

Amnesty International Group 22 Pasadena/Caltech News

Volume XVII Number 6, June 2009

UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday, June 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.

Sunday, July 12, Monthly Movie Night. Time and location TBD. **Note date change due to 4th of July weekend.**

Tuesday July 14, 7:30 PM. Note change of venue. Letter writing meeting at Zephyr coffee house, 2419 E. Colorado Blvd, Pasadena. 626-793-7330. This informal gathering is a great way for newcomers to get acquainted with Amnesty.

Sunday, July 19, 6:30 PM. *Rights Readers Human Rights Book Discussion Group.* Vroman's Book Bookstore, 695 E. Colorado Blvd., Pasadena. This month we read "The Daughters of Juarez by Teresa Rodriguez.

COORDINATOR'S CORNER

Hi everyone,

I won't write much – want to make room for information regarding the situation in Iran. It is of interest because we don't want to see the reformers suppressed like others in China and Myanmar. There is also a large Iranian community in Los Angeles – in the San Fernando Valley and the West Side. (There is an Iranian Jewish Temple by my parents' place in Tarzana!) Amnesty has information on their website - please visit <http://www.amnestyusa.org> for breaking news. For info about the death of Neda, see <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/news/iran-stop-using-basij-militia-to-police-demonstrations-20090622>.

You can also download these Urgent Actions: **Urge the Release of Political Leaders and Activists in Iran (UA 159/09)**

<http://www.amnestyusa.org/actioncenter/actions/uaa15909.pdf>

Release 28 Iranians Detained for Peaceful Expression (UA 152/09)

<http://www.amnestyusa.org/actioncenter/actions/uaa15209.pdf>

Protect Demonstrators From Excessive Force in Iran (UA 150/09)

<http://www.amnestyusa.org/actioncenter/actions/uaa15009.pdf>. This one is featured later in this newsletter.

One of our Amnesty colleagues, Tracy Gore, was honored by the Visual Artists Guild for her work for human rights in China. Congratulations Tracy! Lucas, Veronica, and Joyce were on hand to cheer as she accepted her award at House of Blues. The 20th anniversary of the Tiananmen Square tragedy was commemorated in Los Angeles with a 4-mile march from Chinatown to the Chinese Consulate and a candlelight vigil. Tracy spoke at the vigil and made sure that we carried the Amnesty banner at both these events!

Con cariño,

Kathy

IRAN ELECTION ACTION

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

On 10 June, two days before the election, following widespread public rallies across in support of Mir Hossein Mousavi, the Head of the Revolutionary Guards Political Office accused his supporters as being part of a "velvet revolution" in Iran, which "would not be successful."

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad claimed victory after the Ministry of the Interior announced results showing he had won by what many consider to be an unexpectedly wide margin. His re-election has been endorsed by the Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, the ultimate arbiter of power in Iran. Mir Hossein Mousavi, who has said he was initially told by the Interior Ministry that he was the victor, has called the result a "dangerous charade," and both he and another candidate, Mohsen Rezaei, have submitted formal complaints to the Council of Guardians, which oversees elections. A ruling on their complaints is expected within 10 days.

In Tehran there have been demonstrations since early on 13 June. The demonstrators have at times thrown stones and set fire to buildings, motorbikes, cars, and have threatened members of the security forces, who have responded with violence, beating demonstrators, and arresting at least 170. On 14 June the Deputy Police Chief of Tehran said 10 of these were people who had been arrested for "masterminding" the riots, including some politicians, and 50 for "orchestrating" them.

Up to five students, named to Amnesty International as Fatemeh Barati, Kasra Sharafi, Mobina Ehterami, Kambiz Sho'a'i and Mohsen Imani - were reportedly shot dead on 14 June when security forces attacked a dormitory area in Tehran; others – possibly dozens – were arrested

and many reportedly injured. Amnesty International has received the names of 13 students said to have been arrested.

In an apparent response to the widespread unrest, the Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei announced that there would be an investigation into allegations of election fraud. The Guardian Council—which oversees the elections—has received Mr. Mousavi's official complaint of fraud, and has said it will report back within 10 days.

On 15 June, protesters defied a ban on demonstrations and held a rally on Azadi, or Freedom, Square on behalf of Mir Hossein Mousavi attended by several hundred thousand—possibly up to one million—people. Mir Hossein Mousavi spoke at this rally. Security forces reportedly fired on the crowd, killing at least one and injuring several, after some protesters apparently attempted to storm a building linked to Basij—or paramilitary forces.

There are also reports of people arrested at demonstrations in provincial cities such as Zahedan, Tabriz, Mashhad, Babol, and Shiraz.

SAMPLE LETTER

Your Excellency,

I am writing to you to express my concern over the use of violence by security forces responding to protests over the election results following the 12 June elections in Iran. Large numbers of people have been severely beaten by riot police on motorcycles who wield truncheons and night sticks. Furthermore, up to five students at Tehran University were reportedly shot dead on Sunday 14 June and another person was reportedly shot when security agents opened fire on a demonstration on behalf of Mir Hossein Mousavi on 15 June. Several other people were injured by gunfire.

I am also concerned that at least 170 people have been detained by authorities since 12 June, including the brother of former President Mohammad Khatami. Furthermore, the Iranian authorities have attempted to prevent the flow of information by blocking cell phone, text messaging, email and web sites.

I urge you to insure that security agents will exercise restraint in the use of lethal force to respond to protests, and to refrain from beating people for exercising their right to freedom of expression and association. I also urge that those detained for peacefully expressing their opposition to the election results be released. I finally urge you not to restrict the right to

freedom of expression and association, by permitting peaceful public protests and by not interfering with communications.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely, your name and address.

SEND TO:

Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic
Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei
The Office of the Supreme Leader
Islamic Republic Street – End of Shahid Keshvar
Doust Street
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Email: info_leader@leader.ir
via website:
<http://www.leader.ir/langs/en/index.php?p=letter> (English)

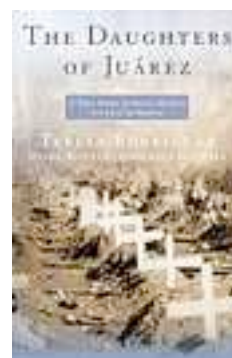
Minister of the Interior
Sadegh Mahsouli
Ministry of the Interior
Dr Fatemi Avenue
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Fax: +98 21 8 896 203
+98 21 8 899 547
+98 21 6 650 203
Salutation: Your Excellency

RIGHTS READERS

Vroman's Bookstore
695 E. Colorado Boulevard
in Pasadena
Sunday July 19, 6:30 pm

"The Daughters of Juarez"

By Teresa Rodriguez



Review from the Washington Post:

"The first body was found on Jan. 23, 1993. Alma Chavira Farel had been raped, beaten and strangled before being dumped in a vacant lot on

the outskirts of Ciudad Juarez. Five months later another victim turned up, her body too mangled to be identified. By year's end, the tally hit 16 — all dark-haired young women, mutilated and ditched in the barren desert across the Rio Grande from El Paso. More... Washington Post Book Review (read the entire Washington Post review) bodies kept appearing, about 400 over 13 years. Arrests have been made, investigators replaced, protests staged and fingers pointed. Still the slaughter of women continues.

It is the stuff of a 'CSI' thriller. Indeed, two Hollywood movies have fictionalized the story. But the cases are very real, and now, finally, the scandal is getting the serious treatment it deserves in 'The Daughters of Juarez,' which is being touted as the first nonfiction account in English of the unsolved murders.

Teresa Rodriguez, a reporter with the U.S.-based Spanish-language network Univision, made four trips to Juarez, returning with a tale that may seem unbelievable to those who have not spent time in Mexico. With assists from co-authors Diana Montane and Lisa Pulitzer, Rodriguez describes an industrial border city in which indifference, incompetence and sexism enabled a serial killer — or more likely several — to operate unchecked for more than a decade.

Rodriguez introduces American readers to a Mexican culture in which men dominate, the rule of law means little, women are devalued, corruption runs rampant and some people actually blame the victims. As state prosecutor Arturo Gonzalez Rascon callously put it: 'Women with a nightlife who go out very late and come into contact with drinkers are at risk.'

Rodriguez is at times overly reliant on cliches — corpses 'pile up like cordwood,' for instance, and 'the names and the faces have changed, but the stories are sadly the same.' Much of the reporting comes from unnamed or secondary sources, and the story sometimes travels down curious tangents. (A case of spousal abuse is one puzzling example.) The book also lacks a bibliography and sourcing notes, which might have added credibility.

But when Rodriguez focuses on the women and their stories, the book is compelling and valuable. Contrary to widespread perceptions, few of the victims were prostitutes. Many worked 12-hour shifts in the U.S.-owned maquiladoras, traveling to and from the factories before sunrise or after midnight, often on foot.

We meet Lilia Garcia, a 17-year-old mother of two who attended college prep school at night after working all day in a maquiladora that made water massage equipment. There's Silvia Morales, who sang in a church choir and sold shoes in a respectable downtown shop. And Claudia Ivette Gonzalez, who was turned away from her job at the Lear Corp. factory after arriving four minutes late. 'A month later her corpse was discovered buried in a field near a busy Juarez intersection,' Rodriguez writes. 'Next to her lay the bodies of seven other young women.'

Rodriguez and her co-authors capture well the contrast between the two worlds of Juarez: 'While the young girls were assembling sophisticated circuit boards' in modern, air-conditioned factories with 'access to sparkling indoor showers ... and complimentary hot and cold meals ... they were facing illnesses like cholera and tuberculosis at home. Many ... were surviving in seventeenth-century conditions, confronting life without plumbing and electricity in cardboard and tarpaper hovels with no floors or foundations.'

Outrage comes, however, not only in the murders, but in the way they are handled by police and prosecutors, who at best are inept and at worst likely involved in the crimes they are investigating. In the week before Lilia Garcia's body was found, police received an emergency call of a 'rape in progress' in a barren field 300 yards from the factory where she worked. Police arrived 70 minutes later but said they found 'nothing to report.' A few days later, the body of Garcia, who had been beaten, raped, strangled and burned, was discovered in the same lot. An autopsy revealed handcuff bruises on her wrists.

Throughout 'The Daughters of Juarez,' suspects are locked up based on circumstantial evidence or coerced confessions. Bodies are misidentified, a lawyer is killed gangland style, and experts from Amnesty International detail egregious investigative errors.

Were they not so horrifying and sad, some elements of this tale would be laughable. Even after authorities had arrested Abdel Latif Sharif Sharif in connection with the killings, bodies continued to appear. When asked how that was possible, police claimed the Egyptian was directing members of Los Rebeldes gang to keep killing local girls — from his jail cell. Later, special prosecutor Suly Ponce claimed Sharif Sharif was hiring several bus drivers to commit a fresh batch of killings in 1999.

Most troubling, though, is the lack of answers. As recently as November, one victim's mother expressed doubts about the guilt of two men charged in her daughter's death. 'We don't want scapegoats. We don't want torture ... or lies,' she said. 'What I want is the truth.'"

Reviewed by Patrick Anderson, whose e-mail address is mondaythrillers@aol.com, Carolyn See, who can be reached at www.carolynsee.com, Ceci Connolly, a Washington Post staff writer on leave in Mexico City, Washington Post Book World (Copyright 2006 Washington Post Book World Service/Washington Post Writers Group)

About the Author



Teresa Rodriguez is a veteran, award-winning journalist at Univision (the leading Spanish language network in the United States). She is the recipient of eleven Emmy awards, eight for news-oriented specials and three for investigative and feature reporting. Rodriguez is the main co-anchor and correspondent for the award winning news-magazine show *Aqui y Ahora*. In 1992, she was reporter for the George Foster Peabody Award winning WTVJ news team that was recognized for their exceptional coverage of the aftermath of Hurricane Andrew. Additionally, she was chosen as one of Hispanic magazine's Top Latinas in the field of Journalism in 2005.

US JOURNALISTS DETAINED IN NORTH KOREA

Introduction

North Korean authorities have sentenced two U.S. journalists, Laura Ling and Euna Lee, to 12 years imprisonment with hard labor. The two journalists, both of whom work for California-based Current TV media venture in San Francisco,

were arrested by North Korean officials on March 17 near the Tumen River, which separates North Korea and China. The two were investigating human rights abuses of North Korean women. Urge China, which is the major provider of energy and food to North Korea, and which has considerable leverage on the regime in Pyongyang, to call for the release of the two journalists.

Send Letters to:

The Honorable Zhou Wenzhong
Embassy of the People's Republic of China
3505 International Place, NW
Washington, DC 20008
Fax: 1-202-328-2582

Sample Letter

Dear Mr. Ambassador:

I am writing to express my grave concern over the recent sentencing of two U.S. journalists, Laura Ling and Euna Lee, to 12 years' imprisonment with hard labor in North Korea. The North Korean government seems to be using these two journalists as pawns in its dangerous game of escalating tensions with the international community. This sentence was harsher than many observers expected and completely out of line with any of the accusations that Pyongyang has leveled against them. As the major provider of energy and food to North Korea, with considerable leverage on the regime in Pyongyang, I urge you to call for the release of the two journalists. Laura Ling and Euna Lee, who were arrested by North Korean officials on March 17 near the Tumen River. It is not yet clear whether the two women had crossed the border into North Korea or if they were in China when arrested. The two were investigating human rights abuses of North Korean women.

As a state party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, North Korean authorities should act toward the journalists according to international human rights standards. The pair has had no access to lawyers, and their trial was not conducted with respect for due process or transparency. They have also had limited consular support and very limited contact with their families after their arrest. Finally, the two were convicted of an unspecified "grave crime" against the nation by the Central Court in Pyongyang, seemingly ruling out the possibility of any further judicial appeals.

I am also concerned that many prisoners have fallen ill or died in custody in North Korea, due to the combination of forced hard labor, inadequate

food, lack of medical care and un-hygienic living conditions. Forms of punishment have included beatings, forced exercise, sitting without moving for prolonged periods of time and humiliating public criticism.

Laura Ling reportedly suffers from an ulcer, and the harsh prison conditions in North Korea might further deteriorate her medical condition.

I respectfully urge you to use the good offices of the People's Republic of China to obtain the immediate and unconditional release of Laura Ling and Euna Lee.

Sincerely, your name and address.

DEATH PENALTY UPDATE

<http://blog.amnestyusa.org/category/deathpenalty>

Posted by Brian Evans, June 18, 2009 at 1:26 PM

A Clear Scientific Consensus that the Death Penalty does NOT Deter

Scientists agree, by an overwhelming majority, that the death penalty has no deterrent effect. They felt the same way over ten years ago, and nothing has changed since then. States without the death penalty continue to have significantly lower murder rates than those that retain capital punishment. And the few recent studies purporting to prove a deterrent effect, though getting heavy play in the media, have failed to impress the larger scientific community, which has exposed them as flawed and inconsistent.

The latest issue of the Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology contains a study by a Sociology professor and a graduate student at the University of Colorado-Boulder (Michael Radelet and Traci Lacock), examining the opinions of leading criminology experts on the deterrence effects of the death penalty.

The results reveal that most experts do not believe that the death penalty or the carrying out of executions serve as deterrents to murder, nor do they believe that existing empirical research supports the deterrence theory. In fact, the authors report that 88.2% of respondents do not think that the death penalty deters murder—a level of consensus comparable to the agreement among scientists regarding global climate change. At the same time, only 9.2% of surveyed experts indicated that they believed the death penalty results in a significant drop in murder cases (56.6% completely disagreed with that statement, while 32.9% thought the correlation between

capital punishment and lower homicide numbers to be “largely inaccurate”; 1.3% were uncertain).

The study builds upon previous research, published in 1996, in which the opinions of 67 leading experts in the field of criminology were surveyed. The most recent study sent the same questions to a new group of experts (a total of 73), among whom were fellows from the American Society of Criminology, as well as award-winning criminology scholars.

A majority of respondents also expressed the opinion that death penalty states don't have lower homicide rates than states where capital punishment has been abolished. The authors point to empirical evidence that backs this up — in 2007 murder rates in states that still had the death penalty exceeded those in states that have abolished it by no less than 42%. More than eighteen percent of surveyed experts went even further and actually expressed the belief that the death penalty leads to a higher rate of murders, something the authors call the ‘brutalization hypothesis.’

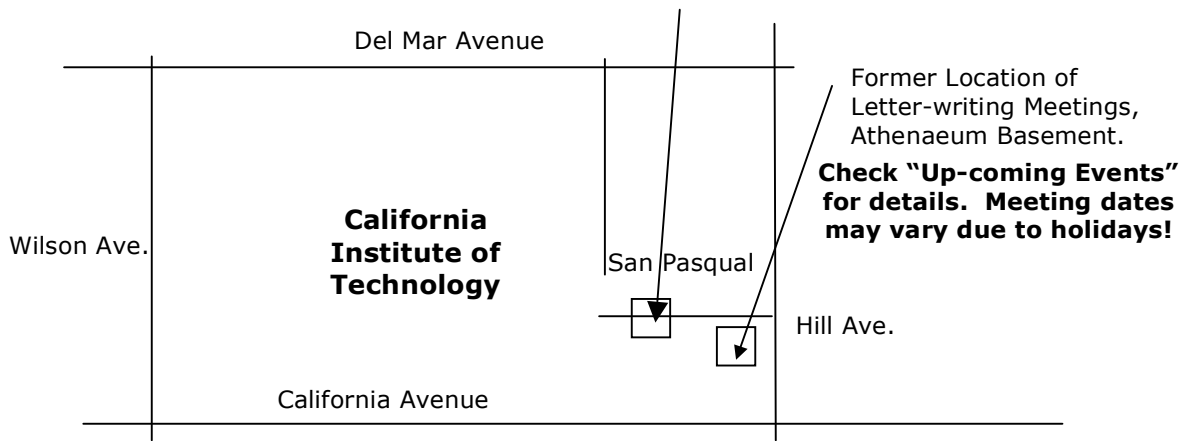
In addition, a majority of respondents involved in both the 2008 and the 1996 studies believe that “(d)ebates about the death penalty distract Congress and state legislatures from focusing on real solutions to crime problems.” Overall, the authors conclude that there is no significant difference between the opinions of experts from the 1996 and the 2008 time periods and that “a vast majority of the world's top criminologists believe that the empirical research has revealed the deterrence hypothesis for a myth.”

Radelet and Lacock also discuss and point to significant inconsistencies in a number of studies conducted by economists, who have found the death penalty to have a deterrent effect. These inconsistencies lead them to conclude that “(r)ecent econometric studies, which posit that the death penalty has a marginal deterrent effect beyond that of long-term imprisonment, are so limited or flawed that they have failed to undermine consensus.”

MONTHLY LETTER COUNT

China postcards	3
UAs	25
Total:	28
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.