Defense or at a DoD facility.

It is crucial that the Anti-Torture Amendment be included in this bill, without any revisions that provide loopholes or exceptions.

Your calls are extremely important. Please urge your member of Congress to support the Anti-Torture Amendment in the Defense Appropriations bill and prevent it from being watered down.

**Defense Authorization bill:** The Defense Authorization bill provides the laws and guidelines that govern US armed forces around the world. It usually passes every year. However, there is a chance that this year it will not pass for various reasons, including many controversial provisions and amendments.

### Oppose the Graham Amendment:

Amnesty International is deeply concerned that on November 15<sup>th</sup>, the Senate passed an amendment proposed by Senators Graham, Levin and Kyl that prohibits detainees in Guantanamo from filing *Habeas Corpus* cases before federal courts. This means that individuals designated by the government as "enemy combatants" – no matter where they are, in the United States or abroad – could be held indefinitely without ever accessing federal courts to challenge their detention.

Please call your members of Congress to let them know that you oppose the Graham Amendment and to urge them to take steps to restore core principles of justice and due process, especially the basic right to *Habeas Corpus*.

### Support the McCain Anti-Torture Amendment:

Urge your member of Congress to vote for the McCain Amendment to the Defense Authorization bill, and also on the Defense Appropriations bill. The amendment must be included in both bills. [Take action](#).

## Stopping Violence Against Women

(For further information, please go to <http://www.amnestyusa.org/stopviolence/index.do>.)

Lydia Cacho Ribeiro is the president of a women's organization providing assistance to women and girls who have experienced violence, especially domestic violence. Ms. Cacho and her staff have been repeatedly threatened by a former police officer, because his wife has sought protection from Ms. Cacho's organization. Despite repeated complaints to the Mexican authorities, little has been done to protect Ms. Cacho and to stop the threats.

Can you please send off the appeal included below? This action can also be taken at: <http://takeaction.amnestyusa.org/action/index.asp?step=2&item=12391>. See also [More Actions](#).

## 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/>.)

With the executions of **Kenneth Lee Boyd** in North Carolina, **Shawn Humphries** in South Carolina and **Wesley Baker** in Maryland, our nation has now executed 1,002 men and women since capital punishment resumed in 1977. The United States is not only continuing to commit this ultimate abuse of human rights, not only refusing to place its public dollars where they can reduce crime, but is swimming against a tide that has seen, in recent years, fewer sentences of death and executions in the U.S. and more nations abroad outlawing the death penalty.

On November 15<sup>th</sup>, **Harold Wilson** was exonerated of murder charges in Pennsylvania, 16 years after conviction. This based on DNA evidence. Mr. Wilson became the 122<sup>nd</sup> person exonerated since 1977. It is troubling to speculate on how many false convictions are not caught. The possibility of executing the innocent is placed in stark relief.

Please try to find time to make **even one appeal** against capital punishment. In each case noted below, please 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, go 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.

**California:** **Stanley "Tookie" Williams**, faces death on 12/13 (and at the time of this printing, he was executed) [http://www.demaction.org/dia/organizations/ncadp/campaign.jsp?campaign\\_KEY=1592](http://www.demaction.org/dia/organizations/ncadp/campaign.jsp?campaign_KEY=1592), and **Clarence Ray Allen** on 1/17. Please make appeals to: **Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger**, State Capitol, 1<sup>st</sup> Fl., Sacramento, CA 95814, Fax: 916-445-4633, Tel: 916-445-2841, Email: [governor@governor.ca.gov](mailto:governor@governor.ca.gov), Web page: <http://www.govmail.ca.gov>.

**Mississippi:** **John Nixon** is scheduled to be put to death on 12/14 [http://www.demaction.org/dia/organizations/ncadp/campaign.jsp?campaign\\_KEY=1627](http://www.demaction.org/dia/organizations/ncadp/campaign.jsp?campaign_KEY=1627). Please make appeals to: **Governor Haley Barbour**, 501 N. West Street, 15<sup>th</sup> Floor, Jackson, MS 39201; Fax: 601-359-3741, Tel: 601-359-3150

**Florida:** Two executions are now pending in our state, those of **Clarence Edward Hill**, on January 24<sup>th</sup>, and **Arthur D. Rutherford** on January 31<sup>st</sup>. **Governor Jeb Bush** is able, under Florida law, to issue a 60-day stay of execution at his own initiative. You can contact him at: The Capitol / Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001 / phone: 850-488-4441 / fax: 850-487-0801 / e-mail: [jeb.bush@myflorida.com](mailto:jeb.bush@myflorida.com). The Governor may grant clemency only upon a positive recommendation of the **Florida State Executive Clemency Office**, which may be reached at: 2601 Blairstone Road, Building C, Room 229 / Tallahassee, FL 32399-2450 / phone: 850-488-2952 / fax: 850-488-0695.

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

### **AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PRESS RELEASE**

AI Index: ASA 17/042/2005 (Public)  
News Service No: 324  
1 December 2005

#### **China: Sixty housing rights activists detained outside UN meeting in Shanghai Joint statement by Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and Realizing Rights**

Around sixty activists were detained by the police this morning in front of the Oriental Pearl building in Shanghai after they attempted to deliver a letter to United Nations officials attending the UN Global Compact Summit taking place nearby. Around 40 are still believed to be detained at Century Plaza police station in Pudong, Shanghai. Local district officials have reportedly taken the twenty others back to their home districts. Their current legal status is unclear.

Among others attending the UN Global Compact meeting was **Amnesty International Secretary General Irene Khan**, the Executive Director of Human Rights Watch **Kenneth Roth**, and **Mary Robinson**, the President of Realizing Rights: the Ethical Globalization Initiative and former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

To detain activists for trying to pass a letter to the United Nations is a violation of their right to peacefully express their grievances. They should be released immediately and unconditionally, the three representatives said in a joint statement. These detentions also contravene the spirit of the UN Global Compact, which is a forum for open dialogue on promotion of human rights, labour rights, environmental protection and other concerns by businesses and NGOs, they added.

The letter, addressed to **Kofi Annan**, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, reportedly listed grievances by housing rights activists in Shanghai, including allegations against the local authorities and police of human rights abuses, including ill-treatment, arbitrary detention and imprisonment of fellow housing activists. It requested that Kofi Annan raises these concerns directly with the central Chinese authorities.

These detentions follow a pattern of arrests of activists and petitioners in China, attempting to draw attention to various grievances including alleged forced evictions and land grabs in the context of China's economic reforms.

#### **For further information,**

Please contact Mark Allison on (+852) 9267 2116 in Shanghai or Chine Chan (+852) 9807 8340 in Hong Kong.

**The following news capsule has been provided by TibetInfoNet - [www.tibetinfonet.net](http://www.tibetinfonet.net)**

19 November 2005

#### **Tibetan monk detained**

(RFA) Chinese authorities in Tibet have expelled the disciplinarian (gekoe) of Sera monastery in Lhasa and detained one of its monks as part of what sources there describe as a broad crackdown on supporters of the **Dalai Lama**, according to reports from Radio Free Asia (RFA). In July, public security officials interrupted a prayer session at the Sera monastery to dismiss the monk, **Tsering Dhondup** who subsequently disappeared, according to reports. He is believed to be held at Gutsa prison. Mr Dhondup's alleged offences include writing a 'request for prayer' that mentioned the Dalai Lama, and possessing and distributing documents critical of China's rule over traditionally Tibetan areas and supportive of Tibetan independence. Relatives who visited Gutsa prison have been permitted to leave clothing and food for Mr Dhondup but have been prevented from actually meeting him, the sources said. No further details about his case were immediately available.

**Amnesty International UK**  
**PRESS RELEASE**

7 NOVEMBER 2005

**CHINA: CLOSURE OF SHENGZHI LAW OFFICE A MAJOR BLOW TO HUMAN RIGHTS,  
SAYS AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL**

Amnesty International has learned from reliable sources that operations of the Beijing-based Shengzhi Law Office have been suspended by the Chinese authorities for one year.

The closure comes shortly after the firm's director sent an open letter to the Chinese **President Hu Jintao** and **Premier Wen Jiabao** urging them to end the 'barbaric' persecution of Falun Gong practitioners in China. It is believed that the closure of the firm is closely linked with this letter.

Shengzhi Law Office is one of a small number of law firms in China, which has taken on cases involving human rights issues, and Amnesty International is concerned that this suspension will severely undercut the work of human rights activists in the country.

On 4 November 2005, **Gao Zhisheng**, director of the firm, received an official notice from the Beijing Municipal Bureau of Justice informing him of the temporary closure of the firm. Reportedly, the official reasons for the closure were the firm's failure to notify the authorities of its change of address and the 'illegal' submission of legal documents to a lawyer who does not work for the firm.

The Shengzhi Law Office has recently been involved in a number of high-profile cases, including a land dispute case filed against locally elected officials in Taishi village, Guangdong province, which is seen as a test case for local democracy in China. The firm has also supported **Chen Guangcheng**, a self-educated lawyer currently under house arrest in Linyi city, Shandong province, because of his involvement in a class action law suit against local authorities over coercion in implementation of China's family planning policies, and is involved in the case of **Zheng Yichun**, a journalist and former professor who was sentenced to seven years imprisonment in September for his on-line writings and who is reportedly appealing his sentence.

**Media information:** +44 (0)20 7033 1548; +44 (0)20 7033 1549

FYI, from Radio Free Asia. Get RFA news via podcast or RSS feed. Go to [www.rfa.org](http://www.rfa.org) for more.

**Tibetan Monks Arrested, Monastery Closed After Rare Protest**

**KATHMANDU:** Chinese authorities in Tibet arrested five monks and closed off their monastery amid rare protests against an intensified campaign to crack down on followers of the Dalai Lama, Radio Free Asia (RFA) reports.

Public Security Bureau (PSB) officials took a senior monk, **Khenpo Nawang Phelgyal**, and four colleagues into custody on Nov. 23<sup>rd</sup> at Drepung monastery in Lhasa, capital of the Chinese-run Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR), sources inside China said.

The other monks arrested were **Nawang Namdrol**, who along with Khenpo Nawang Phelgyal is a native of Phenpo Lundup county (in Chinese, Linzhou Xian). The other three were not identified by name but were said to be natives of Shigatse, Lhoka, and Lhasa.

Drepung monastery, established in 1416 and located in Lhasa's western suburbs, is considered the most important monastery in the Gelug tradition of Tibetan Buddhism. At one time it housed more than 7,700 monks. Chinese security officials also secured the monastery, stopping all incoming and outgoing traffic, sources told RFA's Tibetan service on condition of anonymity.

**Re-education campaign**

The move comes amid a renewed 'patriotic education' campaign in recent months aimed at boosting support inside Tibetan Buddhist monasteries for the Chinese government and at the expense of monks loyal to Tibet's exiled leader, the Dalai Lama. "During the course of the patriotic education campaigns in Drepung monastery, the Chinese officials insisted on the monks' condemning the Dalai Lama and opposing separatists," one source said. "But Khenpo Nawang Phelgyal and other monks in Drepung refused to comply, and Khenpo in particular told the Chinese officials that [even] if they were told to condemn [China's late supreme leader] **Deng Xiaoping** and [ex-president] **Jiang Zemin**, they would refuse." No further details about the detained monks were available.

**Rare, silent protest**

Two days later, an unknown number of monks from Drepung monastery staged a rare protest in which they gathered at the monastery cathedral courtyard and sat in silence, sources said. PSB officials threatened to remove them by force and sealed the monastery to prevent anyone entering or leaving, the sources said. "No devotees are allowed to go inside and no monks were allowed to move out of the monastery. There were several Chinese soldiers inside and around Drepung monastery," said one source.

An official at Drepung monastery confirmed its closure for two days. During that time, the official said, 10 security officials, along with armed and regular police "conducted fire drill and completed the annual inspection of cultural items in Drepung. The forces came in two vehicles. Now Drepung is open to the public."

“I don't know anything about the arrest of monks but patriotic education is going on at Drepung,” another official said. “That’s all I know. I am just staff on duty.”

### **Re-education ‘in full swing’**

Earlier this month, public security officials expelled the disciplinarian at a key monastery and detained one of its monks as part of what sources there described as a broad crackdown on the Dalai Lama’s supporters. Public security officials near the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) capital, Lhasa, interrupted a prayer session at the well-known Sera monastery, according to sources who spoke to RFA’s Tibetan service on condition of anonymity. “They snatched a ‘request for prayer’ letter from the monastic disciplinarian and fired him, right at the prayer session, and they ordered him under surveillance for one year,” one source said.

**Tsering Dhondup**, 30 and a native of Phenpo Lhundup county, disappeared from the monastery immediately afterward, several sources said. Tsering Dhondup is said to have been held in Gutsa prison, in northern Lhasa, since July. The incident occurred in July but was reported only this week, after several witnesses were able to flee the TAR. Tsering Dhondup’s alleged offenses include writing a ‘request for prayer’ mentioning the Tibetan exiled leader, the Dalai Lama, and possessing and distributing documents critical of China’s rule over traditionally Tibetan areas and supportive of Tibetan independence. The disciplinarian who read the request for prayer aloud, **Changchup Gyaltzen**, was expelled from Sera monastery, one source said. Other sources, including Chinese authorities, have previously reported a renewed Chinese campaign to blacklist key religious figures close to the Dalai Lama and to ‘re-educate’ Buddhist monks. The campaign began Oct. 26 in Tibet’s Chamdo prefecture and focused heavily on the banning of the prominent Oser Lama from returning to his homeland from India.

**“The patriotic re-education campaign is in full swing,” one source inside China said. “We are divided into small committees of 20 monks. Sometimes we are ordered to fill out forms, and sometimes they give [us] questionnaires, and we have to fill in the blanks. We have to study six books on patriotic re-education...”**

According to the India-based Tibetan Center for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD), the six books are titled Handbook on Crushing the Separatists, Handbook of Contemporary Policies, Handbook of Policies on Religion, Handbook on Law, Handbook on Ethics for the Masses, and Handbook of History of Tibet. The Dalai Lama fled Lhasa in 1959 after an unsuccessful revolt against Chinese rule. He leads the Tibetan government-in-exile in Dharamsala, India. Pictures, writings, and video of the Dalai Lama, who is revered by Tibetans, are banned in Tibet, and those found in possession of them typically receive prison sentences.

**RFA is a private, nonprofit corporation that broadcasts news and information to listeners in those East Asian countries where full, accurate, and timely news reports are unavailable. RFA is funded by an annual grant from the nonprofit Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG).**

## **Kamil Abbas al-Ahmad**

Recent news about our POC **Kamil Abbas al-Ahmad** of Saudi Arabia from Amnesty International Secretariat:

Dear Friends,

I just wanted to get in contact and respond to a few queries that I have recently received regarding Kamil's case. I know many of you are frustrated with the lack of information/developments received and particularly received by the team or myself. That's largely because there have been very few if any developments to report.

I have continuously been in contact with Kamil's brother for updates but unfortunately there is no new news. Simply, Kamil's family continue to have regular visits and they say, are awaiting his expected release next year.

I received two letters kindly forwarded from Group 54 in Denmark from the Danish Embassy in Riyadh some months back informing them that a group called Human Rights First was due to visit Kamil in prison but that the visit was reportedly cancelled as a result of the ill-health of the Human Rights First delegate. I am assuming the group Human Rights First referred to is a Saudi Arabian based group and not the USA based group - two separate organizations. We know well Human Rights First in Saudi Arabia and will contact them for further information. I will of course share any new news with you as soon as possible. The other correspondence to the group also said that there was still no new news about Kamil's status, simply that he is detained in connection with vague charges of "creating problems for the regime" and that as AI said earlier, he is expected to be released next year having served the reported five year sentence.

As mentioned, we'll try our best to get further information but in the meantime please do continue with our appeals on Kamil's behalf and do not be discouraged by the lack of information received. This is one of the obstacles of our work on Saudi Arabia. There are numerous campaigning initiatives that you could undertake including:

- With the Christmas period approaching, many sections and groups publish non-religious Greeting Cards that can be sent to individuals in prison as letters of support and to let the prisoners know that they are not forgotten;
- Writing to the newly appointed King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia and welcoming him in his new role as King of Saudi Arabia. Then calling for Kamil's immediate and unconditional release. Say that you believe Kamil to be a prisoner of conscience held solely for his conscientiously held beliefs. Please also seek clarification about the exact charges against Kamil together with details of any trial proceedings that may have taken place;
- You can also write to the Saudi Arabian Ambassador's in your countries, particularly new Ambassador assuming posts. For example Prince Turki al Faisal in the USA or Prince Muhammad Bin Nawaf in the UK.
- Of course, as much media as possible!

Further, if you've done anything previously that has worked really well then please do share it so that we can hear about your campaigning activities and learn from each other.

...

As promised in my email to you all on 11 November, I have been in contact with Human Rights First (HRF) in Saudi Arabia regarding Kamil's case.

HRF confirmed much of the information that i have already communicated to you all, in particularly that he receives regular visits from his family and they are now awaiting his release once he has served his sentence. HRF did say that they would try to visit Kamil in prison shortly and will let us know the outcome of this as soon as they do. I hope to hear back by the end of this month but will update you all sooner if I hear before then. Otherwise, I'll speak to you all again in December.

In the meantime please continue with your good work.

## **Stop Violence Against Women**

On December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2005 students and professors met at FIU to hold the 1<sup>st</sup> Genocide Awareness Night. Sponsored by several organizations, the event featured an introduction by the Dean of the Honors College, **Dr. Griffith**, the movie **“Sometimes in April,”** based on the genocide in Rwanda, and a discussion led by human rights expert, **Dr. Clair Apodaca**. Information on the film is available at: [HBO Films: Sometimes In April](#). More events will be coming soon.

### **VAWA: Women's rights on Hold!!**

Congress has still not reauthorized the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) of 2005.

Amnesty International has been working with its partners to ensure that VAWA includes badly needed provisions to prevent evictions of and improve access to housing for domestic violence victims and their families. However, the Financial Services Committee in the House of Representatives is *still debating* whether or not these housing provisions, sections 606 and 607 should be included.

Please contact **U.S. Representative Michael Oxley**, Chair of the Financial Services Committee today at **202-225-2676**. When calling, please mention the following:

**“Victims of domestic violence should not be evicted because of the crimes committed against them.  
Please insure that sections 606 and 607 remain in the violence against women act.”**

Tell him why it is important to you and your community that these protections stay in VAWA. Share with him any stories or information you may have about this need.

Thank you for helping to protect victims of domestic violence from unfair evictions.

## **Sample Letters**

Hon. Condoleezza Rice  
Secretary of State  
2201 C Street NW  
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Ms. Secretary:

I am writing you to request your personal intervention in the case of Kamil Abbas al-Ahmad, a prisoner of conscience in Saudi Arabia. Kamil Abbas al-Ahmad is a member of the Shi'a religious community in Saudi Arabia who was known for his criticism of the Saudi Arabian authorities.

Kamil Abbas al-Ahmad was arrested, for still unknown reasons, at his home in Safwa city, in the Eastern province, on 13 September 2001. It has been reported recently that Kamil was sentenced to five years in prison in connection with vague charges of “creating problems for the regime.” He is expected to be released next year, having served the reported five year sentence.

I call on you to write a letter to the newly appointed King Abdullah, and to personally contact Ambassador Prince Turki al Faisal calling for Kamil's immediate and unconditional release and to seek clarification on the exact charges against him and details of any trial proceedings that may have taken place. Kamil Abbas al-Ahmad is considered a prisoner of conscience held solely for his conscientiously held beliefs.

In light of the above information, I urge you to act quickly to protect the rights of Kamil Abbas al-Ahmad. Please, keep me informed of the outcome of your correspondence and meeting with the Saudi Arabian authorities.

Sincerely,

## Sample Letters

Professor R. Omotayo Olaniyan  
Permanent Observer for the African Union to the United Nations  
305 East 47<sup>th</sup> Street, 5th Floor  
New York, NY 10017  
Telephone: 212-319-5490

Dear Sir:

I am writing to express my deep concern about the credibility of the National Court of Sudan, and impress the importance of the African Union's support for the International Criminal Court's investigation of Human Rights abuses in Darfur — especially as they relate to bringing the perpetrators of violence against women to justice.

Amnesty International delegates have interviewed hundreds of Sudanese refugees in Chad and have found that many of the human rights violations in Darfur have been targeted specifically against women and girls. These violations have included abductions, sexual slavery, torture and forced displacement. Almost every woman in Darfur is at risk of attack; pregnant women and girls as young as eight have not been spared from rape, abduction and sexual slavery. Women have been raped in public, terrorizing and humiliating them, their families and communities. Women have also been tortured to solicit information on the whereabouts of their husbands and other male survivors. Those who resist rape have been beaten, stabbed, or killed. The suffering and abuse endured by these women goes far beyond the actual rape. Women who survive this violence often suffer from severe mental and physical health problems, unwanted pregnancies, social stigmatization, and economic difficulties.

The creation of a national court for crimes in Darfur by the Government of Sudan came a week after the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) announced the opening of its investigation into the war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in the Darfur region in the past two years. There is concern that this move was designed by the Sudanese government in order to avoid prosecution by the ICC, and there are deep concerns about the overall credibility of such a court and its ability to hold those responsible in the Sudan accountable.

I write you to reiterate the importance of the African Union's support for the ICC as an international justice mechanism, and to ask you and the African Union to make all efforts to call on the Government of Sudan to cooperate with the International Criminal Court.

Sincerely,

Ambassador Carlos de Icaza Gonzalez  
Embassy of Mexico  
1911 Pennsylvania Ave NW  
Washington DC 20006

Dear Ambassador de Icaza:

I am writing to you out of deep concern for the safety of Lydia Cacho Ribeiro, president of Centro Integral de Atencion a las Mujeres (CIAM). Ms. Cacho and staff from three CIAM shelters for women and girls have received numerous death threats as a result of their work. CIAM provides shelter, legal and medical assistance to women and girls, especially victims of domestic violence.

In January, Lydia Cacho reported two threatening phone calls to her home from a man reportedly connected to organized crime networks whose wife and child were being sheltered by CIAM. Ms. Cacho reported the threats to the Attorney General in Mexico City. In February, Ms. Cacho received two threatening phone calls from a former agent of the Federal Investigation Agency (AFI). His wife and children were also being sheltered by CIAM. He stated that he would give her a chance to live if she handed over his wife and children. This man visited three CIAM shelters with a gun and threatened staff, seeking that they hand over his family. On February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2005, Ms. Cacho received another phone call threatening to kill her and her staff if she did not stop giving out information. From April to July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2005, Ms. Lydia Cacho has reportedly received at least 42 threatening phone calls at CIAM's office in Cancun.

On March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2005, federal agents told Ms. Cacho that the officer threatening her had fled Mexico and that she no longer needed to fear for her safety. However, additional threatening telephone calls were subsequently made from within Mexico. On June 30<sup>th</sup>, the former police officer reportedly visited the CIAM shelter in Saltillo, Coahuilla and harassed the manager. He demanded that she tell Ms. Cacho to stop speaking about his case and that she return his wife and children. He is under investigation by the AFI but judges have reportedly refused to issue a warrant for his arrest. No charges have been filed against him in relation to the threats against Lydia Cacho and CIAM staff members.

Amnesty International fears for the safety of Lydia Cacho Ribeiro and the staff of CIAM following the series of renewed threats. Amnesty International also calls for measures guaranteeing the protection of Ms. Cacho and CIAM staff to be strengthened in accordance with their wishes. Amnesty International urges authorities to act in preventing the former police officer from intimidating Ms. Cacho and her staff, and to ensure that he is prosecuted.

I would appreciate receiving any information you might have regarding steps taken by Mexican authorities to guarantee the safety of Ms. Lydia Cacho and CIAM staff, and to ensure a full investigation and prosecution is carried out of the threats against her.

Thank you for your kind attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL MIAMI

## Florida State Conference

February 25, 2006

Miami, Florida

*Working to Protect Human  
Rights Worldwide*

*Location:  
University of  
Miami School of Law  
Time: 9am-5:30 pm*

*Workshop topics to include:*

*War on Terror  
Detention Centers  
Death Penalty  
Violence against Women  
Amnesty 101  
Torture  
Prisoners of Conscience  
Corporate Action  
LGBT*

*Free Lunch Provided*

**Hosted by  
Miami Chapter of  
Amnesty International  
And the University of Miami  
School of Law**

**Contact Beth Lindeman  
Phone: 786-210-5797  
E-mail: Amnestymiami@aol.com**



Join members from across Florida and human rights defenders around the world for the 2006 Amnesty International Florida State Conference in one of the world's most exciting and international metropolitan areas—Miami.

During this conference, nationally and internationally renowned speakers, panelists, activist members and staff of AIUSA will explore concrete strategies for confronting national and international human rights violations.

This is your chance to meet, learn and discuss human rights strategies and develop expertise in the rapidly

changing field of human rights.



**Amnesty International  
Florida State Conference  
February 25, 2005**



**General Information**

The meeting will be held at the University of Miami Law School on February 25 from 9 am to 5:30 pm. Individuals can register by printing this form and mailing it to:  
Amnesty International, Miami Chapter  
c/o Beth Lindeman  
7701 SW 57<sup>th</sup> Ave #3  
Miami, FL 33143

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*If you are a student, please fill in the following:*

School Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address : \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Amnesty Faculty Advisor : \_\_\_\_\_

Contact information  
of Faculty Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Will you be attending the meeting with your school group? \_\_\_\_\_

Arrival Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Departure Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like us to send you hotel information? \_\_\_\_\_

*If you are NOT a student, please fill in the following:*

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

If you have any questions, please call Beth Lindeman at 786-210-5797 or e-mail us at [Amnestymiami@aol.com](mailto:Amnestymiami@aol.com). More information to follow soon!

## Announcement

**Human Rights Celebration:** It's the time of year when we gather with friends, both old and new, to celebrate the holidays. Join Amnesty International Miami, Friday, December 16<sup>th</sup>, 8 to 12 pm at **Bagua**, 4600 NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave. (corner of 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave. and 46<sup>th</sup> St.) Design District, 305-573-9292. Please bring your favorite appetizer.

**BAGUA & Ayabonmbe**  
**presents**  
**this Friday night**  
**December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2005**  
**8PM - Midnight**  
**MATISOU LEGBA and friends!**



Legba, the opener of a Vodou ceremony, Matisou Legba one of the young master drummers that have opened diverse musical, ceremonial and traditional functions all around the world. Matisou has drummed at the three most sacred Vodou temples in Haiti, Lakou Souvenance, Lakou Badio, Lakou Soukri. He started his career first as a dancer and later went into drumming. Matisou perfected his knowledge in drumming and Vodou rhythms and rites while researching in the mountains of Haiti with the peasants for over many years.

Matisou Legba drummed professionally for musical groups such as Samba Yo, Boukan Guinen, Ayabonmbe, Djanaye and Djam Lakay. He is best remembered in a hit CD released by Boukan Guinen in 1993 *Le a Rive* and Ayabonmbe's hit musical video *Severin* in 2000. Matisou continues to perform with Boukan Guinen, his main group, and Ayabonmbe. His knowledge and experiences drumming makes him one of the most sought after master drummers in the U.S. and Haiti for workshops, performances or ceremonies.

Assisting a drum performance by Matisou Legba will be an opening experience for someone, no matter how many times they have seen him perform before. Matisou is one of the few young master drummers that has familiarized himself with the 21 ceremonial rhythms, dances and their ancestral meanings.

Marc Joseph of AYABONMBE has been instrumental to co-produce several music concerts in Miami, Haiti and St. Louis, Missouri. Presently the business manager of the group Ayabonmbe, he recorded two CDs with the group and also two music videos. He is also a board member of the dance group Bale Folklorik. He is involved with the Jean Jacques Dessalines Community Center to promote cultural instructions to teens and pre-teens to learn their Haitian heritage. The program incorporates singing, dance, drumming and acting, martial arts instructions and arts and crafts.

**PS- We'll be passing the hat throughout the night for the drummers!**  
**Please forward and come with friends.**

**A bit of spirit, a bit of soul, a bit of sass!**  
**Awaken your senses!**

**Music, Tea, Wine & Hors d'Oeuvres**

**For more info or to RSVP**  
**please call 305-573-9292**

**Or email to [info@bagua9.com](mailto:info@bagua9.com)**



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**(North of the Design District)**



**Amnesty International Miami Chapter**  
**P.O. Box 141057**  
**Coral Gables, FL 33114**

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**David Dowd** – Newsletter Coordinator [ai248ai@netscape.net](mailto:ai248ai@netscape.net)

“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