

Amnesty International

Southern California

Mini-Conference

Program



March 31, 2007

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Putting on this conference requires the combined efforts and hard work of a large number of groups and individuals. The organizing committee would like to especially thank:

- The invited speakers and workshop presenters for their time and participation.
- The Western Regional staff (Kathy Brown and Sandra Perez) for all their support, including fielding phone calls, putting packets together, staffing group sales, etc., etc., etc.

ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

Program	Harmon Tipton
Support	Western Regional Office
Group Sales	Kathy Brown
Logistics	Ernie Solheid

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PROGRAM

All sessions are in University Hall

9:00– 1:00	REGISTRATION	Lobby
9:00– 9:20	CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST	Lobby
9:20–10:20	OPENING PLENARY <i>Emcee: Harmon Tipton, AIUSA Group 137 San Diego</i> Sara Petite, Americana Singer/Songwriter Lydia Cacho, Mexican Investigative Journalist and Winner of the 2007 Ginetta Sagan Fund Award	Room 252
10:30– 5:00	GROUP SALES	Room 240
10:30–11:50	WORKSHOPS, SET 1	
	Guantánamo Detainee Casework: One Local Group’s Experience <i>Cathy Pfister, AIUSA Group 137 San Diego</i> <i>Devinder Hans, AIUSA Group 137 San Diego, Member, Board of Directors, International Museum of Human Rights San Diego</i>	Room 250
	Introduction to Amnesty International <i>Deidre Jackson Gaffney, AIUSA Trainer/Group 141 Orange</i> <i>J. Kevin Gaffney, AIUSA Trainer/Group 141 Orange</i>	Room 248
	Uganda: Militarism Fueled by Resource Plundering, Imprisonment of the North <i>Dr. Ochan Otim, Executive Director, Friends for Peace in Africa, Chemistry Professor at Cal State Fullerton</i> <i>Kathy Smith, Coordinator, AIUSA Group 479 Scripps Ranch</i> <i>Tim Hardy, Co-chair, CEGUN.org</i>	Room 246
12:00–12:40	CAUCUSES (DISCUSSION SESSIONS)	
	Local Groups <i>Erin Callahan, AIUSA Western Regional Director</i>	Room 250
	Students <i>Masatoshi Mochizuki, Student, Soka University of America</i>	Room 248
12:40– 2:00	LUNCH: See flyer in packet for places to eat	Off Campus

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2:00 – 3:20 WORKSHOPS, SET 2

Universal Declaration of Human Rights Room 246

Corrie Ort, *Professor of Sociology and Anthropology,
San Diego Miramar College*

International Council Meeting Resolutions and Issues Room 250

Healy Vigderson, *Alternate US Delegate to the ICM,
AIUSA Group 137 San Diego*

**The Rest of Their Lives: Life without Parole for Child Offenders
in the United States** Room 248

Elizabeth M. Calvin, *Children's Rights Division, Human Rights Watch*

3:30 – 4:50 WORKSHOPS, SET 3

Stop Violence Against Women: A Program of Awareness Room 250

Courtney Pulido, Brittany Baxter, Chris Getz, *Miramar College Students*
Corrie Ort, *Professor of Sociology and Anthropology,
San Diego Miramar College*

**Shi Tao–Western Region Special Focus Case: The Chinese Government
and the Internet** Room 248

Jim Zimmerman, *AIUSA Group 137 San Diego*
Joanne Lao, *China Country Specialist*

Death Penalty Room 246

Tim Spann, *AI California State Death Penalty Abolition Coordinator*

5:00 – 5:30 CLOSING PLENARY

Room 252

Emcee: Harmon Tipton, *AIUSA Group 137 San Diego*

Ali Azizi, *AI Country Specialist for Yemen*

AI Research Missions to Yemen

This presentation is a short pictorial description of three AI missions to Yemen. It will show what is involved in an AI mission and how it works.

Erin Callahan, *AIUSA Western Regional Director*

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INVITED SPEAKERS

Sara Petite, *Americana Singer/Songwriter*

Raised where wild huckleberries grow, Sara originally hails from Sumner, Washington—a tulip-farming town southeast of Seattle. She grew up riding in her Dad's seaplane and on the back of his motorcycle. Her mother raised a trio of women and a son, and gave each of them a strong backbone and sense of self.

She is a modern-day June Carter with the lyrical sense of Dolly Parton. With strong roots in classic country, bluegrass and classic rock, she falls firmly under the genre of Americana. Sara's inspiration for songwriting comes from fond memories of home and her many travels throughout the United States, Canada, Mexico, Western and Eastern Europe. She also writes political songs about current events, she has a bachelor's degree in International Relations and Political Science.

In her first songwriting competition, two of Sara's songs—*Shine Some Heaven* and *Coming Home*—advanced to the semi-finals in the 2005 International Songwriting Competition in Nashville, Tennessee, which had nearly 15,000 entries. She earned an Honorable Mention for *Coming Home* in *American Songwriters Magazine*, and an honorable mention in the Great American Songwriter Competition with *Shine Some Heaven*. She has recently returned from the Great Waters Folk Festival where she was 1 of 5 finalists out of almost 400 entrants in the 2006 annual songwriting competition. She is currently a finalist in the 2006 Portland Songwriting Contest.

In the last year she has played clubs in San Diego including The Ould Sod, LeStats, Tio Leo's, Belly Up and The Whistle Stop. She has also made guest appearances in Oxford, Mississippi, Los Angeles, Joshua Tree, Seattle, Washington, and Nashville, Tennessee. She has recently finished her second tour in Ireland and Netherlands, where she played in gigs in Galway, Cork, Dublin, Bray, Belfast, Miltown Milbay and Amsterdam. She has opened up for Todd Snider, Bert Jansch and the Highway 61 Revisited. Her influences include: Dolly Parton, Loretta Lynn, John Prine, Todd Snider, Shelby Lynne, Bob Dylan, Patti Griffin, Steve Earle, Johnny Cash, June Carter, Merle Haggard, Lyle Lovett, the Stones, Tom Petty, Lucinda Williams, John Hiatt, John Mellencamp, and Hank Williams.

For more information or booking, call (858) 405-4027, email info@sarapetite.com, or visit either www.sarapetite.com or www.myspace.com/sarapetite.

Lydia Cacho, *Mexican Investigative Journalist and Winner of the 2007 Ginetta Sagan Fund Award*

Lydia Cacho, a Mexican journalist jailed for publishing a book implicating prominent businessmen in a vast child pornography ring near Cancun, will receive the 2007 Ginetta Sagan Fund award. Ms. Cacho also runs the Center for Women's Assistance in Cancun, a refuge for abused women.

Nominated by the poets, playwrights, essayists, editors and novelists from the PEN American Center, Ms. Cacho was arrested on a criminal defamation charge in December 2005, and escorted to jail by federal authorities who she says threatened to rape her and did not allow her to contact her lawyer or take her bronchitis medicine with her. She has since filed an expensive countersuit against the governor, district attorney and a judge for corruption and attempted rape and also released audio tapes documenting these officials conversing with the businessmen implicated in her book.

Each year, Amnesty International awards the Ginetta Sagan Fund prize to a woman working on behalf of the human rights of women and children in her native country. The award is named after the late Ginetta Sagan, who was imprisoned in her native Italy during World War II for her role in resisting fascism. After the war, Ms. Sagan went on to work for Amnesty International for 34 years.

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INVITED SPEAKERS

Erin Callahan, *AIUSA Western Regional Director*

Erin Callahan is Amnesty International's Regional Director for the Western United States, and previously managed media relations for Amnesty International USA. She has twelve years of experience with U.S. presidential campaigns, serving as communications director in Iowa, New Hampshire, Ohio and California. She also served as Communications Director for U.S. Senator Barbara Mikulski and as Emergency Services Manager for Alameda County Sheriff's Department

In addition, she was a lecturer at Cornell University, School of Industrial and Labor Relations, conducted political seminars for the National Democratic Institute's Eastern European delegations, was a policy advisor for Mexico City based Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez Center for Human Rights, and produced a radio series on youth culture in Israel and Palestine for National Public Radio.

She is a graduate of UC Berkeley and has a master's degree in broadcast journalism.

Alireza Azizi, *Member, AIUSA 2007 ICM delegation, Yemen Country Specialist*

Ali Azizi has been a member of Amnesty International since the 1980's. He has held many positions in AI, including Group Coordinator and Case Coordinator; member of the Nominations Committee, and member of the Western Region Planning Group. He has been a Country Specialist for Yemen since 1992 covering human rights in Yemen and has participated in three Amnesty International missions to Yemen. He was a member of the AIUSA Board of Directors 2000–2006 and a member of the AIUSA 2007 ICM delgation. He has also served on the board of several other non-governmental organizations. He is originally from Iran. He has a Ph.D. in Physics and currently works at NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory.

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WORKSHOPS

Guantánamo Detainee Casework: One Local Group's Experience

Cathy Pfister, *AIUSA Group 137*

Devinder Hans, *Member, Board of Directors, International Museum of Human Rights San Diego*

Beginning with a short history of the legal issues surrounding use of the Guantánamo Bay detention camp in the US government's "War on Terror," this workshop will explore the experiences of one local group in adopting the case of a Guantánamo detainee. We will discuss some of the unique challenges we have faced in our efforts to ensure that our detainee is treated justly and humanely.

Introduction to Amnesty International

Deidre Jackson Gaffney, *AIUSA Trainer/Group 141 Orange*

J. Kevin Gaffney, *AIUSA Trainer/Group 141 Orange*

This workshop will include an overview of Amnesty International's work and structure in the U.S. and internationally—how to get involved, what we do as activists, the volunteer leadership structure, and where to go for information. Questions about Amnesty's work and campaigns will be welcome.

Uganda: Militarism Fueled by Resource Plundering, Imprisonment of the North

Dr. Ochan Otim, *Executive Director, Friends for Peace in Africa, Chemistry Professor, CSU Fullerton*

Kathy Smith, *Coordinator, AIUSA Group 479 Scripps Ranch*

Tim Hardy, *Co-chair, CEGUN.org*

For nearly two decades, Northern Uganda has been ravaged by conflict. Thousands of civilians have been subject to brutal attacks, rape, torture, extra-judicial execution and destruction of homes and communities. In the last several years, there has been some movement toward justice, including the opening of investigations at the International Criminal Court, but the progress has been slow and marred by continued violence. This workshop deals with the history of this conflict and topics including conflict diamonds and child soldiers.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Corrie Ort, *Professor of Sociology and Anthropology, San Diego Miramar College*

Have you been dismayed by all the problems in the world? Did you wonder where to start? In 1948 United Nations member nations agreed on a document of human rights that is considered the foundation for a safe, just, and prosperous world. We do not start from scratch! We need only follow the guidelines of this document! All human rights organizations take their mission from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In this workshop we will cover the history of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, its content, and its promise. We will compare various countries and rate the US against this ideal of how our world could be.

Human rights transcend the political spectrum, disciplines, nations, and issues. By understanding the Universal Declaration of Human Rights we build a foundation for our human rights activism.

ICM Resolutions and Issues

Healy Vigderson, *Alternate US Delegate to the ICM*

Learn about the ongoing discussions regarding AI's International Congress Meeting this year in Mexico City. Learn what direction the movement is going in and the opinions held by various country sections of Amnesty International.

The Rest of Their Lives: Life without Parole for Child Offenders in the United States

Elizabeth M. Calvin, *Children's Rights Division, Human Rights Watch*

The United States is one of just a handful of countries in the world that sentences children to life without the possibility of parole. Here there are over 2200, while in the rest of the world combined there are just 12 individuals serving LWOP for crimes they committed under the age of 18.

This workshop will review the Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International report on the use of life without parole for children in the U.S. We'll also discuss exciting developments in California where SB Bill 999, the *Juvenile Life without Parole Reform Act*, was just introduced. Over 200 child offenders are serving life without parole in California, and changing this law will be tough. Your support is essential.

Stop Violence Against Women: A Program of Awareness

Courtney Pulido, Brittany Baxter, and Chris Getz, *Miramar College Student Group*

Corrie Ort, *Faculty Advisor, Miramar College Student Group*

Last year the Amnesty International Student Chapter of San Diego Miramar College adopted the AI Stop Violence Against Women Campaign. This presentation is an overview of violence against women both here in the US and internationally. It grew out of our efforts to educate ourselves and share what we learned with others.

Shi Tao–Western Region Special Focus Case: The Chinese Government and the Internet

Jim Zimmerman, *AIUSA Group 137 San Diego, AI China Country Specialist*

Joanne Lao, *AI China Country Specialist*

We will discuss the threat posed by the Internet to the Chinese government's monopoly of information and discussion, in the context of the arrest and imprisonment of Shi Tao, who is the Special Focus case in the W. Region. A special presentation on the case will be given by Joanne Lao, Case Supervisor and China Country Specialist.

We will also brainstorm ways to take effective action leading to the release of Shi Tao and other Internet offenders, and what methods might be used to influence American companies such as Yahoo and Microsoft who have, in effect, collaborated with the Chinese government in disseminating technology aimed at repression of freedom of speech and in some cases, as in Shi Tao's, have actually furnished names and evidence of "subversive" activity on the request of the Chinese government.

Death Penalty

Tim Spann, *AI California State Death Penalty Abolition Coordinator*

This workshop will include discussions of:

- the history of the death penalty in California;
- recent developments in abolition nationwide;
- recent history of the death penalty in California;
- California moratorium campaign; and
- references to Californian abolition personnel, websites and upcoming SoCal DP events

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PRESENTERS

Elizabeth Calvin

Elizabeth M. Calvin is a researcher and advocate with the Children's Rights Division of Human Rights Watch. Based in Los Angeles, her focus is on juvenile justice and foster care in California where more than 25% of incarcerated U.S. children reside and 85,000 children are in foster care. Current projects include advocacy to stop sentencing juveniles to life in prison without the possibility of parole, research on the adequacy of representation for children in the juvenile justice system, and research on the high rate of homelessness among children who leave the foster care. She is an attorney and has been a writer and teacher on juvenile justice issues, foster care and education rights. Her writing includes manuals on education law, a national guide on legal strategies for reducing the unnecessary detention of children, and an assessment of the quality of attorneys representing children in juvenile court.

Deidre Jackson Gaffney

Deidre Jackson Gaffney (see below) has been a volunteer for Amnesty International for over twenty years, both in local community groups and for ten years as a trainer for the Western Region. She has been active in Amnesty's transition from mandate to mission both in training local groups about this as well as many other issues within AI. She is also noted to be the "serious" one in the Kevin/Deidre combo . . . we think? (Don't let the humor fool you, these two are well-informed Amnesty activists.)

J. Kevin Gaffney

Kevin has been with Amnesty since he had a full head of hair. Besides being a trainer, he is said to have been a stunt double for Bart Simpson. He's also been a group coordinator, Area Coordinator, Student Area Coordinator, and head chef at BBQ meetings in the county (and has the hat to prove it). He recently married his fellow trainer and may show you some tips of how AI can be a great dating pool. He's willing to tell you all about if for a Diet Coke or a Guinness. Attend one his workshops and make up your own mind about this character activist.

Devinder Hans

Devinder Hans has been an active member of Amnesty International for 12 years and is a member of the Board of Directors for the International Museum of Human Rights San Diego.

Tim Hardy

Tim was born and raised in Rangoon, the capital city of Burma. He was one of the foremost students in Burma who sparked, organized, and actively participated the nationwide anti-government demonstrations in 1988, which brought down the original invincible Burma Socialist Programme Party and the succeeding two military regimes. He is currently concluding a masters degree in computer science at San Diego State University while working full time as a software engineer at Electronic Data Systems corporation. He's been a member of Amnesty International for the past 5 years and currently holds a co-chairman position at CEGUN.org.

Corrie Ort

Dr. Corrie Ort is Professor of Sociology and Anthropology at San Diego Miramar College and faculty co-advisor of the student chapter of Amnesty International there.

Ochan Otim

Dr. Ochan Otim is from Pader District, one of the most impacted areas of grave human rights abuses in Northern Uganda. He is the founding and current Executive President of Friends for Peace in Africa (FPA) (<http://www.friendsforpeaceinafrica.org/>). FPA's mission is to facilitate and mediate, through dialogue, advocacy, and empowerment, the implementation of conditions that enable individuals in all regions of Africa to live and develop to their fullest potential in an atmosphere of peace. Currently, he is a visiting scientist at the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena, and a faculty member in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry at California State University, Fullerton.

Cathy Pfister

Cathy Pfister works as a software engineer in San Diego and has been a member of San Diego Amnesty International Group 137 since 2001. She is the group's urgent action coordinator and leads the group's "adopted" Guantánamo detainee case efforts. She's also involved in a variety of other human rights organizations, particularly related to peace and justice in the Middle East.

Kathy Smith

Kathy Smith is a longtime Amnesty activist and group coordinator for Group 479 in Scripps Ranch, San Diego. She is a graduate of San Diego State University with a B.S. in Social Work, with added additional course emphasis in child development. She has worked with nonprofits, adult education, and children's centers. Kathy has been a member of AI for about 20 years and has been the Scripps Ranch coordinator for much of that time. The group has focus cases on India (Environmental Case/Human Rights, Gujarat State Action File, Bhopal Campaign for Justice) and also works under Darcie Olson's East African Regional Network, with a focus on Uganda.

Tim Spann

Tim Spann joined AI in 1987 and became involved in death penalty work through AI in 1989, which means he has been active working towards abolishing the death penalty for eighteen years. He is currently the AI California State Death Penalty Coordinator. He has traveled throughout the U.S. to death penalty abolition events and has worked extensively with victims' groups, especially Murder Victims' Families for Reconciliation, a group comprised of surviving family members of homicide victims who speak out against capital punishment. Mr. Spann is also involved with California People of Faith Working Against the Death Penalty. He operates a sign business and has produced many death penalty related banners and other signs for death penalty events nationwide.

Healy Vigderson

Healy Vigderson has been a member of AI for 18 years and has at various times been, student group coordinator, student area coordinator, resolutions rapporteur, and local group coordinator. She is currently an alternate delegate from the U.S. section of AI to the International Council Meeting.