

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Thursday, October 24, 7:30 PM.** Monthly Meeting. We meet at the Caltech Y, Tyson House, 505 S. Wilson Ave., Pasadena. (This is just south of the corner with San Pasqual. Signs will be posted.) We will be planning our activities for the coming months. Please join us! Refreshments provided.

**Tuesday, November 12, 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, November 17, 6:30 PM.** Rights Readers Human Rights Book Discussion group. This month we read "Looking for Trans-Wonderland – Travels in Nigeria" by Noo Saro-Wiwa.

## COORDINATOR'S CORNER

Hi All

This year Amnesty International's Western Regional Conference will be held in Los Angeles November 1-3, at the Sheraton Four Points near LAX. It is too late to get the discounted hotel rate for AI members, but not too late to register for the conference itself. Go to <http://www.amnestyusa.org/events/regional-conferences/western-regional-conference>

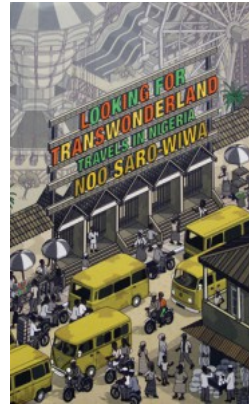
The deadline to register online is Monday October 28<sup>th</sup>. You can also show up and register at the conference.

We will be out of town for a family emergency that weekend. I expect a report from those who attend for our next newsletter!

Con Cariño,  
Kathy

**RIGHTS READERS**  
**Human Rights Book Discussion Group**

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



**Next Rights Readers meeting:**

**Sunday, Nov.17, 6:30 PM**

**Vroman's Bookstore**  
**695 E. Colorado, Pasadena**

*Looking for  
Transwonderland:  
Travels in Nigeria*

By Noo Saro-Wiwa

## BOOK REVIEW

A Nigerian-born English journalist makes peace with the land that killed her father. Ken Saro-Wiwa was a Nigerian nonviolent political activist campaigning against government corruption and environmental degradation when he was falsely accused by the military regime and executed in 1995. His daughter Noo, a twin to her sister, Zina, born in 1976 and educated in England and the United States, maintained a mostly antagonistic relationship toward the land of her Ogoni parents, who sent the children on summer holidays back to the family compound where the heat, disorder, lack of running water and electricity consumed the author with dread. Now a young woman self-admittedly spoiled by the amenities of English life, the author allows her love-hate relationship with Nigeria to flavor this thoughtful travel journal, lending it irony, wit and frankness, yet also an undertone of bitterness. Starting in Lagos, staying at the home of her mother's friend, she was overwhelmed by the noise and tumult of the city, teeming with 300-odd ethnic groups that were miraculously not worn down by quotidian inconveniences such as five-hour commutes, poorly paid jobs (\$2 at most per day) and a constant need for haggling and hustling to make ends meet. Indeed, a Pentecostal faith inspired many Nigerians, rendering them by one account the happiest people in the world. From Lagos, "feral and impenetrable," Saro-Wiwa trekked through Nigerian land and history, to the university town of Ibadan, the modern urban metropolis of Abuja, Kano and the Islamic northern recesses, national parks and nature preserves, civic-minded Calabar and formerly glorious Benin, before facing the "tense oil-city" and difficult childhood memories of Port Harcourt.

A vigorous, scathing look at Nigeria then and now.

From Kirkus Reviews

## AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

Noo Saro-Wiwa was born in Nigeria in 1976 and raised in England. She attended King's College London and Columbia University in New York and has written travel guides for Rough Guide and Lonely Planet. She currently lives in London.



Her first book *Looking for Transwonderland:*

*Travels in Nigeria* was published by Granta in January 2012 to brilliant reviews and was chosen by the *Financial Times Life & Arts* as one of the best books of the year, and by *The Sunday Times* as *Travel Book of the Year 2*

## SECURITY WITH HUMAN RIGHTS

by Robert Adams

## US has killed far more civilians with drones than it admits, says UN

By Michael Isikoff  
NBC News National Investigative Correspondent

A new report from a special U.N. investigator says drone strikes have killed far more civilians than U.S. officials have publicly acknowledged – at least 400 in Pakistan and as many as 58 in Yemen – and chides the U.S. for failing to aid the investigation by disclosing its own figures.

U.N. Special Rapporteur Ben Emmerson, who issued the "interim" report, said the U.S. had created "an almost insurmountable obstacle to transparency."

"The Special Rapporteur does not accept that considerations of national security justify withholding statistical and basic methodological data of this kind," wrote Emmerson in the report, which is due to be presented to the U.N. General Assembly next Friday.

U.S. intelligence officials have consistently downplayed the number of civilian deaths from drone strikes. In a June 2011 speech, White House counter-terrorism advisor John Brennan, who is now CIA director, said that "for nearly the past year, there hasn't been a single collateral death because of the exceptional proficiency [and] precision" of U.S. counter-terror strikes.

Later, the CIA acknowledged some civilian casualties, but told Congress that they were in the "single digits," according to a February 2013 statement by Senate Intelligence Committee chair Sen. Diane Feinstein, D.-Calif.

In a major speech on drone strikes this May, President Obama openly acknowledged civilian deaths, saying "they will haunt us for as long as we live" -- but didn't provide any hard numbers or estimates.

"It is a hard fact that U.S. strikes have resulted in civilian casualties, a risk that exist in every war," Obama said. "And for the families of those civilians, no words or legal construct can justify their loss."

According to Emmerson, the Pakistani government provided him with new casualty numbers for strikes in the country's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), where the U.S. government has targeted Al Qaeda operatives and their associates since 2004. While acknowledging the difficulty in compiling precise figures in a region largely beyond government control, he states that Pakistani officials confirmed "at least 400 civilians had been killed as a result of remotely piloted aircraft strikes and a further 200 individuals [killed] were regarded as probably non-combatants." He added that Pakistani officials said those figures were likely to be an underestimate,

due to "underreporting and obstacles to effective investigation."

Emmerson told NBC News that there is no reason "on the face of it" to question the Pakistani government's number because they were broadly in line with the lower end of figures compiled by non-governmental groups and independent media monitoring. He said one major difficulty in calculating any numbers is a differing view of who constitutes a civilian. Pakistani officials, he said, tend to view the owner of a home where suspected al Qaeda operatives are staying as a non-combatant, an assessment not generally shared by U.S. officials.

Emmerson also said that he and his researchers had identified 33 "sample remotely piloted aircraft strikes that appear to have resulted in civilian casualties." Most of these were by the U.S., he said, but about "eight or nine" were Israeli strikes in Gaza. He did not identify the strikes, saying he is still investigating them and plans to present his findings to the U.N. Human Rights Council.

The highest level of civilian casualties, Emmerson said, occurred when the CIA ramped up drone strikes in Pakistan between 2008 and 2010. Since then, he said, drone strikes in Pakistan have steadily declined and "the number of civilian deaths has dropped dramatically."

Emmerson's estimate of civilian casualties from drone strikes in Yemen ranged from 21 to 58.

A former Pakistani official told NBC News that the figures the Pakistani government supplied to Emmerson were much higher than earlier estimates and could have been influenced by domestic politics, given mounting domestic resistance in that country to U.S. drone operations. The number is still "significant," said Letta Taylor, a senior counter-terrorism researcher for Human Rights Watch, because it is the first time a United Nations investigator has attached specific numbers to the issue of civilian death. She acknowledged, however,

that "all the figures are estimates. We're all operating in an information blackout."

In a statement, White House spokesperson Laura Magnuson said, "We are aware that this report has been released and are reviewing it carefully."

She noted that at the National Defense University on May 23, "[T]he President spoke at length about the policy and legal rationale for how the United States takes action against al Qaeda and its associated forces. As the President emphasized, the use of lethal force, including from remotely piloted aircraft, commands the highest level of attention and care. Of particular note, before we take any counter-terrorism strike, there must be near-certainty that no civilians will be killed or injured – the highest standard we can set."

## PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE

**Gao Zhisheng**

by Joy Wolf

Human Rights Watch identified Gao Zhisheng, Group 22's adopted prisoner of conscience, as an example of a human rights defender singled out for particularly harsh treatment by the Chinese government.

<http://www.hrw.org/news/2013/10/17/upr-submission-china>

This statement from HRW is for the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of China by the United Nations Human Rights Council, scheduled for October 22 in Geneva. The UPR is "a unique process which involves a review of the human rights records of all UN Member States. With the UN Human Rights Council's support, the UPR provides the opportunity for each State to declare what actions they have taken to improve the human rights situations in their countries and to fulfill their human rights obligations. It also provides the opportunity for civil society organisations to engage in the process, which aims at reminding States of their responsibility to fully respect and implement all human rights and fundamental freedoms."

<http://www.hrichina.org/content/6979>

The documentary film, *Transcending Fear: The Story of Gao Zhisheng*, now has its own website, <http://transcendingfearfilm.com>, where you can read a statement from director Wenjing Ma telling how she came to make the film. It's showing Nov. 3 in Ottawa, Canada, at the 4<sup>th</sup> annual festival of the Free Thinking Film Society. Unfortunately the film is not available on Netflix. We might consider contacting Wenjing Ma about showing the film in the Los Angeles area, if we can get the involvement of other local human rights organizations. In the meantime, you can "like" the film on its facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/TranscendingFear>.

Group 22's photo of our action to send birthday cards to Gao Zhisheng's 10-year old son was retweeted on the Twitter account dedicated to Gao Zhisheng. Visit (and retweet if you wish) <https://twitter.com/GaoZhisheng>.

## DEATH PENALTY NEWS

By Stevi Carroll

### Herman Wallace

Herman Wallace lived 41 years in solitary confinement. In 1971, Mr. Wallace and two other men were convicted of armed robbery and sentenced to the Louisiana State Prison at Angola. Because of the conditions at the prison, including sexual assault and enslavement, Mr. Wallace joined the Black Panthers and began protesting for improved conditions and protecting newly arrived inmates.

When Brent Miller, a prison guard, was murdered, Associated Warden Hayden Dees thought "A certain type of militant or revolutionary inmate, maybe even a communist type" should be locked down at all times. A member of the Black Panthers definitely would have fit that description.

Brent Miller's case had intrigue. The murdered guard was born on the prison grounds in a community made up of prison employees. The star witness against Mr. Wallace and his co-defendant, Albert Woodfox, was known jailhouse snitch. The grand jury was not 'of his peers.'

Mr. Wallace was found guilty of Mr. Miller's murder. At the time of his conviction, the

Supreme Court had ruled the death penalty to be cruel and unusual; therefore, Mr. Wallace received life without parole.

Mr. Wallace spent decades in solitary confinement. A judge finally overturned his sentence on constitutional grounds. He was released from prison October 1, 2013. Three days later Herman Wallace died a free man.

To learn more about this case, go to <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=96199165>

<http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2009/12/herman-wallace-angola-3-solitary-confinement?page=2>

[http://www.democracynow.org/2013/10/14/headlines/hundreds\\_honor\\_angola\\_3\\_member\\_herman\\_wallace\\_at\\_funeral](http://www.democracynow.org/2013/10/14/headlines/hundreds_honor_angola_3_member_herman_wallace_at_funeral)

Before Mr. Wallace died, Democracy NOW! did segment on his release. This set of interviews clarifies many of the details of this case. [http://www.democracynow.org/2013/10/2/after\\_4\\_decades\\_in\\_solitary\\_dying](http://www.democracynow.org/2013/10/2/after_4_decades_in_solitary_dying)

### Albert Woodfox

Albert Woodfox, a co-defendant with Herman Wallace, continues to live in solitary confinement where he has been for more than 40 years. He reports being strip searched, including cavity searches, as many as six times a day. According to Amnesty International, Mr. Woodfox's conviction has been overturned three times and yet he languishes in the SHU.

To read more on his case, go to <http://www.amnestyusa.org/news/press-releases/state-of-louisiana-must-not-appeal-federal-ruling-overturning-conviction-in-angola-3-case>

To take an online action, go to <http://takeaction.amnestyusa.org/siteapps/advocacy/ActionItem.aspx?c=60jCLQPAIjUG&b=6645049&aid=520358>

### Harry Mitts, Jr.

Harry Mitts, Jr. isn't as well known as Paris Hilton or Sarah Palin, but what happened to him is an historical event. He is the last man Ohio executed before its supply of pentobarbital expired the end of September, and Ohio and other states won't be able to get any more of their execution drug of choice. The Danish manufacturer Lundbeck won't sell pentobarbital to states that use it for executions and plans to

support this decision in accordance with Danish law and European human rights law. Since Ohio has an execution scheduled for November 14, they must find a solution to this problem. But for Harry Mitts, Jr. - well, someone has to be last, but he may not be the last person executed in Ohio since a new plan for getting execution drugs seems available.

### Compounding Pharmacies

Compounding pharmacies may be the savior for the execution business. That's what at least five states, South Dakota; Texas; Ohio; Georgia; and Colorado, hope. Apparently, three compounding pharmacies are ready to supply executioners with the drugs needed. October 9th, Michael Yowell died from a dose of pentobarbital from a compounding pharmacy. One problem with compounded drugs is that they may not be safe or they may cause other infections, diseases, or problems. In 2012, a Massachusetts compounding pharmacy created tainted drugs that caused an outbreak of a rare type of meningitis. Fifty people died and more than 700 other people were sickened in 20 states. In the case of Michael Yowell, U. S. District Judge Lynn Hughes succinctly put it, "Pentobarbital will kill Yowell in five to eighteen minutes and his consciousness will be diminished almost immediately; therefore, infections like meningitis will not hurt him because they require weeks to incubate."

David Ball, a spokesman for the compounding industry, has said that only three pharmacies have supplied compounded drugs for lethal injection at this point. He also said that no compounding pharmacy actively seeks the business of making drugs to kill people. Mr. Ball said, "Every pharmacist that I know chose their profession in part out of a desire to help people, and that is what they focus on in their work." Maybe this is why the owner of Woodlands Compounding Pharmacy sent a letter to Texas corrections officials telling them he wanted the pentobarbital his pharmacy had created and they'd purchased back.

We will have to see what happens with the compounding pharmacies and state sanctioned murder in the USA.

### *I Am Troy Davis*

Many of us remember the months, weeks, days and hours that led up to September 21, 2011, when Troy Davis was executed. In September,

new book, *I Am Troy Davis* by Jen Marlowe, Martina-Correia Davis, and Troy Davis, was published by Haymarket Books. Sister Helen Prejean, long-time anti-death penalty activist and author of *Dead Man Walking*, wrote the forward.

To read more about the book and its authors, go to

<http://www.haymarketbooks.org/pb/I-Am-Troy-Davis>

[http://thegrio.com/2013/10/18/i-am-troy-davis-new-book-humanizes-death-penalty-icon/-si\\_am\\_troy\\_davis\\_frontcover](http://thegrio.com/2013/10/18/i-am-troy-davis-new-book-humanizes-death-penalty-icon/-si_am_troy_davis_frontcover)

### Stays of execution

October		
16	Larry Hatton	Texas
23	Allen Nicklasson	Missouri

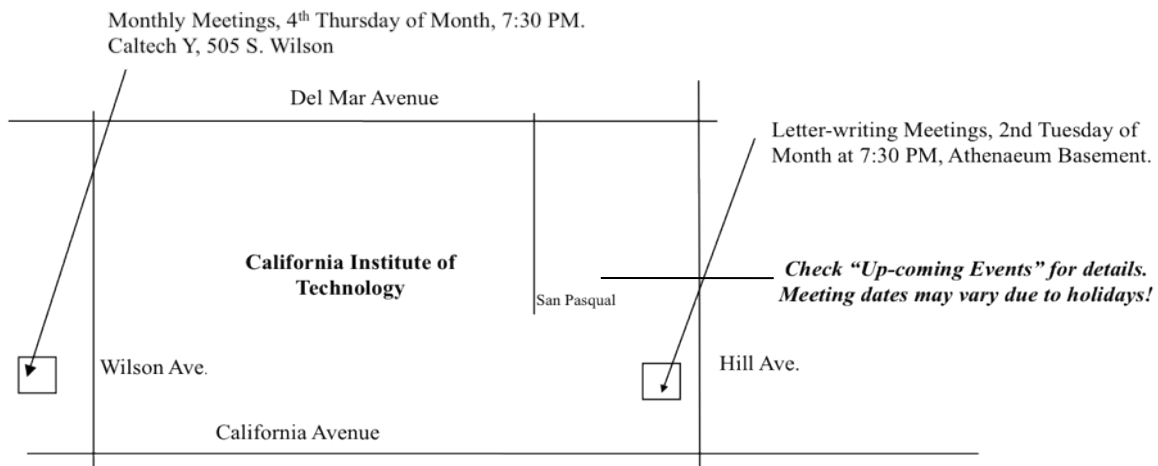
### Executions

September		
25	Harry Mitts	Ohio
		1-drug lethal injection <sup>1</sup>
26	Arturo Diaz	Texas
		1-drug lethal injection
October		
1	Marshall Gore	Florida
		3-drug lethal injection <sup>2</sup>
9	Edward Schad	Arizona
		1-drug lethal injection
9	Michael Yowell	Texas
		1-drug lethal injection
15	William Happ <sup>3</sup>	Florida
		3-drug lethal injection <sup>4</sup>

Notes:

1. Pentobarbital
- 2 Pentobarbital - I don't know why only one drug is listed
3. volunteer - an inmate who waived ordinary appeals that remained at the time of his execution. Mr. Happ had been on death row for 24 years.
4. midazolam hydrochloride

GROUP 22 MONTHLY LETTER COUNT	
UAs	17
POC Cards	6
Total	23
To add your letters to the total contact <a href="mailto:lwkamp@gmail.com">lwkamp@gmail.com</a> .	



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 C1-128  
Pasadena, CA 91125  
[www.its.caltech.edu/~aigp22/](http://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.