Volume XIX Number 4, April 2011

# UPCOMING EVENTS

**Thursday, April 28, 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 May 10, 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, May 15, 6:30PM.** Rights Readers Human Rights Book Discussion group. This month we read "The Routes of Man" by Ted Conover.

# COORDINATOR'S CORNER

Hi everyone

Spring break is almost over and then it's back to crazy time! I've enjoyed a nice rest, getting a few important things done but mostly flaking off!

Hope everyone has a nice holiday weekend. Group 22 members have been busy lately – Stevi, Joyce, and Lucas attended the AGM in San Francisco last month. Read the reports from Joyce and Lucas featured in this newsletter. Stevi and Laura attended a Pasadena City Council meeting with other DP activists in order to persuade them to adopt a resolution against it.

Doo Dah is coming up next weekend. It's not too late to join the fun! This year's theme is maternal health care. Rob and I will be in Eastern Washington that weekend to celebrate my aunt's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday along with a crowd of relatives!

Con cariño, Kathy

# **RIGHTS READERS**

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Human Rights Book Discussion Group

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



Next Rights Readers meeting:

Sunday, May 15, 6:30 PM

Vroman's Bookstore 695 E. Colorado Blvd In Pasadena

The Routes of Man by Ted Conover

# About the Author

I feel lucky to do what I do. I write about real people, often by living their lives for a whilevisiting their lives, you might say. Trying them on for size. Though there are easier ways to make a living, I suppose, none strike me as a fraction so interesting.

My first real adventures were cross-country bicycle rides, and a summer's work in a sausage factory in Pamplona, Spain. During time off from college, I did community organizing in Dallas as a VISTA volunteer. Then came riding the rails (Rolling Nowhere), which originated as another escape from college, but doubled as research for a senior anthropology thesis. A transcendent moment occurred in a freight yard



in Bakersfield, California, where, as I spoke with a guy my age named Enrique Jarra, it dawned on me that Mexican illegals were the true, modern-day incarnation of the classic American hobo. Coyotes, my second book, recounts a year of work and travel with these men.

A smart guy I met in New York (he now edits the New Yorker magazine) introduced me at a party as a writer who "made a living sleeping on the ground," which got me thinking and led me to Aspen and Whiteout, a very different sort of first-person ethnography. And then came Newjack, an account of immersion in a world that is tough and dangerous and—if a person's not careful—soul-shrinking. That research was my hardest ever, but also paid an enduring dividend of knowledge. In my latest book, *The Routes of Man*, I link a series of challenging first-person passages down roads with reflections on how this most extensive manmade artifact changes us all, both intentionally and not. It's a book about roads, yes, but like my others it's also a book about me. I continue to admire writing where the writer has something at stake; where he doesn't just depend on experts but rather takes time to think and research and participate, thereby transforming himself into an expert; where his caring and the urgency of the subject can transform the writing into something that matters, an act of witnessing.

From Ted Conover's website

#### ARMCHAIR TRAVELER Book Review: 'The Routes of Man: How Roads

Are Changing the World and the Way We Live Today'

#### By Richard B. Woodward New York Times

The symbolic value of the road may be as crucial for civilization as its ancient function in easing the transport of goods and soldiers. Poets have long viewed the ups and downs of a tortuous path worn smooth over time as a potent metaphor for the course of life itself. To young Americans after World War II, the highway promised escape and happy fortuity, while for less mobile societies it has been as much a source of trouble as a way out of it — the means by which the destructive stranger, novelty or virus comes to town.

Ted Conover's absorbing book sifts the many meanings of the concept and weighs the profit and loss for various cultures (as well as wildlife) attendant on this expanding form of infrastructure. One of the leading participatory journalists of our time, he has bushwhacked far off the interstates before, sleeping in the Mexican desert with immigrants heading north in "Coyotes" and in boxcars with hobos in "Rolling Nowhere".

His six adventures here are no less far-flung. He walks with a group of young Tibetan Buddhists through the Indian region of Ladakh as they make their annual 40-mile journey on a frozen river from Himalayan villages to the city of Leh. He rides with Peruvian truckers heading over the Andes with an illegal shipment of mahogany and with Kenyan truckers suspected of spreading AIDS along their routes. In China and Nigeria, countries afflicted with patchy transportation networks, he reports on efforts to build more and better roads, success that has resulted in bigger traffic and social problems. After each of these first-person travelogues, which exhibit his remarkable gift for companionship and impious eye for absurdity, Mr. Conover pauses to reflect on everything from the role of the military in highway construction to the thrill of driving a Porsche over the speed limit to the emerging discipline of road ecology.

"For many animals, movement is not optional; it's what they do to find food, to survive," he writes, adding with chagrin that he himself has probably killed tens of thousands of insects and other tiny creatures by accident in his 30 years as a driver.

"The road is very unfair, very harsh," observes a Kenyan truck driver, and Mr. Conover agrees. But it is also, a friend of his notes, an oddly "self-effacing" feature of any landscape, one that is "always receding." Loaded with searching questions about the double edge of connectivity and the future of the planet, this is a book with few answers. The main comfort it provides is the chance to spend time with such a thoughtful and daring writer.

# REPORT ON THE AIUSA 2011 AGM IN SF MARCH 18-20.

#### By Lucas Kamp

Joyce, Stevi, Veronica and I attended this event, which was held in the historic (and expensive!) Fairmont Hotel, where the UN Charter was drafted in 1945. The weather was pretty bad and delayed our flights up by several hours, but we made it just in time to catch the last part of the opening ceremonies, featuring Joan Baez talking about her long-time experiences working for human rights and AI and singing several songs. She has aged, of course, but still looks and sounds very good.

Saturday morning I attended an OCAN breakfast caucus led by Kala Mendoza, where more plans were made for the Organizing Cities project, in which LA is one of the focus cities. After that were the Opening Remarks, featuring a video address by Jimmy Carter and a truly great speech by Salil Shetty, the new Secretary General of AI (who replaced Irene Khan, about whose departure last year there has been a big news flap – to which no reference at all was made during the entire conference). Shetty is an excellent speaker, both funny and eloquent; I hope he will be equally effective as S-G. I

missed the first sessions block, but attended the lunchtime Local Groups Caucus and an interesting session entitled "Are UN Investigative Reports Advancing International Justice?" (consensus: they are, on the whole, though some are pretty futile). I then attended a rather strange "focus group" to which I had been invited, supposedly by random selection, though almost everyone there was a group coordinator or some AI functionary; it was a small closed session that focused mostly on PR aspects of AI. After that there was a series of plenary sessions that featured a number of speakers, mostly good to excellent; one who stood out was Jenni Williams of Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA), who was both colorful and eloquent.

Sunday morning was the voting plenary, which processed 5 resolutions, 3 of which pertained to environmental issues. None was particularly controversial and all passed by large margins. The most interesting one, to me, was one addressing the human rights of environmental cross-border migrants (e.g., inhabitants of island nations that are sinking due to rising sea levels), a category that has been neglected in comparison to refugees from wars or political oppression. After that was the closing plenary, featuring four speakers all of whom were very interesting: Salil Shetty again, giving another fine turn, Paul Hoffman, a well known HR lawyer and past AI functionary, who gave a fascinating account of the development of AI over the decades, Mike Posner, an official with the Obama administration who offered some unique insights into the struggle within that administration to give voice to human rights, and Larry Cox, the Executive Director of AIUSA (in his final year in that role), to whom it's always a pleasure to listen.

After the end of the conference on Sunday afternoon I attended a 3-hour session of the Regional Planning group at the Western Regional Office, led by the Regional Director, Rini Chakraborty. I did not have much to contribute to this group, but it was interesting to hear something about the inner workings of the AIUSA administration. One small detail of which I made note is that the WRO has a large collection of films that can be obtained by local groups for public viewings; there is a link to a list of these in the Weekly Update email that gets sent out regularly.

This AGM commemorated the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of AI and AIUSA pulled out all

the stops to make it a success. I think it succeeded, with some really outstanding speakers and about 1300 attendees.

# MORE ABOUT AGM By Joyce Wolf

Here are a few notes of mine to supplement Lucas's excellent summary. Because of our plane delays, we missed the Opening Ceremony, but arrived just as the Joan Baez tribute was beginning. Steve Earle sang "I Dreamed I Saw Joe Hill" and got a big cheer when he changed the words to "From San Diego to Madison." (Throughout the conference any mention of Wisconsin was greeted with huge applause!) You can watch at

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F9S9Oiyyx vE and also find links to Joan's performances at AGM of "Imagine" and "There But for Fortune." We posted Stevi's beautiful photo of Joan on our Group 22 facebook page.

I attended the workshop "Holding Oil Companies Accountable: Human Rights in the Gulf Coast and the Niger Delta." Amnesty's renewed emphasis on environmental issues warmed my heart, since the Just Earth campaign back in 2000 was my first bit of activism. I picked up the new Niger Delta petition to use for the theme of Group 22's table at Pasadena's Earth Day festival. Stage 2 of the Nigeria campaign is planned to coincide with the November anniversary of Ken Saro-Wiwa's execution.

A highlight of the Saturday afternoon plenary was the live phone call to Aung San Suu Kyi. She couldn't see the standing ovation we gave her, but she could certainly hear it! Another inspiring speaker was Jenni Williams of WoZA. I remember writing cards to these women during Amnesty write-a-thons. Jenni told a story about how various local police stations did not want to hold a group of arrested WOZA women, because "too many letters would be coming".

My favorite resolution was the one about promoting a healthy and safe environment as a human right. An AIUSA Board amendment (passed overwhelmingly) added language mentioning the previous Just Earth campaign. The final texts of the resolutions passed by the AGM are not yet online, although I suppose that will happen eventually. More articles about the AGM are posted at http://blog.amnestyusa.org/tag/agm11/.

# PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE GAO ZHISHENG By Joyce Wolf

It was one year ago on April 20 that human rights lawyer Gao Zhisheng disappeared for the second time into the custody of China's secret police. Members of Group 22 marked the anniversary by signing a card of support and encouragement for Geng He, Gao's wife, who fled with their children to the U.S. in 2009.

European Parliament President Jerzy Buzek noted the anniversary. On April 20 he said, " I remain seriously concerned about the fate of Mr. Gao Zhisheng. ...[the Chinese authorities] should provide a credible account of Gao Zhisheng's whereabouts and his state of health." <u>http://www.europarl.europa.eu/president/vie</u> w/en/press.html

Gao has been in the news a lot in the past month. On March 24 he received the 2011 Bindmans Law and Campaigning Award from the Index of Censorship organization. Geng He stated, "I wish Gao Zhisheng could receive this award, instead of me accepting on his behalf. I would have been proud to see him here, I would have cheered for his regained freedom and once again I would have been able to breathe freely, to think freely, and to speak freely." http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pWwWJ09 JcZQ

On March 28 the organization Freedom Now made public a judgment from the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detentions. Senator John Kerry responded, "I commend the thorough investigation by the independent UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention into the disappearance of Gao Zhisheng, the Chinese lawyer and human rights advocate. I am deeply concerned for Gao's welfare, and I call on the Chinese government to release him immediately and reunite him with his wife and family." <u>http://freedomnow.org/news</u>

The arrest of renowned artist Ai Weiwei has sparked worldwide reactions concerning human rights in China. See Martha's excellent articles of April 15 and April 17 at

http://rightsreaders.blogspot.com. The annual springtime human rights dialog between the USA and China, scheduled for next week in Beijing, should have some interesting topics to discuss. Assistant Secretary Michael Posner will lead the US delegation. He was a speaker at the AGM's last plenary session and acquitted himself well under relentless questioning, so here's wishing him luck! <u>http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2011/04/</u> 161492.htm

Please take a moment to observe the anniversary of Gao Zhisheng's disappearance by expressing your concern to one or more authorities in China. Addresses and guidelines are at <u>http://www.its.caltech.edu/~aigp22/GaoPOC</u>/GaoZhisheng.html.

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL GROUP 22 APPEALS TO CITY HALL

#### By Laura Brown

Members of the Los Angeles County Coalition for Death Penalty Alternatives met Thursday, April 21, 2011 with Pasadena City Councilwoman Margaret McAustin to press their case against California executions. Stevi Carroll and Laura Brown represented Group 22 at the meeting. McAustin seemed very receptive to the group's ideas, asking questions and revealing that she personally opposes the death penalty, and that her strongest objection to it is that an innocent person may be executed. In materials handed out by James Clark, the coalition leader, a Senate commission has found that 138 people so far have been exonerated from death row in the U.S.

Clark urged McAustin to initiate a move by the Pasadena City Council to go on record as opposing the death penalty. He and other members noted that the council took such a position on a prominent issue earlier when they opposed the Patriot Act. In addition, some city councils have expressed their support for equality in marriage. Clark told McAustin that California may repeal the death penalty only by an initiative of the voters. However, he said that Governor Jerry Brown has the power to convert the sentences of all of those on death row to life without parole, should he choose to do so.

In the meantime, Clark asked McAustin to help introduce a resolution to the legislative committee of Pasadena's city council the purpose of the resolution, Clark said, is to prevail upon Los Angeles County District Attorney Steve Cooley to not pursue additional death penalty sentences. Each county prosecution seeking death costs the county budget \$1 million, Clark said. Senior Minister Jim Nelson of the Neighborhood Unitarian Universalist Church of Pasadena told McAustin, that economic issues are not the only important ones for elected officials to consider. Leading the community in doing the right thing is also their duty, he said. "We elected you to be courageous," he told McAustin.

Clark told the councilwoman that California has more people on death row (715) than any other state. The California legislature is considering building a new death row facility at a cost of \$400 million, in addition to the nearly \$1 million spent recently on renovating the death chamber. McAustin met with the coalition members for more than 40 minutes, and ended by agreeing to bring up the resolution to Pasadena Mayor Bill Bogaard immediately. Clark said that the coalition has already met with Pasadena council member Jacque Robinson on the issue, and plans to meet soon with council member Steve Madison and Bogaard.

# VIOLATIONS AGAINST WOMEN By Cheri Dellelo

#### Make It a Meaningful Mother's Day



AI is campaigning to have the Maternal Health Accountability Act of 2011 passed. This act would establish accountability, fight maternal health disparities, and combat severe maternal complications.

As we told you last month, every 90 seconds a woman dies from complications related to pregnancy and childbirth. This is a global problem, but you may be surprised to hear that it is a serious concern in the U.S. as well. Women in the U.S. have a higher risk of dying of pregnancy-related complications than those in 49 other countries, including Kuwait, Bulgaria, and South Korea. And California rates an appalling 35<sup>th</sup> among the United States in maternal health. This Mother's Day (May 8), please consider making a donation to AI in your mother's name to honor her and to help support the passage of the Maternal Health Accountability Act of 2011. Visit AIUSA's site to make to make your taxdeductable donation—

http://tinyurl.com/3rw9h5d.

#### Pakistan Considers Life Sentence for Acid Attacks On Women



Pakistan's National Assembly is considering a bill that would toughen the punishment for people who commit acid attacks on women. The bill was prepared by the National Commission on the

Status of Women, a government committee that oversees women's rights in Pakistan. Tahira Noor, head of the commission, said that life imprisonment and a fine of 1 million rupees (\$11,800) had been proposed in the bill as punishment for anyone involved in carrying out an acid attack on women. (The current penalty for those convicted of acid attacks is between five and 14 years in prison.) People selling the acid used in the attacks would also be subject to legal action.

Reports suggest that an average of about 150 incidents of acid attacks on women are reported in Pakistan each year. Men attack women with acid and usually throw it at their heads or faces, often leaving them grotesquely disfigured. The attacks are sometimes carried out for religious reasons. But more often they are used by men against disgruntled wives, because a woman has rejected a man, or to settle family feuds.

#### Liberian Woman Forced to Undergo Female Genital Mutilation

In Liberia, in January 2010, Ruth Berry Peal had an argument with two women from the Gola ethnic group and was summoned by the Gola



Chief who ruled that she be genitally mutilated despite her belonging to an ethnic group that does not practice FGM. The following day, Ruth was forcibly taken from her home to the 'bush' where she was genitally mutilated in an initiation ritual, was forced to take an oath of secrecy and was threatened with death if she broke the oath. She was kept in the 'bush' for one month and developed health complications, which required three months of treatment following her release. Ruth filed a lawsuit against the two women who forcibly mutilated her. However, because Ruth has invoked the wrath of the Gola community by exposing their practice after taking an oath of secrecy, she and her husband received several threats demanding they drop the case. Ruth's case has been moved to Monrovia, where she currently resides apart from her husband and children due to threats against her. She has been receiving support from the Women NGOs Secretariat of Liberia (WONGOSOL), Women of Liberia Peace Network (WOLPNET) and the Association of Female Lawyers of Liberia (AFELL).

Please write to the Liberian authorities urging them to honor Liberia's international and regional human rights commitments by enacting and enforcing comprehensive legislation against FGM as well as supporting educational outreach to relevant communities and local chiefs on the harms of FGM. Please also urge the Minister of Internal Affairs to immediately cease the practice of issuing permits to schools where FGM is conducted, and ask them to ensure that Ruth Peal obtains justice and remedy for the abuse she suffered. Because Ruth is threatened by members of the secret society and traditional heads who support the secret society, please also request that the government provide her with immediate protection. A sample letter, street addresses, and email addresses can be found at Equality Now's website http://tinyurl.com/6f4h5g3.

## Libyan Woman Detained and Slandered After Rape Claim

Libyan postgraduate law student Iman al-Obeidi attracted worldwide media attention on March 26



during the 2011 Libyan Civil War, when she burst into the restaurant of the Rixos Hotel in Tripoli and told the international press corps staying there that 15 of Muammar Gaddafi's government troops had detained her at a checkpoint, held her against her will for two days, beaten, and gang-raped her. Her insistence on telling her story in public had the effect of challenging both the Gadaffi regime and the taboo that surrounds discussion of sex crimes in that country.

A scuffle took place in which government security forces dragged her out of the hotel and drove her to an unknown destination, using violence against journalists who tried to help her. Government spokespersons told reporters she was drunk, mentally ill, a whore, and a thief. A Libyan state television anchor called her a whore and a traitor, and said she would be charged with slander. *The Washington Post* described her as a "symbol of defiance against Gaddafi."

Police "minders" tried to prevent al-Obeidi from speaking to foreign journalists.

She was released from government detention after three days, and was interviewed several times by Libya TV—an opposition satellite channel—and by CNN, during which she offered graphic details of her rape and subsequent detention by government officials. As of April 11, she remained out of detention, but was being prevented from leaving Tripoli. Please urge the Gaddafi Development Foundation to:

- Ensure Iman el-Obeidi's right to freedom of movement is guaranteed and that clear instructions are issued to all pro-Gaddafi forces not to obstruct her safe passage to eastern Libya.

- Demand the Libyan authorities conduct an immediate, full, and thorough independent investigation into her alleged rape and illtreatment by members of the Libyan security forces and bring those responsible to justice.

AI's UK site has a sample email you can send: <u>http://tinyurl.com/6z3r8em</u>.

#### Egyptian Women Protesters Forced To Take 'Virginity Tests'

AI called on the Egyptian authorities to investigate serious allegations of torture, including forced 'virginity tests,' inflicted by the army on women protesters arrested in Tahrir Square last month. After army officers violently cleared the square of protesters on March 9, at least 18 women were held in military detention. AI has been told by women protesters that they were beaten, given electric shocks, subjected to strip searches while being photographed by male soldiers, then forced to submit to 'virginity checks' and threatened with prostitution charges.

All the women detained in the military prison were brought before a military court on 11 March and released on 13 March. Several received one-year suspended prison sentences. Salwa Hosseini was convicted of disorderly conduct, destroying private and public property, obstructing traffic, and carrying weapons. AI opposes the trial of civilians before military courts in Egypt, which have a track record of unfair trials and where the right to appeal is severely restricted.

Demand that Egyptian officials investigate the allegations and stop this shocking and degrading treatment of women protestors. Call on Secretary Clinton to use her influence to demand immediate action by sending the email provided by AI at http://tinyurl.com/3lh4ow5.

# DEATH PENALTY NEWS By Stevi Carroll

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#### LACCDPA

As Laura discussed, she and I along with other members of the Los Angeles County Coalition for Death Penalty Alternatives met with Pasadena City Councilmember Margaret McAustin. The meeting did go well, and I am looking forward to continuing with this work.

The LACCDPA is adding the city council of West Hollywood to pursue for support in our resolution to DA Steve Cooley. A LGBT group called IDAHO (International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia) has taken a stand linking gay rights and human rights including death penalty abolition. We thought this would be a perfect entry to the West Hollywood city council. Also James Clark said that years ago West Hollywood supported a resolution against the death penalty. More news to come.

# Gil Garcetti

Former LA country DA, Gil Garcetti who pursued death sentences while DA recently went on record saying that the California "death penalty is dysfunctional." He said that the resources used to pursue the death penalty would be better spent "keeping kids in school, keeping teachers and counselors in their schools and giving the juvenile justice system the resources it needs." He thinks we should use our shared tax money on preventing crimes. This is a boost for our cause!

# **Troy Davis**

March 28, 2011, the U. S. Supreme Court ruled that Troy Davis did not prove his innocence and while the court does not believe guilt has been undeniably established, he still may face execution. This ruling removes Mr. Davis's last remaining court challenge to his execution. Jason Ewart, one of Mr. Davis' lawyers, says he will now take the appeal back to the Georgia pardons and paroles board. An online petition is available at

http://takeaction.amnestyusa.org/siteapps/ad vocacy/index.aspx?c=jhKPIXPCIoE&b=2590179 &template=x.ascx&action=12970

At the AGM, I had the opportunity to hear Martina N. Davis-Correia, Mr. Davis' sister, and Antone De'Juan Davis-Correia, his nephew, speak. They have not given up hope for Mr. Davis and continue to work for him. Meeting them allowed me to see the human faces of this campaign.

On April 12, 2011, Virginia Davis, Mr. Davis's mother, unexpectedly died. Martina Davis-Correia said that her mother had been upset since the Supreme Court's decision. Ms Davis-Correia also said, "I think she just had a broken heart."

If you would like to send Troy Davis a letter or card, please write to Troy A. Davis #657378 GDCP PO Box 3877 G-2-39 Jackson, GA 30233

An interesting video about Mr. Davis, Life and Trials of Troy Anthony Davis, can be found at http://bcove.me/cmwrvvlt.

# Death Penalty in 2010

Amnesty has released a report, Death Penalty in 2010: Executing Countries Left Isolated After Decade of Progress. The report is available at http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-andupdates/report/death-penalty-2010-executingcountries-left-isolated-after-decade-progress

An interesting short video, Death Penalty in 2010, can be found at http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-andupdates/report/death-penalty-2010-executingcountries-left-isolated-after-decade-progress

# **Drugs for Killing**

As you will see from the recent executions, the drugs used are changing. Because of the shortage of sodium thiopental - one drug used in the three-drug injection, states have begun to use one drug, pentobarbital, even though "the drug's manufacturer argues against its use in capital punishment." Some states are now swapping drugs to be ready for their executions.

#### **Stays of Execution**

April

5	Cleve Foster	Texas

- 5 Daniel Wayne Cook Arizona
- 6 Wayne Kubsch Indiana

#### Executions

March

- 29 Eric King Arizona Lethal Injection 3-drug w/sodium thiopental
- 31 William Glenn Boyd Alabama Lethal Injection 3-drug w/sodium thiopental

April

12 Clarence Carter Ohio Lethal Injection 1-drug pentobarbital

# MONTHLY LETTER COUNT

UAs	25	
DP	4	
Total	29	
To add your letters to the total contact		
lwkamp@gmail.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 The Caltech Y Mail Code 5-62 Pasadena, CA 91125 <u>www.its.caltech.edu/~aigp22/</u> 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.