

UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday, August 28, 7:30 PM. *Monthly Meeting* 414 S. Holliston, Caltech Y Lounge. Help us plan future actions for Tibet, the Patriot Act, Just Earth campaign and more.

Tuesday, September 9, 7:30 PM. *Letter-writing Meeting* at the Athenaeum. Corner of California & Hill. In the summer our usual basement meeting area shuts down. Look for us on one of the patios, or the lounge. We'll put up a sign at our table. This informal gathering is a great for newcomers to get acquainted with Amnesty!

Sunday, September 21, 6:30 PM. *Rights Readers Human Rights Book Discussion Group.* Vroman's Bookstore, 695 E. Colorado Blvd., Pasadena. This month we discuss *Crescent and Star*, by Stephen Kinzer. (More info below.)

Save the Date! Amnesty International Western Regional Conference will be held November 1-2 at the Crowne Plaza Redondo Beach and Marina. Keynote speakers include Loretta Ross, Executive Director fo the National Center for Human Rights Education, Paul Hoffman, Chair, International Executive Committee of Amnesty International, Carrie Dann, Western Shoshone Defense Project. Workshops on a variety of topics: Congo, Guatemala, North Koriea, the Patriot Act, Corporate Responsibility and Human Rights, Violence against Women and more... For more information, contact the AIUSA Western Regional Office (LA) at 310-815-0450 or aiusala@aiusa.org.

COORDINATOR'S CORNER

Summer is almost over! Hope you had a nice vacation, if you took one, and a more relaxed atmosphere at work if you had to work! (I think the heat makes everyone slow down!) Our trip to Hawaii was very nice-it is so green and beautiful there! Some of the highlights were a helicopter ride over Kauai, seeing Volcano National Park on the Big Island and the USS Arizona Memorial at Pearl Harbor (I was surprised at how moved I was).

Unfortunately, the world's problems did not take a vacation. Amnesty has officially ended the Iraq Crisis Response, but has a continuous presence in Iraq and is monitoring the situation. There are still human rights violations occurring and of course, everyone has heard about the recent tragedy of the UN Headquarters being bombed. Many other countries are on the "hot spot" list-Liberia, Columbia, Guatemala, Congo just to name a few. We have sent actions on some of these countries at our recent letter-writing meetings. You can also send email actions via the Internet. Please visit the website at: <http://www.amnestyusa.org> to read updates and to send actions. To keep up with the Iraq situation, log on to <http://www.amnestyusa.org/countries/iraq>.

On a happier note, we have received an unofficial report that our longtime POC, the Tibetan monk, Ngawang Pekar, has been released. We are waiting for official confirmation from Amnesty International before we break out the champagne!

We'll let you know when we hear!

I went to hear Erwin Chemerinsky, a constitutional law expert/professor from USC, speak at All Saints Church on the Patriot Act in late July. He is a dynamic and informative speaker-a passionate advocate for civil liberties. Our group is involved in a campaign, along with the ACLU and other organizations, to persuade the Pasadena City Council to pass a resolution against the Patriot Act. Group 22 Co-Coordinator Lucas Kamp, who has been working on this, will keep us updated and let us know when the City Council is supposed to vote on this issue.

The Amnesty International 2003 Western Regional Conference will be held in Redondo Beach, at the Crowne Plaza hotel from October 31 to November 2 2003. All are welcome to attend (you do not have to be a member of AI to attend) what should be a great opportunity to learn about, discuss, and act upon some of the most important human rights issues facing our world community today. And it's in our area, so I hope that a lot of you will be able to go! For more information, contact the AIUSA Western Regional Office (LA) at 310-815-0450 or aiusala@aiusa.org.

Thanks so much to all who helped us at our special "work day" creating greeting handmade cards which we plan to sell at the regional conference. This has been a successful fundraiser for us in the past and our volunteer "craftspeople" are greatly appreciated!

Kathy

aigp22@caltech.edu

IRAQ

Attack On UN in Baghdad is an Attack on Justice & Human Rights

The attack that killed Sergio Vieira de Mello, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, symbolises an attack on those who promote the principles of justice and human rights, stated Amnesty International's Secretary General Irene Khan.

"The brutal murder of Sergio Vieira de Mello is yet more proof that people who serve humanity and defend human rights are easy targets in a world in which national security has trumped human security."

"Human rights, the international community and all those who promote peace and justice in Iraq are under attack."

"Only when human rights take centre stage and inform our approach to world security, will we stop these hideous crimes from occurring again," she said. "The next few days in Iraq will be critical. We can establish the genuine security needed to breach this perilous chasm or we can revert once again to the tactics which breed the unrest and discontent at the root of this violence. What further evidence do we need that eroding the principles which underpin human rights leads only to escalating insecurity and death?"

"Sergio Vieira de Mello the man has been killed, but his ideals and message remain alive," declared Ms. Khan as she stated that grief has only strengthened Amnesty International's resolve for action.

Ms. Khan cautioned that Mr Vieira de Mello's murder has put at stake the fundamental human rights of the Iraqi people. "Iraq must be a building site for human rights -- it must not be allowed to become a wasteland."

Paying tribute to Mr Vieira de Mello, a close friend of many years, Ms. Khan said: "He was a man of action and conviction, exuding all that is positive and passionate in life."

Ms. Khan called for the perpetrators of the attack to be apprehended and brought to justice but added: "His death must not become a pretext for a witch hunt nor lead to widespread abuse of human rights."

PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE *Ngawang Pekar, Tibetan Monk*

We have still not received any official confirmation of the release of our group's adopted POC, Ngawang Pekar. (He is a Tibetan monk

imprisoned since 1989, when he was arrested by the Chinese authorities for participating in a peaceful demonstration.)

However, in late July Silvia Sarasua of the AI local group in Miami received another report from one of her Tibetan contacts. Lhading Rinpoche, a revered lama from the Drepung Loseling Monastery in exile, replied to her query with a letter saying that Ngawang Pekar "was released from prison some time ago and now he is in Lhasa and he is well. I received this information from someone who knows present about him in Dharamsala."

We suggest this month that you help us get official confirmation of the good news by writing to Rep. Schiff and asking if he can obtain information. Here is a sample letter:

The Honorable Adam B. Schiff
437 Cannon HOB
Washington D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Schiff,

I am writing to ask your assistance in obtaining information about the current status of Ngawang Pekar, a Tibetan monk imprisoned by the Chinese authorities since 1989 in Tibet Autonomous Region Prison Number One.

Amnesty International Group 22 of Pasadena/Caltech has been working on Ngawang Pekar's case for the past seven years. He was sentenced to 8 years for participating in a peaceful demonstration in 1989; then his term was increased by an additional 6 years when he was discovered keeping a list of his fellow political prisoners. He was reportedly beaten and tortured and denied medical care.

Members and friends of AI Group 22 in Pasadena and the Caltech community would be grateful to learn whether Ngawang Pekar has now been released and if he is well. Thank you for anything you can do to help in this matter.

Sincerely, (YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS)

CONGO CRISIS RESPONSE *Write Congress About Your Concerns*

At least 3.5 million people have died and 500,000 have been displaced over the last four and a half years as a result of the war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. There are reports of large scale massacres in province of Ituri following the withdrawal of Ugandan troops in early May. On May 30, the UN Security Council authorized the deployment of a Rapid Response Force to the town of Bunia in Ituri. However, as the force deployed, there was heavy fighting in Bunia as well as in neighboring North Kivu province. It is essential that efforts to ensure long-term

peace and security in Ituri as well as the rest of the Congo also focus on cutting links between armed militias in the DRC and governments of neighboring countries such as Rwanda, Uganda.

Please write and urge your Member of Congress to call on the Bush Administration to urge the governments of Uganda and Rwanda to cease all support to militia groups in the DRC.

Background information

The Democratic Republic of Congo is currently the scene of one of the worst human rights and humanitarian disasters in the world. The situation is especially dire in the Ituri region where there are reports of large-scale massacres and the displacement of an estimated 500,000 people who are facing serious shortages of food, water, and sanitation and are at risk of cholera. Conditions in Ituri deteriorated dramatically in early May, following the withdrawal of Ugandan troops, which had served as the de facto authority in the region. UN officials have stated that spiraling violence in Ituri, if left unchecked, could lead to genocide. In response to this situation, on May 30, the U.N Security Council authorized the deployment of a French-led international Rapid Response Force (RRF) to the town of Bunia in northeastern Congo. As the RRF deployed, there was heavy fighting between Hema and Lendu militias. There were also reports of heavy clashes between armed groups in the North Kivu province, another region where there is great concern over the human rights and humanitarian situation. Amnesty International USA is calling on the Bush administration to lead efforts to ensure long-term peace and security in Ituri as well as the rest of the Congo. These efforts must focus on cutting links between armed militias in the DRC and governments of neighboring countries such as Rwanda, Uganda and Zimbabwe and on establishing transparency over the exploitation of natural resources.

The war raging in the DRC has claimed an estimated 3.5 million casualties since 1998, either as a direct result of the violence or because of the conditions created by the conflict. In addition to the humanitarian crisis, human rights abuses are rampant, including torture and sexual violence, unlawful killings, summary executions, illegal detentions, use of child soldiers and even reports of cannibalism. Many of these abuses are directly linked to competition to control and exploit the DRC's natural resources. A 2002 UN report stated that as much as \$10 billion in resources has been extracted in the past four years, underscoring how central this illicit wealth has become to perpetuating the ongoing conflict. Armies from

Zimbabwe, Rwanda and Uganda are directly involved in this looting and were officially recalled from the DRC last year. However, numerous reports suggest that significant forces from these countries remain in the Eastern Congo, dressed in civilian clothing but nonetheless, still actively maintaining control of key natural resources. These armies also created proxy militia forces that are now committing terrible human rights abuses in order to control territory and carve out possible roles themselves in the ongoing peace processes.

If you are not in Congressman Schiff's district go to <http://takeaction.amnestyusa.org/legdirectory/> to find the officials who represent you

Sample letter

The Honorable Adam B. Schiff
437 Cannon HOB
Washington D.C. 20515

Dear _____:

I am deeply concerned by the slaughter and horrific human rights abuses occurring in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, particularly in the Ituri region. I urge you to call upon the Bush administration to insist that Uganda and Rwanda immediately withdraw all support to militias in the DRC that are allied to them.

I am pleased that the United States played a leading role in facilitating the deployment of the UN Rapid Response Force to Bunia and I hope that we will continue to support these critical efforts. However I am worried that unless equal attention to the continuing negative role played by some governments in the region is forcefully addressed and ended, all of our peacekeeping efforts will fail. I believe that it is essential that the United States and the international community forcefully press the governments of Uganda and Rwanda to cut off immediately all military support to militia groups that they created in the DRC immediately..

As you may be aware, over three and a half million people have died and another 500,000 have been displaced as a result of the war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo during the last four and one half years. The crisis escalated dramatically in the Ituri region over the last several weeks with reports of large-scale massacres and an increasingly desperate humanitarian situation. Human rights abuses are rampant and include torture and sexual violence, unlawful killings, summary executions, illegal detentions, use of child soldiers and even cannibalism. The humanitarian situation is abysmal as displaced persons face serious shortages of food, water, and sanitation and is at great risk of cholera. UN officials have warned that the spiraling violence in Ituri, if left unchecked, could lead to genocide.

I urge you once again to help end the killing in the DRC by calling on the Bush Administration to take action to ensure that any support to militia groups in the DRC by the governments of Uganda and Rwanda is ended immediately. I also urge you to encourage the Bush Administration to develop plans that will ensure long-term peace and security in Ituri as well as the rest of the Congo.

Sincerely,

YOUR NAME and ADDRESS

LETTER COUNT	
Liberia/Ivory Coast Special Action	6
Urgent Action	14
Total:	20
Want to add your letters to the total? Get in touch with lwkamp@cs.com	

JUST EARTH

Protect Guatemalan Environmentalists!

Amnesty International is deeply concerned for the safety of Norma Maldonado, and for her environmental activist colleagues. This follows a recent raid on her home, which appears to be part of a wider pattern of intimidation and harassment directed against the leadership of environmental groups.

At 9am on 24 July, three armed men forced their way into Norma Maldonado's Guatemala City home. The intruders dragged those present, including a member of the Board of Directors of *Mamá Maquín*, a rural indigenous women's rights group and a student from the United States (US) who had been working with them, to the building's ground floor. The men opened files on several computers, rifled through papers, diskettes, and folders, apparently searching for something specific. One of the raiders repeatedly said "It's not here," ("No está") to which another responded "Keep looking" ("Seguí buscando"). The men broke diskettes and threw posters with environmental justice slogans around the building's entrance.

After over an hour, the intruders left, possibly frightened off by the telephone's repeated ringing and arrival of a visitor. They took two laptop computers with data on the groups' activities and a camera with footage of a recent meeting of Mexican and Guatemalan environmental justice advocates opposed to the proposed *Plan Puebla Panamá* (PPP) treaty, held in June in Ixcán, Guatemala. However, clearly visible money and cars with keys in them were not taken.

Norma Maldonado works with an umbrella group *Mesa Global de Guatemala*, which includes *Mamá Maquín*, and is concerned about the effects on local communities of the proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas and the PPP. Following the June Ixcán meeting, openly observed by personnel from the local military base, other attendees reportedly received death threats, and Norma Maldonado heard noises on her telephone which suggested it may have been bugged.

In recent months, actions by various Guatemalan and other groups concerned about the environmental and social effects of the PPP, and the climate of total secrecy in which such agreements have been negotiated, have attracted considerable international attention. Amnesty International fears that business interests with known ties to the Guatemalan military may be orchestrating intimidation of the leadership of environmental groups to silence their opposition to such treaties.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The raid on Norma Maldonado's residence occurred during a wave of politically-motivated violence in Guatemala City. On 24 July, as many as 5,000 supporters of General Efraín Ríos Montt rampaged through the capital, purportedly protesting recent court decisions upholding the Constitutional ban on coup participants, like the General, from running for presidential office. Many arrived on buses allegedly provided by the ruling *Frente Republicano Guatemalteco* (FRG), Guatemalan Republican Front political party, of which the General is a founding member. The protestors were allegedly given food, weapons and instructions by masked men, some of whom were recognized as FRG leaders. Under their direction, the mob committed acts of vandalism and violence, targeting noted opponents of the FRG, including judges who had ruled against the General's candidacy, opponents in the business and diplomatic communities, and journalists. One journalist died, apparently from a heart attack, shortly after escaping the mob; another was drenched in gasoline but was able to escape before being set alight. Human rights groups, many of whom have been vocal in their criticism of General Ríos Montt and his party, closed their offices and sought protection. The disturbances only concluded when the General himself reportedly ordered the mob to disperse. Human Rights Procurator Sergio Morales subsequently announced that he had received word of a plan to execute a number of human rights activists, named on a black-list.

General Ríos Montt came to power in a 1982 coup and ruled the country during one of the most repressive periods of Guatemala's prolonged civil conflict. Since 2000, the FRG administration of

President Alfonso Portillo has brought a marked deterioration in the human rights climate, with an alarming increase in intimidation, harassment, surveillance, abductions, attacks, and apparent extrajudicial executions directed against the human rights community, including those struggling for environmental justice. With General Ríos Montt determined to run for president, Amnesty International is gravely concerned that the current climate of heightened tensions may lead to further acts of violence in the lead-up to the November presidential elections.

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

- expressing grave concern for the safety of Norma Maldonado, members of *Mamá Maquín*, and other environmental justice activists who have opposed the *Plan Puebla Panamá* (PPP) treaty;
- pressing the authorities to carry out an immediate, impartial and exhaustive investigation into the raid on Normal Maldonado's residence, to make the results public and bring those responsible to justice;
- calling on the government to ensure that the civilian population, including local environmental and human rights activists, are protected and that the rule of law is maintained in Guatemala, to avoid further incidents like the 24 July mob violence;
- urging the government to collaborate fully with the work of the proposed *Comisión para la Investigación de Cuerpos Illegales y Aparatos Clandestinos de Seguridad* (CICIACS), which is to investigate human rights abuses allegedly committed by illegal armed groups and clandestine security apparatus and to take immediate steps to dismantle such groups and prosecute those involved.

APPEALS TO:

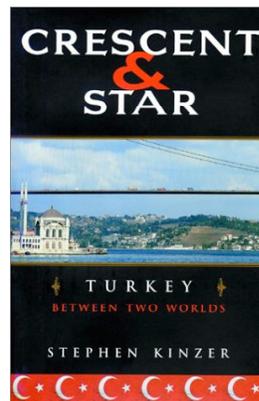
President of the Republic of Guatemala:
Lic. Alfonso Portillo Cabrera
Presidente de la República de Guatemala
6a Avenida "A" 4-41, Zona 1
Ciudad de Guatemala
GUATEMALA
Salutation: Dear Mr. President

Minister of the Interior:
Lic. Adolfo Reyes Calderón
Ministro de Gobernación
Ministerio de Gobernación
6a Avenida 4-64, Zona 4
Ciudad de Guatemala
GUATEMALA
Salutation: Dear Minister / Señor Ministro

Attorney General:
Lic. Carlos David de Leon Argueta
Fiscal General de la Republica
Fiscalia General del Ministerio Publico
8a. Avenida 10-57, Tercer nivel, Zona 1
Ciudad de Guatemala
GUATEMALA
Salutation: Dear Attorney General

RIGHTS READERS

Human Rights Book Discussion Group
Vroman's Bookstore
695 E. Colorado Boulevard, Pasadena
Sunday, September 21, 6:30 PM



Crescent and Star:
Turkey Between Two Worlds

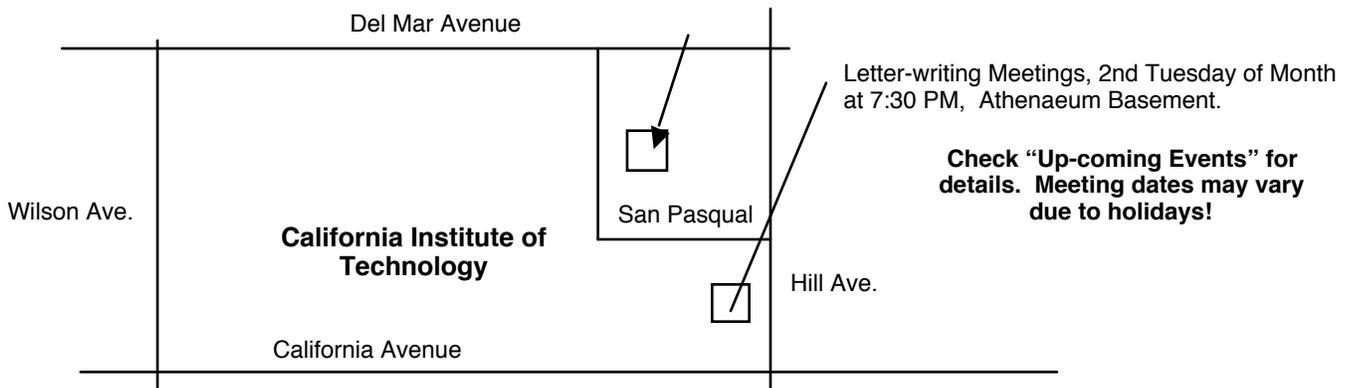
by Stephen Kinzer

Kinzer vividly describes Turkey's captivating delights as he smokes a water pipe, searches for the ruins of lost civilizations, watches a camel fight, and discovers its greatest poet. But he is also attuned to the political landscape, taking us from Istanbul's elegant cafes to wild mountain outposts on Turkey's eastern borders, while along the way he talks to dissidents and patriots, villagers and cabinet ministers. He reports on political trials and on his own arrest by Turkish soldiers when he was trying to uncover secrets about the army's campaigns against Kurdish guerillas. He explores the nation's hope to join the European Union, the human-rights abuses that have kept it out, and its difficult relations with Kurds, Armenians, and Greeks.

EDITOR'S LAST WORD:

Read us on line: <http://www.cco.caltech.edu/~aigp22>
Martha Ter Maat, 626-281-4039 / rightsreaders@yahoo.com

Monthly Meetings, 4th Thursday of Month, 7:30 PM,
Caltech Y Lounge, 414 S. Holliston.



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
P.O. Box 50193
Pasadena, CA 91115-0193



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.