

UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday, October 23, 7:30 PM. *Monthly Meeting* 414 S. Holliston, Caltech Y Lounge. Help us plan future actions for Tibet, the Patriot Act, Just Earth campaign and more.

Tuesday, November 11, 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, November 16, 6:30 PM. *Rights Readers Human Rights Book Discussion Group.* Vroman's Book Bookstore, 695 E. Colorado Blvd., Pasadena. This month we discuss *A River's Tale: A Year on the Mekong*, by Edward Gargan. (More info below.)

November 1-2 Amnesty International Western Regional Conference the Crowne Plaza Redondo Beach and Marina. See below for more information. Don't miss this great opportunity!

Save the Date for Doo-Dah! 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 (see Lucas' column for details) and welcome volunteers new and old to participate in this year's Doo-Dah parade on **Sunday, November 23**. Please plan to attend the rehearsal/planning session on **Sunday, November 9** at 2:00 PM at the Caltech Y. Contact Lucas at lwkamp@cs.com for more information.

COORDINATOR'S CORNER

Hi everyone!

I'm filling in for Kathy this month as she's snowed under at work. The main thing I want to share with you is our entry for this year's Doo-Dah parade in Pasadena, which will take place on Sunday, November 23. What is Doo-Dah? If you are new to the area, the Doo-Dah parade is a Rose Parade parody that attracts large crowds to Old Town Pasadena. The entries vary wildly, from espousing Pug (the dogs) Power to political commentary, from marching toilet seats to spacecraft from other planets. For many years, our group has marched as "Animals for the Ethical Treatment of People", of which some photos can be seen on our website.

But both masks and theme have become worn out, so this year our theme will be "Letters to the Rescue", about letter writing on behalf of prisoners of conscience such as Nobel Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi. We will do a skit involving super-sized envelopes marching in synchrony, a dictator, his henchmen, and their prisoners, who are liberated by bushels of letters flown in by the "Spirit of Amnesty". We will need at least 20 people, not just for the skit itself but also to carry banners, hand out leaflets to the crowd, etc. A call for volunteers will be sent out soon, but if you are interested in participating, please contact us at aigp22@caltech.edu or lwkamp@cs.com. There will be a rehearsal / planning meeting on Sunday, November 9th, at the Caltech Y (our regular monthly meeting site), from 2pm on. Please try to attend!

Cheers,

Lucas

aigp22@caltech.edu

AFGHANISTAN

Ensure Reconstruction of Prison System

Following 23 years of armed conflict, the criminal justice system in Afghanistan is not able to protect the rights of the people. Prisons, an essential component of this system, are crumbling after years of neglect and lack qualified staff. Prisoners are being held for months in overcrowded cells, some of them shackled, with inadequate bedding and food. Prisoners and detainees are not being held in safety; some are suffering ill-treatment and torture.

Background information. Following 23 years of armed conflict, the criminal justice system in Afghanistan is not able to protect the rights of the people. Prisons, an essential component of this system, are crumbling after years of neglect and lack qualified staff. Prisoners are being held for months in overcrowded cells, some of them shackled, with inadequate bedding and food. Prisoners and detainees are not being held in safety; some are suffering ill-treatment and torture.

Prison staff are struggling to accommodate thousands of people held for long periods in poor conditions, violating basic international human rights standards relating to the treatment of detainees. They have received no training and have not been paid for months.

Amnesty International recognizes that the task of rebuilding prisons across the country is enormous and challenging. Unlike other key aspects of the criminal justice system, until March 2003 the prison system had no international donor taking the lead on its reconstruction. The Afghan Transitional Administration does not have resources and expertise to reconstruct a prison system that conforms to international minimum standards. The international community must provide the essential

financial and technical support and expertise necessary for this vital task.

Take action! Please support Amnesty International's campaign to ensure the reconstruction of the prison system in Afghanistan. Write a letter to your government minister responsible for Foreign Affairs or Overseas Development Aid urging them to ensure that they make a long term commitment to reconstruction of the prison system in Afghanistan. Ask them to provide prompt financial and technical assistance for the reconstruction of the prison system in Afghanistan. Ask them to ensure that all their plans are coordinated and reflect the need to build a prison system capable of protecting human rights in line with international standards. Appeals to:

Andrew S. Natsios
Administrator
U.S. Agency for International Development
Ronald Reagan Building
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20523

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

Copies to:

Ambassador Ishaq Shahryar
Embassy of Afghanistan
2341 Wyoming Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20036

Sample letter

Dear Sirs:

I am deeply concerned about the lack of resources being put towards the reconstruction of the prison system and how it falls short in respecting and protecting human rights in Afghanistan. The lack of resources includes training, food, water, shelter and rehabilitation. There are no accountability structures to monitor prison officials and discipline those that commit human rights violations.

I urge you to ensure that the U.S. government makes a long-term commitment to the reconstruction of the prison system in Afghanistan, providing financial and technical support to improve prison conditions and training for staff to ensure that detainees and prisoners are treated humanely and in accordance with international human rights standards.

I urge you to build on any commitments the U.S. government has made towards the reconstruction of Afghanistan. Without essential commitment and support by the international community, Afghanistan will not be able to protect prisoners and detainees from

human rights violations and build a prison system with human rights at its core.

Sincerely, YOUR NAME and ADDRESS

JUST EARTH

Concern for Bolivian Demonstrators

Amnesty International is seriously concerned for the safety of demonstrators at mass protests around the country, following the apparent use of excessive force by the army and the police. Since 20 September, over 50 people, including three soldiers, have reportedly been killed and several hundred have been injured. The majority of the victims were reportedly shot. On 13 October, up to 14 people were killed in La Paz, and an undisclosed number were arrested.

Representatives of the Catholic Church and the non-governmental organization Asamblea Permanente de Derechos Humanos (Human Rights Permanent Assembly) have criticized the use of fire arms and high calibre weapons by members of the security forces. Amnesty International recognizes the duty of the Bolivian authorities to uphold law and order. However, the organization condemns the use of excessive force and calls on the authorities to respect demonstrators' right to life in all circumstances.

The demonstrations are the largest series of protests against the administration of President Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada who has been elected from 2002 until 2007. Demonstrations began in the highlands area (Altiplano) in mid-September and have mobilized peasants, trade unionists, and sectors of civil society in several cities, particularly in the area of el Alto, near the capital La Paz. Demonstrators are demanding social reforms and protesting against the exportation of Bolivia's natural gas. There have been also been calls for the President's resignation. Cabinet ministers have resigned and the Vice President Carlos Meza has withdrawn his support for the government, even though he is still in office.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible:

- recognizing the duty of the Bolivian authorities to maintain law and order
- but expressing serious concern for the safety of demonstrators at mass protests around the country, following the apparent use of excessive force by the security forces;
- calling on the authorities to ensure that the security forces comply with UN International standards including the 1979 UN Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials and the 1990 UN Basic Principles on the use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials;
- asking for a thorough and independent investigation by ordinary courts into the deaths of over 50 people who were reportedly killed during demonstrations, as

well as the injuries sustained by hundreds of others who were reportedly shot;

- asking the authorities to guarantee the safety of those in detention and for them to be granted access to lawyers, family members, and medical assistance if necessary;
- calling for the terms of the investigation and its outcome to be made public and for those found responsible be brought to justice.

APPEALS TO:

Minister of the Presidency, Justice and Human Rights:
Sr. Ministro de la Presidencia e Interino de Justicia y Derechos Humanos
Sr. Guillermo Justiniano
Palacio de Gobierno
Plaza Murillo s/n
La Paz, BOLIVIA
Salutation: Sr. Ministro/Dear Minister

Minister of Foreign Affairs:
Sr. Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores y Culto
Sr. Carlos Saavedra Bruno
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Culto
Plaza Murillo, c Ingavi esq. Junin
La Paz, BOLIVIA
Salutation: Sr. Ministro/Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Ambassador Jaime Aparicio
Embassy of the Republic of Bolivia
3014 Massachusetts Ave NW
Washington DC 20008

LETTER COUNT

Turkey (Leyla Zana)	18
Death Penalty	13
Urgent Action	21
Postcards	5
Total:	56

Want to add your letters to the total? Get in touch with lwkamp@cs.com

DEATH PENALTY

Juvenile Issues in DC Sniper case

At a trial scheduled to begin on 10 November in the Commonwealth of Virginia, the prosecution is intending to seek a death sentence against Lee Boyd Malvo for a murder he is alleged to have committed when he was 17 years old. International law, binding on all countries, prohibits the use of the death penalty against child offenders - defendants who were under 18 at the time of the crime.

John Allen Muhammad, aged 42, and Lee Boyd Malvo are charged in 10 sniper killings that occurred over a

three-week period in October 2002 in Virginia, Maryland and Washington DC. At Lee Malvo's forthcoming trial, the teenager will be tried for the murder of Linda Franklin who was shot dead in Fairfax County, Virginia, on 14 October 2002. John Muhammad has not yet been brought to trial.

Following the arrests of the two suspects, US Attorney General John Ashcroft announced that he had ordered federal agents to transfer Lee Malvo from federal custody to the local authorities in Fairfax County, Virginia. He said that his decision was based on a number of considerations, including that "the first prosecutions should occur in those jurisdictions that provide the best law... and the best range of available penalties". He added that it was "imperative" that the death penalty be an option. Neither federal nor Maryland law provides for the death penalty for those under 18 at the time of the crime, but Virginia law does. Virginia is known for the relative speed at which it takes capital defendants from conviction to execution, and has executed three child offenders since 1998.

Lee Malvo's trial, which is expected to last for more than a month, will be held in the City of Chesapeake after the judge granted a defence motion for a change of venue from Fairfax County. The charges against Lee Malvo include murder "in the commission of an act of terrorism", and his defence lawyers argued that under this theory all residents of Fairfax County (from whom the jury would be selected) were victims in this high-profile crime and would therefore not be impartial. The judge decided to transfer the trial to a jurisdiction out of the immediate area where "many citizens lived in fear during the month of October 2002 as a result of the crimes with which the defendant is charged".

Last month, the judge denied a motion in which the defence sought to have the death penalty excluded from the case in line with international law. In an editorial, the Washington Post wrote: "[W]hatever one thinks of capital punishment, it ought not be applied to children, whose personalities and capacities for judgment are not yet fully formed. Government takes on, in general, a protective role with respect to children... It is an abdication of that protective role for state governments, even in prosecuting terrible crimes, to respond to youth crime by seeking execution. To sentence someone to die for a crime committed as a child, one has to believe that - in the long natural life the defendant would otherwise have before him - meaningful change and some measure of redemption are either impossible or unimportant. There are good reasons why the rest of the world has rejected executions of children...". The paper described such use of the death penalty as an "abhorrent policy".

BACKGROUND INFORMATION. The imposition of the death penalty against people who were under 18 at the time of the crime is prohibited by international law, and has been roundly condemned by United Nations bodies and experts. The Geneva Conventions, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the American Convention on Human Rights and the United Nations Safeguards

Guaranteeing Protection of the Rights of Those Facing the Death Penalty, all have provisions exempting this age group from execution. In October 2002, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights concluded: "The acceptance of this norm crosses political and ideological boundaries and efforts to detract from this standard have been vigorously condemned by members of the international community... [T]his proscription binds the community of States, including the United States".

Since 1990, the USA has executed 19 child offenders, compared to 14 such executions reported in the rest of the world combined. These 14 occurred in Democratic Republic of Congo, Iran, Nigeria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen. Yemen and Pakistan have now abolished such use of the death penalty in law. Iran is reported to be considering such legislation. The USA is responsible for 13 of the 18 executions of child offenders known to have been carried out worldwide since January 1998, and for all four of such executions reported since January 2002. In October 2002, four of the nine US Supreme Court Justices wrote that the execution of people for crimes committed when they were under 18 years old was "a relic of the past and is inconsistent with evolving standards of decency in a civilized society. We should put an end to this shameful practice."

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

- expressing sympathy for the family and friends of Linda Franklin and the other nine victims of the sniper shootings, explaining that you are not seeking to minimize the gravity of these crimes or the suffering they have caused;
- expressing deep concern, however, that Fairfax County intends to pursue the death penalty against Lee Boyd Malvo in the event of his conviction, in violation of a fundamental principle of international law respected around the world;
- urging the Commonwealth's Attorney (prosecutor) to offer human rights leadership and to respect international legal principles by dropping pursuit of a death sentence in this case, in the interest of the reputation of the Commonwealth of Virginia and the USA as a whole.

APPEALS TO:

Robert F. Horan
Commonwealth's Attorney
4110 Chain Bridge Road, Room 123
Fairfax, VA 22030

You may also write to: (1) Attorney General Ashcroft, protesting his direct complicity in this violation of international law, and urging him to use his influence to stop the death penalty in this case; and (2) Secretary of

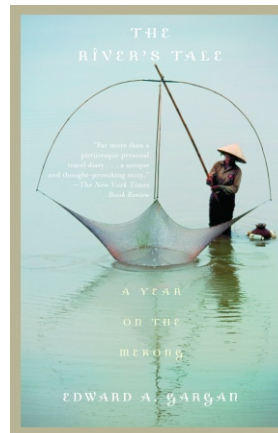
State Powell, urging that the State Department oppose this violation of US obligations.

(1) John Ashcroft
Attorney General
Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20530

(2) Colin Powell
Secretary of State
2201 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20520

RIGHTS READERS

Human Rights Book Discussion Group
Vroman's Bookstore
695 E. Colorado Boulevard, Pasadena
Sunday, November 16, 6:30 PM



The River's Tale: A Year on the Mekong

by Edward Gargan

From Tibet to Vietnam, from windswept plateaus to the South China Sea, the Mekong flows for three thousand miles, snaking its way through Southeast Asia. Long fascinated with this part of the world, former New York

Times correspondent Edward Gargan recounts his ambitious exploration of the Mekong and those living within its watershed.

Gargan invested over a year traveling the length of the river, and he gives us an unforgettable account of his immersions into the unique and varying cultures lining its banks. He vividly portrays regions shaped by colonial occupation, brutal wars, and unspeakably corrupt governments. But he also documents communities courageously moving forward while wrestling with the past. On dirt streets Internet cafes stand next to thatched huts without electricity. A thriving tourist industry lays adjacent to Pol Pot's killing fields. New highrise office buildings tower over the disenfranchised children of American soldiers. *The River's Tale* is a seminal examination of the Mekong and its people, a testament to the their struggles, their defeats and their victories.

EDITOR'S LAST WORD:

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

Imagine: A World Without Discrimination

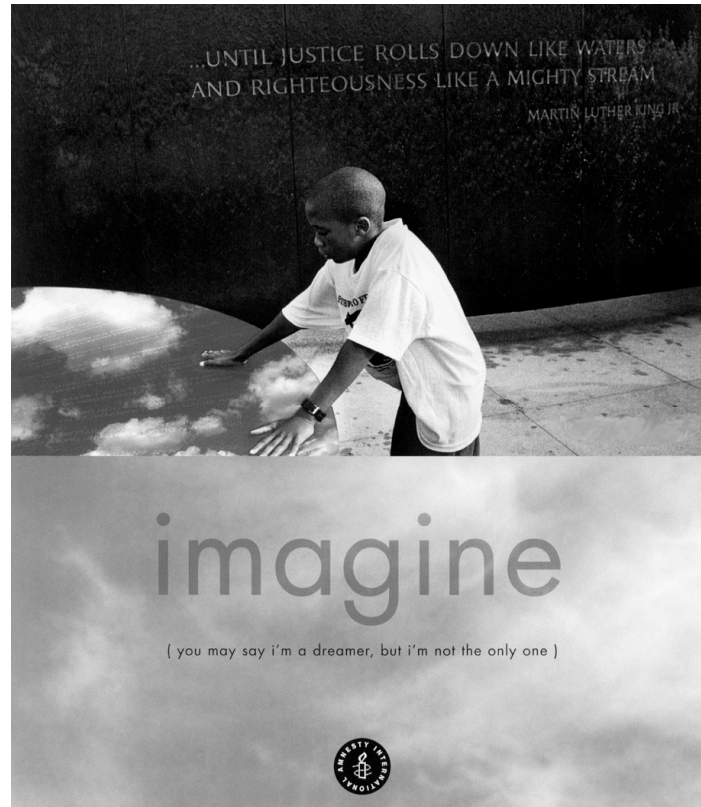


Photo: A young boy learns about civil rights at a memorial designed by Maya Lin. Montgomery, Alabama. ©Maya Lin. Photo: Eli Reed/Magnum. "IMAGINE" by John Lennon © 1971, 1999 Lenono Music (admin. by EMI Blackwood Music Inc.)

Amnesty International USA

Western Regional Conference

October 31 - November 2, 2003

Crowne Plaza Hotel, Redondo Beach, CA

Keynote Speakers

Loretta Ross
Executive Director
The National Center for Human
Rights Education

Carrie Dann
Western Shoshone Defense Project

Paul Hoffman
Chair, International Executive
Committee of Amnesty
International

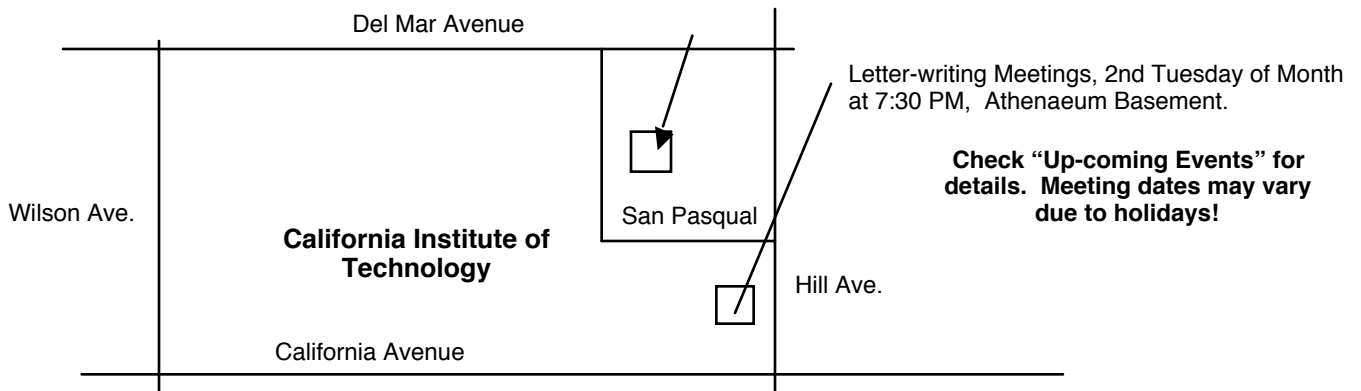
Workshops

- 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
 - Outfront! Defending the Rights of Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, and Transgender People
 - Human Rights and Corporate Responsibility
 - Human Rights Education: The Fourth R
 - Human Rights in West Africa
- And many others

Open to the public

Call 310-815-0450 or visit www.amnestyusa.org/events/#regconf for more information.

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



Letter-writing Meetings, 2nd Tuesday of Month
at 7:30 PM, Athenaeum Basement.

**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.