

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Thursday, April 27, 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 9, 7:30 PM.** *Letter-writing Meeting*  
at the Athenaeum. Corner of California & Hill. Look for our table downstairs in the cafeteria area. This informal gathering is a great way for newcomers to get acquainted with Amnesty!

**Sunday, May 21, 6:30 PM.** *Rights Readers Human Rights Book Discussion Group.* Vroman's Book Bookstore, 695 E. Colorado Blvd., Pasadena. This month we read Emma Larkin's *Finding George Orwell in Burma* (More below.)

## COORDINATOR'S CORNER

Hi everyone. Hope you had a nice holiday. Robert and I went to San Diego (Easter was our first wedding anniversary!); we will bring some food to my folks in the Valley this weekend and have a nice dinner with them.

Thanks to the great organizational and persuasion skills of Group 22 member Paula Tavrow, Amnesty had a tent at Camp Dafur, a week long educational encampment at Lennox Middle School near Inglewood. Group 22 members Joyce, Lucas, Paula, Azadeh and Mehdi staffed the tent, held discussions on the various articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and assisted visitors to write letters and send postcards re the genocide in Darfur, Sudan. Paula and Ido Dooseman each spent the night in the tent as "refugees". Thanks also to the Western Regional AI office for assisting with the scheduling and Darcie Olson for supplying materials.

Earth Day, April 22 was celebrated Friday April 21 at Caltech and also the next day in Memorial Park in Pasadena. Joyce and Martha volunteered for both events with Stevi helping out at Caltech and Paula, Robert and myself joining in the Old Town fun. The kids drew outlines of their hands on a petition to send to Chevron asking them to clean up pollution created by oil drilling/exploration in the Amazon region of Ecuador. There was also a petition to Dow Chemical asking them to clean up the Bhopal, India Union Carbide factory (now owned by Dow). Group 22 added 90 signatures to the Chevron petition (plus 50 children's handprints!) and 70 to the Dow petition to the thousands being collected by activists around the country for Earth Day. Both petitions will be

presented at shareholder meetings in coming weeks as part of Amnesty's "Share Power" campaign for better corporate citizenship.

Nepal has been in the news lately. Krishna Pahadi, the former president of Amnesty Nepal, was arrested Jan 2006 along with 3,000 others who were campaigning for democracy and human rights in Nepal. He spoke at the AI Western Regional Conference in San Francisco that was held Nov 9-11. Please see the action below on his behalf.

Take care,

Kathy

aigp22@caltech.edu

## NEPAL

### *Human Rights Activists Detained*

Human rights and peace activists Krishna Pahadi, Dr Devendra Raj Pandey, Dr Mathura Prasad Shrestha and journalist Shyam Shrestha continue to be detained. Amnesty International is calling for their immediate and unconditional release as prisoners of conscience, held solely as a result of their peaceful exercise of the rights of freedom of expression and of free association. Three of the detainees, Krishna Pahadi, Dr Devendra Raj Pandey and Dr Mathura Shrestha, are the leaders of an organization known as the Citizens' Movement for Democracy and Peace, which is campaigning for the restoration of democracy and human rights in Nepal.

Krishna Pahadi and Shyam Shrestha are detained at the Armed Police Force Barracks No. 2 at Ranibari, in Maharajgunj, Kathmandu. Dr Devendra Raj Pandey is reportedly detained at Naxal Armed Police Battalion No. 1 and Dr Mathura Prasad Shrestha at the National Police Academy, also located in Maharajgunj. Krishna Pahadi's health has improved, following hospital treatment for high cholesterol and polycythemia (a disease affecting blood cell levels) on 15 February. He has returned to hospital for checkups on at least two occasions and continues to take medication.

The five men named above were among more than 3,000 political party and human rights activists were arrested in late January and early February 2006. Their arrests came just before and during demonstrations in Kathmandu and other districts of the country in protest against municipal elections called for 8 February.

Demonstrators also called for the restoration of democracy and human rights. The great majority of these people were arbitrarily arrested for exercising their right to freedom of peaceful assembly or expressing their political opinion. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Nepal noted that in every case that a detainee was brought

before the courts, their detention was found to be illegal.

It is reported that eleven activists, including those named above, still remain in detention; ten in Kathmandu and one in the town of Pokhara. They are being held under the Public Security Act (PSA), which permits detention without trial, initially for up to 90 days, to prevent persons from committing actions that "undermine the sovereignty, integrity or public tranquility and order of the Kingdom."

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible:

- welcoming the release of Kundan Raj Kafle and other student leaders and party activists on 20 February;

- appealing for the immediate and unconditional release of Krishna Pahadi, Shyam Shrestha, Dr Devendra Raj

Pandey, and Dr Mathura Prasad Shrestha, whom Amnesty International considers to be prisoners of conscience detained solely for the peaceful exercise of their right to freedom of expression and of free association;

- calling for all the detainees to be granted immediate access to their relatives and legal counsel, and medical treatment if required;

- urging that all detainees be held in an officially recognized place of detention and, in conformity with national law, be brought before a judicial authority promptly after detention;

- calling on the authorities to ensure that all legislation used to arrest and detain is in conformity with international standards to which Nepal is a state party.

APPEALS TO:

His Majesty the King Gyanendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev

C/O The Chief of Protocol Division

Dr. Rambhakta P.B.Thakur

Protocol Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Shital Niwas

Kathmandu, Nepal

Salutation: Your Majesty

Minister Kamal Thapa

Minister of Home Affairs

Singha Durbar

Kathmandu, Nepal

Salutation: Dear Minister

Minister Niranjana Thapa

Minister of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs

Singha Durbar

Kathmandu, Nepal

Salutation: Dear Minister

Shyam Bhakta Thapa

Inspector General of Police

Police Headquarters, GPO Box 407  
Naxal

Kathmandu, Nepal

Salutation: Dear Inspector General

COPIES TO:

Ambassador Kedar B. Shrestha

Royal Nepalese Embassy

2131 Leroy Pl. NW

Washington DC 20008

Email: info@nepalembassyusa.org

## STOP VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

*Amnesty Partners with Director of Indian Film*

Amnesty International USA is proud to announce its support of "Water," a film directed by the courageous and provocative filmmaker Deepa Mehta.

"Water" is the profoundly moving and compellingly vibrant story of India's "widow houses," where women of all ages are taken to live (even today) apart from society following the deaths of their husbands.

Sprinkled with humor, rife with universal emotions and alive with visual excitement, the story of WATER follows three widows who dared to stand up for themselves in the liberating time of Mahatma Gandhi.

Learn about the film at [www.amnestyusa.org/water/](http://www.amnestyusa.org/water/). The film opens in Pasadena (Playhouse 7) on May 5.

A sample letter on current concerns regarding gender based violence in India follows:

Chief Minister of Gujarat Shri Modi

Chief Minister's Office, Block No 1, 5th Floor

New Sachivalaya

Gandhinagar,

RE: Bring to justice those responsible for the crimes in Gujarat

Dear Chief Minister of Gujarat Modi

I am writing you today out of concern that four years after the violence against Muslims on your state, that justice still has not been done. As the Chief Minister of your state and under Indian and international law, you are in the position to bring to justice those responsible for the crimes, including crimes of sexual violence and gender based discrimination. I write to urge you to live up to your commitments under the Indian constitution and give your attention towards prosecuting the perpetrators of the violence of women and children in in early 2002.

I would like to urge you to first thoroughly investigate all reports of police participation in crimes of sexual violence and all crimes intended to degrade or humiliate. We also urge you to implement legislation such that women and girls are to have legal equality by removing discriminatory

legislation by enacting new legislation that gives women equal rights. I urge you then to investigate the reported failure of police to perform their constitutional duty to protect against imminent sexual violence.

I also ask that you take urgent steps to end impunity in your state. By training police officers in gender sensitivity recruitment, referring victims of sexual assault to a medico legal practitioner for medical examinations by the police, recruiting and appointing investigating officers who are specialized in cases of sexual violence and witnessing protection schemes implemented for all victims who are at risk of testifying. In the case whereby police and judiciary should fail to provide justice and reparations, I urge you to take the strictest possible action, without fear or favor, against all those individuals and organizations, who spread social discord, disturb social amity, and propagate religious bigotry and communal hatred.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I would appreciate being kept informed about measures taken within your state to protect women from violence in the State of Gujarat.

Sincerely, Your Name and Address

## LETTER COUNT

Urgent Actions	15
<b>Total:</b>	<b>15</b>
To add your letters to the total contact <a href="mailto:lwkamp@sbcglobal.net">lwkamp@sbcglobal.net</a>	

## RIGHTS READERS

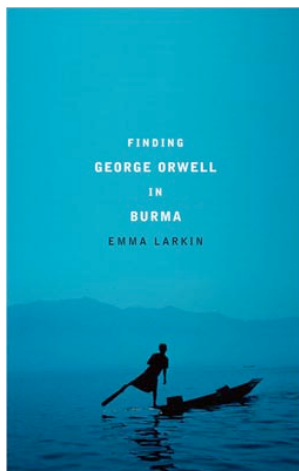
*Human Rights Book Discussion Group*

**Vroman's Bookstore**

695 E. Colorado Boulevard in Pasadena

**Sunday, May 21, 6:30 PM**

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



*Finding George Orwell  
in Burma*

by *Emma Larkin*

In one of the most intrepid travelogues in recent memory, Emma Larkin tells of the year she spent traveling through Burma, using as a compass the life and work of George Orwell, whom many of Burma's underground teahouse intellectuals call simply "the Prophet." In

stirring prose, she provides a powerful reckoning with one of the world's least free countries. Finding

George Orwell in Burma is a brave and revelatory reconnaissance of modern Burma, one of the world's grimmest and most shuttered police states, where the term "Orwellian" aptly describes the life endured by the country's people.

"A truer picture of authoritarianism than anyone has written since, perhaps, Orwell himself." —*Mother Jones*

"Mournful, meditative, appealingly idiosyncratic . . . an exercise in literary detection but also a political travelogue." —*The New York Times*

"Combining literary criticism with solid field reporting, [Larkin] captures the country at its best and, more often, its worst." —*San Francisco Chronicle*

## PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE

*Free Burmese Activist Ma Khin Khin Leh*

To inspire us to read this month's Rights Readers selection, here's a sample letter for a prisoner of conscience in Burma.

Senior General Than Shwe  
Chairman, State Peace and Development Council  
c/o Embassy of the Union of Myanmar  
2300 S Street N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20008

Dear Senior General Than Shwe:

I respectfully urge you to take swift action to free prisoner of conscience Ma Khin Khin Leh, who has been imprisoned solely due to her peaceful political activities. Ma Khin Khin Leh and her husband were among a group of people planning a demonstration to take place in the town of Bago on July 19, 1999. Days before the demonstration was to occur, security agents arrested Ma Khin Khin Leh and her three-year-old daughter. Although her daughter was released after five days in detention, Ma Khin Khin Leh was transferred to Insein Prison in Yangon. Following an unfair trial, a court sentenced her in December 1999 to life imprisonment under vaguely-worded security legislation. Ma Khin Khin Leh is believed to be held in Myanmar's notorious Insein Prison, where she reportedly suffers from an unspecified lung problem, rheumatoid arthritis and dysentery. Amnesty International is concerned for her safety and well-being.

I am concerned that broad security laws are used in Myanmar to prosecute people for peaceful political and religious activities. As you know, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights asserts that all people have the right to freedom of opinion and expression and the right to peaceful assembly and association.

I urge you to bring about the immediate and unconditional release of Ma Khin Khin Leh and all prisoners of conscience in Myanmar. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Your NAME and ADDRESS

## REFUGEES

### *Immigration Law threatens Asylum Applicants*

While much of the public debate regarding the immigration legislation concerns whether or not to provide paths to citizenship, guestworker status or increased border enforcement, other proposed but lesser known provisions are of great concern to human rights activists who seek to protect applicants for political asylum. Here is a sample letter outlining those concerns:

The Honorable Barbara Boxer  
United States Senate  
112 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510-0505

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

RE: Preserve Fair Asylum Procedures

Dear Senator Feinstein

As your constituent, I am writing to urge you to ensure that any immigration legislation passed by the Senate does not prevent victims of persecution from receiving a fair hearing for asylum in the United States.

I am very concerned that the bills currently pending make it a crime to have used false documents in order to arrive at our borders—those fleeing persecution often have no choice other than to escape without proper identification, or travel and entry documents, and should not be prosecuted for such. And to then imprison those same people immediately is a further insult. It is tremendously difficult to make an asylum claim while in detention, and forcing people to do so only increases the chances that their claims will be denied and that they will be returned to danger.

The limiting of judicial review of those same claims, which will be discussed in separate hearings, is the last step in eroding meaningful access to asylum procedures

Senator, asylum seekers come to the United States because we hold our country up as a place of refuge and security for those who have been persecuted. Such people need our assistance and compassion. If we do not welcome them, who will?

I hope that you will consider my concerns during the Senate's immigration debate. The United States must not shut the door on its stated commitment to welcome those in need of its protection.

Sincerely,

Your Name and Address

## UZBEKISTAN

### *Free Prisoner of Conscience*

President Islam Karimov  
700163 g. Tashkent,  
ul. Uzbekistanskaia, 43  
Prezidentu Respubliki Uzbekistan Karimovu I.A.  
UZBEKISTAN  
email: presidents\_office@press-service.uz

Dear President Karimov:

I am deeply concerned about human rights defender Saidzhakhon Zainabitdinov who was reportedly sentenced on January 5, 2006 to seven years' imprisonment after a secret trial at which neither his family nor his lawyer were present. Saidzhakhon Zainabitdinov is the chairperson of the human rights group Apelliatsia (Appeal). He was monitoring a trial and public protests in the eastern city of Andizhan when the protests escalated on May 12-13, 2005. Security forces allegedly opened fire indiscriminately into a crowd of mainly unarmed civilians, killing hundreds and wounding many others. Saidzhakhon Zainabitdinov's account of the events, which was cited by the international media, differed significantly from the official version given by authorities.

Saidzhakhon Zainabitdinov was arbitrarily detained on May 21, 2005 and has been held incommunicado for most of the time since then. Based on the well-documented history of human rights abuses in Uzbekistan, Amnesty International considers him at serious risk of being subjected to torture and other ill-treatment.

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on torture has described the use of torture and ill-treatment in Uzbekistan as "systematic." Amnesty International considers Saidzhakhon Zainabitdinov to be a prisoner of conscience, imprisoned solely for carrying out his peaceful and legitimate human rights work. I appeal to you to ensure that he is immediately and unconditionally released and that his safety is guaranteed until then.

Sincerely,

Your Name and Address

copy to:

Ambassador Abdulaziz Khafizovich Kamilov  
Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan  
1746 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20036

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Other	\$0.75	\$0.84