

# Amnesty International Group 22 Pasadena/Caltech News

Volume XVIII Number 9, September 2010

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Thursday, September 23, 7:30 PM.** Monthly Meeting. Caltech Y is located off 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 and more.

**Tuesday, October 12, 7:30 PM.** Letter writing meeting at Caltech Athenaeum, corner of Hill and California in Pasadena. This informal gathering is a great way for newcomers to get acquainted with Amnesty!

**Sunday, October 17, 6:30PM.** Rights Readers Human Rights Book Discussion group. This month we read "Forest Gate" by Peter Akinti.

## COORDINATOR'S CORNER

Hi everyone

Check out Facebook to see the photo of Robert and Marie-Helene's new arrival! Congratulations to the new mom and dad from all of us!

Also on Facebook you can find a site for Group 22, set up by Cheri, one of our members. Click on <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Amnesty-International-Pasadena-Group-22/159506047393747?ref=ts&v=wall#!> to access the group site. Thanks Cheri!

The Western Regional Conference, "Shine a Light – 50 years of Activism" will be held in San Francisco November 5-7. **Early bird registration for discount hotel rates ends September 30.**

This link has information on the conference and online registration link:  
<http://www.amnestyusa.org/regional-conferences/west/page.do?id=1691093>

This is a link to the conference brochure with mail-in registration and conference schedule.  
<http://www.scribd.com/doc/37359438/Western-Regional-Conference-Brochure>

Last time the WRC was in SF, Rob and I weren't able to go. We wanted to drive, but I was unable to call in sick for the Friday due to a commitment I'd made to cover a co-workers school to administer insulin to a diabetic child! We plan to attend this year!

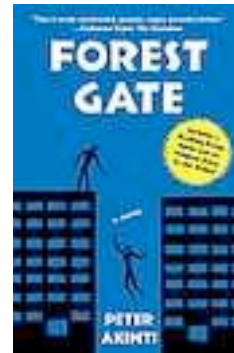
Con cariño,  
Kathy

## RIGHTS READERS

Human Rights Book Discussion Group

Keep up with Rights Readers at  
<http://rightsreaders.blogspot.com>

Next Rights Readers meeting:  
**Sunday October 17, 6:30 PM**  
Vroman's Bookstore  
695 E. Colorado Boulevard  
In Pasadena



## AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

Peter Akinti was a seventies child, born of Nigerian ancestry, in London. He read Law at a London University. He has written for the Guardian, and worked for four years at HM Treasury Chambers before founding and editing Untold Magazine for five years. Untold was the first independent British magazine for black men and had a wealth of gifted contributors from all over the diaspora. Peter spent eighteen months in Nigeria, running a restaurant, beer parlour and cinema in Ondo Town, Southwest Nigeria. He currently lives in Brooklyn. Forest Gate is his first novel.



## PUBLISHER COMMENTS

**A shattering, poetic and raw first novel set among young Somalian refugees in the slums of London — beginning with a double suicide and ending with a rebirth.**

In a community where poverty is kept close and passed from one generation to the next, two teenage boys, best friends, stand on top of twin

tower blocks. Facing each other across the abyss of London's urban sprawl, they say their good-byes and jump. One dies. The other, alternating with the sister of the deceased, narrates this novel.

James gives us a window into the inner city — his mom is a crack addict, his gang "brothers" force him to kill another black boy. Meina describes with feeling her family history in Somalia: after her parents are killed before her eyes, her village aunt sells her to six husbands — before she is even a teenager. Desperate to rebuild their lives, James and Meina set out to find the place for which every child longs — home.

Brutal and shockingly violent in places, rambunctious and lively in others and slyly, dryly witty in yet others, Meina and James's journey toward life through their past is ultimately a powerful story of redemptive love and the debut of an extraordinary literary talent.

## **PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE GAO ZHISHENG**

by Joyce Wolf

My monthly googling for Gao turned up a September podcast with Paul Mooney, a journalist with the South China Morning Post. It's 5 minutes long and you can download it from <http://www.worldvisionreport.org/Stories/Week-of-September-11-2010/China-Gao-Mooney>.

Group 22 adopted the case of human rights lawyer Gao Zhisheng (pronounced Gow Jirsheng). Gao disappeared for a year after he was detained by police in China in February 2009. He reappeared for a few weeks, but has been missing since 20 April.

Mr. Mooney described a private interview with Gao that he conducted in April during the brief period before Gao's second disappearance. Gao thanked the people of the U.S. and other countries for their efforts in his behalf and said the fact that people on the outside care was what kept him going. He said he had been tortured no less severely than during his previous detention in 2007. He also endured psychological harassment such as not being allowed to brush his teeth for 18 days. He felt conflicted between his wish to give his family a rest from worrying about him and his desire to speak out about human rights abuse in China.

Let's continue to demonstrate that the world has not forgotten Gao Zhisheng. This month let's write to the Chinese Embassy. Here's a sample letter you can use as a guide.

His Excellency Ambassador ZHANG Yesui  
Embassy of the People's Republic of China  
3505 International Place, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20008

Dear Ambassador,

I am deeply concerned about Gao Zhisheng (高智晟), a Beijing-based human rights lawyer who was detained in Shaanxi Province on February 4, 2009. His current whereabouts has been unknown since April 20, 2010.

A highly respected lawyer, Gao Zhisheng has represented a number of human rights defenders, including members of the spiritual group Falun Gong. The American Bar Association recently honored him with their 2010 International Human Rights Lawyer Award.

Although Gao was named one of the top 10 lawyers in 2001 by China's Justice Department, in 2005 the government revoked his license and sent him to jail for three years, during which time he reportedly was tortured. I respectfully urge that the authorities open a full and impartial investigation into allegations that Gao Zhisheng suffered ill-treatment in detention, including beatings and inadequate access to medical treatment, and bring those responsible to justice.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

[your name and address]

## **STOP VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN BY CHERI DELLELO**

**Tribal Law and Order Act of 2010**  
Native American and Alaska Native women are more than 2.5 times more likely to be raped or sexually assaulted than other women in the United States in general. A complex maze of tribal, state and federal jurisdictions allows perpetrators to rape with impunity and in some cases even encourages assaults.

President Obama signed the Tribal Law and Order Act of 2010 (TLOA) into law on July 21, 2010. This is a groundbreaking law marks an

important step forward in addressing some of the many continuing injustices that Native American and Alaska Native communities—particularly women—face in this country. TLOA will enhance the criminal justice system by improving coordination and communication between federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies.

Tinnekkia M. Williams-Three Legs, the Stop Violence Against Women (SVAW) Coordinator for the Dakotas, says “Before the release of the report by Amnesty International, the voices of our Native Women seemed to fall on deaf ears! Now the many voices of our Native sisters from around Indian country are being heard and more than [sic] that they are being listened to and changes are being made on an almost daily basis.”

### Conflict in Liberia

During the conflict in Liberia that lasted between 1989 and 1997 and also from 1999 to 2003, Liberian women and girls were confronted with unspeakable acts of violence including:

- Abduction
- Rape and other forms of sexual violence
- Murder of family

During the conflict, women played roles such as commanders, combatants, porters, spies, sex slaves, cooks, and mothers. Estimates of women and girls associated with fighting forces were in the range of 30-40% or 25,000-30,000 of all fighting forces. The high levels of sexual violence committed against women and girls is likely one of the most devastating aspects of their experience and the main difference between what men and women experienced in the conflict.

Although UN-sponsored disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation, and reintegration (DDRR) programs in Liberia did a better job of assisting females formerly associated with the fighting forces than other DDRR programs in other countries, women and girls still experienced significant difficulties in accessing and fully benefiting from the programs compared to men and boys.

As a result, thousands of women and girls that should have benefited did not. Many other women and girls that did participate dropped out for reasons such as the shame and stigma of being associated, limited child care, and sexual exploitation in schools. Many female former fighters are now facing overwhelming conditions and responsibilities alone. Few have access to appropriate medical care and many others are

largely uneducated, jobless, and with few skills. With little help to ease the burden, they have full responsibility for raising their children. At the same time, the incidences of sexual violence against females in homes, schools, and communities continue to rise in Liberia, seriously impacting the well being of Liberian families and society.

AI is encouraging members to view a documentary called *Women in Liberia: Fighting for Peace* that follows the epic journey of five Liberian women, but no LA area dates have been posted on AI's website yet. If dates become available, I will update you.



### The International Violence Against Women Act

The International Violence Against Women Act (IVAWA) is making progress in the U.S. Congress and has a good chance of passing this year, but it is critical that you keep up the pressure. Many of you have asked your member of Congress to support IVAWA before, but they need to hear from you again! We are hopeful that the bill will move to the floor of the House and the Senate very soon and members of Congress will have the opportunity to vote. Secure your member of Congress's vote for IVAW and urge them to cosponsor IVAWA and support the bill when it comes to the floor of the House or the Senate.

### Sample Please Co-Sponsor IVAWA letter

The Honorable \_\_\_\_\_ [Insert the District Office Address of your member of Congress here – find it at <http://www.congress.org/congressorg/dbq/officials/>]

Dear Representative/Senator (last name),

**I am writing to urge you to co-sponsor the International Violence Against Women Act**

**(H.R. 4594/S. 2982) and support the bill when it comes to the floor.**

Approximately one out of every three women globally has been beaten, coerced into sex, or otherwise abused in her lifetime. Rates of domestic violence are up to 70 percent in some countries. Every day a woman is raped, beaten by her husband or forced to trade sex for food. All too often these violent crimes are not prosecuted and worse still, they become socially accepted and tolerated. Violence against women is a global health crisis and human rights violation that contributes to instability and insecurity throughout our world.

Support from the American public is strong. A 2009 poll found that 61 percent of voters across demographic and political lines thought global violence against women should be one of the top international priorities for the U.S. government, and 82 percent supported the I-VAWA legislation when it was explained to them.

**I am asking you, as my Representative/Senator, to co-sponsor the International Violence Against Women Act and take action to end the abuse.**

The International Violence Against Women Act (I-VAWA) supports innovative programs which have been shown to effectively decrease acts of violence. Many of these programs help women and girls do things we so often take for granted; go to school, earn an income to take care of their families, collect food or water without fear of rape and bring perpetrators of abuse to justice. I-VAWA will increase the efficiency and effectiveness of existing US foreign policy to end violence against women and enhance our ability to stop the suffering.

In a world where tensions and violence within communities can jeopardize national and international security, it is critical that the United States takes action to end atrocities committed against women and girls in their homes and in their communities, during times of peace and times of conflict.

The International Violence Against Women Act provides the United States with an opportunity to effectively address this problem and stop the violence around the world. When implemented, this important piece of legislation will put an end to the fear, pain and suffering experienced by countless women and girls globally.

Please make a difference in the lives of millions of women and girls - co-sponsor this important bill and support it when it comes to the floor.

Yours sincerely,  
**(Your name and address)\*\*Or ask other group members and constituents to add their names and address to one letter.\*\***

## **THE STORY OF LU TIAN, A PASADENA RESIDENT AND WIFE OF CHINESE PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE**

**BY WEN CHEN**

Lu Tian is a Falun Gong practitioner living in Pasadena. In 2009, after 30 days of detention and torture by the Chinese authority for her beliefs, she escaped to Singapore, and then came to the United States. The following is her story.

“On Jan. 13, 2009 when my husband and I were posting Falun Gong flyers in Dalian, China, we were followed by three local plain-clothes police and taken to the Ganjingzi Police station. That same night, we were taken to the Dalian Detention Center and detained there. In the detention center I was forced to do the heaviest work, and was slapped on the face. Although being tortured both physically and mentally, I insisted that I had done nothing wrong in telling people the truth of Falun Gong. I was released one month later. With the help of my parents and my friends overseas, I came to the United States in Dec. 24, 2009.

However, my husband Cong Rixu was not so fortunate. After he was arrested, the Ganjingzi Procuratorate and the Court framed up charges and tried to sentence him to prison. My parents-in-law were constantly harassed by the local police. I was also monitored and harassed while going to Beijing to look for a lawyer for my husband. Even though the district attorney had rejected my husband’s case twice before, citing insufficient evidence, on June 16, 2009, the Ganjingzi District Court still had the show trial and tried to sentence my husband. When two lawyers for my husband entered a “non-guilty” plea, the court adjourned. However, the Ganjingzi District Court later cooked up charges and sentenced my husband to three years in prison. Now he is jailed in the Nanguan Prison of Dalian. According to eyewitness accounts, the

food is very bad there and he always suffered from hunger and has lost weight seriously. The Chinese Communist Regime not only persecuted my husband but also his lawyer, Mr. Wang Yonghang. On June 16, 2009, Lawyer Wang Yonghang presented in court voluntarily and defended my husband with a "non-guilty" plea. This infuriated the Communist regime since no attorney in China was allowed to defend Falun Gong practitioners as "non-guilty". Lawyer Wang Yonghang was immediately followed and taken into the Dalian Detention Center. He was severely beaten there and sustained fractures to his right ankle. One of his legs suffered atrophy as a result of delayed medical treatment. He was not sent to the hospital for surgery until one month after. He was force-fed and almost choked to death just because he tried to stop the guards from torturing other Falun Gong practitioners in the cell. He was also hand-cuffed on to the ground for 48 hours. On November 27, 2009, Lawyer Wang Yonghang was sentenced to seven years into prison. Like Lawyer Gao Zhisheng, Mr. Wang is another Chinese human rights lawyer who was sentenced to heavy prison term.

For more than ten years, Falun Gong practitioners have been brutally persecuted by the Chinese Communist regime. They continuously face the risk of detention, torture and murder. Please help to rescue my husband Gong Rixu and his defending lawyer, Mr. Wang Yonghang."

Lu Tian has been coming to the monthly meeting of AI group 22 and updating the current situation of her husband and Mr. Wang Yonghang. You may show your support by writing letters to Mr. Cong Rixu and Mr. Wang Yonghang.

Mr. Cong Rixu  
China Post Public Mail Box 203-13  
Dalian City, Liaoning Province  
P.R.China 116037

You may also visit Lu Tian's blog:  
<http://tianlu.blog.epochtimes.com/article/?categoryid=2520>

## DEATH PENALTY NEWS

BY STEVI CARROLL

What do Japan and the United States have in common? Hello Kitty? Anime? Baseball? Well, yes, all of these plus the distinction of being

the only major industrialized nations to use the death penalty. Recently, Japanese authorities allowed the local media in to Japan's death chambers, just a month after executing two inmates. Nouto Hosaka, a former lawmaker and former secretary general of the Diet's League for the Abolition of the Death Penalty said the media may have gotten a 'sanitized' view of the Tokyo Detention Center. This new openness may lead to more national debate about the use of capital punishment, but Mr. Hosaka doesn't think it will. While Japan hangs the condemned, the United States uses lethal injection.

### New rules?

Here in California, an injunction staying all executions because of suits filed against the use of lethal injection is in force until or unless Marin County Superior Court Judge Verna Adams rules otherwise. This is not, however, stopping the prison officials at San Quentin from moving on "operationally" in preparation for the September 29 scheduled execution of Albert Greenwood Brown. As we discussed last month, new procedures for lethal injection written by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation have been adopted and prosecutors believe these procedures allow for the resumption of executions. At this point since the judge's order still stands, people, from Amnesty International, Death Penalty Focus and others, watching this case expect the execution will be canceled. We'll see.

### George Smithey

In late August, condemned inmate George Smithey had his death sentence commuted to life without parole because of mental retardation, a defense that was not allowed in his 1989 trial. Mr. Smithey, 70, hanged himself in his cell less than a week after the ruling. A prison spokesman Lt. Sam Robinson said he did not know if Mr. Smithey had been notified about the change in his sentence. According to the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation website, 18 condemned inmates have committed suicide since the death penalty was reinstated in 1978.

### New death row

If you know anyone who works in the public sector, you probably have heard about budget cuts to programs we have for our shared benefit: education, libraries, public health, firefighters, police. The governor did not take

office and solve California's financial woes. But Governor Schwarzenegger, and his administration, have decided to borrow nearly \$65 million from the general fund to begin building a new 1,152-bed death row at San Quentin State Prison. H. D. Palmer, spokesman for the Department of Finance said the favorable construction climate we have in the state, high unemployment in the construction industry, will allow the state to save money. (It's really a jobs program, of course.) The new facility will include a 24-bed medical treatment center while those 1,152 beds will be divided among 768 new cells. The \$64.7 million will, perhaps, cover the first-year costs. The entire project may come at \$356 million. When I called Assemblyman Anthony Portantino's office to see if this project really is advancing, the woman who answered the phone laughed at my question and said we don't have the money. We'll see, especially since those are our 356 million tax dollars at work.

### 10-10-10 World day against the death penalty

During the days just prior to and after October 10, people around the world will take action to raise awareness about the death penalty. The special interest of the events will focus on the USA, especially the cases of Reggie Clemons and Troy Davis. Last month at the Los Angeles County Coalition for Death Penalty Alternatives, we discussed the possibility of some 10-10-10 action. After our September 19 meeting we'll know more about this.

(Reggie Clemons:

<http://www.amnestyusa.org/abolish/i/ClemonsFactSheet.pdf> online action:

[http://takeaction.amnestyusa.org/siteapps/advocacy/index.aspx?c=jhKPIXPCIoE&b=2590179&template=x.ascx&action=14230;](http://takeaction.amnestyusa.org/siteapps/advocacy/index.aspx?c=jhKPIXPCIoE&b=2590179&template=x.ascx&action=14230)

Troy Davis:

<http://www.amnestyusa.org/death-penalty/troy-davis-finality-over-fairness/page.do?id=1011343>

Online action:

[http://takeaction.amnestyusa.org/siteapps/advocacy/index.aspx?c=jhKPIXPCIoE&b=2590179&template=x.ascx&action=12970\)](http://takeaction.amnestyusa.org/siteapps/advocacy/index.aspx?c=jhKPIXPCIoE&b=2590179&template=x.ascx&action=12970)

### Teresa Lewis

Teresa Lewis is scheduled to be executed September 23. Matthew Shallenberger and Rodney Fuller the two men who did in fact commit the murders in the crime she's slated to

die for received life sentences. Ms Lewis' IQ is 72. In an Amnesty article Mr. Fuller is quoted as saying, "Ms Lewis would do just about anything Shallenberger asked her to do." Amnesty has taken this case on. Check the online action to see the status of this action.

<http://takeaction.amnestyusa.org/siteapps/advocacy/index.aspx?c=jhKPIXPCIoE&b=2590179&template=x.ascx&action=14652>

### Two Iranian women in danger of imminent execution

From Amnesty International:

Zeynab Jalalian, a 27-year-old Iranian Kurd, was arrested in 2007 and convicted in 2009 due to her alleged connection with a Kurdish armed opposition group. Sakineh Mohammadi Ashtiani was convicted of adultery and sentenced to death by stoning.

**Online action:**

<http://takeaction.amnestyusa.org/siteapps/advocacy/index.aspx?c=jhKPIXPCIoE&b=2590179&template=x.ascx&action=14503>

### USA Executions

September

9 Holly Wood Alabama lethal injection

10 Cal Brown Washington lethal injection

### Executions stayed

August

24 Brian Galvin Pennsylvania

September

14 Anthony Dick Pennsylvania

16 Brent Sherwood Pennsylvania

Gregory Wilson Kentucky

### Sentences commuted to life without parole

September

Kevin Keith Ohio

Galle Owens Tennessee

### Videos on YouTube

**DEATH TO THE DEATH PENALTY** - Amnesty International

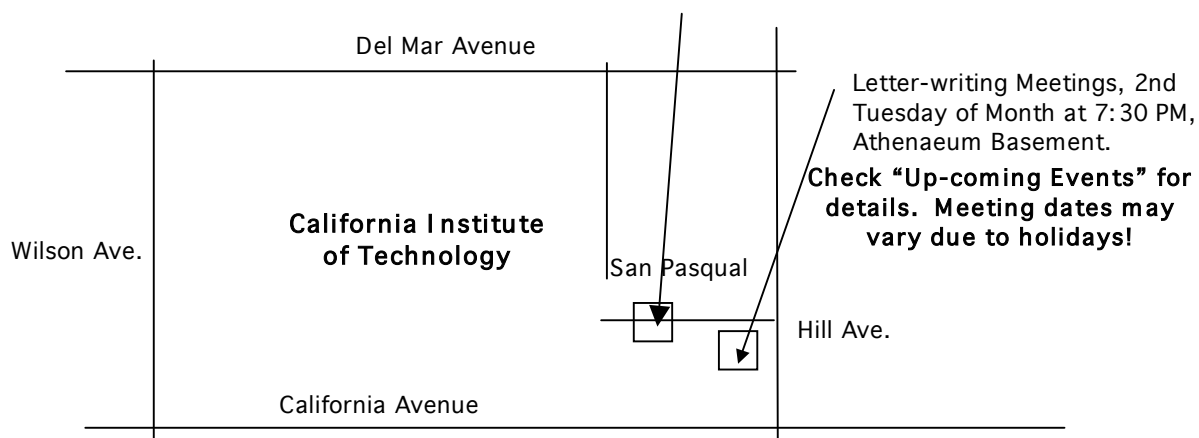
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XIXthucUGuQ>

### GROUP 22 MONTHLY LETTER COUNT

UA's	10
UA's (DP)	2
POC	6
Total	18
To add your letters to the total contact <a href="mailto:lwkamp@gmail.com">lwkamp@gmail.com</a> .	

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Monthly Meetings, 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of Month, 7:30 PM,  
Caltech Y Lounge.



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  
The Caltech Y  
Mail Code 5-62  
Pasadena, CA 91125  
[www.its.caltech.edu/~aigp22/](http://www.its.caltech.edu/~aigp22/)  
<http://rightsreaders.blogspot.com>



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.