



Amnesty International

Orange County

GROUP 141 ORANGE • GROUP 175 LONG BEACH
GROUP 178 IRVINE • GROUP 596 HUNTINGTON BEACH

October 2003

Amnesty International, Oxfam, IANSA Launch Global Control Arms Campaign

This article is taken from an October 9 AIUSA news release.

The global arms trade is dangerously unregulated, and allows weapons to reach repressive governments, human rights abusers and criminals, says a new report released today. To address these concerns, three international organisations have joined to launch a global campaign in over 50 countries. The 'Control Arms' campaign aims to reduce arms proliferation and misuse and to convince governments to introduce a binding arms trade treaty.

Arms proliferation and abuse, have reached a critical point, fuelling human rights violations, poverty, and conflict. Someone is killed every minute by armed violence while many more suffer abuse and serious injury. But arms are a dangerously unregulated global business, according to the new report.

Among the report's findings:

- National arms export controls are riddled with loopholes. The easy availability of arms increases the incidence of armed violence, acts as a trigger for conflicts, and prolongs wars once they break out. Civilians are increasingly being targeted.
- Conflict and armed crime prevent aid reaching those who desperately need it, and often lead to the denial of health care and education.
- The September 11, 2001 attacks and the resulting 'war on terror' have fuelled weapons proliferation, rather than focusing political will on controlling arms.
- The 'war on terror' has led to increasing numbers of arms being exported, particularly by the US and the UK, to new-found allies (such as Pakistan, Indonesia and the Philippines) regardless of human rights or development concerns.

"Each year hundreds of thousands of people are unlawfully killed, tortured, raped and displaced through the misuse of arms. With the 'war on terror' dominating the international agenda, there should be renewed interest in arms control. Yet the reverse has occurred. The vicious circle of arms transfers, conflict and abuse can and must be stopped," said Irene Khan, Secretary General of Amnesty International.

To address these concerns, Amnesty International, Oxfam and the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) have jointly launched the global Control Arms campaign. The campaign will focus on promoting an international treaty covering arms transfers "the Arms Trade Treaty" as well as a num-

ber of regional and locally appropriate measures designed to limit arms proliferation and misuse.

"The arms trade is out of control. It is a global problem with horrific local consequences - and it is poor people who suffer the most. An Arms Trade Treaty is desperately needed, to stop the flow of arms to abusers and to help make all our societies safer," said Barbara Stocking, Director of Oxfam.

The report describes how the possession of increasingly lethal weaponry is becoming an integral part of daily life in many parts of the world. Among farmers in northern Uganda, AK47s are replacing spears; in Somalia children are now named "Uzi" or "AK"; in countries such as Iraq, there is now more than one gun per person.

"Governments, preoccupied with a search for nuclear, biological and chemical weapons in their fight against 'terrorism', have essentially ignored the real 'weapons of mass destruction': small arms. So they continue to proliferate, at the cost of hundreds of thousands of lives," said Rebecca Peters, Director of the International Action Network on Small Arms.

Alongside the call for an Arms Trade Treaty, the Control Arms campaign is also calling for:

- Governments to develop and strengthen regional arms-control.
- Governments to rigorously control national arms exports, brokers and dealers, and do more to prevent law enforcers misusing their weapons and to protect citizens from armed violence.
- Local authorities and community leaders to help improve safety at a community level by developing projects to reduce the local availability and demand for arms.

For more information about the report *Shattered Lives: The Case for Tough International Arms Controls* and the Control Arms campaign, visit www.controlarms.org.

A draft Arms Trade Treaty has been developed by a group of human rights, development and arms control NGOs including Amnesty International and Oxfam in partnership with international legal experts. It carries the support of 19 Nobel Peace Prize laureates, led by Dr. Oscar Arias. The central aim is to provide a set of common minimum standards for the control of arms transfers, based firmly on states existing responsibilities under international law. To see a copy of the draft Arms Trade Treaty, visit www.controlarms.org.

2003 Western Regional Conference

The 2003 Western Regional Conference is being held Friday, October 31–Sunday, November 2 at the Crowne Plaza Redondo Beach and Marina (7 miles south of Los Angeles International Airport), in Redondo Beach. The conference will begin with Friday evening entertainment: a drum circle, followed by a screening of the film *Rabbit Proof Fence*. The main program will begin Saturday at 10:00 AM with the Opening Plenary and will continue until approximately 3:00 PM Sunday.

The cost to attend the conference is (after September 30) \$20 general or \$15 students/seniors/limited income. This registration fee includes all conference sessions throughout the weekend. Meals and accommodation at the Crowne Plaza Hotel are NOT included.

The conference's theme is "Imagine: A World Without Discrimination." This year, human rights activists find themselves facing a host of challenges, continuing crisis in North Korea, almost a complete breakdown of security in Liberia, and unrelenting human rights abuses in the Democratic Republic of Congo. In addition, the world continues to grapple with the "war on terrorism", raising concerns about racial profiling and attacks on freedom of expression. During these most troubling times our voices must rise above the fear and mistrust undermining protection for human rights the world over. Amnesty International and its members have faced such challenges in the past, and working as a single movement have shown that our passion for freedom and respect for *all* human rights can be a tremendous force for justice.

To this end, Amnesty International USA has launched a Campaign Against Discrimination to expose and challenge this violation of the fundamental principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Keynote speakers are

- Loretta Ross, Executive Director, The National Center for Human Rights Education
- Paul Hoffman, Chair, International Executive Committee of Amnesty International
- Carrie Dann, Western Shoshone Defense Project

Workshops include:

- Crisis in the Democratic Republic of Congo
- Violence Against Women
- Human Rights and the "War on Terrorism": An International Update
- Organizing in your community in response to the Patriot Act
- Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights: Focus on North Korea
- Human Rights in Guatemala and Colombia
- Introduction to Amnesty International
- Outfront! Defending the rights of lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and transgendered people
- Refugees: Asylum Law and Detention
- Human Rights and Corporate Responsibility
- How to Organize an Event
- Human Rights Education: The Fourth R

- Military, Security, and Police Transfers
- Human Rights in West Africa
- Work Against the Death Penalty
- Membership Recruitment and Retention

On Saturday, lunchtime will feature a book-signing with AIUSA Executive Director Bill Schulz and Roundtable Discussions:

- Amnesty International's Mission
- The Children's Edition of the Urgent Action Network
- International Council Meeting
- Special Focus Case: Rebiya Kadeer
- Women's Network
- AI online

Go to <http://www.amnestyusa.org/events/western/regionalconference.html> for more information, including online registration and a conference schedule.

Volunteers are needed to help out before and during the conference. Contact Kathy Brown at the Regional Office at (310) 815-0450 or via email at kbrown@aiusa.org.

Nigeria: Amina Lawal's Life Spared

Amnesty International welcomed the decision September 25 by the Sharia Court of Appeal of Katsina State to acquit Amina Lawal, who had been sentenced to death by stoning by a Sharia court on March 22, 2002.

More than 1.2 million AI activists and viewers of the Oprah Winfrey Show logged on to Amnesty International USA's online human rights action center to sign a petition opposing the sentence. The petition was then delivered to the Nigerian government.

"Obviously we are thrilled that the life of Amina Lawal has been spared," commented Curt Goering, Senior Deputy Executive Director for Amnesty International USA. "We congratulate the millions of activists in Nigeria and around the world who voiced their opposition to such a cruel and unusual punishment. This verdict is a reaffirmation of the power of a grassroots movement. We will continue our work against the death penalty in Nigeria in the hopes that others will not have to endure such a harrowing ordeal."

While Amina Lawal's conviction was quashed, an appeal of the death penalty sentence against Fatima Usman and Ahmadu Ibrahim on the charges of adultery is still pending at a Sharia Court of Appeal in Minna, Niger State.

"Amnesty International calls on the Nigerian government and civil society to seize this opportunity and address an issue that has caused unnecessary harm and distress for many Nigerian citizens," Goering added.

The federal government of Nigeria should take steps to abolish the death penalty and amend all legislation, including elements of Shari'a law, which introduce it and other cruel, inhuman and degrading punishments.

Amnesty International continues its campaign to abolish all discriminatory laws and opposes the criminalization of consensual sexual activity between adults in private, as well as the imprisonment of anyone solely on that basis.

Upcoming Events

UNA International Film Festival

The 3rd annual United Nations Association International Film Festival-Human Rights 2003 will be held Friday, October 24, and Saturday, October 25, at UC Irvine and the City of Irvine. We are proud to bring you two days of international cinema dealing with issues of human rights. Introducing many of the documentaries will be the director, producer, and/or actor associated with the documentary. The highlight of the festival will be the keynote address Saturday, October 25, by Terree Bowers, Chief Deputy Los Angeles City Attorney, former prosecutor for the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda.

Movies being shown include:

Face Off (30 minutes)

Director: Yong bin Yuk

In the face of economic growth and prosperity there is a powerful and growing populist movement in South Korea fighting for worker's rights. This film documents these current mobilizations and illustrates their effects on Korean society.

The Kidnapping of Ingrid Bentacourt (75 minutes)

Directors: Karin Hayes and Victoria Bruce

The story of a Colombian presidential candidate held hostage by leftist guerrillas and her family's desperate quest to free her and keep her campaign alive.

Leche and Mala Leche (60 minutes)

Director: Naomi Uman

For the past 5 years filmmaker Naomi Uman has chronicled the life of a family from Aguacaliente, Mexico. In these two short films she examines their Mexican roots and culture and how it transforms as they immigrate to small central valley town in California.

Living in Conflict (60 minutes)

Director: Mikayla Mickelberg

Five interviews with various Israelis and Palestinians talking about life, culture, music, religion and what it will take to bring peace to the middle east.

Mercy (50 minutes)

Directors: Jeanne Halcy and Jamlong Saiyot

Filmed over two years at a community hospice in Klong Toey, Thailand, the story unfolds as a thirteen-year old girl, Luk Nam, recalls the loss of her family to Aids.

Plan Columbia (60 minutes)

Directors: Gerard Ungerman and Audrey Brohy

A look into the United States government's hidden agenda in Latin America.

Sir Alfred (50 minutes)

Story of an Iranian man who has been living in the Charles de Gaulle Airport for the past 15 years.

Friday's screenings will take place at the Film and Video Center located at 100 Humanities Instructional Building on the UCI Campus. Saturday screenings will take place at Irvine City Hall, located on Alton and Harvard in Irvine. Tickets will be sold both days on the premises. Advanced tickets can be purchased at Alakazam at 4237 Campus Drive in the UCI Market Place or through Irvine Community Services (949) 724-6610 or www.irvinequickreg.org. Admission is \$10 per day general public, \$8 per day for students and seniors. Two-day passes are available for \$14 for the general public and \$12 for students and seniors. UCI Parking is \$4, City of Irvine parking is free. All profits from this film festival will go to the UCI Model United Nations Club, a non-profit organization

For more information, screening times, and directions, see <http://www.polyesterprince.com>, or contact Diane Chang at teach_ps@yahoo.com or (949) 551-5186.

Voices from the Inside: A Different Look at the Death Penalty

As we work for an end to violence and the abolition of the death penalty, CPF (California People of Faith Working Against the Death Penalty) Orange County Chapter proudly announces the 2nd Annual "Voices from the Inside: A Different Look at the Death Penalty." On Tuesday, November 4, at 6:45 PM at Mater Dei High School, two speakers will look at the death penalty from the perspectives of the victim and the prisoner:

- Bud Welch, current director of Murder Victims Families for Reconciliation, lost his daughter in the bombing of the Federal Building in Oklahoma in 1995—a powerful story from vengeance to forgiveness.
- Stephanie Nigh, MFT, trained trauma and disaster counselor, corresponded with Timothy McVeigh while he was on death row and attended his trial—a powerful story from outrage to empathy.

Our panel last year at the St. Joseph Center in Orange was a great success. We ask you to help make this discussion even bigger! Please plan to attend and contact all within your sphere of influence about this event.

If you would like to continue receiving this newsletter and supporting the work of the Orange County and Long Beach Amnesty International groups, please return this coupon to the address below with annual dues of \$10.00. Dues are used to cover the costs of this newsletter and of letters on behalf of prisoners. Your address label contains your membership expiration date.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State & Zip _____

Return to:
Amnesty International
P.O. Box 864
Orange, CA 92856

For (check one):
 Orange Group
 Irvine Group
 Huntington Beach
 Long Beach

Please make your check payable to Amnesty International. Contributions to AI are tax-deductible. Thank you for your interest and support!

