

Amnesty International Group 22 Pasadena/Caltech News

Volume XII Number 9, September 2004

UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday, September 23, 7:30 PM. *Monthly Meeting* Caltech Y has moved. **New Location!** Just around the corner from our old meeting place, we move to San Pasqual between Hill and Holliston, south side. You will see two curving walls forming a gate to a path, with the sign "Caltech Auxiliary and Business Services, 1-62" on one of them; our building is just behind that sign. This month we welcome activist Hector Ariztibal who will update us on the human rights situation in Colombia. Help us plan future actions on Tibet, the Patriot Act, Campaign Against Discrimination, death penalty, environmental justice and more.

Tuesday, October 12, 7:30 PM. *Letter-writing Meeting* at the Athenaeum. Corner of California & Hill. **We are back in our usual location in the basement recreation area.** This informal gathering is a great for newcomers to get acquainted with Amnesty!

Sunday, October 17, 6:30 PM. *Rights Readers Human Rights Book Discussion Group.* Vroman's Bookstore, 695 E. Colorado Blvd., Pasadena. This month we discuss Colombian writer Laura Restrepo's *The Dark Bride*. (More info below.)

COORDINATOR'S CORNER

Hi everyone,

Hope you are enjoying the early Fall. Summer is over and it's time to get back to work and school! We have lots of fun and interesting projects this Fall-- please come to our meetings and find out what's going on!

The weekend before Thanksgiving is the Doo-Dah Parade, a spoof of the Rose Parade Pasadena is famous for. We have had an entry for several years now. This year will prove to be interesting as we will decide what to do with our "marching letters" and prisoners! Come join the discussion at our next monthly meeting.

Hector Ariztibal will be updating us on the situation in Colombia, his native country, at our monthly meeting Sept 23. He is a well-

known human rights activist and will speak on actions his group is planning plus update us on "Plan Columbia."

We are also developing a lending library of books and other media materials with a human rights theme-- some that we have read in our Rights Readers Book Group and more. If you have books you'd like to loan, please contact me at danishgirl@earthlink.net. I am still working on setting this up.

The crisis in the Sudan continues. Please see the action elsewhere in this newsletter. Samantha Power, the author of our May book group selection, "A Problem from Hell-America and the age of Genocide", has written an article published in the August 30th New Yorker magazine on the crisis in Sudan titled "Dying in Darfur." For those of you who don't subscribe, you can find it online or at local libraries. It is very interesting. Our group is also going to show the documentary film, "The Lost Boys of Sudan", in early October. More info will be coming.

Good news this month! Anwar Ibrahim has been freed-- some of you may remember we sent him postcards and wrote letters on his behalf. He is the former deputy prime minister of Malaysia and had been convicted on politically motivated charges of sodomy and abuse of power.

Amnesty USA has just released a report on racial profiling, the result of hearings held in several major US cities, including Oakland, California, last year. See the summary in this newsletter for more information.

Please take note that our monthly meetings have moved to a new location just down the street from the old one (see Upcoming Events for details!)

Take care,

Kathy

aigp22@caltech.edu

SUDAN

Please visit the AIUSA website www.amnestyusa.org for several actions you can take on the on-going crisis in Sudan. Here is a sample letter on the Sudan crisis:

Please send appeals to:

President Omar Hassan al-Bashir
c/o Permanent Representative of the Republic of the Sudan to the United Nations

655 Third Avenue, Suite 500-510,
New York, NY 10017

Dear Mr. President:

I am writing to express my sincere concern about the fate of an estimated 1.2 million forcibly displaced people in Darfur and the continuing threats to their lives and safety.

Satellite images of the area between al-Jeneina and Zalingei, commissioned by Amnesty International, indicate that 44 percent of the villages and settlements have been burnt. Most of the other villages have been abandoned. These satellite images of destroyed villages vividly illustrate the pattern of attacks, including burning, killing, looting and raping that extends throughout Darfur and has caused the crisis of forced displacement in the region. Amnesty International has also interviewed refugees in camps in Chad and found that many of the human rights violations in Darfur have been targeted specifically against women and girls. These violations have included abductions, sexual slavery, torture, and forced displacement.

Displaced people continue to live under the control of the very people who have caused their predicament. Janjawid militiamen continue to attack people outside the IDP camps and harass people inside. One displaced person who reached Khartoum after three months in Mukjar camp said, "It is not a camp but a prison." There have been numerous reports of men venturing outside the camps being killed and women and girls raped. In Mornay camp in March 2004, a shaikh told the UN that 16 women a day may be raped as they went to gather water in the riverbed (wadi). Despite this, women continued to go out to fetch water even though they were likely to be raped because if the men went they would be more likely be killed. Rapes and other forms of violence also occur within the IDP camps.

Within the camps the humanitarian conditions are precarious. There is still not enough food in Darfur to last throughout the rainy season, which will cut off much of region, especially western Darfur. Displaced persons camps in remote areas cannot be reached, except by plane or camel. A resident of West Darfur told Amnesty International "The food is reaching hundreds but there are thousands who need food and receive nothing."

I urge you, as President of Sudan, to act now to enforce Sudanese constitutional protections for your own citizens. Article 20 of your Constitution states, "Every human being shall have the right to life, freedom, safety of person and dignity of honor save by right in accordance with the law; and is free of subjection to slavery, forced labor, humiliation or torture."

In this regard, I urge you to:

- Disarm and disband the Janjawid militia;
- Suspend any member of the Sudanese armed forces suspected of having committed or ordered human rights violations, pending investigation;
- Prevent any member or former member of the Janjawid militia from joining police, military, or security forces and prevent any member or former member of the Janjawid militia from operating inside or on the peripheries of displaced persons camps;
- Provide full and unimpeded access to humanitarian agencies and human rights monitors to all areas and groups in Darfur, and
- Guarantee that displaced persons will not be forced back to any place where their lives, health, or safety would be at risk.

I urge you to do everything in your power to stop the horrific attacks on civilians in the Darfur conflict and to address immediately the consequences of this violence. I appeal to you to take all steps necessary to allow full and free access to Darfur for humanitarian agencies and human rights monitors to ensure that the civilian population is provided with humanitarian relief. Thank you for your attention, I look forward to your response.

Sincerely, YOUR NAME and ADDRESS

RACIAL PROFILING

"Threat and Humiliation: -- New Report Released

Last week Amnesty released a report "Threat and Humiliation: Racial Profiling, Domestic Security and Human Rights in the United States. You can download the report in its entirety from www.amnestyusa.org where you will also find suggested actions. A summary of the report follows:

Racial profiling is a serious human rights problem affecting millions of people in the United States in even the most routine aspects of their daily lives. A year-long study conducted by the Domestic Human Rights Program of Amnesty International USA found that the unlawful use of race in police, immigration, and airport security procedures has expanded since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. The study further found that state laws provide insufficient and inconsistent protection against profiling. Despite promises by President George W. Bush shortly after his taking office to end racial profiling, the number of American ethnic, racial, and religious groups whose members are at high risk of being subjected to this scourge has increased substantially. To address this growing national problem, Amnesty International USA (AIUSA) urges the White House and Congress to prioritize and enact the End Racial Profiling Act of

2004 and allocate sufficient funds for its vigorous enforcement.

From July 2003 to August 2004, AIUSA's Domestic Human Rights Program studied the current state of racial profiling by law enforcement agencies in the United States. The process began with the consultation of a wide range of community organizations and the organizing of a series of public hearings across the United States throughout the fall of 2003 (San Francisco/Oakland on September 9, Tulsa on September 30, New York City on October 2, Chicago on October 18 and 20, and Dallas on November 15). At the hearings, victims, human rights advocates, experts and law enforcement officials testified about their experiences with racial profiling.

The hearings were followed by an intensive period of research that included analyzing:

- State laws concerning racial profiling
- The U.S. Supreme Court's interpretation of relevant protections guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution
- Pertinent federal policies
- International treaties, covenants, and laws
- Recent national public opinion polls
- Current U.S. census data
- And a wide range of literature on the subject.

The major findings of this study may be summarized as follows:

1. A staggering number of people in the United States are subjected to racial profiling:

- Approximately thirty-two million Americans, a number equivalent to the population of Canada, report they have already been victims of racial profiling.
- Approximately eighty-seven million Americans are at a high risk of being subjected to future racial profiling during their lifetime.
- Racial profiling directly affects Native Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanic Americans, African Americans, Arab Americans, Persian Americans, American Muslims, many immigrants and visitors, and, under certain circumstances, white Americans.
- Racial profiling happens to both women and men, affects all age groups, is used against people from all socio-economic backgrounds, and occurs in rural, suburban, and urban areas.
- Racial profiling of citizens and visitors of Middle Eastern and South Asian descent, and others who appear to be from these areas or

members of the Muslim and Sikh faiths, has substantially increased since September 11, 2001.

2. As the testimony cited in this report shows, racial profiling occurs in almost every context of people's lives:

While driving: A young African-American schoolteacher reports being routinely pulled over in his suburban neighborhood in San Carlos, California, where only five other African-American families live. Native Americans in Oklahoma report being routinely stopped by police because of the tribal tags displayed on their cars. In Texas, a Muslim student of South Asian ancestry is pulled over and asked by police if he is carrying any dead bodies or bombs.

While walking: In Seattle, Washington, a group of Asian-American youths are detained on a street corner by police for 45 minutes on an allegation of jaywalking. While a sergeant ultimately ordered the officer in question to release them, the young people say they saw whites repeatedly crossing the same street in an illegal manner without being stopped.

While traveling through airports: An eight-year-old Muslim boy from Tulsa, Oklahoma was reportedly separated from his family while airport security officials searched him and dismantled his Boy Scout pinewood derby car. He is now routinely stopped and searched at airports.

While shopping: In New York City, an African-American woman shopping for holiday presents was stopped by security at a major department store. She showed the guards her receipts. Nonetheless, she was taken to a holding cell in the building where every other suspect she saw was a person of color. She was subjected to threats and a body search. She was allowed to leave without being charged three hours later, but was not allowed to take her purchases.

While at home: A Latino family in a Chicago suburb was reportedly awoken at 4:50 a.m. on the day after Father's Day by nine building inspectors and police officers who prohibited the family from getting dressed or moving about. The authorities reportedly proceeded to search the entire house to find evidence of overcrowding. Enforcement of the zoning ordinance, which was used to justify the search, was reportedly targeted at the rapidly-growing Latino population.

While traveling to and from places of worship: A Muslim imam from the Dallas area reports being stopped and arrested by police upon leaving a mosque after an outreach event. Officers stopped him, searched his vehicle, arrested him for expired vehicle tags, and confiscated his computer.

3. Despite the prevalence and serious nature of the problem—including the devastating effect that it often has on victims, their families, and their communities

—no jurisdiction in the U.S. has addressed the problem in a way that is both effective and comprehensive. While as of the writing of this report 29 states have passed laws concerning racial profiling, state and federal protections against this problem continue to be grossly insufficient:

- Forty-six states do not ban racial profiling based on religion or religious appearance.
- Thirty-five states do not ban racial profiling of pedestrians (and the majority of the fifteen states that do, use a definition of racial profiling that makes the ban virtually unenforceable in most circumstances).
- The scope of Tennessee’s current racial profiling law is so limited that it only pertains to the conditions under which fingerprint records are obtained.
- In June 2003, the Department of Justice issued its Guidance Regarding the Use of Race by Federal Law Enforcement Agencies forbidding racial profiling by federal law enforcement officials. Yet, the guidance does not cover profiling based on religion, religious appearance, or national origin; does not apply to state or local law enforcement agencies; does not include any enforcement mechanisms; does not specify punishment for violating officers/agencies; and contains a blanket exception for “national security” and “border integrity” cases. The Guidance is an advisory, and hence is not legally binding.
- On February 27, 2001, President Bush said, “racial profiling is wrong” and promised to “end it in America.” Yet, almost four years later he has failed to support any federal legislative effort to eliminate racial profiling in the United States.

4. When law enforcement officials focus on what people look like, what religion they follow, or what they wear, it puts us all at risk. Several incidents in history illustrate this risk:

- In 1901, President McKinley’s assassin, a white man born in Michigan, was able to conceal the murder weapon in a bandage wrapped around his arm, pass through security, and go undetected until he shot the president because secret service agents had decided to focus their attention on a “dark complexioned man with a moustache.”
- In 1995, after bombing the Alfred P. Murrah federal building in Oklahoma City, Timothy McVeigh, a white male assailant later convicted of delivering the bomb alone, was able to flee while officers operated on the initial theory that ‘Arab terrorists’ had committed the attacks.

- In 2002, two African-American male snipers were able to evade police and continue terrorizing residents of the nation’s capital and nearby areas. Police, relying on racially-based profiles of serial killers, were searching for antisocial white males.

LETTER COUNT	
Ngawang Gyaltzen	6
Urgent Actions	15
Sudan	2
OutFront (Jamaica)	2
War on Terror	1
Total	26
Want to add your letters to the total? Get in touch with lwkamp@sbcglobal.net	

STOP VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Threats to Colombian Activist

In Colombia, women who speak out for their rights face intimidation, violence and even death from armed groups on both sides of the country’s long-running internal conflict. In October 2003, Esperanza Amaris Miranda, a member of the Popular Women’s Organization (OFP), which has campaigned for women’s rights for more than 30 years, was abducted and murdered by three armed men.

Background information. Esperanza Amaris Miranda was reportedly abducted from her home by three armed men on October 16, 2003. The men – apparently members of army-backed paramilitary forces – forced her into a taxi and began to drive away. When her 21-year-old daughter clung on to the door of the moving car, the men got out and kicked her to the ground. A few minutes later, Esperanza’s body was abandoned in the road. She had been shot dead. Esperanza was 40 years old and supported her two children by selling lottery tickets in the city of Barrancabermeja, Colombia. She was also a member of the Popular Women’s Organization (OFP), which has campaigned for women’s rights for more than 30 years. In Colombia women who speak out for their rights face intimidation, violence and even death from armed groups on both sides of the country’s long-running internal conflict. Government security forces and their paramilitary allies have labelled women community leaders, activists and human rights defenders as guerrilla collaborators and legitimate targets in the counter-insurgency war. Armed opposition groups have killed women they accuse of siding with their enemies. Rape, mutilation and abuse of women and girls have been used as weapons of war to generate fear and to silence campaigns for social, economic and political rights. Esperanza’s abductors reportedly said they were from the Central

Bolivar Bloc, a paramilitary group that had previously threatened her. She had reported the threats to the Regional Prosecutor. Yet the police took no effective action to safeguard her and, after her abduction, did not answer OFP's phone calls. More than 90 murders and over 50 "disappearances" in Barrancabermeja in 2003 testify to the impunity enjoyed by the paramilitaries and guerrilla groups. Esperanza's case is only one of many. Leonora Castaño, president of a group promoting women's land and human rights, the National Association of Peasant Farmer, Black and Indigenous Women of Colombia (ANMUCIC), has been the target of numerous death threats. Blanca Nubia Díaz, an ANMUCIC supporter, was forced to flee her home after her 16-year-old daughter was killed by paramilitaries in May 2001. In September 2003 an anonymous letter to ANMUCIC said that her son had been taken captive. The Colombian government has failed not only to guarantee the safety of human rights defenders, many of them women, but also to combat or dismantle paramilitary groups. Ignoring repeated recommendations by the international community, the government is now proposing legislation that may allow human rights abusers to elude justice.

In the home and in the community, in times of war and peace, millions of women and girls are beaten, raped, mutilated and killed with impunity. Join Amnesty International's campaign to demand that governments, communities and individuals act to stop violence against women throughout the world.

Call on President Uribe to:

- Bring to justice those responsible for the killing of Esperanza Amaris Miranda and other human rights abuses against women's rights activists;
- Take action to disband army-backed paramilitary groups and to stop the security forces flouting the government's obligations, under international and regional human rights standards, to protect individuals campaigning for women's rights.
- When writing to President Uribe, stress that although we recognize that guerrilla groups are responsible for serious breaches of international humanitarian law, this cannot be used by the government as an excuse not to take measures to confront the human rights crisis.

Send your appeals to:

Señor Presidente Álvaro Uribe Vélez
 Presidente de la República
 Palacio de Nariño, Carrera 8 No.7-26
 Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Send messages of solidarity and support for the women's organizations OFP and ANMUCIC to:

Mesa de Trabajo "Mujer y Conflicto Armado"
 Calle 38, No. 16-45
 Bogotá, Colombia

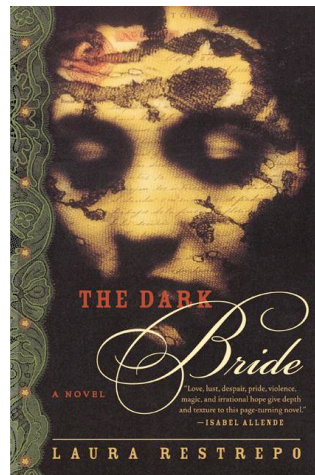
RIGHTS READERS

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

Sunday, October 17, 6:30 PM

The Dark Bride

by *Laura Restrepo*



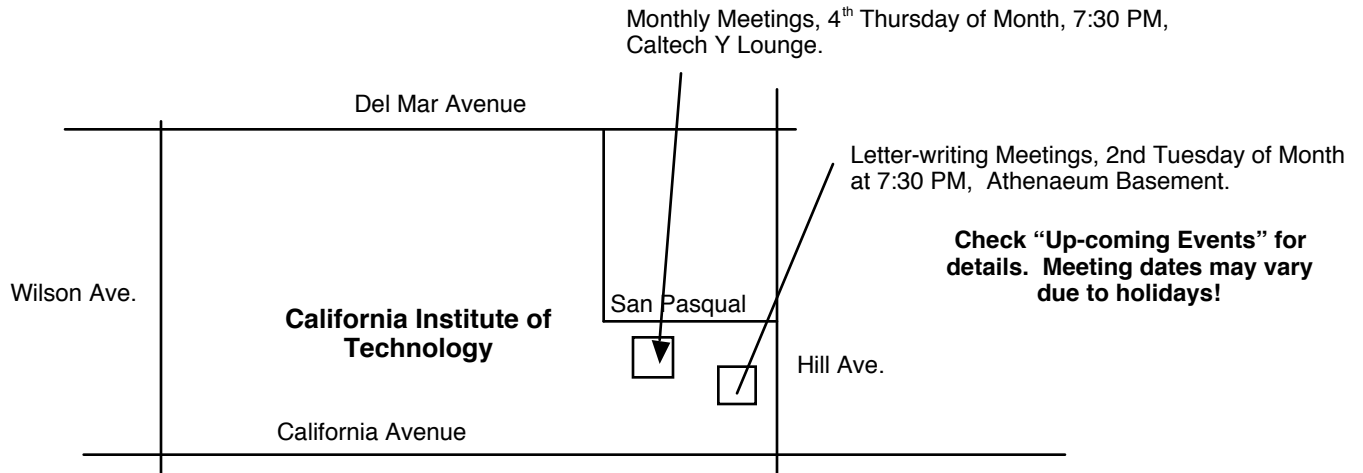
Once a month, the refinery workers of the Tropical Oil Company descend upon Tora, a city in the Colombian forest. They journey down from the mountains searching for earthly bliss and hoping to encounter Sayonara, the legendary Indian prostitute who

rules their squalid paradise like a queen. Beautiful, exotic, and mysterious, Sayonara, the undisputed barrio angel, captivates whoever crosses her path. Then, one day, she violates the unwritten rules of her profession and falls in love with a man she can never have. Sayonara's unrequited passion has tragic consequences not only for her, but for all those whose lives ultimately depend on the Tropical Oil Company.

Laura Restrepo is a bestselling author and political activist. In 1984 she was a member of the peace commission that brought the Colombian government and guerrillas to the negotiating table. As she does with all of her novels, Restrepo did thorough research for *The Dark Bride*, transforming her investigations as a journalist into the foundation for a fictional creation.

EDITOR'S LAST WORD:

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



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.