



Amnesty International

Orange County

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

December 2003

<http://www.aiusaoc.org>

US Exports \$20 million of Shackles, Electro-Shock Technology

This article is taken from a December 2 AI news release.

A new Amnesty International report charges that in 2002, the Bush Administration violated the spirit of its own export policy and approved the sale of equipment implicated in torture to Yemen, Jordan, Morocco and Thailand, despite the countries' documented use of such weapons to punish, mistreat and inflict torture on prisoners. The US is also alleged to have handed suspects in the 'war on terror' to the same countries.

The total value of US exports of electro-shock weapons was \$14.7 million in 2002 and exports of restraints totaled \$4.4 million in the same period. The Commerce and State Departments approved these sales, permitting 45 countries to purchase electro-shock technology, including 19 that had been cited for the use of such weapons to inflict torture since 1990.

The report, *The Pain Merchants*, also reveals that the US approved the 2002 export to Saudi Arabia of nine tons of Smith & Wesson leg-irons. Former prisoners in Saudi Arabia have stated that their restraints were stamped with the name of Smith & Wesson. In a 2000 Amnesty International report, Phil Lomax, a UK national who was held for 17 days in 1999, recounted how shackles used in Malaz prison in Riyadh, were made in the US: "When[ever] we were taken out of the cell we were shackled and handcuffed. The shackles were very painful. They were made of steel . . . like a handcuff ring. The handcuffs were made in the USA."

"Although torture is endemic in Saudi Arabia, Smith and Wesson had no qualms about exporting approximately 10,000 leg-irons to Riyadh, and apparently sharing this lack of concern, the Bush Administration approved the sale," said Dr. William F. Schulz, Executive Director of Amnesty International USA. "For decades, human rights groups and the US State Department have documented Saudi Arabia's cruel use of leg-irons and shackles to inflict torture and force confessions. With this shameful shipment, we can expect the torture of religious minorities and peaceful protestors to continue for years to come."

Amnesty International acknowledges that the US government made several positive changes in recent years, including creating an excellent export policy predicated on human rights standards that created well-defined export categories and required export licenses for electro-shock equipment to all countries except Canada. However, Amnesty International is alarmed that the policy is being improperly implemented. In particular, the policy has not prevented the approval of exports

even when there is a significant risk of their use for torture in the destination country.

In 2001, the US approved three sales of electro-shock weapons to Turkey, despite continued widespread use of such technology to torture. In a 2002 case, a 17-year-old schoolgirl who had been detained for distributing leaflets calling for Kurdish education was stripped, threatened with rape and tortured with electric shocks to her feet, legs and stomach.

"The US needs to completely close the loopholes that have allowed the re-supply of this technology to countries that torture," said Maureen Greenwood, AIUSA's Advocacy Director for Europe. "Representatives Tom Lantos (D-CA) and Henry Hyde (R-IL) have worked to codify in law greater oversight of torture equipment exports, and are currently working on legislation that places restrictions on crime control exports to foreign governments that have a record of repeatedly engaging in acts of torture. The administration should give this legislation its unqualified support."

Worldwide, there are now at least 856 companies in 47 countries involved in the manufacture or marketing of electro-shock technology, restraints and chemical irritants that are prone to be used to torture. A 2001 survey by Amnesty International found more than 80 such firms—1 in 10—were in the United States.

The number of manufacturers of electro-shock technology has more than doubled since 1997, when Amnesty International documented 20 such firms. For the period 1999-2003, Amnesty International found at least 59 manufacturers of electro-shock weapons in 12 countries, including 8 firms in the US. For the same period, Amnesty International found 21 manufacturers of leg cuffs, leg-irons and shackles in 11 countries, of which six were US companies.

Senate Calls For Rebiya Kadeer's Release

Amnesty International welcomed passage of a Senate resolution October 3 calling on the Chinese Government to free prisoner of conscience Rebiya Kadeer. Introduced by Senator Richard Lugar, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the resolution was initiated at the urging of Amnesty International. Rebiya Kadeer, a prominent businesswoman and women's rights activist, has been jailed for more than four years for disseminating information regarding discrimination and other human rights violations against the Uighur minority in western China.

November Meeting Minutes

Group #141 Orange

Letter-Writing

We sent Rebiyah Kadeer, the Western Region's Special Focus Case in China, birthday cards as her birthday was November 15 and participated in the Holiday Card Action as well. We also sent Colin Powell letters regarding the conflict in the Congo, our POC in Vietnam, and to Mexico concerning the ongoing murders of young women in Juarez.

Weekend of Faith Event

Tami reported on the Weekend of Faith-Death Penalty event held at Mater Dei High School on November 4. Bud Welch was the keynote speaker and moved everyone to tears. A great event from the Orange County Death Penalty Coalition. Just ignore the sometimes snide report in the *OC Weekly*.

December's Meeting

We agreed to have our holiday party in conjunction with the Irvine group's Write-a-Thon on December 13. Jacques assured us that a laptop and printer will be available as well as snacks from Trader Joes but all are welcome to bring something to share as well. This will take place Saturday, December 13, 3:00-10:00 PM at the Orange Coast Unitarian Church in Costa Mesa.

Western Regional Conference

Kevin, Sabrina, Glen and Deidre gave everyone a recap of the Regional conference.

Mailing

In January, the group will be sending out a mass-mailing to Ai members in zip codes in the surrounding area as a membership booster. Mailing labels are on their way from the LA office.

Michelle Williams' Going Away Party

On Friday, December 12, there will be a going away party for Western Region Deputy Director Michelle Williams. Contact the LA office for details.

November Meeting Minutes

Group #175 Long Beach

Attendees

Mike Farris, Kevin Gaffney, Deidre Jackson, Bobbi Kendig, Shean McMahon, Jim Roberts, Enzo Sanchez, Jamie Skaluba.

Letter-Writing

We generated a total of 15 letters to Vietnam, Nepal and Ukraine, as well as 6 holiday cards and 2 postcards to Mexico.

A Personal Report

Bobbi described the experience of a friend of hers, a Czech citizen with hemophilia, who suffered severe maltreatment and medical neglect while in jail in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. She visited him in the jail in August. He was initially able to walk into the jail, but after five months there, he needed a wheelchair due to inadequately treated bleeding into his knee joint. He has since been released but due to severe damage to his knee, he is still unable to walk.

Priority Survey

The group worked on the Priority Survey for AIUSA. The

areas of concern expressed by group members were (1) continuing work on individual prisoners of conscience, (2) child soldiers, (3) torture, (4) education of girls, (5) conscientious objectors, and (6) fair trials. We completed the survey questions.

Western Regional Conference

Deidre told of her astonishment to learn that there are four-year-old unaccompanied children without U.S. citizenship who are housed in a Comfort Suites Hotel in Florida and not allowed to leave. By law they cannot be interned in the detention center, but they are not released to relatives. Hence the taxpayer-financed hotel internment.

Upcoming Events

Kevin announced the Candlelight Walk in Oceanside on December 7 and the Write-a-Thon scheduled for December 13.

Next Meeting

There will be no meeting in December. We will gather again on Tuesday, January 27.

November Meeting Minutes

Group #178 Irvine

Letter-Writing

23 letters were written.

Yes we will be meeting in December because we are trying out a new meeting room; Rhonda Seiter is the only person we know of who is a member of the church at which we will be having the meeting; we thought it would be good to have Rhonda present at our first meeting at the church; since Rhonda is pregnant she can't guarantee to be at a January meeting.

We reported on the Western Regional Meeting in Redondo Beach and Linda Biehl's talk at Sage Hill School.

We discussed the four points on AIUSA's national Human Rights Priority Setting and our conclusions will be forwarded to the national office.

Upcoming Events

Announcements were made about the Write-a-Thon & Holiday Party potluck on December 13, the Henna Tattooing Fundraiser on December 9 and the Walk for Human Rights on December 7 in Oceanside.

New Meeting Location

Many thanks to Full Spectrum Yoga for hosting our meetings for many months. However the Irvine Group will be trying a new meeting place and changing our meeting start time back to the original meeting start time of 7:00 PM. The new meeting place is:

St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal and Parish Church
3233 Pacific View Drive
Corona del Mar, California 92625-1109
Phone: (949) 644-0463

See full details on the web page <http://www.aiusaoc.org>. The group agreed to reassess this location in March 2004. It was requested that Jacques change the website ASAP to notify people of our new meeting location.

The next meeting will be on December 30 and we will show a video on Rwanda.

November Meeting Minutes

Group #596 Huntington Beach

Letter-Writing

We completed 37 cards for the AI Holiday Card Action.

Goal Setting for 2004

We had 11 people in attendance and did our goal setting/brainstorming for 2004. The results follow. Suggestions for speakers for 2004 include:

January: Joann Baker speaking on the AIDS epidemic in South Africa has already been booked.

March: Possible Women's Rights focus to help kick off the two-year Women's Rights Campaign with a focus on domestic violence. We could have a panel event with Heather Banuelos with Victim's Rights. Shyamal has a friend that runs a girls/women's empowerment group. This could perhaps tie in the Juarez disappearances and could be promoted in Santa Ana and at St. Joaquins Church in Costa Mesa. Darcie will contact Donna Rustvold for additional speakers and Shyamal will gather more information on her friend.

Other possible topics include:

Update on Afghanistan: Contact Julie Ralls for information on her nurse practioner friend who recently returned from Afghanistan. Darcie will contact Mary Urashima and Hekmat on possibly doing a collaborative meeting.

Religion Panel: Focus on Eastern religions, including Buddhists, Taoists, Hindu, etc.

Tibet: Rhonda checking on speaker from the Friends of Tibet.

Egypt: Ann Jennings, who lived with a traditional Egyptian tribe.

New Coordinators

Dominique will take over the Women's Rights Campaign from Rhonda. We need a new membership coordinator to replace Rhonda.

Fundraising Ideas

Selling Ice Cream at Swap Meet: Darcie will check into this.

Night at the Improv: Julie Ralls and Shyamal will look into this.

Amnesty Party: Mahsa has found someone who will DJ for free and help us find a location.

Great American Write-In: Dominique is checking to see if we can get sponsors for every letter we write

Fashion Show featuring traditional outfits from around the world.

Next Meeting

Our next meeting will be January 26. We will have Joanne Baker speak about AIDS and South Africa. She will also show a slideshow of her travels there.

Upcoming Events

15th Annual Candlelight Walk for Human Rights

This event will take place on Sunday, December 7, approximately 5:00-8:00 PM, to commemorate International Human Rights Day, December 10, at the Oceanside Amphitheater and Pier.

The event will take place at the Oceanside Amphitheater, just south of the pier in North San Diego county. From the north, take I-5 south, exit Mission Avenue, go west to the coast in Oceanside, then follow directions to the Pier). The trip is approximately a 35-minute drive from the El Toro Y in south Orange County. For carpooling from Orange County, email Kevin Gaffney at xhusker@aol.com.

Participants should bring a flashlight and pen and dress warmly for the brief walk on the pier. Also, bring quarters for parking. For information, contact Kathy Ford at (760) 731-0735 or swamiwilly@aol.com or see the website www.amnestygroup471.org.

Amnesty International Write-a-Thon

Amnesty International of Orange County is sponsoring the Fourth Annual Amnesty International Write-a-Thon. Join other Amnesty International groups throughout the world as we send out letters to promote human rights! This worldwide event, originally conceived by an Amnesty International group in Poland, is happening on this date throughout the world. Do your part in Orange County!

Date: Saturday, December 13

Time: 3:00-10:00 PM

Place: Orange Coast Unitarian Universalist Church

1259 Victoria Street, Costa Mesa

(on the hilltop east of Brookhurst on the south side of Victoria Street, between Brookhurst and Placentia.)

Food and drinks will be provided. We will be watching human rights informational videos and other movies during the letter-writing. Come any time between 3:00 and 10:00 PM and stay as long as you wish.

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.

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