

Amnesty International Group 22 Pasadena/Caltech News

Volume XII Number 6, June 2004

UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday, June 24, 7:30 PM. *Monthly Meeting* 414 S. Holliston, Caltech Y Lounge. Help us plan future actions on the Patriot Act, Campaign Against Discrimination, death penalty, environmental justice and more.

Tuesday, July 13, 7:30 PM. *Letter-writing Meeting* at the Athenaeum. Corner of California & Hill. Please note that in the summer, the basement area where we usually meet is closed. Look for us on the lawn or check with the receptionist. This informal gathering is a great for newcomers to get acquainted with Amnesty!

Sunday, July 18, 6:30 PM. *Rights Readers Human Rights Book Discussion Group.* Vroman's Book Bookstore, 695 E. Colorado Blvd., Pasadena. This month we discuss Greg Campbell's *Blood Diamonds*. (More info below.)

COORDINATOR'S CORNER

Hello everyone,

Happy Summer! The official start of summer is June 21st.

Today was the last day of school-what a relief (although I am working a little during the summer). Missed doing the column last month due to work overload.

Group 22 has a new POC, also a Tibetan monk, named Ngawang Gyaltsen. He has been held in Drapchi Prison since April 1989 and was sentenced to 17 years imprisonment for "actively participating in criminal activities organized by a counter-revolutionary group", "engaging in espionage and illegally crossing the national border". Come to our monthly meetings to find out what we'll be doing on his behalf!

Good News-you may have heard that Leyla Zana, a Kurdish woman POC from Turkey has been released! She was one of the special focus cases that we featured in the Doo Dah parade this year and our group has sent many letters and postcards on her behalf.

There will be an online chat on the crisis in Darfur, Sudan all day on Monday June 21. In honor of World Refugee Day, AI's researcher on Sudan and Uganda, Annette Weber will host the chat. She has

just returned from interviewing Sudanese refugees in Eastern Chad. To join the chat, go to <http://www.amnestyusa.org/askamnesty/live/display.php?topic=6> or check later to read the transcripts.

I read about Camilo Mejia in the National Catholic Reporter, and heard about his case on KPDK, so I was glad to see the sample letter below for him on the AI website.

Take care, Kathy aigp22@caltehc.edu

The Honorable Les Brownlee
Acting Secretary of the Army Les Brownlee
102 Army Pentagon, Room 3E588
Washington DC 20310-0102
Email: les.brownlee@us.army.mil

Major General William G. Webster Jr.
60 Macneely Road
Fort Stewart GA 31314
Email: william.webster2@us.army.mil

Dear Major General,

I am writing to express my concern for the Staff Sergeant Camilo Mejia Castillo. On May 21, 2004, a US military court sentenced Camilo Mejia of the Florida National Guard to the maximum penalty of one year's imprisonment for desertion. He is imprisoned solely because of his conscientious objection to the war in Iraq and to the human rights abuses he claims to have witnessed in Iraq. Amnesty International has declared Staff Sergeant Camilo Mejia Castillo a prisoner of conscience, imprisoned as a consequence of his leaving the armed forces without authorization for reasons of conscience, even though he took reasonable steps to secure release from his military obligations. I urgently request that he be released immediately and unconditionally.

Staff Sergeant Camilo Mejia Castillo was deployed in Iraq in April 2003. During this tour of duty he began to question the morality and legality of the war. He returned home in October 2003 on leave for two weeks and did not return to duty in Iraq. He filed for conscientious objector status on March 16, 2004 affirming his belief that the war and consequent occupation was "illegal and immoral." In his application Camilo Mejia depicted the circumstances of detainee's detention and treatment, citing instances where soldiers were ordered to "break the detainees resolve." Camilo Mejia described such actions of fellow military personnel as depriving prisoners of sleep by banging on metal walls with sledge hammers and loading pistols near the ears of prisoners. He also cited witnessing killing of civilians, including children, as an incentive for his desertion. Since April 2004 it has been publicly documented that US agents have been physically and mentally torturing prisoners in Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq.

Staff Sergeant Camilo Mejia Castillo was sentenced despite his pending application for conscientious objector status. His lawyers were not permitted to present any arguments related to his application during the trial. Mejia Castillo is currently being held in Fort Still, Oklahoma.

Amnesty International, the largest grassroots human rights organization in the world, considers Camilo Mejia Castillo to be a prisoner of conscience, incarcerated for "his conscientious objection to participation in war." I join Amnesty International in calling for his immediate and unconditional release.

Sincerely, YOUR NAME and ADDRESS

IRAQ

Call for Corporate Accountability in Iraq

Recent allegations of torture and ill-treatment by Coalition forces in Iraqi prisons echo the frequent reports of human rights violations that Amnesty International has received over the past year. As details emerge, it becomes apparent that private companies operating as military contractors in Iraq also face challenges as regard their human rights responsibilities. It is incumbent on them to reevaluate their ethical policies and standards in order to explicitly address human rights issues. Thus, even as we call on President Bush to support a thorough, independent and public investigation into the abuses at Abu Ghraib, we also call on companies to support independent investigations; to help ensure that any person guilty of committing acts of torture or cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment is brought to justice; and to acknowledge their human rights responsibilities by adopting and implementing a comprehensive human rights policy.

BACKGROUND. The publication of photos depicting Iraqi detainees being physically and mentally abused at Abu Ghraib prison has caused shock and outrage across the world. However research carried out by Amnesty International reveals that the abuses allegedly committed by US agents in this prison facility are not isolated cases.

For over a year, AI has been investigating human rights violations including allegations of torture and ill-treatment of detainees by Coalition forces. Testimony from former detainees indicates a pattern of abuse. Detainees were forced to lie face down on the ground, handcuffed, hooded or blindfolded during arrest. Our reports indicate that during interrogation they were repeatedly beaten, restrained for prolonged periods in painful positions, and subject to sleep deprivation, prolonged forced standing, and exposure to loud music and bright lights.

Addressing these incidents must be a priority if the Iraqi people are to live free of brutal and degrading practices. For Iraq to have a sustainable and peaceful future,

human rights must be a central component of the way forward.

Titan's name has appeared in reports of alleged human rights violations at Abu Ghraib prison. Irrespective of whether Titan employees were involved in these abuses, we are concerned about the inevitable risks that can arise when companies choose to operate in environments where human rights are imperiled. Under international law, all corporations have obligations to uphold, respect, and protect fundamental human rights. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) calls upon every individual and every organ of society, which includes companies and business operations in general, to promote and protect human rights and "to strive to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance." In addition, the Geneva Conventions contain binding standards for military and non-military personnel during times of armed conflict and the Convention Against Torture prohibits cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment at all times. Thus it is essential for Titan to adopt and implement a code of conduct explicitly referencing the UDHR, helping to guarantee that its employees will not be implicated in human rights violations. Though Titan has a code of conduct concerning ethical behavior, it is inadequate in that it does not explicitly reference the UDHR or address fundamental human rights concerns.

AIUSA Executive Director Bill Schulz has written directly to the CEOs of both Titan Corporation and CACI International Inc, companies whose employees have been identified as working in Abu Ghraib prison. Regardless of the presumption of innocence in the case of prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib, companies such as these have a responsibility – to their employees, their shareholders and to the people they serve – to develop and implement a comprehensive human rights policy; publicly disclose and report on this policy; and to incorporate human rights into all hiring procedures, contracts and training.

The situation in Iraq highlights a recurring issue concerning the legal accountability of companies, and their employees, contracted to provide services to the US military, or US companies operating in Iraq. Amnesty International raised these concerns in the AIUSA 2002 report *Unmatched Power, Unmet Principles: The Human Rights Dimensions of US Training of Foreign Military and Police Forces* ; and in the AI 2003 statement *Iraq: On Whose Behalf? Reconstruction Must Ensure the Human Rights of Iraqis* .

Alongside efforts with individual companies, AIUSA has been actively pressing for reforms of existing laws governing the use of private contractors by the Departments of Defense and State. AIUSA has pursued these reforms in the context of the annual budget bill that funds the Department of Defense, as well as through separate legislative initiatives still in development. AIUSA has proposed these legal reforms based in part on research in the report *Unmatched Power, Unmet Principles* .

AIUSA's recommendations reaffirm the principle of accountability for human rights violations committed by

private contractors and attempt to close any legal loopholes that would prevent criminal prosecutions of contractor employees when they commit abuse or violations of international standards. In addition, the reforms seek to:

- Increase congressional oversight over the use of private contractors;
- Ensure that all recipients of U.S. training, whether by US forces or private contractors, are fully vetted for past human rights abuses; and
- Ensure that all private contractors receive basic training in international human rights and humanitarian law.

TAKE ACTION. Please write to the CEO of the Titan Corporation to express your concern about the human rights risks associated with operating in a complex environment such as Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq, and to request clarification about the company's human rights policies and practices.

Dr. Gene Ray
The Titan Corporation
3033 Science Park Road
San Diego, CA 92121-1199

Dear Dr. Ray,

I am writing to you as a member of Amnesty International USA (AIUSA) to express my concern over the human rights abuses committed in the Abu Ghraib prison facility and to ask for some clarification of your company's human rights policies and practices.

Amnesty International condemns the abuses allegedly committed by U.S. agents in the Abu Ghraib facility in Iraq as torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. AI has documented a pattern of abuses by U.S. agents against detainees in this and other facilities and we feel that those responsible for abuses should be brought to justice in accordance with U.S. obligations under international and domestic law. Your company has performed services contracts with the U.S. military that have led to public allegations of complicity in abuses against detainees by some of your employees. I hope and expect that Titan will support and facilitate public investigations and help bring persons found responsible to justice.

I would like to know if Titan has a human rights policy, and if it does what that policy is. Under international law, all corporations have obligations to uphold, respect and protect fundamental human rights. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) calls upon every individual and every organ of society, which includes companies and business operations in general, to promote and protect human rights and to strive "to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance."

I would like to know what processes and policies your company has in place to ensure that your employees never commit human rights abuses. In the event that you do receive information indicating your employees have committed human rights abuses, I would also like to know how your policies and procedures would ensure that those individuals are brought to justice.

If you do not have such policies I urge you to:

- Develop and implement a comprehensive human rights policy, which shall include an explicit commitment to support and uphold the principles and values contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- Publicly disclose this human rights policy and periodically issue public reports on its implementation.
- Incorporate a policy on human rights into all hiring procedures, contracts and training.

I also call on you to make public the results of your own investigations into any alleged human rights abuses by your employees, and the terms of your service contracts with the U.S. military with respect to human rights. Thank you for your attention, and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely, YOUR NAME and ADDRESS

LETTER COUNT	
Urgent Action	5
Refugees	1
Iraq Torture	17
China	15
Total	38
Want to add your letters to the total? Get in touch with lwkamp@sbcglobal.net	

DEATH PENALTY *Tibetan Monk faces Execution*

Tenzin Deleg Rinpoche, a religious and community leader in Kardze (Ganzi), Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province, was charged in connection with several bombings in Sichuan and was given a suspended death sentence on December 2, 2002.

There are concerns that Tenzin Deleg Rinpoche has been punished solely because of his peaceful religious and community work with Tibetan communities in Sichuan, not because of his alleged involvement in the bombings. Although authorities assert that Tenzin Deleg Rinpoche has confessed to the crime, a recorded statement was made in January 2003 by the religious leader: "I am completely innocent... I have always said we should not raise our hand at others. It is sinful... I have neither distributed letters or pamphlets nor planted bombs secretly. I have never even thought of such things, and I have no intention to hurt others..."

Several people connected to Tenzin Deleg Rinpoche have also been implicated in the case. On January 26, 2003,

Lobsang Dhondup, a former attendant of his, was executed for his alleged role in the bombings. Amnesty International is concerned that the detention of Tenzin Deleg Rinpoche and the execution of Lobsang Dhondup are serious miscarriages of justice. The trials of the two men were held in secret, the evidence of their conviction appears to have been obtained through torture and there were several irregularities in trial procedures.

Please write letters to Governor Zhang Zhongwei Shengzhang, urging him to conduct an immediate review of the case of Tenzin Deleg Rinpoche (A'an Zhanxi) and conduct a retrial which is completely open and in line with international fair trial standards.

Sample letter

Governor of the Sichuan Provincial People's Govt.
Zhang Zhongwei Shengzhang
30 Duyuanjie, Jinjiangqu,
Chengdushi 610016
Sichuansheng
People's Republic of China

Dear Governor:

I urge you to conduct an immediate review of the case of Tenzin Deleg Rinpoche (A'an Zhanxi) and conduct a retrial which is completely open and in line with international fair trial standards. Tenzin Deleg Rinpoche, a religious and community leader in Kardze (Ganzi), Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province, was charged in connection with several bombings in Sichuan and was given a suspended death sentence on December 2, 2002. Although Chinese authorities assert that Tenzin Deleg Rinpoche had confessed his involvement, he recorded the following statement in January 2003: "I am completely innocent... I have always said we should not raise our hand at others. It is sinful... I have neither distributed letters or pamphlets nor planted bombs secretly. I have never even thought of such things, and I have no intention to hurt others..."

Several people connected to Tenzin Deleg Rinpoche have also been implicated in the case. On January 26, 2003, Lobsang Dhondup (Lousang Dengzhu), a former attendant of his, was executed for his alleged role in the bombings. I am alarmed that Lobsang Dhondup was executed after an unfair trial. I urge you to disclose the evidence used to convict him and explain the connection with 'state secrets' that led to his trial being held in secret.

I call on you to order a full, independent and impartial investigation into the allegations that Tenzin Deleg Rinpoche (A'an Zhanxi) has been tortured and ill-treated, and for the results to be made public and for those responsible to be brought to justice.

I strongly urge you to take immediate measures to guarantee the safety of Tenzin Deleg Rinpoche (A'an Zhanxi), including clarifying his whereabouts, ending his solitary confinement, providing him with appropriate medical treatment and giving guarantees

that he will not be subjected to further torture or ill-treatment; and to provide him with access to his relatives and a lawyer of his choice.

Thank you for your time and attention to this very serious matter.

Sincerely, YOUR NAME and ADDRESS

CHILD SOLDIERS *Unfair Trial and Medical Concern in Congo*

Léonard SAFARI (m) aged 17
Samson BAGANIZI (m) aged 15
Portance HABIMANA (m) aged 17
(DRC) SENGIYUMVA ZABAYA (m) aged 17
ISONGO ZABENGA (m) aged 16
KANYARO NYANDU (m) aged 16
INNOCENT HATEGEKIMANA (m) aged 15
TWIZEYIMANA RUZINDANA (m) aged 17
Faustin BIRINDWA (m) aged 17
MUDOGO BAENI (m) aged 16
BONANE SERUSHAGO (m) aged 17
Papy MANGO (m) aged 16
Emmanuel BUZIMA (m) aged 17
Six other child soldiers aged 15 to 17

The child soldiers named above are being held in the city of Goma, North-Kivu province at Munzenze central prison and in two military detention centres, the Goma military prosecutor's lock-up and the T2 military lock-up. They are in overcrowded conditions with poor sanitation and a poor diet. Some are reportedly in very poor health and being denied medical care. Léonard Safari is dangerously ill with dysentery and other infections, whilst other boys are suffering from serious illnesses, injuries or wounds received in combat. Some of the boys were reportedly beaten at the time of their arrest.

Three of the children are illegally detained because they are accused of purely military offences. Faustin Birindwa, detained since September 2003, is accused of abandoning his post. Mudogo Baeni, arrested in February 2004, is accused of desertion. Samson Baganizi, detained since January 2004, is accused of wasting ammunition and reportedly suffered rib injuries sustained following his arrest. Under DRC military law, military jurisdiction does not apply to children aged under 18. The other children are accused of offences under the DRC's common criminal code, including common theft or aggravated theft, extortion, armed robbery, assault, rape and murder, and in some cases of a mixture of civil and military crimes. Although accused of crimes punishable under the common criminal code, the children are still illegally detained since they are held under military jurisdiction of the military prosecutor's office. Almost all the children are awaiting trial or passing of sentence. A number such as Bonane Serushago who was arrested in May 2003 have spent a prolonged period in pre-trial detention.

Only two children have been tried and sentenced. However both were before a military tribunal, which is illegal under

existing DRC law. Ruitamu Kanyabugoyi, arrested in January 2004, was sentenced to five years' imprisonment for aggravated armed assault. He is reportedly suffering from rib injuries sustained during ill-treatment after arrest. Isongo Zabenga, arrested in June 2003, has been sentenced to death for murder, although he is not believed to be at imminent risk of execution. He is reportedly suffering from old bullet wounds to his sides.

The child soldiers served with the RCD-Goma armed group. The children have tragic personal histories. Some were forcibly recruited and / or recruited at a very young age. Faustin Birindwa was recruited at the age of nine. Others, such as Sengiyumva Zabaya, are war orphans.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please write:

- calling for the children, including those named above to be immediately seen by doctors and given appropriate medical treatment;
- calling for the children to be protected from torture or ill-treatment and from inhuman conditions of detention. Where children allege they have been tortured or ill-treated, their allegations must be investigated;
- urging for the immediate and unconditional release of Faustin Birindwa, Mudogo Baeni and Samson Baganizi, who are held for purely military offences, in contravention of the military judicial code which applies only to those aged 18 or older, and of all children who are under the age of criminal responsibility;
- calling for the sentences imposed by military tribunal on Ruitamu Kanyabugoyi and Isongo Zabenga (who is under sentence of death) to be quashed as illegal. Adding that these two children should be released or be promptly re-tried by a civilian court that meets international fair trial standards;
- calling for the release of children accused of lesser offences against the common penal code, citing international standards which state that the detention of children should be a measure of last resort;
- in cases of children accused of more serious offences under the common criminal code, ask that these children be transferred immediately to the jurisdiction of the civilian judge for children. If children are to be tried and sentenced by civilian courts, calling for these courts to meet international standards for fair trial and the courts to take the young age and best interests of the defendants into consideration when passing sentence;
- reminding the authorities that no children should be recruited or used by the DRC's armed forces and that therefore no child should be detained or tried by military jurisdiction;

- calling for any child in military detention to be released or transferred to a civilian jurisdiction.

APPEALS TO: (Please note: if your emails do not go through, please print out and send by post. Thanks!)

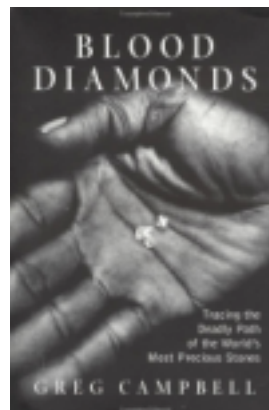
Azarias RUBERWA MANYWA
Vice-Président de la République
Présidence de la République
Le Cabinet du Vice-Président
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RIGHTS READERS

Human Rights Book Discussion Group
Vroman's Bookstore
695 E. Colorado Boulevard, Pasadena
Sunday, July 18, 6:30 PM



Blood Diamonds
by Greg Campbell

First discovered in 1930, the diamonds of Sierra Leone have funded one of the most savage rebel campaigns in modern history. These "blood diamonds" are smuggled out of West Africa and sold to legitimate diamond merchants in London, Antwerp, and New York, often with the

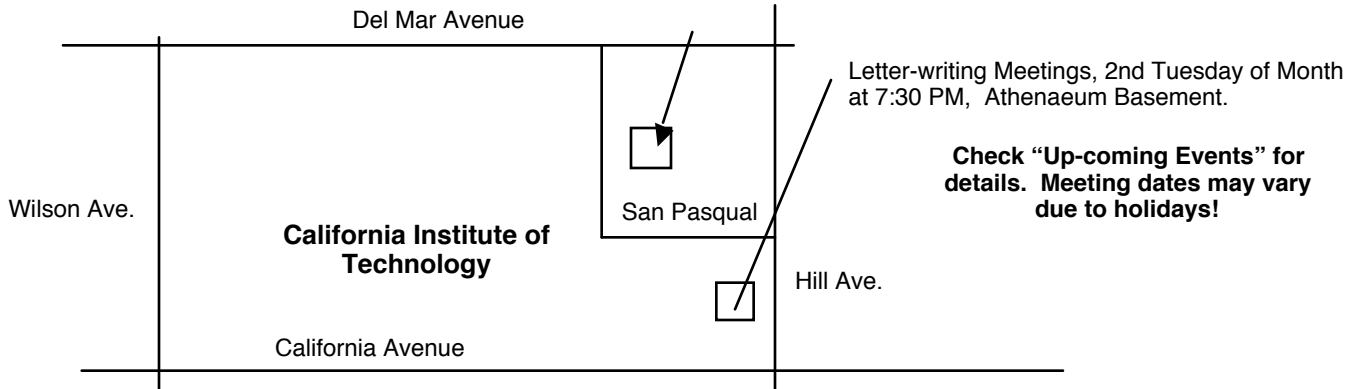
complicity of the international diamond industry. Eventually, these very diamonds find their way into the rings and necklaces of brides and spouses the world over.

Blood Diamonds is the gripping tale of how the diamond smuggling works, how the rebel war has effectively destroyed Sierra Leone and its people, and how the policies of the diamond industry have allowed it to happen. Award-winning journalist Greg Campbell traces the deadly trail of these diamonds, many of which are brought to the world market by fanatical enemies. These repercussions of diamond smuggling are felt far beyond the borders of the poor and war-ridden country of Sierra Leone, and the consequences of overlooking this African tragedy are both shockingly deadly and unquestionably global.

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.



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.

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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.