

Amnesty International Group 22 Pasadena/Caltech News

Volume XI Number 11, November-December 2003

UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday, November 20, 7:30 PM. *Monthly Meeting* 414 S. Holliston, Caltech Y Lounge. Help us plan future actions on the Patriot Act, Just Earth campaign, death penalty and more.

Tuesday, December 9, 7:30 PM. *Letter-writing Meeting* at the Athenaeum. Corner of California & Hill. This informal gathering is a great for newcomers to get acquainted with Amnesty!

Sunday, December 14, 6:30 PM. *Please note that book group meets in a special time and location in December. Home of Lucas Kamp* 187 S. Catalina Avenue #2. This month we discuss *Ella Minnow Pea*, by Mark Dunn. (More info below.)

Doo-Dah is here! It's that time of year when Group 22 members head for the streets to promote the idea that activism is fun! We have a new skit this year and welcome volunteers new and old to participate in this year's Doo-Dah parade on **Sunday, November 23**. Contact Lucas at lwkamp@cs.com for more information.

Tuesday, January 13, 7:30 PM. *Letter-writing Meeting* at the Athenaeum. Corner of California & Hill. This informal gathering is a great for newcomers to get acquainted with Amnesty!

Sunday, January 18, 6:30 PM. *Rights Readers Human Rights Book Discussion Group.* Vroman's Book Bookstore, 695 E. Colorado Blvd., Pasadena. This month we discuss *Tainted Legacy: 9/11 and the Ruin of Human Rights*, by William Schulz. (More info below.)

COORDINATOR'S CORNER

Hi all!

It's November already and soon the holidays will be upon us. I hope no-one was affected by the recent terrible fires and smoke.

What have we been doing? The first weekend in November, several Group 22 members attended the Amnesty USA Western Regional Conference in Redondo Beach. Bill Schultz, the president of Amnesty International, was there signing his latest

book, "Tainted Legacy: 9/11 and the Ruin of Human Rights".. (We are reading this book in our January book group meeting!) Unfortunately, due to a household emergency, I missed him and the opening speakers on Saturday, but was able to attend most of the rest of the conference. Some of the workshops Group 22 members attended were: Refugees: Asylum and Detention Law Post 9/11, Democratic Republic of Congo Crisis Alert, The Denial of Food as a Political Weapon in N. Korea, Human Rights in Guatemala and Columbia, the Patriot Act, AI's new campaign on the International Arms Trade and Military, Security and Police Transfers and teaching about AIDS from a global health perspective. At the closing session, we heard Carrie Dan, a Western Shoshone elder who spoke re a land dispute her tribe in Nevada has with the federal government and Esther Cano Chavez, an activist from Juarez, Mexico, who spoke on the 370 women who have been "disappeared" or murdered there since 1993. AI has made the Juarez murders the focus of "16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence" which takes place from Nov 25 to Dec 19. Our group plans to send postcards to Mexican authorities and may plan other actions during this week.

A fun thing at the conference was taking photos for the control arms campaign(AI, Oxfam and iansa(International Action Network on Small Arms) is doing. You can view photos on the website(<http://www.controlarms.org>) and send in your own drawing or photo! Hint: mine is under "mary kathryn"-haven't been able to find anyone else's from our group yet-keep checking!

Don't forget the book group this Sunday night at Vroman's. We're reading *The River's Tale* by Gargan. I just started it. It's part travelogue, history, and political commentary and very well written. I feel like I'm in China. See upcoming event section.

The Doo-Dah parade is coming up Sunday Nov 23rd. If you need info, or want to sign up to participate(it's not too late!), contact Lucas at lwkamp@cs.com Our skit has a different theme this year-"Letters to the Rescue"- and some unique props!

Take care,

Kathy aigp22@caltech.edu

CAMPAIGN AGAINST DISCRIMINATION

Justice for Evangelina Arce and Women of Juarez

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Evangelina Arce, who was reportedly intimidated and was

assaulted in the street in Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua State, Mexico.

Evangelina Arce is the mother of Silvia Arce, who has been missing since 1998. She is also a member of the Comité Independiente de Derechos Humanos de Chihuahua, Independent Committee of Human Rights in Chihuahua.

On April 30, 2003, Evangelina Arce was reportedly assaulted by three men in downtown Ciudad Juárez. The men stole her purse and kicked her repeatedly, raising concerns that theft may not have been the primary motive for the attack. During the previous week, Evangelina Arce received several anonymous telephone calls and reported noticing an unidentified car parked outside her house.

Prior to the incidents of intimidation, Evangelina Arce gave a statement to the Comisión Nacional de Derechos Humanos, National Human Rights Commission, highlighting the failure of authorities to carry out an effective investigation into the abduction of her daughter Silvia, who was 25 years old when she went missing in Ciudad Juárez on 11 March 1998.

TAKE ACTION NOW! Voice your concern for the safety of Evangelina Arce and call on the authorities to implement a prompt, full and impartial investigation into the reported acts of intimidation against her and an investigation into all of the cases of women who have been murdered or gone missing in Chihuahua State.

Governor of Chihuahua State
Lic. Patricio Martinez
Aldama 901, Colonia Centro
Chihuahua State
Mexico

Dear Governor,

I am writing to express my grave concern for the safety of Evangelina Arce, the mother of Silvia Arce, who went missing in March 1998 in Ciudad Juarez. Ms. Arce is a member of the Comité Independiente de Derechos Humanos de Chihuahua.

Ms. Arce has reported acts of intimidation and assault against her following statement to the Comisión Nacional de Derechos Humanos about the failure of authorities to effectively investigate the disappearance of her daughter. I urge you to guarantee her safety and to ensure that a prompt, full, and impartial investigation is undertaken into the reported acts of intimidation against her. The results of such an investigation must be made public and those responsible brought to justice.

I am seriously concerned about the cases of women who have been murdered and gone missing in Chihuahua State since 1993. I urge you to ensure prompt, full, effective and impartial investigations, with the full collaboration of federal and state institutions, of all of the cases of women who have been murdered or gone missing in Chihuahua State. This pattern of

murders and disappearances demands a fully integrated response from federal and state institutions to demonstrate that such crimes will not be tolerated.

Violence against women must be tackled at its roots. I call on authorities to take effective measures to prevent, investigate, and punish all instances of violence against women in Chihuahua State.

Sincerely, YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS

LETTER COUNT	
Urgent Action	15
Postcards (Women of Juarez, Mexico)	7
US Asylum	1
Total:	23
Want to add your letters to the total? Get in touch with lwkamp@cs.com	

DEATH PENALTY

Ongoing Concerns Re Guantanamo Detainees

The UK and Australian authorities have continued discussions with the US government on the cases of their nationals who have been made subject to the Military Order on the Detention, Treatment and Trial of Certain Non-Citizens in the War Against Terrorism signed by President Bush in November 2001. The UK Prime Minister has indicated that a decision on the UK nationals may be imminent. Amnesty International is calling on him and his Australian counterpart to reject trials by military commission and not to compromise international fair trial standards in any agreement reached on the cases.

It emerged on 3 July 2003 that President Bush had identified six foreign detainees in US custody as falling under the provisions of the Military Order. As such the six can be held indefinitely without charge or trial, or brought to trial before military commissions against whose decisions there would be no right of appeal to any court. Amnesty International believes that the Military Order, which applies only to non-US nationals, should be revoked, and that any trial before the commissions - which are executive bodies, and not independent courts - would contravene international standards. The organization is also concerned that any guilty pleas brought before the commissions could be the result of the coercive nature of the conditions in which the detainees have been held without access to any legal process. UK nationals Feroz Abbasi and Moazzam Begg, and Australian national David Hicks, held in Camp Delta in the US Naval Base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, were among the six named under the Order. Amnesty International does not know the identities of the other three detainees, though information received suggests that they may be from Pakistan, Sudan and Yemen. None has had access to a lawyer. While the US authorities have given assurances that the death penalty will not be sought against the UK and Australian nationals,

no such guarantees are known to have been given in the other three cases.

Asked about the UK detainees on 23 October 2003 (there are nine UK nationals and three UK residents in Guantanamo), Prime Minister Tony Blair said "I think we are going to bring this to closure one way or another within the next two weeks...either you get a trial of these people which we can be satisfied meets the obligations and stipulations that we've got, or alternatively they will come back here" [to the UK]. In a recent private meeting with Australian Prime Minister John

Howard, President Bush reportedly promised to expedite the cases of two Australian nationals in Guantanamo, including David Hicks. Moazzam Begg and Feroz Abbasi are said to be in cells away from the rest of the prisoners, with no access to any other detainee. In the main cell blocks in Camp Delta, detainees are held in individual cells, but can communicate through the mesh walls of the cells. Amnesty International does not know when Moazzam Begg and Feroz Abbasi were so placed, or if the other four are also now in increased isolation. In any event, such a move heightens concerns for their mental health.

There is growing concern for the psychological well-being of all detainees in Guantanamo as detentions there approach their two-year mark. In recent months, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the only non-governmental organization to have had access to the detainees, has taken the unusual step of making public its concerns on this issue (its findings are generally confidential). In July, ICRC spokespersons described how the absence of "any clear legal framework" had had "a very adverse impact on [the detainees'] physical and mental well-being". In August, the ICRC posted on its website that it had "observed a worrying deterioration in the psychological health of a large number of [the detainees]". On 9 October, an ICRC spokesperson told the New York Times that "the open-endedness of the situation and its impact on the mental health of the population has become a major problem." To date, there have been over 30 suicide attempts among the detainees.

BACKGROUND. There are more than 650 people from around 40 countries detained in Guantanamo Bay, where detentions of "enemy combatants" in the USA's "war on terror" began in early January 2002. None of the detainees has had access to any sort of legal process. Efforts to obtain justice in the US courts have been unsuccessful, with the courts holding that they do not have jurisdiction over the detainees, because they are foreign nationals held outside US sovereign territory. On 9 October 2003, former US diplomats, former federal judges, ex-prisoners of war, retired military officers, and the International Bar Association were among those who filed amicus curiae (friend of the court) briefs in the US Supreme Court urging it to examine the issue in the interest of justice, international standards, the rule of

law, and the reputation of the USA. The Court has not yet responded.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in your own words:

To Prime Minister Blair and Prime Minister Howard:

- calling on them not to accept trial by military commission under the fundamentally flawed Military Order, and to obtain return of all of their nationals and residents from Guantanamo Bay if the US authorities refuse to give them trials that fully meet international standards;
- suggesting that any plea arrangements should be viewed with scepticism, given the coercive conditions under which these detainees have been held over a prolonged period of time, and the fact that they have had no access to legal counsel;
- urging them to call on the US authorities to end the legal limbo of all those held in Guantanamo Bay.

To President Bush:

- expressing concern for the psychological well-being of the detainees held in Guantanamo Bay in view of the indefinite nature of their detention, noting that many have been so held for almost two years;
- noting the recent statements of concern by the International Committee of the Red Cross about the mental health impact of this legal limbo, and noting the numerous suicide attempts;
- calling for an end to the legal limbo of all Guantanamo detainees, urging that they be charged with recognizably criminal offences, brought to trial, without recourse to the death penalty, in proceedings which meet international standards for fair trial, including the right to appeal, or else released;
- opposing trial by military commission, and calling for the 2001 Military Order to be rescinded;
- regretting that by its conduct in relation to the Guantanamo detainees, the USA is undermining its claims to be committed to the rule of law.

APPEALS TO:

Tony Blair
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London, SW1A 2AA
United Kingdom

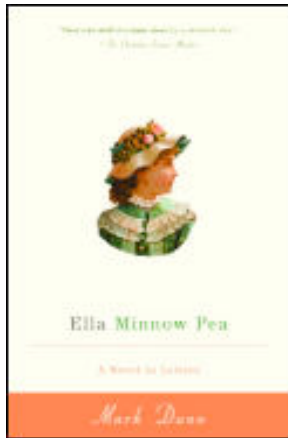
John Howard
Prime Minister
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia

President George W. Bush
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

RIGHTS READERS

Human Rights Book Discussion Group
Special Location This Month!
187 S. Catalina Avenue #2

Sunday, December 14, 6:30 PM



Ella Minnow Pea

by Mark Dunn

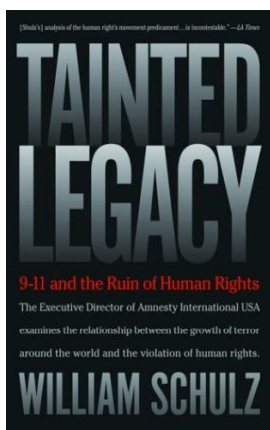
Ella Minnow Pea is a girl living happily on the fictional island of Nollop off the coast of South Carolina. Nollop was named after Nevin Nollop, author of the immortal pangram,* "The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog." Now Ella finds herself acting to save her

friends, family, and fellow citizens from the encroaching totalitarianism of the island's Council, which has banned the use of certain letters of the alphabet as they fall from a memorial statue of Nevin Nollop. As the letters progressively drop from the statue they also disappear from the novel. The result is both a hilarious and moving story of one girl's fight for freedom of expression, as well as a linguistic tour de force sure to delight word lovers everywhere.

RIGHTS READERS

Human Rights Book Discussion Group
Vroman's Bookstore
695 E. Colorado Boulevard, Pasadena

Sunday, January 18, 6:30 PM



Tainted Legacy: 9/11 and the Ruin of Human Rights

by William Schulz

Have human rights as we once understood them become obsolete since 9-11? Aren't new methods needed to combat the apocalyptic violence of al-

Qaeda? Shouldn't we sacrifice some rights to make us all safer? And if we can kill a combatant in battle, why shouldn't we torture them if it will save lives? William Schulz, Executive Director of Amnesty International USA, examines these and other fundamental questions

through the prism of our new consciousness about terrorism in this provocative new book. It questions America's own ambivalent record—its tainted legacy—and addresses recent human rights violations: the imprisonment without charge of non-citizens and the violation of the Geneva Convention at Guantanamo Bay. Schulz writes, "One of Osama bin Laden's goals is to destroy the solidarity of the international community and undermine the norms and standards that have sustained that community since the end of World War II. The great irony of the post-9/11 world is that, when it comes to human rights, the United States has been doing his work for him."

CONGO CRISIS RESPONSE

Concerns Re Violence against Women and Girls

Despite a recent peace agreement aimed at ending the five-year war in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), massacres, mutilation and rape continue in the eastern part of the country. The need for international action is as crucial as ever.

The situation in the Ituri district of eastern DRC, where ethnic tensions between the Hema and Lendu communities have been aggravated by leaders of armed political groups is of particular concern. With the withdrawal of Ugandan and Rwandan troops from Ituri and the Kivu provinces respectively, various groups have vied for control over the territories and have resorted to ethnic appeals to marshal followers. In the ensuing violence, thousands of civilians from both communities, targeted mainly because of their ethnic identity, have been killed, raped and tortured.

During this ongoing conflict, women have been victims of sexual violence, including rape. Within a 10-week period in 2003, more than 100 cases of rape and sexual abuse were reported, including sexual torture of women committed in front of their husbands or other family members. Gang rapes, sometimes performed in public, have been used to terrorize the women and girls and to humiliate civilian populations suspected of collaborating with enemy forces, forcing these populations into submission.

L., a 35-year-old Hema woman who fled east from Bunia, the major town in Ituri, on May 10, was stopped and taken prisoner by Lendu and Ngiti militia in the village of Bavi the next day. The militia systematically singled out people whom they suspected of being Hema and sought confirmation of their suspicions from a local witch doctor (féticheur). After the witch doctor denounced L. as a Hema, they took all of her clothes except for a single garment and imprisoned her overnight in a meter-deep waterlogged pit in the ground with two other Hema women. These two women were later taken out of the hole and hacked to death by Ngiti militia using hand-axes. L. managed to escape and reach Uganda.

At the end of June, in the Saio district of Bunia, a 45-year-old Bira woman and her 13-year-old daughter were woken from sleep by a group of young Union of Congolese Patriots (UPC) militiamen, who demolished a door to force

their way into the house. Once inside, they looted and destroyed property and accused the mother and daughter of hiding Lendu combatants in their home. They then attempted to abduct the daughter. When the mother tried to intervene, both she and her daughter were brutally raped side-by-side by two of the militiamen, not far from their home. Both mother and child suffered injuries as a result of the attack.

Many girl children have been recruited, often forcibly, into the various armed groups. While forced to serve on the frontlines, these girl soldiers are routinely raped and used as sexual slaves, and some child combatants have been forced – at gunpoint – to commit rapes and killings themselves. Natalia (not her real name) told Amnesty International in early 2003 that, at the age of 12, she joined the RCD-Goma armed group after an attack on her village in eastern DRC:

“I watched as soldiers killed many of my relatives in the village and raped my two sisters and my mother. I was in hiding, but I saw all this. I was scared and thought that if I joined the army I would be protected. I wanted to defend myself. Once in the army... I was frequently beaten and raped by the other soldiers. One day a commander wanted me to become his wife, so I tried to escape. They caught me, whipped me and raped me every night for many days. When I was just 14 I had a baby: I don't even know who his father is. I ran away again and this time I managed to escape. But today I have nowhere to go and no food to give to the baby...”

The prevalence of HIV/AIDS among combatants has added considerably to the trauma faced by the victims. Many victims also fear the social stigma attached to rape, and potentially being ostracized by their community and abandoned by their family. Medical and psychological treatment appropriate to the needs of the victims is uniformly absent.

Deployment of an emergency multinational force (IEMF) led by the French in May of 2003 has calmed the situation in the immediate area of Bunia, but not throughout the entire Ituri district. The UN recently expanded the mandate of the MONUC peacekeeping force authorizing it to operate under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, and increasing its numbers in order to adequately protect civilian lives. Amnesty International calls for MONUC troops to take decisive steps under this mandate to intervene in preventing sexual and physical abuse to women.

Virtually none of those responsible for such sexual and physical abuse of women and children have been brought to justice. The International Criminal Court has recently vowed to investigate these charges but as their mandate is limited to the most recent crimes, other local, national, and international venues should be considered for monitoring and prosecuting atrocities carried out prior to July 2002.

Sample Letter:
The Honorable Colin L. Powell
United States Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20210

Dear Secretary Powell:

I am concerned by the number of civilians who continue to be killed, mutilated and tortured in the ensuing violence in the eastern provinces of the Democratic Republic of Congo. As a member of the UN Security Council that authorized the United Nations Organization Mission in the DRC (MONUC) force, I urge you to ensure that MONUC fully implements its newly reinforced mandate under Chapter VII of the UN Charter and intervenes to effectively protect civilian lives in the region.

Under its mandate, MONUC is responsible for duly protecting civilians with particular attention to vulnerable groups including women, children and demobilized child soldiers. Throughout the conflict, rape and other forms of sexual violence have been used as weapons of war by all the parties. In many cases, the deliberate wounding or killing of victims follows these acts of sexual violence. There are reports that many girls have been forcibly driven to serve on the frontlines and have been routinely raped and used as sexual slaves by adult commanders.

UN peacekeeping forces have been present in the DRC since February 2000 under UN Resolution 1291 (2000), but have largely failed to adequately protect civilians from suffering and deprivation of life. In July 2003, under UN Resolution 1493, MONUC was given an expanded mandate under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, authorizing UN troops to take all necessary means, including use of force, to secure the safety of civilians in Ituri and the Kivu provinces of eastern DRC.

While I welcome these developments, MONUC's ability to intervene effectively to prevent further abuses remains a significant concern. Insufficient deployment of troops in conflict areas and lack of adequate training severely hamper the implementation of its mandate. Peacekeeping forces should also be deployed throughout all districts of Eastern Congo where there is a risk of armed clashes in order to prevent further escalation of the crisis and human rights violations.

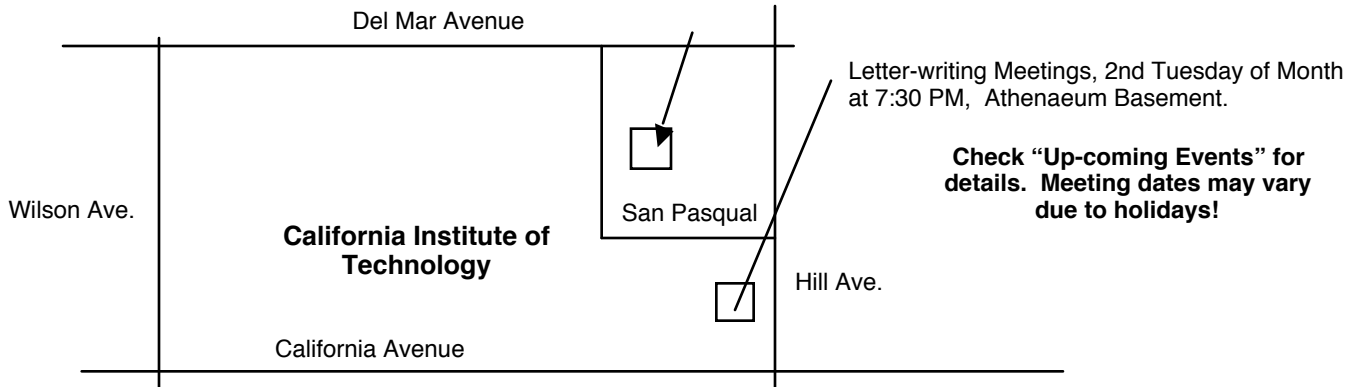
Mr. Secretary, I ask you to take every measure possible to end the human rights abuses occurring in the DRC and to urge the UN Security Council to take every necessary step to support MONUC in providing sufficient combat personnel, equipment and training to fulfill its mission successfully. Thank you for your attention to this human rights concern.

Sincerely, YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS

EDITOR'S LAST WORD:

Read us on line: <http://www.cco.caltech.edu/~aigp22>
Martha Ter Maat, 626-281-4039 / rightsreaders@yahoo.com

Monthly Meetings, 4th Thursday of Month, 7:30 PM,
Caltech Y Lounge, 414 S. Holliston.



Check "Up-coming Events" for details. Meeting dates may vary due to holidays!

From the 210 exit on Lake Avenue, head south, turn left on Del Mar
From the 110 continue on Arroyo Parkway north, turn right on California
Street parking is generally available.

**Amnesty International Group 22
P.O. Box 50193
Pasadena, CA 91115-0193**



Amnesty International's mission is to undertake research and action focused on preventing and ending grave abuses of the rights to physical and mental integrity, freedom of conscience and expression, and freedom from discrimination, within the context of its work to promote all human rights.