

# Amnesty International Group 22 Pasadena/Caltech News

Volume XXIV Number 7, July 2016

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**NOTE: NO THURSDAY MEETINGS IN JULY OR AUGUST.** The Thursday planning meetings will resume after summer break on September 22.

**Tuesday, August 9, 7:30 PM.** Letter writing meeting at Caltech Athenaeum, corner of Hill and California in Pasadena. In the summer we meet outdoors at the "Rath al Fresco," on the lawn behind the building. This informal gathering is a great way for newcomers to get acquainted with Amnesty.

**Sunday, August 28, 6:30 PM, (date to be confirmed).** Rights Readers Human Rights Book Discussion group. This month we read a mystery, "The Unquiet Dead," by Ausma Zehanat Khan.

**We wanted to move the book group date forward a week from the usual third Sunday, because several of us will be out of town on Aug 21, including Stevi, our dedicated discussion leader. We will send an announcement as soon as the new date is confirmed. Thank you.**

## COORDINATOR'S CORNER

Hello everyone,

This is Joyce. I'm putting the July newsletter together while Kathy is off enjoying a Mediterranean cruise.

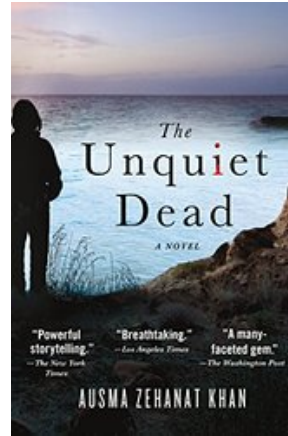
August is traditionally the month when we choose a mystery as our human rights book group selection. This book looks very interesting, and I hope many of you can join Stevi and the usual suspects for the discussion on Sunday, Aug. 28. We will send a confirmation of the date within a week or two.

Be sure and check <http://amnestyusa.org> for the latest human rights news. I loved the photos of Amnesty Observers in their yellow T shirts at the Republican Convention last week. They're at the Democratic Convention too.

Here in California, the campaign for Prop 62 is gearing up. See Stevi's Death Penalty update column following in this newsletter.

Best wishes to Kathy and Robert for a great vacation. Kathy has posted photos of Barcelona, Pisa, Florence, and there's much more to come.

Cheers, Joyce



Next Rights Readers meeting:

**Sunday, Aug. 28 (date to be confirmed) 6:30 PM**

**Vroman's Bookstore (to be confirmed) 695 E. Colorado Blvd Pasadena**

*The Unquiet Dead*

by Ausma Zehanat Khan

## AUTHOR BIO



Ausma Zehanat Khan holds a Ph.D. in International Human Rights Law with a specialization in military intervention and war crimes in the Balkans. She has practiced immigration law and taught human rights law at Northwestern University and York University. She is the former Editor in Chief of

Muslim Girl magazine, the first magazine targeted to young Muslim women. Khan currently lives in Colorado with her husband. *The Unquiet Dead* is her first novel.

[[us.macmillan.com/author/ausmazehanatkhan](http://us.macmillan.com/author/ausmazehanatkhan)]

## REVIEWS

The LA Times wrote:

"While publishers may rave about mysteries that 'transcend the genre,' few soar beyond their crime-solving objectives. And to find such a treasure in a first-time effort is rarer still.

'The Unquiet Dead' bears examination not just because it is a debut mystery. Its author, Ausma Zehanat Khan, is a Canadian Muslim who holds a PhD in international human rights law, giving rise to some questions: What might such a writer bring to a mystery? How much might her faith or academic research be reflected on the page?"

[<http://www.latimes.com/books/jacketcopy/la-ca-jc-ausma-zehanea-khan-20150111-story.html>]

## KIRKUS REVIEW

Two Toronto detectives are handed a politically sensitive case.

Esa Khattak is a second-generation Canadian Muslim who heads the new Community Policing Section, created to deal with delicate cases involving minorities. A call from Tom Paley, chief historian at the Canadian Department of Justice, drops Esa and his partner, Rachel Getty, into the case of Christopher Drayton, who fell, jumped or was pushed off a cliff. They visit Drayton's famous neighbor, writer Nathan Clare, who is Esa's lifelong friend. Clare longs to renew a relationship that was destroyed by Esa's former partner, a siren who bewitched Clare into testifying against Esa in a complaint that almost ended his career. Rachel has secrets of her own. She still lives at home with her abusive ex-cop father and her meek mother in the hope that the beloved brother who left home at 15 will seek her out. The older daughter of Drayton's fiancée, mercenary Melanie Blessant, hated Drayton and hoped she and her sister could live with their father if her mother remarried. After dozens of letters with horrifying stories of rape and murder are found in Drayton's safe, Esa admits to Rachel that Drayton is probably Drazen Krstic, a former lieutenant colonel in the Bosnian Serb Army and the instigator of horrific war crimes. Paley wants the story kept quiet until they positively identify Krstic and learn the manner of his death. The scandal of U.N. forces standing by while thousands of Muslim men, women and children were slaughtered is intensified by the possibility that Krstic entered Canada with a fortune in blood money.

Khan's stunning debut is a poignant, elegantly written mystery laced with complex characters who force readers to join them in dealing with ugly truths.

[Review Posted Online: Nov. 3rd, 2014  
 Kirkus Reviews Issue: Nov. 15th, 2014  
<https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/ausma-zehanat-khan/the-unquiet-dead-khan/>]

**PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE**

**Narges Mohammadi**

by Joyce Wolf

Narges Mohammadi, Group 22's adopted Prisoner of Conscience, began a hunger strike on June 27 to protest the Iran prison authorities'

denial of telephone contact with her young children. Her supporters around the world were deeply concerned about the effect on her health, since she suffers from neurological and pulmonary conditions. Fortunately, 20 days later, she called off her hunger strike after the authorities promised her weekly phone calls with her children.

Amnesty UA 105/15, updated July 6, stated: "Narges Mohammadi started a hunger strike on 27 June as a last resort to protest the judicial authorities' persistent refusal to allow her telephone contact with her nine-year-old twins. Her children had to move abroad one year ago to live with their father, as there was nobody to look after them in Iran after her arrest in May 2015. Since then, she has been allowed only one phone call with them. In a letter she wrote from inside Evin Prison on 27 June announcing her hunger strike, she said that all her requests for telephone contact with her children have been refused, except on 2 April when, on the written order of the Prosecutor General of Tehran, she was granted a 10-minute telephone call with them. She wrote: 'I have forgotten their voices. I don't keep their photos by my bed anymore. I can't look at them.'

Narges Mohammadi is critically ill. She suffers from a pulmonary embolism (a blockage in the blood vessel that carries blood from the heart to the lungs) and a neurological disorder that has resulted in her experiencing seizures and temporary partial paralysis. She needs ongoing specialized medical care, which she cannot receive in prison, as well as daily medication, and a hunger strike puts her health and life at risk. On 3 July, she was taken from Tehran's Evin Prison to Iran Mehr Hospital, also in Tehran, for routine tests related to her pulmonary embolism.

Narges Mohammadi received a 16-year prison sentence after she was convicted, following an unfair trial in April 2016, of the charges of 'founding an illegal group', 'gathering and colluding to commit crimes against national security', and "spreading propaganda against the system". She is already serving a six-year prison sentence from a previous case. Her convictions are based solely on her human rights work."

It was with joy and relief that I read the news on July 16 that her hunger strike was over and that she could speak with her children.

<https://hra-news.org/en/narges-mohammadi-ended-hunger-strike-achieving-demand>

And also from Reporters Without Borders: "18.07.2016 – Narges Mohammadi ends hunger strike. Reporters Without Borders (RSF) is relieved that imprisoned journalist and human rights defender Narges Mohammadi abandoned her hunger strike on 16 July after being able to talk by phone with her two children, who now live with their father in Paris. "

<https://rsf.org/en/news/press-freedom-violations-recounted-real-time-january-2016>

Narges is one of the featured cases in the special report that Amnesty released on July 17: "In Iran a prisoner's health is routinely taken hostage by the authorities, who recklessly ignore the medical needs of those in custody. Denying medical care to political prisoners is cruel and utterly indefensible," said Philip Luther, Director of Amnesty International's Middle East and North Africa Program.

"Prisoners' access to health care is a right enshrined in both international and Iranian law. When depriving a prisoner of medical care causes severe pain or suffering and it is intentionally done for purposes such as punishment, intimidation or to extract a forced 'confession', it constitutes torture."

<http://www.amnestyusa.org/research/reports/health-taken-hostage-cruel-denial-of-medical-care-in-iran-s-prisons>

The organization International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran recently issued a report on conditions in Evin Prison where Narges and other women are detained.

"The report presents extensive excerpts from Iran's State Prison Procedures, showing these conditions violate Iran's own laws. According to the prisoner testimony contained in the report, the inmates repeatedly reported the conditions in the Ward to Iran's Judiciary, but the Judiciary, headed by by Sadegh Amoli Larijani, has taken no action.

Since 2005, no United Nations or other international monitoring body has been allowed to visit the Women's Ward at Evin Prison—or indeed any ward at Evin Prison."

<https://www.iranhumanrights.org/2016/06/inside-the-women-ward-report/>

You can take action for Narges here:

<http://www.amnestyusa.org/get-involved/take-action-now/iran-release-narges-mohammadi-ua-10515>

Keep up with news about Narges and human rights in Iran with #FreeNarges at

<https://twitter.com/UnitedForNarges>

## DEATH PENALTY NEWS

By Stevi Carroll

Justice That Works has a proposition number:

**YES ON 62**

July 14, 2016, a broad coalition joined together in Los Angeles to launch the Yes On 62 campaign. In attendance were Mike Farrell, Yes on Prop 62 proponent; Dolores Huerta, civil rights and labor leader; Franky Carrillo, wrongly convicted, released from prison after 20 years; Gary Tyler, wrongly convicted, released from prison after 41 years; Beth Webb, sister of a victim of the Seal Beach hair salon mass shooting; Hilda Solis, Los Angeles County Supervisor; John Van de Kamp, former California Attorney General; Gil Garcetti, former Los Angeles County District Attorney; Ron Briggs, who earlier led the campaign that brought the death penalty back to California in the 70s; Rabbi Jonathan Klein, executive director of CLUE; and Eric Bauman, chair of the Los Angeles County Democratic Party. During that press conference, Beth Webb said more violence did not bring peace. "Neither me (sic) nor my mom will find closure in the death of another human being." To see video from this event, see <http://www.latimes.com/politics/essential/la-pol-sac-essential-politics-updates-anti-death-penalty-advocates-launch-1468522852-htmlstory.html> (scroll down to "Critics of California's death penalty launch the campaign to pass Proposition 62")

Endorsements for Proposition 62 roll in from former President Jimmy Carter and First Lady Rosalynn Carter to the Catholic Bishops of California to Lt. Governor Gavin Newsom. In an article in the *LA Times*, the former President and First Lady said, "We believe that the attempt to administer the death penalty in a fair and efficient manner has failed, and note that a number of states have chosen to abandon this policy for this reason. ...It is our hope that California will also lead the nation in adopting a more effective and fiscally responsible law enforcement approach." Lt. Gov. Newsom said that the death penalty does not deter crime and is fundamentally immoral. He noted that statistics show California has spent \$5 billion to execute 13 people since 1978.

*The East Bay Times* and the *Turlock Journal* have recently had editorials encouraging their readers to vote yes on Proposition 62. I'm interested to see where the *LA Times* and the *Pasadena Star-News* will come down on 62.

Attorney General Kamala Harris said she is unable to comment on Prop 62 because her office is responsible for the draft of the measure. She personally opposes the death penalty and Nathan Click, the campaign spokesperson, says he believes that dispels "any uncertainty about how Harris will vote on Prop 62." Rep. Loretta Sanchez (D-CA), AG Harris's opponent for US Senate, says she is opposed to the death penalty and would like to see a moratorium at both the state and federal levels. While Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton supports the death penalty, a draft of the Democratic platform includes, "We will abolish the death penalty, which has proven to be a cruel and unusual form of punishment. It has no place in the United States of America."

Please be aware that also on the November ballot will be Proposition 66 that seeks to reduce the time between sentencing and execution. Remind your friends who may be in favor of abolition to vote YES on Proposition 62 and NO on Proposition 66.

If you would like to endorse Proposition 62, go to <http://go.justicethatworks.org/page/s/endorse-jtw>. To donate, go to <https://secure.actblue.com/contribute/page/jtwq12016>.

## Deadliest Prosecutors

In June of this year, the Fair Punishment Project, a joint initiative of Harvard Law School's Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race & Justice and its Criminal Justice Institute published a report called *America's Top Five Deadliest Prosecutors: How Overzealous Personalities Drive The Death Penalty*.

From the introduction of this report: "This report analyzes the records of five of America's deadliest head prosecutors. Three of them personally obtained over 35 death sentences each: Joe Freeman Britt in North Carolina, Bob Macy in Oklahoma, and Donnie Myers in South Carolina. These men shared an obsession with winning death sentences at almost any cost.

For example, Joe Freeman Britt, who committed misconduct in more than 36% of his death penalty prosecutions, said: "Within the breast of each of us burns a flame that constantly

whispers in our ear 'preserve life, preserve life, preserve life at any cost.' It is the prosecutor's job to extinguish that flame." The remaining two prosecutors, Lynne Abraham (Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania) and Johnny Holmes (Harris County, Texas), did not personally prosecute as many death penalty cases as the three men above, but nonetheless oversaw the imposition of death sentences against a staggering 108 and 201 people, respectively, during their terms.

Of these five prosecutors, only one—Donnie Myers—remains in office, and he plans to retire at the end of the year. One of the most remarkable findings from our research is the fact that once these prosecutors and their protégés left their positions, death sentences dramatically declined in these jurisdictions—a pattern that has only become clear in the years since their departures."

To read the entire report, go to [http://fairpunishment.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/FPP-Top5Report\\_FINAL.pdf](http://fairpunishment.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/FPP-Top5Report_FINAL.pdf).

Within California, the imposition of death sentences also varies. Prosecutors in Riverside County have condemned murderers to death more than five times the statewide rate during the last 10 years and in Orange County the rate is twice the state average. These two counties account for 14 percent of the population and are responsible for 34 percent of the death sentences. Fresno County had 555 murder arrests in the past decade with one death sentence while San Francisco County had 350 murder arrests and no death sentences. We need Justice That Works.

## Relatives of Murderers

I find it easy to have compassion and sympathy for the victims of violent crimes and their family members and friends. But what about the relatives of the murderers? We've seen with the meeting of Bill McVeigh, Timothy McVeigh's father, and Bud Welch, the father of Julie Welch who died in the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building, the mourning of two fathers.

Recently, I read two books that offered me the opportunity to see into the lives of the mothers of murderers. *A Mother's Reckoning: Living in the Aftermath of Tragedy* by Sue Klebold gives the reader insight into the life of the mother of Dylan Klebold, one of the Columbine High

School shooters, who knows her son killed many teenagers and who also lives with the knowledge that her son killed himself. In *When the Focus Shifts: The Prayer Book of Arlene Holmes*, Arlene Holmes, the mother of James Holmes the murderer at the Aurora movie theater, shares with the reader her prayers as she moves through the nightmare of what her son did, his trial, and his possible sentence of death. (He received life without possibility of parole.)

I find it helpful as I work for the abolition of the death penalty to be reminded of Sr. Helen Prejean's quote: "People are more than the worst thing they have ever done in their lives." And now I also will keep in mind not only the friends and family members of the murdered, but also the friends and family members of the accused.

### Recent Exonerations

Justin Chapman. State: GA  
Date of Exoneration: 6/22/2016  
In 2007, Justin Chapman was convicted of murder by arson in Bremen, Georgia and sentenced to life in prison. He was exonerated in 2016 after evidence concealed by prosecutors showed the primary witnesses lied at trial.

Crystal Weimer. State: PA  
Date of Exoneration: 6/27/2016  
In 2006, Crystal Weimer was sentenced to 15 to 30 years in prison for third-degree murder in Fayette County, Pennsylvania, based on testimony by a co-defendant and by a dentist who said her teeth matched a bite mark on the victim. She was exonerated in 2016 after the co-defendant and the dentist both recanted their testimony.

William Richards. State: CA  
Date of Exoneration: 6/28/2016  
In 1997, William Richards was convicted of murdering his wife in San Bernardino County, California, and was sentenced to 25 years to life in prison. He was exonerated in 2016 after a dentist who testified at trial that a bite mark on the victim was made by Richards' teeth recanted his testimony and said that he was no longer confident the injury was a human bite mark.

Duquene Pierre. State: NJ  
Date of Exoneration: 7/7/2016  
In 1996, Duquene Pierre was convicted of murder and aggravated assault in Union County, New Jersey and sentenced to 60 years in prison. He was acquitted on retrial in 2016 after the only two witnesses who had identified him recanted.

Lavell Jones. State: NY  
Date of Exoneration: 7/7/2016  
In 1999, Lavell Jones was convicted of murder in Albany, New York and sentenced to 37 1/2 years to life in prison. Jones, along with his co-defendant, Carl

Dukes, was exonerated in 2016 after the real killer confessed to the crime.

Carl Dukes. State: NY  
Date of Exoneration: 7/7/2016  
In 1998, Carl Dukes (right) was convicted of murder in Albany, New York and sentenced to 39 years to life in prison. Dukes, along with his co-defendant, Lavell Jones, was exonerated in 2016 after the real killer confessed to the crime.

Davontae Sanford. State: MI  
Date of Exoneration: 7/19/2016  
In 2007, 14-year-old Davontae Sanford falsely confessed to a quadruple homicide in Detroit, Michigan. He later pled guilty and was sentenced to 39 to 90 years in prison. He was exonerated in 2016, eight years after the real killer confessed to the crime.

Jose Montanez and Armando Serrano State: IL  
Date of Exoneration: 7/20/2016  
In 1994, Jose Montanez and Armando Serrano were convicted of murder in Chicago and each was sentenced to 55 years in prison. They were exonerated in 2016 after witnesses recanted their testimony and said they were beaten by police.  
source:  
<http://www.law.umich.edu/special/exoneration/>

### Stays of Execution

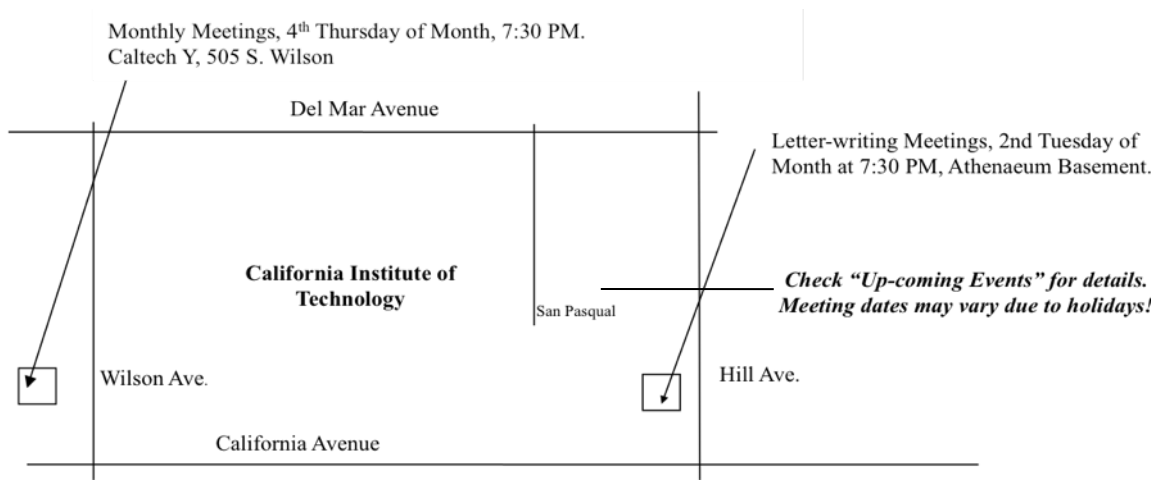
July  
1 George Hitcho PA  
14 Perry Williams TX  
20 Cleveland R. Jackson OH  
20 Taichin Preyor TX  
27 Rolando Ruiz TX (date changed to 8/31/16)

### Recent execution

July  
15 John Conner GA  
Lethal Injection (1-drug Pentobarbital)

### GROUP 22 JULY LETTER COUNT

UA for POC	8
Other UAs	13
Total	21
To add your letters to the total contact <a href="mailto:aigp22@caltech.edu">aigp22@caltech.edu</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.