

UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday, May 26, 7:30 PM. *Monthly Meeting* Caltech Y has moved. Just around the corner from our old meeting place, we moved to San Pasqual between Hill and Holliston, south side. You will see two curving walls forming a gate to a path-- our building is just beyond. Help us plan future actions on Sudan, the War on Terror, death penalty, environmental justice and more.

Tuesday, June 14, 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, June 19, 6:30 PM. *Rights Readers Human Rights Book Discussion Group.* Vroman's Book Bookstore, 695 E. Colorado Blvd., Pasadena. This month we discuss Nigerian novelist Chris Abani's, *Graceland*. (More info below.)

Amnesty International Film Festival The Amnesty International Film Festival is coming to West Hollywood, May 24-29. Visit www.amnestyusa.org/filmfest/weho/2005 for details, or call the Western Regional office at 310-815-0450 to request a brochure or volunteer to help staff the event!

COORDINATOR'S CORNER

Hi everyone. Robert Adams and I got married April 16th in Pasadena, so Martha took over the column last month! We went to Carmel for four days after the wedding. The weather cooperated and was sunny yet cool. We enjoyed the peace and quiet. We explored Point Lobos (walked a short trail to a quiet cove where we saw two sea otters floating in kelp bed, saw mom and baby harbor seals in the water trying to wash up on a rock.), went to the Monterey Aquarium and wharf (more frolicking otters), the 17 mile drive in Carmel (harbor seals resting on rocks near shore-looking like large white furry cigars from a distance, very aggressive squirrels, cormorants, and the ubiquitous seagulls). We want to thank everyone who donated to Amnesty in honor of our wedding and also for the "petition", photo collage and candle!

I did manage to finish the April alternate book selection, "Five minutes past midnight in Bhopal" by Dominique LaPierre and Javier Moro. It is a gripping story of the 1984 disaster at the Bhopal chemical plant in India. Several characters living in the "bustees" (shacks near the plant) are followed throughout the story-at the end we learn if they survived the gas leak or not. I was glad to see that some of my favorite characters did survive. The author makes you empathize with the struggles of the poor people living near the plant and it is a compelling story.

To this day, there still has not been justice for the injured people of Bhopal. One of our group members, Paula Tavrow, has written a letter to the Pasadena Weekly re this topic that we all signed. Look for it in a future edition, as the weekly claims to "print all letters received"!! We are also planning to send the hands traced by children on a large paper petition at the environmental fair at the Arboretum to Dow Chemical, the current owner of the Bhopal plant site.

Dominique LaPierre has set up a fund for India called "City of Joy Aid, Inc." The money goes to several projects in India. One of these projects is the Bhopal Gynecological Clinic, which treats women injured by the gas leak, which has caused various gynecological problems, especially cervical cancer. This clinic helps underprivileged women obtain medical care. Many have not been adequately treated by government hospitals. If you want to donate to the fund, send a check to City of Joy Fund, Inc. in care of Marie B. Allizon, 7419 Lisle Ave, Falls Church, VA 22043. Phone 703-734-6956.

Amnesty Film Festival in West Hollywood starts Tuesday May 24 through Sunday May 29. For a schedule and to buy tickets online, go to www.amnestyusa.org/filmfest/weho/2005/index.html. I missed this event last year, but am planning to go on the weekend this year. The list of movies looks very interesting, including films on Ciudad Juarez murders, Bhopal disaster, war on terror, child soldiers, etc.

We have adopted a new Prisoner of Conscience from Vietnam, Brother Nguyen Thien Phung (Huan) a 51 year old Catholic priest sentenced to 20 years (along with other priests) for "conducting propaganda to oppose the socialist regime and undermine the policy of solidarity" (he was involved in peaceful activities relating to his membership in his order, such as establishment of orphanages, asylums, and hospitals and training of lay people. By next month we hope to have our first action for this case!

Kathy

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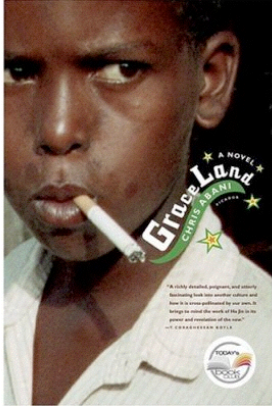
RIGHTS READERS

Human Rights Book Discussion Group

Vroman's Bookstore

695 E. Colorado Boulevard in Pasadena

Sunday, June 19, 6:30 PM



GraceLand

by Chris Abani

In this dazzling debut by a singular new talent, the sprawling, swampy, cacophonous city of Lagos, Nigeria, provides the backdrop to the story of Elvis, a teenage Elvis impersonator hoping to make his way out of the ghetto. Broke, beset by

floods, and beatings by his alcoholic father, and with no job opportunities in sight, Elvis is tempted by a life of crime. Thus begins his odyssey into the dangerous underworld of Lagos, guided by his friend Redemption and accompanied by a restless hybrid of voices including The King of Beggars, Sunday, Innocent and Comfort. Ultimately, young Elvis, drenched in reggae and jazz, and besotted with American film heroes and images, must find his way to a GraceLand of his own. Nuanced, lyrical, and pitch perfect, Abani has created a remarkable story of a son and his father, and an examination of postcolonial Nigeria where the trappings of American culture reign supreme.

SUDAN

Support Darfur Accountability Act

We continue to express our concern for the situation in Sudan. Here is a sample letter to Senator Feinstein in support of the Darfur Accountability Act.

Senator Dianne Feinstein
United States Senate
331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-0001

Dear Senator Feinstein,

As your constituent, I am writing to thank you for your continued efforts to respond to the crisis in Darfur Sudan. I am also writing to urge you to support the Darfur Accountability Act 2000, S.495. This bill will help ensure that the perpetrators of gross human rights violations against the Sudanese people will be brought to justice, support efforts to improve protection for the targets of this violence and help shut down the flow of weapons that allows the government to commit these abuses. By supporting this bill, you would be sending a message that the world will no longer close its eyes to

gross violations but will do all possible to bring the perpetrators to justice.

Many innocent civilians have suffered as a result of the crisis in Darfur with women bearing a huge burden of the cost. Human rights groups estimate that thousands of women have been raped by combatants from government forces and armed groups linked to the government known as the Janjawid. Rape victims face stigmatization and torment from family members. Some of them, have been abducted from their homes and held as sexual slaves. Survivors make up majority of population in the camps for Internally Displaced Persons where they continue to face violence due to inadequate resources and security in an around the camps in the region in as a whole.

This bill will support enhancing the African Union's ability to protect civilians, extend the current arms embargo to include the government of Sudan, and it demands accountability for the crimes committed in Sudan. I urge you to support the legislation.

Sincerely, YOUR NAME and ADDRESS

LETTER COUNT

Stop Violence Against Women Campaign	8
Urgent Actions	25
Death Penalty	8
Vietnam	7
Abdullah Webster	8
Campaign for Bhopal	22
Total:	78

Want to add your letters to the total? Get in touch with lwkamp@sbcglobal.net

VIETNAM POC

A Biographical Sketch of Nguyen Thien Phung

Here's what we know so far about our new prisoner adoption case. We hope to have an action by next month!

Brother Nguyen Thien Phung (Huan), 51-years-old, was born on 10 February 1951 in Bui Chu, northern Viet Nam. He is a Catholic monk and member of the Congregation of the Mother Coredeptrix (CMC). He was arrested on 20 May 1987 during raids on Thu Duc monastery, near Ho Chi Minh City, by public security officers. Another 22 priests and brothers of the CMC, including the founder Father Dominic Tran Dinh Thu, were arrested around the same time. In October 1987 Brother Nguyen Thien Phung (Huan) was sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment for "conducting propaganda to oppose the socialist regime and undermine the policy of solidarity", under Articles 81 and 82 and an additional five years' deprivation of civil rights on completion of his sentence under Article 100 of the 1986 Vietnamese Criminal Code. The 1986 Criminal Code was amended and replaced in December 1999. His sentence was upheld by the Appeal Court on 7 November 1988. His co-defendants were sentenced to terms of imprisonment ranging between four years and life; all have been released

except for Brother Nguyen Thien Phung (Huan). Amnesty believes that Brother Nguyen Thien Phung (Huan) is detained solely for his peaceful activities as a Roman Catholic monk and member of the CMC.

The CMC is an evangelical order which in Viet Nam attempted to promote their beliefs through social programs, such as establishment of orphanages, asylums, hospitals and student residences, and through training of lay people.

OUTFRONT

Urge Turkey to Amend Penal Code

The new Turkish Penal Code (TPC) has been presented as a reforming measure designed to improve human rights protection in Turkey, as it attempts to bring its laws into line with the requirements for membership of the European Union. While the new TPC does propose many positive changes - for example, it increases the punishment for those convicted of torture - it contains numerous restrictions on fundamental rights. Provisions covering freedom of expression, which have been used in the past to prosecute people or imprison them as prisoners of conscience, remain. Article 159 of the old TPC, which criminalized acts that "insult or belittle" various state institutions, is one that Amnesty International has repeatedly called on the authorities to abolish. It reappears as Article 301 of the new TPC in the section entitled "Crimes against symbols of the state's sovereignty and the honor of its organs" (Articles 299 - 301). Amnesty International is concerned that this section could be used to criminalize legitimate expression of dissent and opinion.

New articles have been introduced which appear to introduce restrictions to fundamental rights. Article 305 of the new TPC criminalizes "acts against the fundamental national interest". The explanation attached to the draft, when the law was first presented to Parliament, provided as examples of such crimes, "making propaganda for the withdrawal of Turkish soldiers from Cyprus or for the acceptance of a settlement in this issue detrimental to Turkey... or, contrary to historical truths, that the Armenians suffered a genocide after the First World War." Amnesty International considers that the imposition of a criminal penalty for any such statements - unless intended or likely to incite violence - would be a clear breach of international standards safeguarding freedom of expression.

The law was supposed to enter into force on 1 April 2005. However, in the face of forceful objections by Turkish journalists that the TPC could be used to greatly restrict their activities and even imprison them, the government agreed to delay this until 1 June 2005 in order to make amendments. On 3 May, the ruling Justice and Development [AK] party submitted its proposed changes to the draft TPC. While some small changes have been made - mainly the removal of provisions that

allowed for increased sentences when breaches of the code took place in the media - most of the restrictive articles remain and have not been changed. In at least one instance, the ruling party is apparently trying to introduce even greater restrictions: for example, the proposal suggests that Article 305 should be altered to explicitly allow for the prosecution of "foreigners" as well as Turkish citizens.

Article 122 of the draft, which forbids discrimination on the basis of "language, race, color, gender, political thought, philosophical belief, religion, denomination and other reasons" originally listed "sexual orientation", but this was removed from the draft at the last moment. Amnesty International is therefore concerned that discrimination on the basis of sexuality is not criminalized in the new law.

In addition, Amnesty International is concerned that the statute of limitations (the time limit) still applies in trials of people accused of torture. While the new law has extended this time limit from seven-and-a-half years to 10 years, it is common for trials of alleged torturers to be deliberately protracted and ultimately abandoned because of this provision, thereby contributing to a climate of impunity. Given the frequency with which this happens, Amnesty International considers that there should be no statute of limitations for the crime of torture.

Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible:

- Expressing concerns about the draft new Turkish Penal Code (TPC), much of which may be used to unnecessarily restrict fundamental human rights and which may lead to people being imprisoned for the peaceful exercise of their right to freedom of expression
- Welcoming the amendments tabled by the ruling AK party but stating that these seem to be insufficient to guarantee the right to freedom of expression in Turkey
- Urging the authorities to listen to the concerns of press and human rights groups, and take further steps to amend or abolish problematic articles of the TPC, such as Articles 305 and 301
- Expressing concern that the statute of limitations remains for crimes of torture and ill-treatment
- Asking the authorities to take steps to ensure that discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation is prohibited

SEND APPEALS TO:

Prime Minister:

Mr Recep Tayyip Erdogan
Office of the Prime Minister
Basbakanlik
06573 Ankara
Turkey

Leader of the Republican People's Party:
Mr Deniz Baykal
Leader of the Republican People's Party
Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi
Cevre sokak No:38
Cankaya, Ankara

Turkey

COPIES TO:

Ambassador Dr. Osman Faruk Logoglu
Embassy of the Republic of Turkey
2525 Massachusetts Ave. NW
Washington DC 20008
Email: ambassador@turkishembassy.org

USA

Conditions for Torture Persist in US Policy

An Amnesty International report entitled "USA: Human dignity denied: Torture and accountability in the 'war on terror'" (see www.amnestyusa.org for a copy) catalogues the United States' three-year descent into the use of torture and warns that without a comprehensive, independent investigation into the United States' torture and ill-treatment of detainees, the conditions remain for further abuses to occur.

Based on an analysis of relevant policy decisions and specific incidents of abuse, the report cites more than 65 specific recommendations that, if implemented by the US government, would provide substantial safeguards against further torture and abuse. Among these is a call on President Bush to make public and revoke any measures or directives that have been authorized by him or any other official that could be interpreted as authorizing "disappearances," torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, or extrajudicial executions.

The report was released to mark the six month anniversary of CBS News' first broadcast of the photographs of torture at Abu Ghraib. Research by Amnesty International suggests that these are not isolated incidents, but rather evidence of a systemic failure to protect the rights of detainees in accordance with international law. Amnesty International has received frequent reports of torture or other ill-treatment from released detainees who were held in US-run facilities in Iraq, Afghanistan, Guantanamo, and elsewhere. Detainees have told Amnesty International that they were tortured and ill-treated by US and UK troops during interrogation. Methods often reported include prolonged sleep deprivation; beatings; prolonged restraint in painful positions, sometimes combined with exposure to loud music; prolonged hooding; and exposure to bright lights. Virtually none of the allegations of torture or ill-treatment has been adequately investigated by the authorities.

Amnesty International calls for a thorough and impartial investigation into torture and other abuses in Iraq, Afghanistan, Guantanamo, and elsewhere, and for assurances that those who perpetrated crimes and those who contributed to a command climate that facilitated crimes are brought to justice. Amnesty International seeks the establishment of an independent commission of inquiry consisting of experts who would examine – up the chain of command – US interrogation practices in Iraq, Afghanistan, Guantanamo and elsewhere.

Hearings and findings should be made public. Amnesty International also calls for the appointment of a Special Counsel to investigate the reports of abuse at the Abu Ghraib prison and other detention facilities in Iraq, Afghanistan, Guantanamo and elsewhere; to establish whether acts of torture, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and other violations of relevant federal statutes have been committed; and to seek prosecution of those who perpetrated crimes and those up the chain of command responsible for creating a climate that facilitated such crimes. Within the US justice system, the Special Counsel is the most independent mechanism for conducting an investigation and prosecution.

Sample Letter follows:

The Honorable George W. Bush
The President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

I am deeply concerned by the US record of torture and ill-treatment that continues to emerge from Iraq, Afghanistan, Guantanamo, and beyond. Amnesty International has interviewed former detainees released from US run facilities in Iraq, Afghanistan, Guantanamo and elsewhere who reported being subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment during interrogation and detention. Extensive research by Amnesty International suggests that these are not isolated incidents. Although Amnesty International has presented this information on several occasions to US government officials, the organization has not received a full response to these allegations. Moreover, there are numerous indications that high ranking government officials have worked to block restrictions on extreme interrogation techniques that amount to torture.

During the past year, the US government has engaged in a series of high profile investigations into the subject of detainee treatment. However, none have met the standards of investigation necessary to gain a full accounting of command responsibility for the ever-growing numbers of allegations of torture and ill treatment of detainees in US custody. Investigations to date have been internal, largely classified, and lacked the mandate or ability to investigate the highest levels of civilian and military leadership and to assign responsibility or demand accountability. Lack of accountability is underscored by recent reports that an Army Inspector's General report will clear Lt. Gen. Ricardo Sanchez who was the senior U.S. commander in Iraq while torture and ill treatment occurred at Abu Ghraib, as well as Maj. Gen. Walter Wojdakowski who was Sanchez's former top deputy, Maj. Gen. Barbara Fast who was Sanchez's intelligence chief in Baghdad, and Col. Mark Warren who was Sanchez's top legal adviser at the time. The exoneration of top level officials and limited prosecution of low ranking soldiers makes clear the need for a truly independent investigation.

High-level US officials have frequently stated that the "war on terror" is a new war that requires new thinking. In fact, these officials seek to justify old methods that have long been de-legitimized. Suspending habeas corpus, "disappearing" detainees, incommunicado detention and the legalization of torture have been used in the name of national security and do not represent "new thinking." These policies merely recycle old, ineffective practices that violate human rights and undermine the rule of law.

Mr. President, I urge you to call for the establishment of an independent commission of inquiry and the appointment of a Special Counsel to conduct public investigations into the reports of abuse in US detention centers in Iraq, Afghanistan, Guantanamo and elsewhere; to establish whether acts of torture, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and other violations of relevant federal statutes have been committed; and to recommend safeguards to prevent further torture and ill-treatment. In addition, the Special Counsel should prosecute those who perpetrated crimes and those up the chain of command responsible for creating a climate that has facilitated such crimes.

Two years ago, you stated that, "torture anywhere is an affront to human dignity everywhere" and "the United States is committed to the world-wide elimination of torture and [is] leading this fight by example." Torture and ill-treatment of detainees at the hands of US personnel runs contrary to your words and the tenets of US and international law. The time for internal investigations and verbal denials has passed. It is essential that the world community view the investigations into such crimes as thorough and impartial, and that both those who commit such acts of torture and those in command who condone them are held accountable. For that reason, I urge you to support an independent commission of inquiry and the appointment of a Special Counsel.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely, YOUR NAME and ADDRESS

USA

Urge Disciplinary Action for Death in Custody

Amnesty International is saddened and outraged that Rev. Joseph Dantica has died in detention in Florida. The 81-year old minister arrived legally in Miami in October 2004. He had fled Haiti after death threats from Haitian gang members. In Miami, Rev. Dantica asked for asylum and was put into detention. His medicines were confiscated, he became seriously ill, and his family was forbidden to see him "for security reasons." He died completely alone, handcuffed to a hospital bed.

Please write to the Secretary of DHS urging that the Dantica investigation be thorough and substantive. Ask that the IG's report recommend specific disciplinary action, and specific changes in policy, to prevent other

asylum-seekers from being humiliated and mistreated like Rev. Dantica. You might also point out that such mistreatment does not improve U.S. national security.

APPEALS TO:

You can base your letters on the sample text below.

Michael Chertoff
Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security
3801 Nebraska Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20016

Dear Secretary Chertoff:

I am writing to express my concern regarding the death in detention of Rev. Joseph Dantica, an 81-year-old Haitian asylum seeker. Rev. Dantica died five days after being apprehended by the Department of Homeland Security and being jailed at the Krome detention center in Florida.

Rev. Dantica, who arrived with a valid passport and visa, told DHS officials upon arrival that he was seeking asylum from persecution in Haiti. He was taken to Krome. Upon arrival at that facility his medications were taken away from him. His condition deteriorated, until he was finally taken to Jackson Memorial Hospital, where he died five days after his arrival at Miami International airport. According to the Miami Herald, even after Rev. Dantica was vomiting and passed out, the Krome detention center medic said that Dantica was "faking" his illness and not being cooperative. After his transfer to ward "D" (for detention) of Jackson Memorial Hospital on November 2, family members were not permitted to visit him "for security reasons." The 81-year-old minister died alone, handcuffed to his hospital bed.

We call on you to make sure the IG's report on the circumstances of Rev. Dantica's detention and death is exhaustive. Did the U.S. Public Health Service examine him upon arrival at Krome? What allowance was made for his advanced age and frail condition? Why were his medications taken away, and why weren't they replaced with equivalent medications? Did any DHS or USPHS officials seek to ascertain information from him regarding his health condition in his language, Creole, or to explain to him in his language the authorities' plan for his care? Why wasn't he paroled from detention on humanitarian grounds quickly, given his condition? Couldn't he have been given a credible fear interview at the airport, instead of being taken to detention? Why wasn't his family permitted to visit him in the hospital, at the very least?

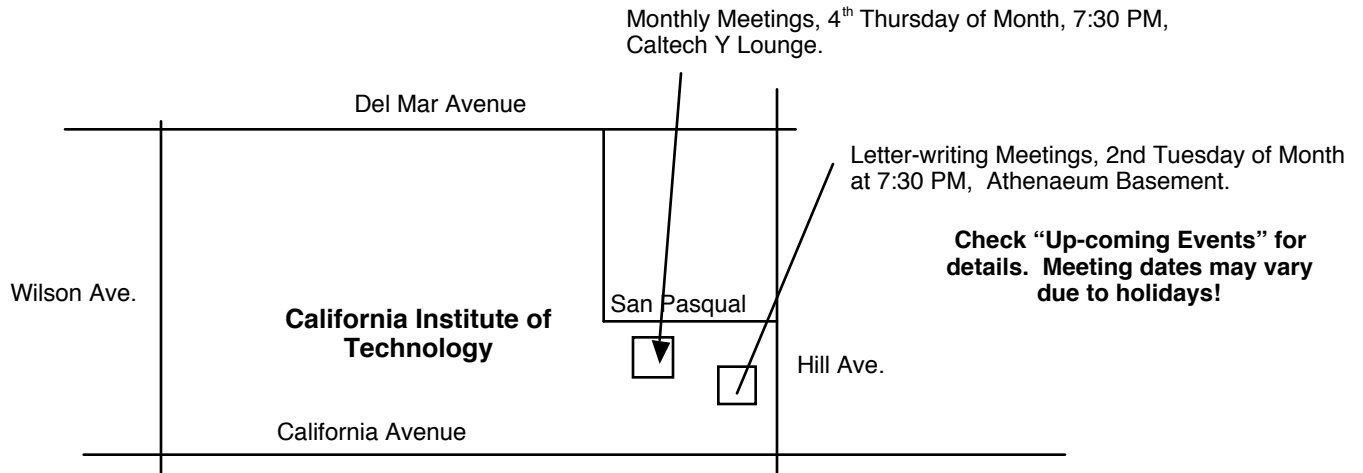
Finally, we would appreciate it if you would assess whether health complaints at Krome from Haitian detainees and/or other nationalities who speak neither English nor Spanish are acted on more slowly or taken less seriously than for other nationalities. Are Haitians with health complaints more likely to be regarded as "faking it" and to receive less attention than other nationalities?

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



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.