

UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday, September 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, October 9, 7:30 PM. *Letter-writing Meeting* at the Coffee Tree at 696 East Colorado Blvd., #8, in the alley just off Colorado. (This is across the street from Vroman's bookstore and the Laemmle theater.) This informal gathering is a great way for newcomers to get acquainted with Amnesty!

Sunday, October 21, 6:30 PM. *Rights Readers Human Rights Book Discussion Group.* Vroman's Book Bookstore, 695 E. Colorado Blvd., Pasadena. This month we read Yasmina Khadra's novel about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, *The Attack*. (More below).

COORDINATOR'S CORNER

Hi everyone,

It is raining now as I sit at the computer waiting for inspiration! What strange weather...usually in the fall, my favorite time of year, it is warm and sunny.

Last week, on September 11th, we had our letter-writing meeting at the Coffee Tree, a coffee/tea bar in the arcade shopping mall where El Portal restaurant is. Currently, the Rathskeller basement of the Athenaeum at Caltech is closed for the summer. Isabel Rodriguez, the owner, and a new member of Group 22, graciously allowed us to sit outside her shop and write letters in the cool evening air. Thank you again Isabel. This is the beginning of a beautiful friendship!

Hopefully most of you caught our Group 22 co-coordinator, Lucas Kamp, being interviewed on KCET's local news show, Life and Times, on Tuesday, September 18th! Lucas spoke regarding the issue of the Chinese government sponsoring a float in the upcoming Rose Parade. Several local organizations, including Amnesty Group 22, are opposed to this because it legitimizes an oppressive government. For those of you who missed it, you can read the transcript at: <http://www.kcet.org/lifeandtimes/archives/200709/20070918.php>. You can also view the video

(requires Real Player) at: <http://www.kcet.org/lifeandtimes/blog/?p=21>.

Larry Cox, the director of Amnesty International USA, was also featured on the program.

Last Sunday, Group 22's Rights Readers read a heart-rending true story about a boy from Honduras who is desperate to join his mother in the United States. "Enrique's Journey", by Sonia Nazario, is a powerful and moving book. For those of you who want to help the people that shelter and care for Central American migrants on their way through Mexico, the author has listed the addresses for the church in Nuevo Laredo and the Shelter of Jesus the Good Shepherd in Chiapas on her website: www.enriquesjourney.com. You can obtain a "giro postal", or money order for Mexico, at your local post office and have it sent to them. There is also an email link to Olga Sanchez Martinez, the woman who runs Albergue Jesus el Buen Pastor.

Last, but certainly not least, Martha TerMaat, is moving to the Minneapolis area in the near future. We are having a party to say farewell on October 6th. The invitation has been sent out to our email list and I hope that everyone can attend. We will miss Martha more than words can say. She has been the heart of our group for many years. ! Que le vaya bien, Martha!

Con cariño,

Kathy aigp22@caltech.edu

ERITREA

Prisoners of Conscience

September 18 marked the sixth anniversary of the arrest of Estifanos Seyoum, Group 22's adopted POC in Eritrea. He was a member of the G15, a group of senior government officials who criticized the ruling party. Estifanos and other detainees have been held incommunicado in secret prisons, where they have been reportedly subjected to torture and denial of medical treatment.

Amnesty International USA stated in their September 17 press release, "Since the detentions on political grounds six years ago on 18 September 2001 of hundreds of former government leaders, private-media journalists and civil servants, most are still held incommunicado in life-threatening conditions. Several detainees are alleged to have died in prison due to ill-treatment and denial of medical treatment, such as former army chief General Ogba Abraha and

journalist Fessahaye "Joshua" Yohannes. Despite numerous requests, the government has constantly refused to provide any evidence that they are still alive."

Diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Eritrea have taken a turn for the worse. In August the U.S. ordered Eritrea to close its consulate in Oakland, CA, as reciprocal action for Eritrea's interference with the U.S. Embassy in Asmara. Now the U.S. is accusing Eritrea of supporting terrorism. It remains to be seen what effect these U.S. actions might have on the appeals for information regarding the POCs.

Please visit <http://RightsReaders.blogspot.com> for links to the full text of the AIUSA press release, to an action for imprisoned Patriarch Abune Antonios, and for more information about recent U.S. relations with Eritrea.

And please don't allow this sad anniversary to go by without taking some action for human rights in Eritrea. You can participate in an action on the new AI Group 19 website www.FreeEritreanJournalists.org, or you can write to the Eritrean Ambassador in behalf of our POC Estifanos Seyoum, using the following sample letter as a guide.

His Excellency Ghirmai Gebremariam
Ambassador of Eritrea
1708 New Hampshire Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20009

Dear Mr. Ambassador,

September 18 marks the sixth anniversary of the arrest of Estifanos Seyoum, former Brigadier General and head of the Inland Revenue Service until August 2001. His current whereabouts and condition of health are unknown.

Amnesty International considers Estifanos Seyoum, Haile Woldetense, Aster Fissehatsion, and other senior government officials known as the G15 to be Prisoners of Conscience, since they neither used nor advocated violence in the peaceful expression of their political opinions.

Incommunicado detention increases the risk of prisoners being denied the basic rights and protection of Eritrean and international law.

Therefore I urge that the whereabouts of Estifanos Seyoum and the other G15 detainees be made known immediately.

I ask that international humanitarian organizations such as the ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross) be given immediate

access to Estifanos Seyoum, Haile Woldetense, Aster Fissehatsion and the other G15 detainees.

I respectfully remind the government of Eritrea that the Constitution of Eritrea guarantees that "no person shall be deprived of liberty without due process of law" (Article 15-2) and that "no person may be arrested or detained save pursuant to due process of law" (Article 17-1).

Thank you very much for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

[Your name and address]

RIGHTS READERS

Human Rights Book Discussion Group

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

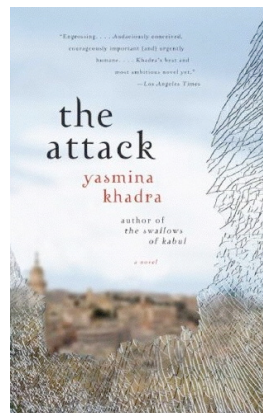
Sunday, October 21, 6:30 PM

Vroman's Bookstore

695 E. Colorado Boulevard in
Pasadena

The Attack

by Yasmina Khadra



Dr. Amin Jaafari is an Arab-Israeli surgeon at a hospital in Tel Aviv. As an admired and respected member of his community, he has carved a space for himself and his wife, Sihem, at the crossroads of

two troubled societies. Jaafari's world is abruptly shattered when Sihem is killed in a suicide bombing.

As evidence mounts that Sihem could have been responsible for the catastrophic bombing, Jaafari begins a tortured search for answers. Faced with the ultimate betrayal, he must find a way to reconcile his cherished memories of his wife with the growing realization that she may have had another life, one that was entirely removed from the comfortable, modern existence that they shared.

REGIONAL CONFERENCE

Join Fellow AI Activists in San Francisco!

Amnesty International USA
Western Regional Conference
November 9-11, 2007

Holiday Inn Golden Gateway
San Francisco, California

The Western Regional Conference of Amnesty International USA is an opportunity for activists, scholars, communities, and students to come together to learn about, discuss, and act upon some of the most important human rights issues facing our world today. All Amnesty group members and anyone interested in human rights are encouraged to attend!

Traveling from Southern California? Looking for cheaper alternatives to flying? We recommend contacting other Amnesty groups about carpools, or check out www.megabus.com for inexpensive (as low as \$1 each way) and, according to the L.A. Times Travel section, comfortable bus travel from Los Angeles or San Diego (with a connection in L.A.).

Buy your tickets early, because the \$1 tickets sell out quickly and prices go up as time goes by.

Remember: OCTOBER 15 is the DEADLINE for

- Early-bird conference registration: Register early to pay the lowest registration fee! (You'll still be able to register after the 15th, but it'll cost more!) Online registration available!

- Hotel guest room reservations: Book your room with the hotel by the 15th to get our special rate of \$124 per night.

- Ideas Fair registration: If you or your Amnesty group have ideas, a project, or a success story you want to share with others, sign up for the Ideas Fair! Space is limited!

Keynote Speakers

- Naomi Roht-Arriaza, Author, "The Pinochet Effect: Transnational Justice in the Age of Human Rights"

- Riane Eisler, Macrohistorian, Author of "The Real Wealth of Nations" and "The Chalice and the Blade"

- Larry Cox, Executive Director, Amnesty International USA

Other conference highlights include

- Friday night movie
- Workshops
- Saturday evening concert!
- Policy-making sessions

And more!

The full conference schedule, list of workshops, and other information are available online at

www.amnestyusa.org/events/western/regionalconference

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED. Would you like to learn more about the inner workings of a Regional Conference? Would you like your conference registration fee waived?

If so, why not sign up to be a volunteer at the conference. A minimum of four hours is requested. If you're interested in volunteering, please contact Kathy Brown ASAP at kbrown@aiusa.org or 310-815-0450.

Questions? Call 310-815-0450 or email aiusaLA@aiusa.org.

We hope to see you in San Francisco!

BANNED BOOK WEEK *Free Burmese Writer-Activist*

Traditionally, the last week in September is promoted by librarians and book lovers as "Banned Book Week." In Amnesty what we seek to draw attention to are banned authors. With the "people power" (or is that monk power?) revolution on going in Burma at the moment, we bring you the case of writer-activist Ko Aung Htun. For more Banned Book Week actions (which can be done now or in the weeks to come) please visit <http://www.amnestyusa.org/bannedbooks>.

Prisoner of conscience Ko Aung Htun (also known as Aung Htun or Aung Tun; name variations are common in Myanmar) was imprisoned between 1990 and 1995 for organizing student demonstrations against military rule. After release, he wrote a 7-volume history of the student movement in Myanmar, reportedly enlisting the assistance of U Thar Ban and Dr Maung Maung Kyaw, also previously imprisoned former student activists at various stages of Burmese history, who reportedly provided him with photographs and papers for the history. They all were re-arrested in February 1998 during a crackdown by authorities on political opponents. Reportedly tortured while interrogated in 1990 and again in 1998, Ko Aung Htun's health has suffered as a result.

There is strict censorship in Myanmar and all publications must be approved by the authorities. After Ko Aung Htun's arrest, authorities stated at a press conference that he had written and illegally printed "largely exaggerated and biased accounts of events based on a few facts" which he distributed to 30 politicians, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. They named the articles and history as "Political History and First Hand Experience", and "History of the Student Movements, Me and

They and Witnesses to History". In April 1998 Ko Aung Htun was sentenced to a total of 17 years' imprisonment: seven years under Section 5j of the 1950 Emergency Provision Act; seven years under the 1962 Printers and Publishers Registration Act; and three years under the Unlawful Associations Act. U Thar Ban and Dr. Maung Maung Kyaw were sentenced to 7 years' imprisonment and reportedly were released in 2005.

The legislation under which the group was sentenced has been used regularly to silence freedom of expression in Myanmar and to imprison critics of the government. The Unlawful Associations Act provides for detention of any person who has had contact with any organization deemed by authorities to be against state interests. The Printers and Publishers Registration Law requires the approval by a censor of anything that is written and distributed in the country, including all books, magazines, other periodicals, song lyrics, and motion picture scripts - in most cases before the material is distributed, and sometimes before it is printed. The 1950 Emergency Provisions Act confers sweeping powers on the authorities to silence and punish any act of real or perceived dissent, and also has been used extensively to imprison thousands of people for their peaceful opposition. Concerned that this legislation circumscribes rights and freedoms more than is needed to preserve security, Amnesty International has called on authorities to carry out a review of all legislation that is being used to criminalize peaceful dissent and freedom of assembly, expression and association, and to revoke or amend it to ensure conformity with international standards.

Please appeal for the immediate and unconditional release of Ko Aung Htun and all prisoners of conscience in Myanmar.

Senior General Than Shwe
Chairman
State Peace and Development Council
Ministry of Defense
Naypyitaw
Union of Myanmar (for US Postal Service, "Burma" should appear in parentheses after "Myanmar", on envelope only, not in the letter itself)

Salutation: Dear Senior General

Minister Counselor U Myint Lwin
Chargé d'Affaires Ad Interim
Embassy of Myanmar
2300 S Street, NW
Washington, DC 20008

USA CAMPAIGN

Justice for Louisiana Inmate

In view of the recent demonstrations in Jena, Louisiana against racial discrimination in our justice system (see www.amnesty-usa.org for press releases on the Jena 6), here is another reminder that Jena is hardly an isolated case.

Gary Tyler, a 49 year old African American man, has been in prison in Louisiana since the age of 17 as a result of an unfair trial infected with racial prejudice. In 1975 Tyler was sentenced to death for the murder of Timothy Weber, a 13 year old white schoolboy, who was shot outside of his Destrehan, Louisiana school during racial disturbances.

Gary Tyler was one of many African American students on a bus on his way home from school when it came under attack by white people throwing stones and bottles. A shot was fired, allegedly from within the bus, and Timothy Weber was killed. Following the shooting, all male students on the bus were searched and the bus was searched twice. No gun was found. One female student at the police station said she had been sitting next to Tyler and saw him fire a gun into the crowd. Following this testimony, the police "found" a gun stuffed through a long visible tear in the seat. The same seat had previously been searched, shaken and turned upside down several times and nothing had been found. Tyler was detained at the police station where there is strong evidence that he was savagely beaten.

Tyler was tried by an all white jury from which members of the African American community were deliberately excluded. He received seriously deficient legal representation from a white lawyer who specialized in civil cases and who spent only one hour with Tyler during the entire year prior to his trial. Since the trial, evidence has come to light that Tyler did not shoot the victim, including witnesses who testified against Tyler at trial and later recanted, saying that they were coerced by the police into making statements against him.

Tyler's original death sentence was overturned in 1997 following a US Supreme Court ruling that declared the Louisiana death penalty illegal. His sentence was commuted to life imprisonment without parole for 20 years.

A federal appeals court has ruled that Tyler has been "convicted on the basis of an unconstitutional charge" and that his trial was "fundamentally unfair", however, Tyler has never

been granted a retrial. On three occasions the Louisiana Board of Pardons recommended to two separate Louisiana governors that Tyler's sentence should be reduced but these recommendations were rejected.

Amnesty International is calling on Governor Kathleen Blanco to rectify this injustice by granting a pardon to Gary Tyler and ordering an independent investigation into his case so that anyone found to have been involved in any cover-up or abuse is brought to justice.

The Honorable Kathleen Blanco
Governor of the State of Louisiana
Kathleen Blanco
Office of the Governor
PO Box 94004
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9004

Dear Kathleen Blanco:

I am writing to express concern about the case of Gary Tyler, who is serving a life sentence in the Louisiana State Penitentiary in Angola. This is a case which Amnesty International has investigated for many years, and about which it has previously expressed serious concern. There is considerable evidence that casts doubt on Gary Tyler's role in the 1974 shooting of the victim, Timothy Weber. Furthermore there is credible evidence that Gary Tyler, who was 16 at the time of the crime, was seriously beaten while under interrogation in police custody.

Amnesty International believes a serious miscarriage of justice occurred either as a result of or exacerbated by Tyler's race and the racially charged atmosphere at the time of the events. Additionally, Gary Tyler received seriously deficient legal representation at his trial before an all-white jury.

The U.S. Court of Appeal for the Fifth Circuit held in two decisions that Gary Tyler had been "convicted on the basis of an unconstitutional charge" which had "infected the trial" making it "fundamentally unfair." Gary Tyler's conviction was upheld on a technical point only: that his trial lawyer failed to present an objection at the right time. In addition, and on three separate occasions, the Louisiana Board of Pardons recommended to two Louisiana governors that Gary Tyler's sentence be reduced.

I urge you to review the case and grant Gary Tyler a pardon and release him. In doing so, please launch a full and impartial investigation into his case to bring to justice anyone found to have been involved in any abuse or obstruction of justice.

Sincerely (Your Name and Address)

ZIMBABWE (RAMADAN ACTION)

Send Support to Student Activist

Maureen Kademaunga is a sociology student and Secretary general of the University of Zimbabwe Students executive Council who has been arrested on more than six occasions for leading demonstrations against exorbitant education fees, mass forced evictions, and poor social services delivery. As a result of her efforts, she has suffered physical assault while in police custody and was also suspended twice for her activism. Only after taking university authorities to court was she later reinstated.

On February 13, 2007, Ms. Kademaunga was arrested and detained along with approximately 30 others from the Harare Polytechnical College while taking part in a meeting to map a way forward for the higher education sector in Zimbabwe. She remained in detention until February 16. Her case has yet to be heard by the magistrate's court.

On March 29, 2007, she was arrested at the headquarters of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), the main political opposition in Zimbabwe. While detained, she was denied access to lawyers, received no food or drink, and was not allowed to go to the toilet. She was released the next day without charge.

Maureen Kademaunga is an example of the many human rights defenders that are under sustained attack by authorities and police in Zimbabwe. Repressive legislation continues to be used to obstruct their work. In 2006 alone, hundreds were subjected to arbitrary arrest, torture, ill-treatment and harassment.

Please send cards of support. Suggested Message: "In solidarity with the important human rights work that you are doing. Keep it up!" Write to:

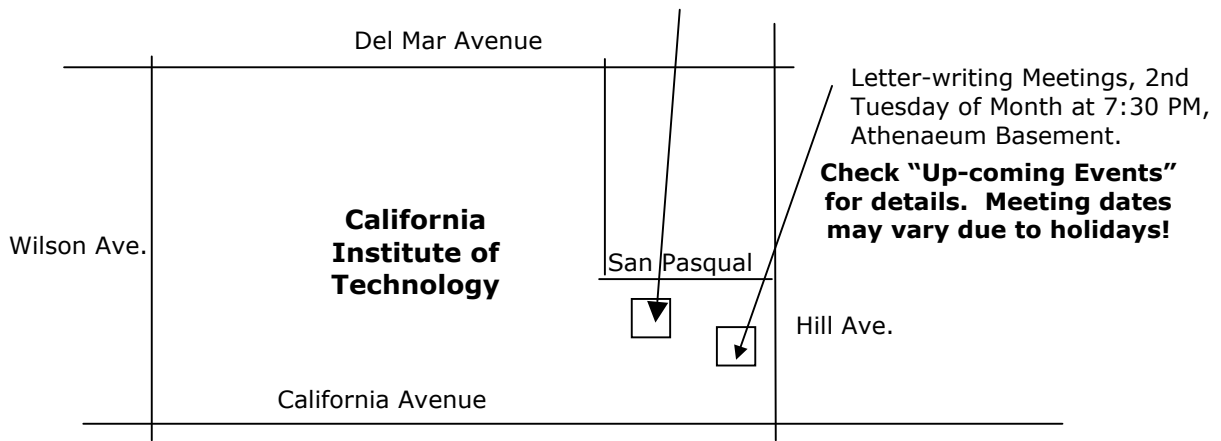
Maureen Kademaunga
Zimbabwe National Student Union
P.O. Box 3951
Harare
ZIMBABWE

LETTER COUNT

Urgent Actions	31
Eritrea	6
Total:	37

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

Monthly Meetings, 4th 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://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.