

UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday, May 25, 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, June 13, 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, June 18, 6:30 PM. *Rights Readers Human Rights Book Discussion Group.* Vroman's Book Bookstore, 695 E. Colorado Blvd., Pasadena. This month we read Ma Jian's *The Noodle Maker* (More below.)

COORDINATOR'S CORNER

Hi everybody! Group 22 has been busy since our last newsletter. Another Camp Darfur was held in Hollywood last weekend and Lucas Kamp was at the Amnesty table. Unfortunately, attendance was sparse as it was at the Camp Darfur in Lennox earlier in April. All Saints Church in Pasadena is going to have Camp Darfur at the end of June, according to Lucas. Hopefully that will be better attended and more of us can help out.

Also a few weekends ago, several Group 22 members met at the Laemmle Playhouse Theatre next to Vromans to see "Water", a film by an Indian director about the plight of widows in India, one of whom is a young child. This film is recommended and supported by Amnesty USA. The director was threatened by Hindu fundamentalists in India during filming so the majority of it was filmed in Sri Lanka. I found this movie to be profoundly affecting and I highly recommend it.

Thursday May 11 was Day of Action regarding Dow Chemical to get them to do something re the clean-up of the Bhopal disaster that occurred 22 years ago. Group 22 members Paula Tavrow, Joyce Wolf and others called their hotline. More info on Bhopal can be found on <http://www.amnestyusa.org>. There is an excellent booklet you can print out called "Clouds of Disaster" for more information.

Good news! Congress has passed legislation condemning the murders of women in Juarez, Mexico. This resolution calls on the secretary of state and US ambassador to Mexico to take specific steps to ensure that addressing these horrendous murders becomes a part of the US-Mexico bilateral agenda.

Hope to see you at future events. Now it's time to get back to reading "George Orwell in Burma" to finish it on time for this Sunday's book group!

Take care,

Kathy

aigp22@caltech.edu

OUTFRONT

Investigate Torture of Gay Prisoners in Mexico

In 2004, Hiram Oliveros and his partner Mario Medina, a US citizen, were arrested and charged murder in Mexico. The men believed they had been arrested because they were a gay couple who could be forced to make a confession. They alleged that after their arrest police agents coerced them into confessing through the use of torture. Medina died after being stabbed by an inmate 88 times. Join Amnesty in demanding a serious and impartial investigation and a guarantee of safety for Hiram Oliveros.

Please write a politely-worded letter in English or Spanish to the Mexican authorities using the letter provided as a guide.

Director of Human Rights- Interior Ministry Ricardo Sepúlveda
Secretaria de Gobernacion
Reforma 99, PISO 21, PH, Colonia Tabacalera
C.P. 06030, México D.F., México

RE: Guarantee Safety of Hiram Oliveros

Dear Director of Human Rights- Interior Ministry Sepúlveda

I am writing to express my deep concern for the safety of Hiram Oliveros, whose partner Mario Medina, a US citizen, was murdered on May 13, 2004 at the Nuevo Laredo prison in Tamaulipas State. Oliveros and Medina have been accused of involvement in the murder of journalist Roberto Javier Mora and coerced to confess the crime through torture. Although the Tamaulipas State Human Rights Commission effectively dismissed the allegations due to a lack of evidence, it appears that not all the evidence was considered. Specifically, the Human Rights Commission has neglected to take into consideration a video of Mario Medina indicating to his lawyer the injuries he sustained during torture. I urge you to review this evidence and revisit the allegation of torture made by Oliveros and Medina.

Despite assurances of his safety by Tamaulipas State prison authorities to a US consular official, Mario Medina was brutally stabbed 88 times by another inmate. It gravely concerns me that such a violent murder could be committed under the close watch of officers who assured his safety to the U.S. consulate.

I urge you to conduct an open, impartial investigation into the death of Mario Medina in the hopes that the prison officers responsible for his safety be held accountable for their neglect and implication in his murder. Further, I urge you to guarantee the safety of Hiram Oliveros while in the custody of the Tamaulipas State prison.

In addition, I urge you to open an impartial and thorough investigation into Oliveros and Medina's claims that they were wrongly imprisoned in connection with the murder of El Mañana reporter Roberto Javier Mora. The two claimed in a March 30 press statement that they were tortured into confessing to the murder by Tamaulipas State judicial police agents. Furthermore, Oliveros and Medina claimed that they were accused of the murder on account of their sexual orientation.

In conclusion, I insist that you conduct independent and exhaustive investigations into both the circumstances surrounding the death of journalist Roberto Javier Mora and the murder of Mario Median while in the custody of Tamaulipas State prison, and guarantee the safety and fair trial of Hiriam Oliveros.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter. I await your reply.

Sincerely, Your NAME and ADDRESS

LETTER COUNT

Urgent Actions	10
Death Penalty	6
Stop Violence Against Women	1
Total:	17

To add your letters to the total contact lwkamp@sbcglobal.net

RIGHTS READERS

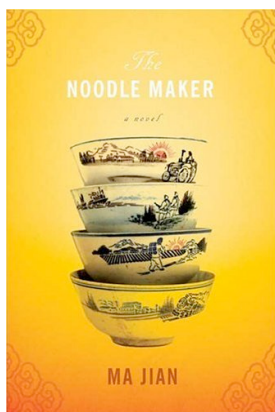
Human Rights Book Discussion Group

Vroman's Bookstore

695 E. Colorado Boulevard in Pasadena

Sunday, June 18, 6:30 PM

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



The Noodle Maker

by Ma Jian

From the highly acclaimed Ma Jian comes a satirical and powerfully written novel-- excerpted in The New Yorker--about the absurdities and cruelties of life in post-Tianamen China.

Two men, a writer of political propaganda and a professional blood donor,

meet for dinner every week. During the course of one drunken evening, the writer recounts the stories he would write, had he the courage: a young man buys an old kiln from an art school and opens a private crematorium, delighting in his ability to harass the corpses of police officers and Party secretaries while swooning to banned Western music; a heartbroken actress performs a public suicide by stepping into the jaws of a wild tiger, watched nonchalantly by her ex-lover. He is inspired by extraordinary characters, their lives pulled and pummeled by fate and politics, as if they were balls of dough in the hands of an all-powerful noodle maker. Ma Jian's masterpiece allows us a humorous yet profound glimpse of those struggling to survive under a system that dictates their every move.

CORPORATE ACTION NETWORK

Sound off to Google & Microsoft on Censorship

Early in 2006 Google launched a self-censoring Chinese search engine, google.cn, that blocks search results for topics such as human rights, political reform, Tiananmen Square and Falun Gong, among others. Amnesty International is concerned about the ways Google is aiding the repression of freedom to information and expression in China, and the implications this may have for the way the company operates everywhere in the world.

You may wish to contact the Google Help Center with your complaint. Visit <http://www.google.com/support/bin/request.py> and select "I have a general question about Google." In the next menu, select "Reporting a problem," "Suggesting a new feature," or "Other." In your message express your concern about Google aiding human rights abuses in China, and request that Google 'feature' respect for universal freedoms everywhere they operate.

Express your concern to:

Eric Schmidt, Chairman and CEO

Google Inc.

1600 Amphitheatre Parkway

Mountain View, CA 94043

Tel: (650) 253 0000

Fax: (650) 618 1499

Dear Mr. Schmidt:

I am alarmed that in the pursuit of new and lucrative markets, your company could be contributing to human rights violations, in particular abuses to freedom of expression and information. This issue is especially evident in China, where Google has agreed to willingly restrict search results for topics such as human rights, political reform, Tiananmen Square and Falun Gong, among others. As a result, websites and webpages dealing with human rights, including many of those of Amnesty International

and other human rights organizations, are inaccessible to internet users in China.

Though I acknowledge the policies recently adopted by Google purportedly to address some of these issues, I remain deeply distressed by your company's evident willingness to directly contradict your stated vision to 'do no evil' by supporting censorship. The fact that the company acts in compliance with restrictive domestic law does not exempt it from its international human rights responsibilities if complying with such request contributes to human rights violations.

Internet companies have an invaluable role to play in the realization of freedom of expression and information -- it shocks me that Google would compromise this goal in pursuit of profit. Therefore I urge Google to:

- Conduct its Internet business in China, and everywhere it operates, in a manner that respects human rights, abides by international human rights standards and avoids complicity in human rights violations.
- Revise its policy to ensure the company does not unconditionally assist censorship of the internet but, on the contrary, challenges requests that are a violation of international human rights standards.
- Put pressure on the Chinese government to:
 - 1) Remove blockages on websites that deal with democracy, human rights, freedom, or that peacefully articulate opinions on religion or politics;
 - 2) Stop the filtering of key words on the Chinese internet, including words such as democracy, human rights, freedom and Falun Gong;
 - 3) Ensure the Chinese public have uninhibited access to the full range of information available on the web in line with international standards on freedom of expression and freedom of information.
- Develop an explicit human rights policy, ensuring that it complies with the UN Norms for Business.

Thank you for your consideration of these demands.

Sincerely, Your NAME and ADDRESS

Amnesty International is concerned about the ways Microsoft may be aiding the repression of freedom of information and expression in China. According to recent reports, Microsoft's search engine blocks searches under key words such as "freedom", "democracy", "human rights", "Falun Gong", and "demonstration", among others. Users of Microsoft Spaces are also prohibited from using these and other words on the weblogs they create.

Send a message to Bill Gates that corporations must respect human rights wherever they operate!

William H. Gates, Chairman
Microsoft Corporation
One Microsoft Way
Redmond, WA 98052-6399
Tel:1-800-MICROSOFT (1-800-642-7676)
Fax: 425-708-0600 and 425-936-7329

E-mail: billig@microsoft.com If you are a MSN customer, visit their support webpage at: <http://support.msn.com/> Click on MSN Search or MSN Spaces Abuses to send them a complaint about their active censorship of these products. Sample Letter:

Dear Mr. Gates

I am alarmed that in the pursuit of new and lucrative markets, your company could be contributing to human rights violations, in particular abuses to freedom of expression and information.

This issue is especially evident in China, where according to reports, Microsoft cooperated with Chinese authorities to shut down the controversial blog of Zhao Jing, a Beijing-based researcher for the New York Times, who had posted articles critical of a management shakedown at Beijing News. As a result, websites and webpages dealing with human rights, including many of those of Amnesty International and other human rights organizations, are inaccessible to internet users in China. I was extremely disturbed by reports that Microsoft cooperated with Chinese authorities to shut down the controversial blog of Zhao Jing, a Beijing-based researcher for the New York Times, who had posted articles critical of a management shakedown at Beijing News.

Though I acknowledge the new policy recently adopted by Microsoft purportedly to address some of these issues, I remain deeply distressed by your company's evident willingness to contradict your own stated values and beliefs by supporting censorship. The fact that the company acts in compliance with restrictive domestic law does not exempt it from its international human rights responsibilities if complying with such request contributes to human rights violations.

Internet companies have an invaluable role to play in the realization of freedom of expression and information -- it shocks me that Microsoft would compromise this goal in pursuit of profit. Therefore I urge Microsoft to:

- Conduct its Internet business in China, and everywhere it operates, in a manner that respects human rights, abides by international human rights standards and avoids complicity in human rights violations.

- Revise its policy to ensure the company does not unconditionally assist censorship of the internet but, on the contrary, challenges requests that are a violation of international human rights standards.
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 - 1) Remove blockages on websites that deal with democracy, human rights, freedom, or that peacefully articulate opinions on religion or politics;
 - 2) Stop the filtering of key words on the Chinese internet, including words such as human rights, democracy, freedom and Falun Gong;
 - 3) Ensure the Chinese public have uninhibited access to the full range of information available on the web in line with international standards on freedom of expression and freedom of information.
- Develop an explicit human rights policy, ensuring that it complies with the UN Norms for Business.

Thank you for your consideration of these demands.

Sincerely, Your NAME and ADDRESS

DEATH PENALTY

Urge Clemency for Mentally Ill Prisoner

Mexican national Angel Maturino Resendiz is scheduled for execution on 27 June 2006. He was sentenced to death for the 1998 murder of Claudia Benton, a doctor in Houston. He is also believed to have committed a series of murders in several other US states. There is compelling evidence that Angel Maturino Resendiz suffers from serious mental illness, including paranoid schizophrenia. His lawyers are arguing that he is incompetent for execution - that is, that he does not understand the reason for, or reality of, his punishment - and that his execution would therefore violate the US Constitution.

At the trial in 2000, the defence argued that Angel Maturino Resendiz was not guilty by reason of insanity, in other words that he did not know right from wrong at the time of the murder. For the defence, an expert testified that Maturino Resendiz was suffering from chronic paranoid schizophrenia, producing the delusion that he was an angel of God with a duty to destroy "evil people." The prosecution's experts did not dispute that he was mentally ill - and their testing found evidence of brain damage - but they testified that, in their opinion, he was not legally insane at the time of the crime.

No determination had been made of his competency to stand trial: the capacity of the defendant to understand the proceedings and to consult rationally with his attorney in presenting a defence. However,

a pre-trial psychological evaluation reported that Angel Maturino Resendiz "stated with great vehemence that he wanted to be his own attorney, that he wanted to plead guilty and that he wanted to be put to death. He explained that if this course of events occurred, he would be victorious because he would return to live on this earth whereas the judge, the jury and the executioner would all die instantly when he was put to death." Throughout the trial proceedings, antipsychotic drugs were administered to subdue the symptoms of his mental illness. After the jury rejected the insanity defence and found him guilty, Maturino Resendiz asked to be sentenced to death. He instructed his court-appointed attorneys not to make an opening statement at the penalty phase of his trial, not to cross-examine the state's witnesses and to present no testimony on his behalf.

In the six years that Angel Maturino Resendiz has been on death row, his mental condition has continued to deteriorate. He has been transferred to an inpatient psychiatric unit on eight different occasions, has mutilated himself more than 30 times, and has been placed on antipsychotic medication to control his auditory hallucinations and delusions. A recent assessment by a psychiatrist found that Angel Maturino Resendiz is completely delusional, convinced that as a "man-angel" he is immune from lethal injection and will awaken unharmed with a "renovated body" (cuerpo renovado) on the third day following his execution. A psychologist also recently concluded that the prisoner suffers from schizophrenia, and that he does not believe he will die as a result of execution.

In addition, Angel Maturino Resendiz - who suffered a childhood in Mexico marked by mental illness in his family and by appalling deprivation and abuse - was denied his internationally-recognized right to adequate legal representation on appeal. His appeal lawyer filed a petition raising a single generic claim, failing to make any reference to the prisoner's mental illness, and not even mentioning him by name. It was later discovered that this petition was identical, word-for-word, to a brief filed in the appeal of another death row prisoner. The appeal lawyer also missed a crucial deadline for filing in Angel Maturino Resendiz's case, with the result that under federal law the prisoner forfeited his right to further review of case-specific issues, such as his mental illness.

A petition has been filed with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, asserting that the execution of Angel Maturino Resendiz would violate the USA's international human rights obligations. On 1 May 2006, the Commission responded by issuing "precautionary measures" calling on the United States to take the steps necessary to preserve the

petitioner's life and physical integrity while his claims are under review.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION. The US Supreme Court has provided constitutional exemptions for some categories of mentally impaired people facing the death penalty. In 1986, the Court ruled in *Ford v. Wainwright* that the execution of people who are legally insane violates the US Constitution's prohibition on "cruel and unusual punishments". In reality, this has offered only minimal protection. In 2002, in *Atkins v. Virginia*, the Supreme Court prohibited the death penalty for people with mental retardation. The Court reasoned that the impairments of defendants with mental retardation diminish their personal culpability and their ability to understand consequences, rendering the death penalty unjustifiable on grounds of retribution or deterrence. Amnesty International believes that there is a profound inconsistency in exempting people with mental retardation from the death penalty while those with serious mental illness remain exposed to it. The same rationale of diminished culpability, greater vulnerability and limited capacity applies to defendants afflicted with severe mental illness.

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

- expressing sympathy for the family and friends of Claudia Benton, explaining that you are not seeking to condone the manner of her death or to minimize the suffering caused;
- expressing concern that Angel Maturino Resendiz was convicted and sentenced to death without a determination of his competency to stand trial, despite abundant evidence of serious mental illness;
- noting that the mental health of Angel Maturino Resendiz has deteriorated further on death row and that he is now reported to have no understanding that his execution will result in his death;
- expressing concern at the shocking quality of legal representation he received on appeal, and noting that executive clemency exists precisely to compensate for inequities that the courts are unable or unwilling to remedy;
- calling for the commutation of this death sentence in the interest of decency and justice;
- urging that the Texas authorities at a minimum grant a reprieve to allow the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights sufficient time to rule on the claims submitted on his behalf.

Please include the prisoner's inmate number in all appeals: TDCJ Number 999356.

APPEALS TO:

Ms. Rissie Owens, Presiding Officer

Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles,
P.O. Box 13401, Austin, Texas 78711
Fax: 1 512 463 8120

The Honorable Rick Perry
Office of the Governor, State Capitol,
P.O. Box 12428, Austin, Texas 78711-2428
Fax: 1 512 463 1849

DENOUNCE TORTURE *Sample Letter for Guantanamo Prisoner*

Navy Rear Admiral Harry B. Harris
Commander Joint Task Force Guantánamo
Department of Defense
Joint Task Force Guantánamo
Guantánamo Bay, Cuba
APO AE 09360 Fax: 305-437-1241
Email: harrishb@jtfgtmo.southcom.mil

Dear Rear Admiral Harris:

I am concerned about Guantánamo detainee Jumah al-Dossari, who attempted suicide in March 2006 by slitting his throat. According to Amnesty International, U.S. officials have refused to give his lawyers any information about his current condition.

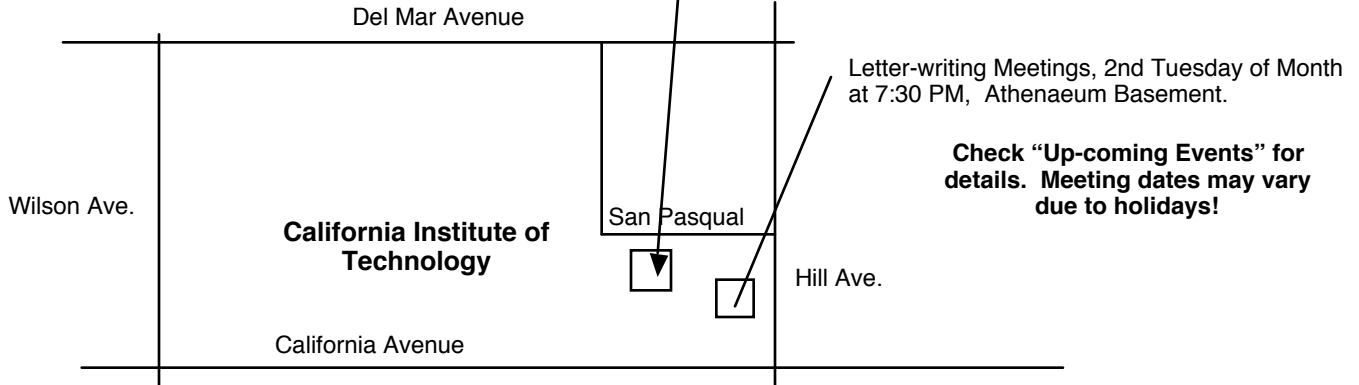
Bahraini national Jumah al-Dossari was detained in Pakistan in late 2001 and held for several weeks by the Pakistani authorities. U.S. agents flew him to Kandahar airbase in Afghanistan, and then on to Guantánamo. Jumah al-Dossari claims he has been tortured in U.S. custody, including beatings and death threats, prolonged isolation, exposure to extreme cold, and sexual assaults.

In an earlier suicide attempt, Jumah al-Dossari reportedly tried to hang himself on 15 October 2005 after going into the toilet during an interview with his lawyer. In November 2005 he told his lawyer that he had wanted to kill himself so that he could send a message to the world that the conditions at Guantánamo are intolerable. He added that he had tried to do it in a public way so that the military could not cover it up and his death would not be anonymous. This suicide attempt left him with a broken vertebra and fourteen stitches in his right arm. The March suicide attempt is the 12th time al-Dossari has tried to kill himself in detention.

I urge you to ensure that there is an independent investigation into allegations that Jumah al-Dossari has been tortured and ill-treated in U.S. military custody. I further urge you to give him access to appropriate independent medical care, and to provide his lawyers with a full report of the state of his health, as reported by independent doctors. I ask you to ensure that Jumah al-Dossari and other Guantanamo detainees receive fair trials in U.S. courts in accordance with international law and without recourse to the death penalty.

Sincerely, Your NAME and ADDRESS

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



Letter-writing Meetings, 2nd Tuesday of Month
at 7:30 PM, Athenaeum Basement.

**Check "Up-coming Events" for
details. Meeting dates may vary
due to holidays!**

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.