



Amnesty International

Orange County

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

September 2006

<http://www.aiusaoc.org>

USA: Government Must End All Secret Detention and Guarantee Fair Trials

This article is taken from a September 7, 2006 AIUSA press release.

The US government must clarify the fate and whereabouts of all people who have been secretly detained and guarantee fair trials for all people in its custody, Amnesty International said today. "President Bush has finally admitted what has long been reported—that, in the 'war on terror', the USA has been resorting to secret detentions and enforced disappearance, which is a crime under international law," said Amnesty International's Secretary General Irene Khan.

The organization was responding to yesterday's announcement by President Bush stating that 14 men held in secret CIA custody have been transferred to Guantánamo. In his address, President Bush indicated that the 14 would be brought to trial.

President Bush is pressing the US Congress to pass legislation authorizing the use of military commissions to try terror suspects, following the US Supreme Court's ruling in June that the commissions he had established were unlawful.

"Congress should authorize nothing, unfair trial procedures, indefinite executive detention or impunity for human rights violations committed, that conflicts with international law or standards," Irene Khan said.

The US has the right and duty to bring to justice anyone responsible for crimes. It must do so in a manner that respects human rights and the rule of law. Secret detention; enforced disappearance; torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment; indefinite detention without charge; and unfair trials are all prohibited under international law.

"Amnesty International has been calling for a full independent commission of inquiry, with international expert input, into all the USA's 'war on terror' detention and interrogation practices. President Bush's admission that the US government has used secret detention highlights the urgent need for such an investigation, rather than for new laws 'legalising' such action," said Irene Khan.

A special prosecutor should also be appointed to conduct a criminal investigation into the conduct of any US personnel, including administration officials, against whom there is evidence of involvement in crimes in the "war on terror". It is not enough that the President says that the USA does not torture.

Background Information

Amnesty International calls on the US government to guarantee fair trials for all detainees held in the context of the "war on terror", particularly their right to:

- be presumed innocent until proven guilty;
- be represented by a lawyer of their choosing;
- be present at their trial and be able to confront the evidence

against him;

- exclusion from trial of any evidence that has been extracted under torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, except if brought against those responsible for such torture or ill-treatment.
- appeal to a higher judicial body.

President Bush's speech follows the June 29 US Supreme Court ruling in which the Court blocked the administration's proposed military commission trials finding that they were not established by US law and that their procedures violated both national and international law. It also found that common Article 3 to the Geneva Conventions—which guarantees fair trial and humane treatment in situations of armed conflict—applied to the case brought before it.

The US War Crimes Act currently makes violations of common Article 3 prosecutable in the USA. Amnesty International is disturbed that, among President Bush's proposals to Congress, are provisions seeking to shield US personnel from prosecution for violations of common Article 3. President Bush also announced that he had sent Congress a proposal to authorize a new version of military commission trials.

While President Bush did not reveal the "alternative" interrogation techniques used by the CIA against detainees in secret custody, repeated reports indicate they include "waterboarding" (simulated drowning) and "the cold cell" (detainees left naked in a cold cell and repeatedly doused with cold water).

The timing of President Bush's statement places the issue of detentions, interrogations and trials for "war on terror" detainees squarely into the context of the November 7 congressional elections. Amnesty International urges the US authorities to they transcend party politics in ensuring that all measures taken to protect people from terrorism respects human rights and the rule of law.

The AC Corner

From Cathleen Kilgallen, Area Coordinator for the Orange County and Long Beach groups

As many of you have noticed, September 23 is the Walk for Hope, so we had to quickly pick a new date for our summer bbq, and ended up on August 20 at Bolsa Chica State Beach. We had about fifteen people turn up and the good company and smores kept us late into the evening. I hope we can make this a summer tradition!

In other news, I was just hired for a six-month internship with the Jane Goodall Institute in Berkeley. But while this means that you won't see my smiling face as often, I still hope that you will use me as a resource. I'll miss you guys!!

August Meeting Minutes

Group #175 Long Beach

Attendees

Lizette Ashcraft, Mary Kay Dunn, Norma Edwards, Deidre Gaffney, Kevin Gaffney, Bobbi Kendig, Cathleen Kilgallen, Elizabeth Petras, Jim Roberts, Robin Schneider, Sara Wall, Steve Wicke.

Northern Uganda Night Commuters

The group took a quiz about the children in northern Uganda who commute to shelters to avoid being abducted by the Lord's Resistance Army. We learned that 25,000 children have been abducted in the almost two decades of conflict and that 15,000 have been rescued or escaped.

Historical Knowledge (Kathy's Institutional Memory)

Cathleen reported that Kathy Brown in the L.A. regional office searched her brain and the archives for group information. Apparently, the Long Beach and Irvine groups were both founded in 1979, and the Orange group was founded in 1982. *[Editor's Note: What nonsense! Kathy was in grade school at that time. Why would the Orange group be numbered a smaller number if it was founded later than Irvine?]*

End Torture Campaign

Steve urged us to check out Amnesty's Air Torture campaign at airtorture.com. Since our meeting, this topic has been front and center in the news. Keep the pressure on our administration to stop these secret detentions and outsourcing of torture.

Walk for Hope: September 23

Please check out <http://www.bethecause.org/walk>. On the left, hit Register Now and join the Amnesty International team! The event is free (parking is \$7), but you can make a donation or get sponsors, and the money will go to your group or national, as you prefer. Long Beach will host the table at the event, but we need volunteers to help! The event is from 9 AM to 1 PM at El Dorado East Regional Park in Long Beach. Contact Norma at beachykeeno@yahoo.com or (562) 425-4353 if you need more information.

Group News

- The group welcomed two visitors who were great letter writers and nice people too. Unfortunately, the attendance sheet was somehow lost and so I can't remember their names (apologies!). Hopefully, they will be back sometime!
- At the meeting we discussed having a summer get-together with the Orange County groups. We had a beach barbeque at Bolsa Chica on August 20 and had a great time eating Glen's corn, kite-flying, s'more-making, and other beach activities. A bit too windy for summer postcards.
- We sent 54 letters and 14 postcards.
- Kevin reported that our treasury is currently at \$350. We will spend \$40 to have an Amnesty table at the Walk for Hope.
- There is currently planning happening for a December 10 Human Rights Day event. The United Nations Association in Orange County is spearheading the effort. We will keep everyone posted. If we would rather do a Long Beach

event, that's fine too.

- We are signed up for the South East Asia Regional Network (SEA RAN). If we want to receive actions, we will need a coordinator. (This entails bringing one action a month to the group.)

August Meeting Minutes

Group #141 Orange

Letter-Writing Actions

The group wrote 42 letters and signed 5 petitions. These included letters to Israeli officials expressing concern for the health and safety of civilians in Lebanon; letters to Salvadoran officials asking for an investigation of death threats against workers at Asociación Entere Amigos, which works on behalf of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people in El Salvador; and a petition to Myanmar for Myo Min Zaw, a student sentenced to 52 years' imprisonment for participation in a peaceful student movement for human rights and democracy.

Walk for Hope

The group discussed participating in the Walk for Hope, scheduled for Saturday, September 23, 9:00 AM–1:00 PM, at El Dorado East Regional Park in Long Beach. The Long Beach group will host a table, but needs help staffing the table. See the website <http://www.bethecause.org/walk> or contact Norma at beachykeeno@yahoo.com or (562) 425-4353 if you need more information. Because of this event, the picnic which was scheduled for this date was moved up to August 20.

Artists Village Tabling

The Orange group is planning to table at the Santa Ana Artists Village Open House on Saturday, October 7. Anyone wanting to help table is welcome. We will be near the Gypsy Den on the Plaza of the Arts. It is an evening when the galleries stay open late and there are lots of people out walking. Parking can be found in the Artists Village Parking Structure at Third Street and Broadway. Walk through the galleries and studios, see a live performance or just hang out and enjoy the music, all for free.

Human Rights Day Event

Cathleen Kilgallen has been in contact with the United Nations Association about a joint Human Rights Day (December 10) event with the Amnesty groups. Kevin Gaffney from Orange, Glen Nielsen from Irvine, and Norma Edwards from Long Beach are representing the three groups in planning this event.

Other News

- Cathleen talked about tabling at the Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young concert at Irvine Meadows. The crowd was generally friendly and they collected 135 signatures on petitions along with about \$50 in donations.
- Cathleen also talked about attending the first-ever national Amnesty Leadership Conference in Columbus, Ohio. Over 300 activists attended (and stayed in horrible dorms).
- There's going to be some staff changes in the Western Region. Deputy Director Samer Rabadi is going to attend grad school in London. Mona Cadena, who has served as a field organizer, is taking Samer's place. Sandra Perez will replace Mona as field organizer.

Group #596 Huntington Beach September Meeting

For September we will have a special program: "Women's Roles in Alleviating Poverty," co-sponsored by Bread for the World. This workshop will feature:

- **Holly Hight**, Bread for the World organizer and ONE Campaign Faith Outreach Organizer, who will highlight the overall causes of poverty around the globe and the part women can play in the world's fight to eliminate extreme poverty.
- **Darcie Olson**, Amnesty International East Africa Coordinator, who will discuss her recent trip to Kenya with the Greenbelt Movement as a case study.

The meeting is scheduled for Monday, September 25, 7:00–9:00 PM, at Sts. Simon and Jude Parish Adult Center, 20444 Magnolia, Huntington Beach. Contact Darcie Olson at (949) 742-5524 for more information.

2006 Western Regional Conference

The 2006 AIUSA Western Regional Conference is scheduled for October 13–15 in Tucson, Arizona, at the Hotel Arizona. The theme for the conference is *Human Rights Have No Borders* and features the following speakers:

- Larry Cox, Executive Director, Amnesty International USA
- Representative Raul Grijalva, 7th Congressional District, Arizona
- Delle McCormick, Executive Director, Borderlinks
- Jumana Musa, Advocacy Director for Domestic Human Rights and International Justice, Amnesty International USA
- Dr. Alp Ayan, 2006 Recipient of the Hopi Foundation Barbara Chester Award for Treatment of Torture Survivors
- Fernando Garcia, Executive Director, Border Network for Human Rights
- Shanti Sellz and Daniel Strauss, No More Deaths

The program will also feature workshops and panels on:

- Rights on the Border
- Taking Human Rights Personally: What YOU Can Do for Individuals at Risk
- Prevention, Not Execution: Ending the Death Penalty for Those with Severe Mental Illness
- Ending Sexual Violence Against Native American Women
- Video, Film, and Human Rights Education

- Holding Multinational Companies Accountable for Human Rights Abuses
- The Darfur Crisis
- Country Action: China
- Torture and Terror
- Paving the Way for the Global Campaign Against Poverty
- AIUSA Democracy and Resolutions
- Taking Your Involvement with Amnesty to the Next Level
- Femicide, an Alarming Trend: Violence Against Women Around the World
- Globalize Justice: An Insider's Guide to the International Criminal Court's Investigations
- Refugees 101
- Working with Trauma Survivors in A.I. Advocacy Work
- Rural Organizing

For more information and a registration form, go to <http://www.amnestyusa.org/events/western/regionalconference.html>.

President Bush Disagrees with Amnesty International on the "Today Show"

The September 11 *Today Show* featured the following exchange:

Matt Lauer: "The head of Amnesty International says secret sites are against international law."

President Bush: "Well, we just agree to disagree with him. And plus, my job is to protect you. And most American people, if I said that we had who we think's the mastermind of the 9/11, they would say, 'Why don't you see if you can't get information out of him without torturing,' which is what we did."

Our Case

The use of secret detention centers, enforced disappearance, unfair trial procedures, indefinite detention and interrogation techniques that amount to torture and ill treatment are violations of the most basic international human rights standards. These are standards the US says it upholds.

In particular, the use of secret facilities to detain prisoners is in violation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), an international piece of legislation to which the USA is a party and which has protected millions of people since World War II.

By questioning prohibitions on secret detention and torture or ill treatment, Bush is giving the green light for other regimes to justify their behaviour.

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 shown with annual dues of \$10.00. Dues cover the costs of this newsletter and of stamps used for saving lives. Your address label contains your membership expiration date. Join us!

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Address _____

City, State & Zip _____

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

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Amnesty International
Group 178
P.O. Box 14485
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For (check one):
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☐ Long Beach

Calendar

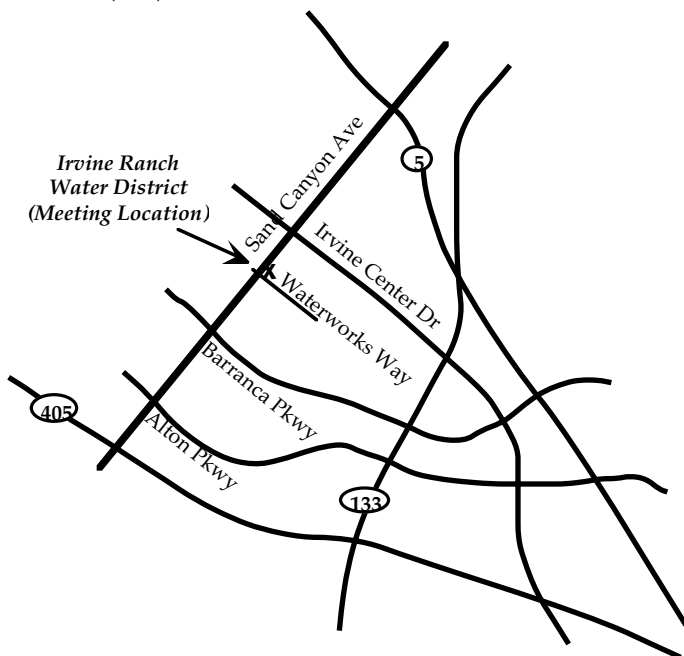
September

19 Tuesday 7:00 PM

Group #141 Orange Monthly Meeting in Classroom 3 at the Sisters of St. Joseph, 480 S. Batavia Street, in Orange. Look for the classroom/auditorium building behind the main building. Drive around and to the back. Group #141 meets the third Tuesday of each month. For further information about the group, contact Kevin Gaffney at xhuskr@aol.com.

20 Wednesday 7:00 PM

Group #175 Long Beach Monthly Meeting at the Unitarian Universalist Church, Rooms 1 and 2, 5450 Atherton Street, Long Beach. Letter-writing from 7:00–7:30. For further information about the group, contact Norma Edwards at (562) 425-4353.



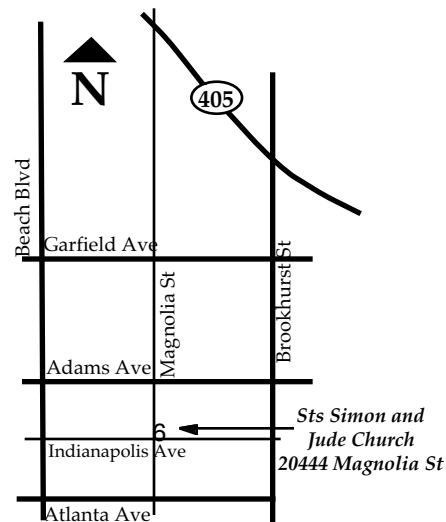
Group #178 Irvine Meeting Location

25 Monday 7:00 PM

Group #596 Huntington Beach Meeting at Saints Simon and Jude Church, Adult Center, 20444 Magnolia Street in Huntington Beach. See details on the website <http://www.hbamnesty.com/main.htm>.

26 Tuesday 7:00 PM

Group #178 Irvine Monthly Meeting at the Irvine Ranch Water District, 15600 Sand Canyon Avenue, Irvine, between the 5 and 405 freeways. See details on the web page <http://www.aiusaoc.org>. For more information about the group, contact Glen Nielsen at nielsen-electric@cox.net.



Group #596 Huntington Beach Location

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