

Amnesty International Group 22 Pasadena/Caltech News

Volume XV Number 8, August 2008

UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday, August 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, September 9, 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, September 21, 6:30 PM. *Rights Readers Human Rights Book Discussion Group.* Vroman's Book Bookstore, 695 E. Colorado Blvd., Pasadena. This month we read "Selling Olga" by Louisa Waugh.

COORDINATOR'S CORNER

Hi everyone,

This is a long newsletter this month so I'll try to make my column short!

We enjoyed watching portions of the Olympics, especially women's gymnastics, but evidently there are still unresolved human rights issues. This section is taken from the AIUSA webpage:

Just as the Olympics began, a new Amnesty International report

<http://www.amnestyusa.org/document.php?lang=e&id=ENGASA170892008> found that the Chinese authorities have broken their promise to improve the country's human rights situation and betrayed the core values of the Olympics.

In addition, it has just emerged that the International Olympic Committee has caved in to China's demands on Internet censorship at Olympic media venues. Urge Chinese and US Internet companies to stop colluding with the Chinese authorities in censoring the Internet. You can take action by going to this link:

<http://www.amnestyusa.org/internet-censorship/action-ideas-and-resources/page.do?id=1101632&n1=3&n2=26&n3=1035>

China promised that it would improve its human rights record if awarded the honor of hosting the 2008 Olympic Games. Urge China to deliver a

positive human rights legacy for the Beijing Olympics.

In September we read a book written by a prize winning journalist on the topic of human trafficking. For more information, see the AI fact sheet on trafficking in this newsletter.

The AIUSA Western Regional Conference will be in Pasadena November 7-9, 2008 at the Hilton hotel. See this link for more info:

<http://www.amnestyusa.org/regional-conferences/west/page.do?id=1091479&n1=5&n2=48&n3=788>.

Con cariño,

Kathy aigp22@caltech.edu

ERITREA UPDATE

Our June newsletter included an action for 900 Eritrean asylum-seekers in Egypt. They were at risk of being forcibly returned to Eritrea. At that time Egypt initially announced that the UN High Commissioner for Refugees would be allowed to assess the asylum claims of the Eritreans, but then Egypt went ahead and carried out the mass deportation.

Please participate in the current AIUSA urgent action for 740 of these Eritrean asylum-seekers who were forcibly returned to Eritrea. They are now held without charge and may be subject to torture and ill treatment.

September 18 will mark the 7th anniversary of the arrest of Group 22's adopted Eritrean prisoner of conscience, Estifanos Seyoum. He has been held incommunicado in secret prisons since 2001 and has never been charged or brought to trial. Many of the Eritrean government officials and journalists arrested in the 2001 crackdown are reported to have died in prison as a result of torture and denial of medical treatment. Next month we hope to join other AIUSA local groups in actions to observe this sad milestone.

13 August 2008

**UA 225/08 Arbitrary detention/ Fear of torture and other ill treatment
ERITREA/ EGYPT Up to 1,200 forcibly returned
asylum seekers**

Between 12 and 19 June, up to 1,200 Eritrean asylum-seekers were forcibly returned from Egypt

to Eritrea. While almost all of the returned women with children and those who were pregnant were released after some weeks in detention, the majority of the male and single female Eritreans that were returned are held without charge. Those in detention have been transferred to military camps and prisons, including 740 reportedly at the Halhal camp within Wia military camp, approximately 40 km south of Massawa. Wia military camp is in a desert location where temperatures reach up to 40 degrees Celsius during the day. Amnesty International is seriously concerned with the well-being and detention conditions of at least 740 Eritreans still in arbitrary detention in Eritrea following their forcible return from Egypt in June 2008.

Amnesty International is also concerned that those who remain in arbitrary detention are at grave risk of torture, and other ill-treatment. Torture is regularly used against detainees in Eritrea, including at military camps such as Wia. Methods of torture Amnesty International has previously documented in Eritrea include prolonged beatings with whips and kicking, tying detainees in stress positions such as the helicopter position and the figure eight position, and leaving them in the sun for periods of hours.

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

To the Eritrean authorities:

- urging the authorities to disclose the names and whereabouts of all the Eritreans who have been forcibly returned from Egypt since 11 June;
- urging the authorities not to detain, torture or ill-treat those who have been returned;
- reminding the authorities that enforced disappearances, torture and other ill-treatment are prohibited under international law.

To the Egyptian authorities:

- calling on the authorities to disclose the names of all the Eritreans they recently forcibly returned to Eritrea;
- calling on the Egyptian government to take all possible diplomatic measures to ensure the Eritreans they returned to Eritrea are released from arbitrary detention, and are not tortured or otherwise ill-treated;
- urging them to respect Egypt's international obligations under the 1951 Refugee Convention and the UN Convention against Torture not to forcibly return asylum-seekers to Eritrea, where they would be at risk of torture and other serious human rights violations.

APPEALS TO:

To the Eritrean authorities:
President
His Excellency President Issayas Afewerki
Office of the President
P O Box 257, Asmara, ERITREA
Fax: 011 2911 123 788
(via Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Justice
Ms Fawzia Hashim
Ministry of Justice
P O Box 241, Asmara, ERITREA
Fax: 011 2911 126 422
Salutation: Dear Minister

To the Egyptian authorities:
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Minister Ahmed Ali Aboul Gheit
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Corniche al-Nil, Maspiro
Cairo, EGYPT
Fax: 011 20 22 574 8822 OR
011 20 22 390 8159 OR
011 20 22 574 9533
E-mail: minexter@idsc1.gov.eg
Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Ambassador Ghirmai Ghebremariam
Embassy of the State of Eritrea
1708 New Hampshire Ave NW
Washington DC 20009
Fax: 1 202 319 1304
Email: embassyeritrea@embassyeritrea.org

Ambassador Samuel Assefa Lemma
Embassy of Ethiopia
3506 International Dr NW
Washington DC 20008
Fax: 1 202 587 0195

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.
Check with the AIUSA Urgent Action office if sending appeals after 24 September 2008.

TRAFFICKING OF PERSONS: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL FACT SHEET

Human trade, slave markets, the buying and selling of people – these are words and phrases that to many people echo a brutal and distant time in our past. But to the countless women, men, and children trafficked every year these words coldly define the horror of their lives. Trafficking is a worldwide phenomenon. Victims are trafficked into a range of hazardous labor including farm work, sweatshops, domestic servants, forced prostitution and subjected to sexual abuse and other forms of violence. Each year, an estimated 600,000-800,000 men, women, and children are trafficked across international borders according to the US Department of State.

As part of Amnesty International's Stop Violence Against Women campaign, we are examining one type of human trafficking, the trafficking of women and girls into forced prostitution – one of the most widespread and pervasive forms of violence against women.

The Amnesty International report: *"Kosovo (Serbia and Montenegro) 'So does that mean I have rights?' Protecting the human rights of women and girls trafficked for forced prostitution in Kosovo"* documents the widespread and systematic abuses of women and girls trafficked into and internally within Kosovo for sexual exploitation. Kosovo has become a major destination for women and girls trafficked into forced prostitution since the deployment of an international peacekeeping force and the establishment of a UN civilian administration.

"Eventually I arrived in a bar in Kosovo, [and was] locked inside and forced into prostitution. In the bar I was never paid, I could not go out by myself, the owner became more and more violent as the weeks went by; he was beating me and raping me and the other girls. We were his 'property', he said. By buying us, he had bought the right to beat us, rape us, starve us, force us to have sex with clients." - 21 year old Moldovan woman

What is trafficking?

"It's something to do with cars isn't it?" - trafficked girl, interviewed by an NGO in Kosovo.

Trafficking is modern day slave trading. It involves transporting people away from the communities they live in by the threat or use of violence, deception or coercion so they can be

exploited as forced or enslaved workers. When children are trafficked, no violence, deception or coercion needs to be involved: simply transporting them into exploitative conditions constitutes trafficking.

Trafficking is a fundamental abuse of human rights. It results in the abuse of the rights to:

- physical and mental integrity;
- life;
- liberty;
- security of the person;
- dignity;
- freedom from slavery, slave-like practices, torture and other inhuman or degrading treatment;
- family life;
- freedom of movement;
- privacy;
- the highest attainable standard of health; and
- safe and secure housing.

Deception and lies

Although in some cases, women and girls are abducted or coerced by traffickers, many start their journeys from their home countries voluntarily.

They see an ad in a local paper, an employment website on the internet, or a flyer on a community billboard: each offering attractive employment as nannies, waitresses, secretaries, models or dancers. All carry the promise of desperately needed money.

"I was desperate, and not because I was having problems with my parents as I heard from other girls, but because we were so poor... My grandmother had a very small allowance, and my mother has only the state allowance for my three brothers. I couldn't live any longer on my grandmother's pension, so I said that I'd better go somewhere else where I could work hard and earn some money to help my family and my brothers." - Woman trafficked into Kosovo

Sometimes it's a boyfriend who promises to help them find work in the 'glittering' west. A friend who offers to help escape a desperate situation. A promise of marriage betrayed. Or a desperate economic exchange by a parent. This is how countless thousands of women and girls are trapped in the chilling world of trafficking.

Violence and threats

For most of these women and girls, as soon as their journey begins, so does the systematic abuse of their rights, in a strategy that reduces them to

dependency on their trafficker, and later their "owner". The realization grows that the work they have been offered is not what was promised; their documents are taken away from them; they may be beaten; they will - almost certainly if they start to protest - be raped.

Although some women are not aware until they reach their destination that they have been sold, other have seen money change hands, or have been raped by buyers when they "try the merchandise". Women are often sold several times before reaching their destination.

Escape is almost impossible. Without her travel documents, a woman is likely to be arrested for immigration or other offences. But probably more pertinently, trafficked women are usually trapped by threats, coercion, or literally being locked inside.

"We worked from 9am to 11pm. After that he said, 'You do what you like', but we were locked. When we asked to go out he said no, that we had to be here. We slept in a room together, me and another girl. All the windows had bars." – Romanian girl trafficked into Kosovo

At a trial in Gnjilane/Gjilan in 2002, a trafficked woman testified that she had been kept in a cellar, where she slept at night and serviced clients during the day. Food, drink and a bucket for use as a lavatory were brought down to her. She only left the cellar when she was driven by her trafficker to meet clients.

Trafficked women are repeatedly subjected to psychological abuse, including intimidation and threats, lies and deception, emotional manipulation and blackmail in order to keep them trapped.

"If I refused [to have sex with clients] I was threatened. He was pointing the gun to my head, and he was saying.. 'If you don't do this in the next minute, you will be dead'. He has the gun, he was just saying do this or you will be dead."

Many trafficked girls and women report being told that their families and their children would be harmed or murdered if they tried to escape or tell anyone. Others report being told that their families have found out what they're doing and that they don't want anything more to do with them.

What you can do

Trafficking is a crime under international law under the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons. For more

information on trafficking, the Stop Violence Against Women campaign, or women's human rights, visit AIUSA's Stop Violence Against Women website at:

<http://www.amnestyusa.org/stopviolence>
or contact Amnesty International at 5 Penn Plaza-16th floor, New York, NY 10001 or at (212) 633-4292.

STOP HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN MONTENEGRO

SAMPLE LETTER:

Dear Ministar Pravde Miras Radovic,

I welcome the signature by Montenegro on the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. Montenegro is a source, transit, and destination country for women and girls trafficked internally and internationally for the purpose of sexual exploitation. I urge you to ensure that Montenegro's legal framework is in accordance with the Convention and to fully implement the Convention.

According to the Explanatory Report to accompany the Council of Europe Convention, "when trafficking in human beings is concerned, special protected shelters are especially suitable and have already been introduced in various countries." I urge you to foster financial support for shelters for women and girls, in close cooperation with independent non-governmental women's groups, either by providing funding from your budget, by providing housing for a shelter, or by providing land on which a shelter may be built. I also urge you to ensure that adequate financial resources are made available for the development and support of independent non-governmental organizations opposing domestic violence and human trafficking.

Furthermore, in implementing the Convention, legislation should prohibit the forcible return and detention of trafficked persons. Also, I urge you to add "abduction" to the definition of trafficking as set out in article 3 (a) of the Palermo Protocol. Finally, I urge you to codify the measures of witness protection in the statute on criminal procedure, by implementing the UN Convention on Transnational Organized Crime (Article 24) in the Statute on Criminal Procedure (Article 8), so that the safety of the witness is guaranteed. Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely, (your name and address)

RIGHTS READERS

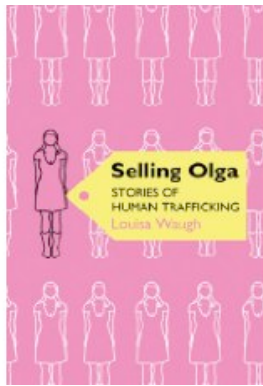
Human Rights Book Discussion Group

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

Next Rights Readers meeting:
Sunday, September 21, 6:30 PM
Vroman's Bookstore
695 E. Colorado Boulevard
in Pasadena

"Selling Olga"

By Louisa Waugh



Review

Louise Waugh spent three years researching and writing this unflinching investigation into human trafficking across Europe. She traveled to places most infested with trafficking, talked to the women who had been trafficked and to those who support them at considerable personal risk to their own safety. Bosnia, Kosovo, northern Albania, Moldova and Sicily all had ugly stories to tell: women sold in bars, confined inside private apartments, raped to ensure obedience, beaten and degraded.

Through a particular victim, Olga, whom she meets in Moldova, we see the realities of such women's situations and it is Olga who can explain how tied such women become to their "owners".

"He warned me He said that the two men who wanted to buy me would take me to Pec or to Ferizye. Pec is a terrible place, up in the mountains. The other girls told me that if you cause trouble there, you are just shot like an animal and your body dumped outside."

Olga had been beaten so badly that she was almost blind. Her need to sustain her young son drove her to accept bestial treatment from many men. Her hope is that she will gain a job in the Moldovan Institute for the Blind.

The great strength of this terrifying report is that the author has made contact not only with the female victims of traffickers themselves, but has also with the organizations which help them and fight for them, the police and officials from the forces (for example, UN and NATO officials dealing with the ugly complicity of their own peacekeepers). She has gone to great lengths to follow her stories through.

A particularly grim case she covers is that of the trafficker Luan Plakici, an Albanian operating in London from 1995 to 2003 before he was convicted of trafficking and sentenced to 23 years. Most shocking about Plakici's story was how easy it was for him to carry out these acts in Britain. He was able to bind the girls to him through fear and threats (for example, to kill a young sister in another country).

Human trafficking for the sex industry and for forced labour is the world's fastest-growing organized crime.

-Margaret Laird (from Society Today online, a British magazine)

Author Biography



Louisa Waugh was born in Berlin and has lived in Liverpool, London, and Edinburgh. She is currently living in Gaza City, in Palestine. Whilst in London she worked with street homeless young people, before packing her bags and taking the Trans-Siberian train to Mongolia in 1996, where she set up home for several years, learnt fluent Mongolian and worked as a freelance journalist.

Her book *Hearing Birds Fly* tells about her life amongst the Tsengel villagers in Mongolia and won the inaugural Ondaatje prize, the £10,000 award for the best book to evoke the spirit of a place, and is named after businessman and philanthropist Christopher Ondaatje.

DEATH PENALTY

THE WRONG MAN: RAY KRONE

Ray Krone was sentenced to death for a crime he didn't commit and was the 100th man exonerated from death row in the U.S.

To watch his testimony, go to

http://www.amnestyusa.org/Our_Issues/Death_Penalty/page.do?id=1011005&n1=3&n2=28

DEATH PENALTY URGENT ACTION IRAN

19 August 2008

**Further Information on UA 71/08
(13 March 2008) - Fear of Execution
IRAN**

**Naser Qasemi (m), aged 23
Mohammad Reza Haddadi (m), aged 18
Reza Hejazi (m), aged 19
Iman Hashemi (m), aged 18
[juvenile offenders]**

Reza Hejazi was hanged in Esfahan prison on 19 August. His lawyer was not informed that his execution was to be carried out, though under Iranian law a 48-hour notification period is required.

On 18 August Reza Hejazi's family were notified that he had been transferred to a cell for those to be executed within 24 hours, and they informed his lawyer, Mohammad Mostafaie.

On 19 August 2008, the lawyer reached Esfahan prison at 4.30am, and attempted to find out when the execution was to be carried out. Prison guards informed him that executions normally took place between 7 and 8am. After attempting for several hours to secure a stay of execution, at around 10am Mohammad Mostafaie was told by the officer supervising executions that Reza Hejazi's execution had been halted. He set off back to his office in the capital, Tehran, a five-hour journey away. While he was traveling, he was informed that Reza Hejazi had been hanged at 11am.

Reza Hejazi – then aged 15 - was among a group of people involved in a dispute with a man on 18 September 2004, which resulted in the man being fatally stabbed. Reza Hejazi was arrested and tried for murder, and on 14 November 2005 he

was sentenced to qesas (retribution) by Branch 106 of the Esfahan General Court. The sentence was approved by Branch 28 of the Supreme Court in Mashhad on 6 June 2006, although under Iranian law he should have been tried in a juvenile court.

There is no further news on Naser Qasemi, Mohammad Reza Haddadi and Iman Hashemi, all of whom have been sentenced to death for crimes committed when they were under the age of 18, in violation of international law.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Since 1990 Iran has executed at least 36 juvenile offenders, eight of them in 2007 and five in 2008. The execution of juvenile offenders is prohibited under international law, as stated in Article 6 (5) of the ICCPR and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), of which Iran is a state party to and so has undertaken not to execute anyone for crimes committed when they were under 18.

For more information about executions of child offenders in Iran, please see: Iran: The last executioner of children (MDE 13/059/2007, June 2007),
<http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/engmde130592007>

And also a joint press release with over 20 other organizations, please see: Iran: Spare four youths from execution, immediately enforce international prohibition on death penalty for juvenile offenders, available at:

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/for-media/press-releases/iran-spare-four-youths-execution-immediately-enforce-international-prohibition>

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible:

- calling for an immediate halt to the executions of Naser Qasemi, Mohammad Reza Haddadi and Iman Hashemi, all convicted of crimes allegedly committed when they were under the age of 18;
- reminding the authorities that Iran is a state party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which prohibit the use of the death penalty against people convicted of crimes committed when they were under 18;
- expressing dismay at the execution of Reza Hejazi in Esfahan prison on 19 August, in violation of Iran's obligations under the ICCPR and the CRC;
- calling on the authorities to explain the reasons for his execution, and for their failure to inform

his lawyer of his imminent execution, in breach of Iranian law;
- calling on the authorities to commute the death sentences passed on Naser Qasemi, Mohammad Reza Haddadi and Iman Hashemi.

APPEALS TO:

Head of the Judiciary
Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi
Howzeh Riyasat-e Qoveh Qazaiyeh /
Office of the Head of the Judiciary
Pasteur St., Vali Asr Ave., south of Serah-e
Jomhuri,
Tehran 1316814737,
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN
Email: info@dadgostary-tehran.ir
(In subject line: FAO Ayatollah
Shahroudi)
Salutation: Your Excellency

Leader of the Islamic Republic
His Excellency Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei,
The Office of the Supreme Leader
Islamic Republic Street - Shahid Keshvar Doust
Street
Tehran, ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN
Email: info@leader.ir
Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO:

President
His Excellency Mahmoud Ahmadinejad
The Presidency
Palestine Avenue, Azerbaijan Intersection
Tehran, ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN
Fax: 011 98 21 6 649 5880
Email: dr-ahmadinejad@president.ir
(via website)
<http://www.president.ir/email/>

Director, Human Rights Headquarters of Iran
His Excellency Mohammad Javad Larijani
Howzeh Riassat-e Ghoveh Ghazaiyeh
(Office of the Head of the Judiciary)
Pasteur St, Vali Asr Ave., south of Serah-e
Jomhuri, Tehran
1316814737,
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN
Fax: 011 98 21 3390 4986
(please keep trying)
Email: fsharafi@bia-judiciary.ir
(In subject line: FAO Mohammad
Javad Larijani) int_aff@judiciary.ir (In subject
line: FAO Mohammad Javad Larijani)

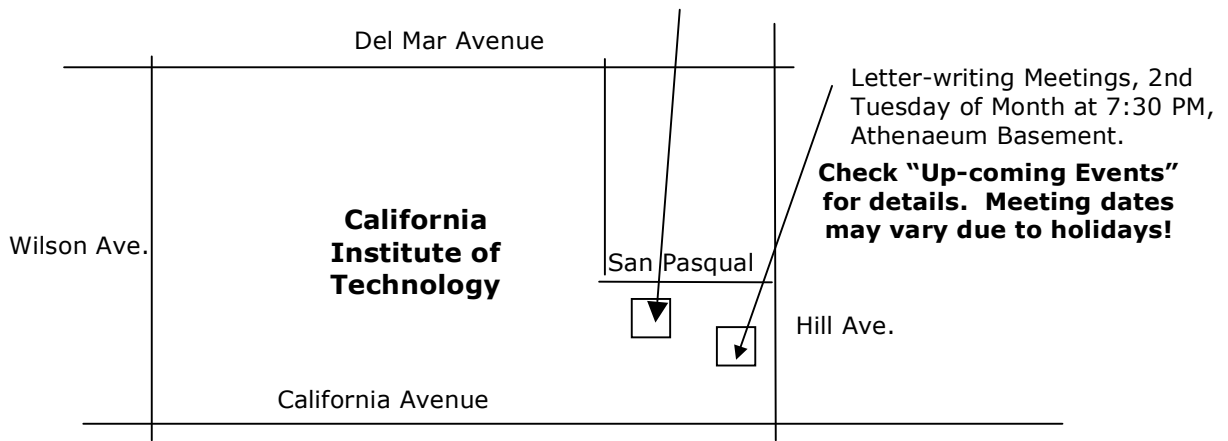
Iran does not presently have an embassy in the
United States. Instead, please send copies to:
Iranian Interests Section
Embassy of Pakistan
2209 Wisconsin Ave NW
Washington DC 20007
Phone: 202 965 4990
Fax: 202 965 1073
Email: requests@daftar.org

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.
Check with the AIUSA Urgent Action office if
sending appeals after 30 September 2008.

MONTHLY LETTER COUNT

UAs	22
Total:	22
To add your letters to the total contact lwkamp@gmail.com .	

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.