

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Thursday, February 23 7:30 PM.** Monthly Meeting. **Note new location – Tyson House, 505 S. Wilson Ave., Pasadena.** (This is south of the corner with San Pasqual, next to the Credit Union, set back from the street. We will post a sign.) We will be planning our activities for the coming months. Please join us! Refreshments provided.

**Tuesday, March 13, 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, March 18, 6:30 PM.** Rights Readers Human Rights Book Discussion group. This month we read "A Woman Among Warlords" by Malalai Joya.

## COORDINATOR'S CORNER

Hi everyone

I'm enjoying a quiet day of respite from the craziness of work today as it is the President's Day holiday, catching up on household tasks and errands, but also reading a good mystery novel by a local writer, Diane Emley, about the Pasadena PD.

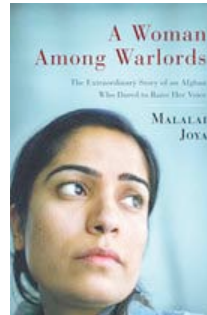
Be sure to read Joyce's column on the congressional hearing on the case of our POC, Gao Zhisheng and click on the link in her column to watch the live webcast. Also, Group 22 member Wen Chen and family took part in a protest at the Los Angeles Chinese Consulate against the persecution of Falun Gong members in China. We applaud their dedication and hope the persecution ends soon.

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, March 18, 6:30 PM**  
**Vroman's Bookstore**  
**695 E. Colorado Boulevard**  
**In Pasadena**

## Author Bio

Malalai Joya, at only 30 years of age, has been called "the most famous woman in Afghanistan" and compared to democratic leaders such as Burma's Aung San Suu Kyi. Born in Afghanistan's remote Farah Province, she grew up in refugee camps in Iran and Pakistan before returning to Afghanistan as a social activist and



a teacher at underground girls' schools during the Taliban's reign. In 2003 she was elected to Afghanistan's constitutional assembly and, two

years later, was the youngest person elected to Afghanistan's new Parliament, a post from which she was suspended in 2007 for her regular denunciation of the country's warlords and their cronies in government.

## Book Reviews

[Kirkus Reviews](#) write about Joya's book: "A chilling, vital memoir that reveals hidden truths about Afghanistan and directly addresses the misguided policies of the United States."

[Library Journal](#) writes: "This book will interest those who seek stories of real-life heroines risking death every day for their nation."

[Publishers Weekly](#) writes: "Joya was outspoken in condemning these warlords she called "criminals" and "antiwomen," enduring the shutting off of her microphone, assassination threats and, finally, suspension from Parliament. Joya is on a dangerous, eye-opening mission to uncover truth and expose the abuse of power in Afghanistan, and her book will work powerfully in her favor."

[Noam Chomsky](#) writes: "Perhaps the most remarkable feature of this inspiring memoir is that despite the horrors she relates, Malalai Joya leaves us with hope that the tormented people of Afghanistan can take their fate into their own hands if they are released from the grip of foreign powers, and that they can reconstruct a decent society from the wreckage left by decades of intervention and the merciless rule of the Taliban and the warlords who the invaders have imposed upon them."

[The Independent Weekly](#): "*Raising My Voice* is an inspiring story of courage and Malalai Joya's struggle against oppressive regimes, given that attempts have been made on her life and more are imminent, and her public defiance of male politicians is most impressive. She makes the case very clearly that foreign aid is going to the tribal warlords and not the people who desperately need assistance."

**PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE**  
**Gao Zhisheng**  
By Joyce Wolf

The Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC) held a hearing on Feb. 14 about the case of Gao Zhisheng, Group 22's adopted Prisoner of Conscience. I watched the live webcast of the hearing.

Congressman Chris Smith (R-NJ) is chairman of the CECC. In his opening statement, he mentioned that China's vice-president Xi Jinping was at this very moment meeting with President Obama. When last interviewed in April 2010, Gao Zhisheng said his jailers taunted him, "You must forget you are human!" Mr. Smith concluded his summary of Gao's case, "To Vice President Xi, we will not forget. We do not know if Mr. Gao is alive or dead. In solidarity with Mr. Gao and his family, we know, however, that we are here to honor Mr. Gao's accomplishments, his rights advocacy and his image. We will not let those who hold him kill Gao Zhisheng's legacy. We will not allow these criminals to dispose of his significance. And, we will not forget Mr. Gao's profound humanity."

Four witnesses testified at the hearing: Geng He, wife of Gao Zhisheng; Li Jing, wife of imprisoned professor Guo Quan; Jared Genser, legal counselor and founder of Freedom Now; and Reverend Bob Fu of China Aid. Their statements, as well as a recording of the live webcast, are available at <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/hearings/general/hearing4>.

Geng He has been a tireless advocate for her husband since she and their two children fled to the U.S. in 2009. The Washington Post published an excellent article by Dan Zak about the busy schedule of Geng He and her team during Xi Jinping's visit. One of the team's major accomplishments was the personal delivery of a letter to Xi Jinping from Speaker of the House John Boehner about the plight of Gao Zhisheng. [http://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/style/a-world-away-from-china-geng-he-seeks-justice-for-her-dissident-husband/2012/02/08/gIQA2EGjIR\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/style/a-world-away-from-china-geng-he-seeks-justice-for-her-dissident-husband/2012/02/08/gIQA2EGjIR_story.html)

Amnesty's China country specialist suggests that we mail cards of solidarity to Gao Zhisheng in Shaya Prison. The address is:

Gao Zhisheng  
P.O. Box 15, Sub-box 16  
Shaya County 842208  
Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region  
People's Republic of China

Postage is now \$1.05.

**FALUN GONG PRACTITIONERS IN LOS ANGELES ASKED FUTURE LEADER OF CHINA TO STOP THE PERSECUTION**  
by Wen Chen

China's vice President Xi Jinping, amidst domestic turmoil triggered by Chongqing Police Chief Wang Lijun's unsuccessful defection to the US consulate over high-level power struggle, visited the U.S. Feb. 14-17. The last two days of his visit was spent in Los Angeles. Xi's arrival was a rare opportunity for persecuted groups like Falun Gong to raise his attention to and call for an end to the 13-year-long brutality.

My family and I, together with another ~70 Falun Gong practitioners, joined a public rally and press conference in front of the Chinese consulate in Los Angeles on Feb 15. Braving the rain, we held banners for two hours. Victims of the persecution and supporters of Falun Gong spoke through microphones and accepted interviews from mainstream media including the Associate Press, Radio Freedom Asia, Voice of America and KPCC.



Professor Yingnian Wu from UCLA, the spokesperson for the local Falun Gong practitioners, said: "[Falun Gong] is a spiritual meditation practice. The main excuse of the Communist regime for the persecution is that there's so many people, tens of millions of people, practicing Falun Gong. The regime feels threatened."

Falun Gong is a body and mind exercise based on the principle of Truth-Compassion-Tolerance. Since it was introduced to public in 1992, the exercise attracted more than 100 million Chinese people because of its health benefits and improvement of morality. The Chinese Communist Party started the crackdown towards Falun Gong in July 1999. While there is no official ban, Chinese police rounded up Falun Gong practitioners through "financial incentives" and forced them into prison camps and "brainwashing classes.". If they refuse to denounce their beliefs, they will be tortured to death. In the past 12 years, the communist party detained millions of practitioners and killed thousands of them. More than 3,500 people have been confirmed killed by Chinese Communist Party (CCP) police.

The demonstration came just one day before China's next leader, Xi Jinping, was going to

visit L.A. as part of his United States tour. We asked Xi Jinping to immediately stop the persecution of Falun Gong, to conduct a thorough investigation of the Chinese officials responsible for the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners, and to bring to justice the main culprits, including Jiang Zemin, Luo Gan, Liu Jing and Zhou Yongkang, etc.

"The Communist regime is a criminal gang. Why should I have any expectations for a criminal gang?" said Wu. "But, of course, as a person, Xi Jinping, I don't treat him like a gang member. If I treat him as a person then I hope he has a conscience and I hope he follows his conscience to do something that a person, a human being, should do."

The future chosen leader of Communist China, Xi Jinping, arrived in Washington on Feb. 13 and will be visiting Los Angeles on Feb. 16 and 17. Xi is on course to become secretary of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) this fall at the 18th Party Congress, replacing top leader Hu Jintao. Just a week ago, Wang Lijun, the deputy mayor and the head of the Public Security Bureau of Chongqing, went to the U.S. Consulate in Chengdu, might be requesting political asylum due to the internal power struggle within the Chinese Communist Party. The U.S. Department of State has verified this daylong visit and said Wang left on his own volition. It was reported by various media of both Chinese and other languages, that Wang had a long talk with the staff in the U.S. Consulate and revealed much confidential information within the CCP. He also submitted some undisclosed paperwork. When Wang was the Police Chief in Jinzhou City, Liaoning Province, at least 500 Falun Gong practitioners were detained, 71 were persecuted to death, and 30 were disabled.

Falun Gong practitioners, who have been persecuted for twelve years by the Chinese Communist regime, would like to make two requests:

- First, we hope the U.S. government to disclose the contents of the conversation between Wang and U.S. Consulate that is relevant to Falun Gong.
- Second, we ask China's next leader, Xi Jinping to immediately stop the persecution of Falun Gong, to conduct a thorough investigation of the Chinese

officials responsible for the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners, and to bring to justice the main culprits, including Jiang Zemin, Luo Gan, Zhou Yongkang, etc.

As Governor Brown and Mayor Villaraigosa meet with Xi, we would like them to be aware of the Communist regime's 12-year-long persecution of millions of innocent Falun Gong practitioners and help stop the persecution within their capacity, including raising this issue to Xi. The persecution is a severe crime against humanity and affects many US citizens and residents.

## DEATH PENALTY NEWS

By Stevi Carroll

### SAFE California Campaign

I am writing this column on the day signatures for the SAFE California Campaign to get the death penalty on the November 2012 ballot are due. The campaign has collected around 750,000 signatures thus giving the needed safeguard to reach the 500,000 verifiable signatures. Now the work begins.

At a January SAFE CA meeting, we discussed what will happen next. The forces against the initiative include the Criminal Justice Legal Foundation, Crime Victims United, the California District Attorneys Association, and the California Correctional Peace Officers Association (prison guards union). This attack will be well funded and needs to be deflected.

In the SAFE CA campaign corner, we have Amnesty International, ACLU, Death Penalty Focus, the Episcopal Bishops of the Diocese of Los Angeles, and the California Catholic Bishops (to read the Catholic bishops statement, go to <http://www.safecalifornia.org/downloads/2012.01.12-ca-bishops-endorse.pdf>).

And we have the Briggs Initiative revisited. February 12, 2012, Ron Briggs, son of former state Sen. John Briggs, had an op-ed about the death penalty in the LA Times. On November 7, 1978, California voters passed the Briggs

Initiative, named for Sen. Briggs, which reinstated the death penalty in California. At that time, Ron Briggs, his father Sen. Briggs, and others believed that the death penalty would bring justice to California.

While he says he remains a staunch Republican conservative, his and his other family members' beliefs about the death penalty have changed. "We'd thought we would bring California savings and safety in dealing with convicted murderers. Instead, we contributed to a nightmarish system that coddles murderers and enriches lawyers." They thought that victims would get justice and be able to go forward with their lives. The reality is that the appeals process forces victims' families to revisit the crimes. Ron Briggs is now a county supervisor in El Dorado County and has seen the results of the present death penalty process.

Mr. Briggs writes, "If the murderer had been sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole rather than to death, the long cycle of appeals could have been avoided." He has come to the conclusion that the Briggs death penalty law does now work. He says, "Had I known then what we do today, I would have pushed for strong life sentences without the possibility of parole."

The closing of the op-ed is particularly important for Amnesty International and our involvement in the SAFE CA campaign: "The Briggs family has decided to endorse the SAFE California campaign, a fall 2012 ballot initiative that would replace the death penalty with a punishment of life without the possibility of parole. The state has another chance at real justice. We should embrace it."

The article can be found at: <http://www.latimes.com/news/opinion/la-oe-briggs-death-penalty-20120212,0,6495041.story?track=rss>

To hear an interview with Ron Briggs on the Madeleine Brand Show, go to <http://www.scpr.org/programs/madeleine-brand/2012/02/14/22525/safe-california-initiative-seeks-shift-on-death-penalty>

For now, something each of us can do to help the SAFE California campaign is give money. Donations can be mailed to

SAFE California Campaign  
237 Kearny Street, #334  
San Francisco, CA 94108

or you can go online

[https://salsa.democracyinaction.org/o/1265/p/salsa/donation/common/public/?donate\\_page\\_KEY=8141](https://salsa.democracyinaction.org/o/1265/p/salsa/donation/common/public/?donate_page_KEY=8141).

As I know more avenues we can walk the walk with this campaign, I will let you know. You can also go to the SAFE California Facebook page or to the campaign's website:

<http://www.safecalifornia.org/home>.

### Reggie Clemons

At our February letter writing, Elizabeth asked about Reggie Clemons. I was at a loss for the details of his case. The following is from the Amnesty International USA website. The link is to an informative video about Reggie's case. It's well worth the watch.

FEBRUARY 1, 2012

#### Why Missouri should NOT execute Reggie Clemons

Reggie Clemons was sentenced to death in St. Louis as an accomplice to a 1991 murder. There was no physical evidence and since allegations have arisen of police coercion, prosecutorial misconduct, and a 'stacked' jury in the Clemons case. Despite so many lingering questions, Missouri is still planning to execute Reggie Clemons.

<http://www.amnestyusa.org/news/multimedia/why-missouri-should-not-execute-reggie-clemons>

### Good News: Joe D'Ambrosio

Also in January Joe D'Ambrosio became the 140th person on death row to be exonerated. Mr. D'Ambrosio was imprisoned for over 20 years. To read an article and see a video about this case, go to

[http://www.cleveland.com/brett/blog/index.ssf/2012/01/joe\\_dambrosio\\_finally\\_free\\_spec.html](http://www.cleveland.com/brett/blog/index.ssf/2012/01/joe_dambrosio_finally_free_spec.html).

### Executions Stayed

January 31	Nicholas Tate	Georgia
February 1	Donald Newbury	Texas
16	Gary Allen	Oklahoma
22	Michael Webb	Ohio

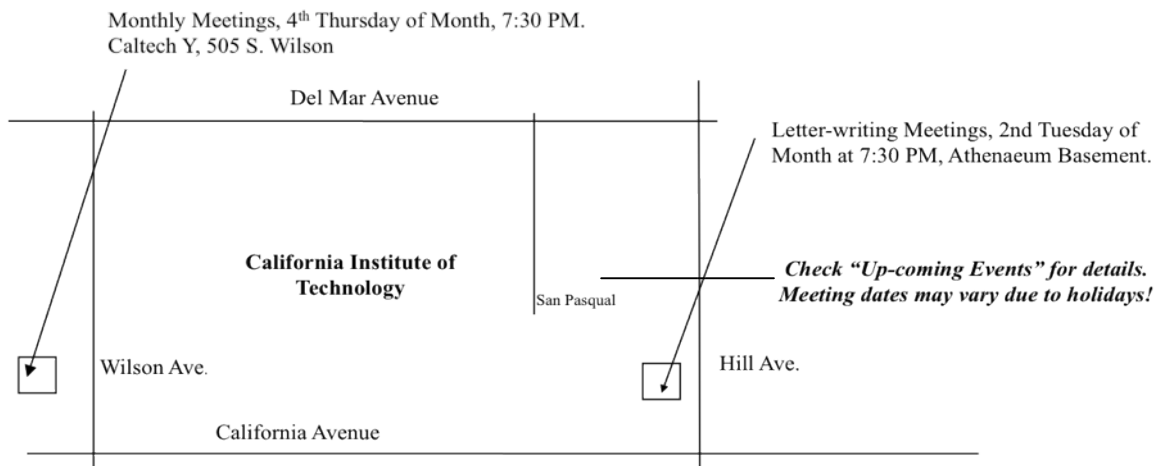
### Executions

January 26	Rodrigo Hernandez Texas	Lethal Injection (pentobarbital)
February 8	Edwin Turner Mississippi	Lethal Injection (pentobarbital)
15	Robert Waterhouse Florida	

### Clemency Granted

January 20	Robert Gattis	Delaware
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<b>GROUP 22 MONTHLY LETTER COUNT</b>	
UAs	17
POC	8
Total	25
To add your letters to the total contact <a href="mailto:lwkamp@gmail.com">lwkamp@gmail.com</a> .	



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 C1-128  
Pasadena, CA 91125  
[www.its.caltech.edu/~aigp22/](http://www.its.caltech.edu/~aigp22/)  
<http://rightsreaders.blogspot.com>



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