



# Amnesty International

Orange County

GROUP 141 ORANGE • GROUP 175 LONG BEACH  
GROUP 178 IRVINE • GROUP 596 HUNTINGTON BEACH

August 2004

<http://www.aiusaoc.org>

## Call For Corporate Accountability In Iraq

Recent allegations of torture and ill-treatment by Coalition forces in Iraqi prisons echo the frequent reports of human rights violations that Amnesty International has received over the past year. As details emerge, it becomes apparent that private companies operating as military contractors in Iraq also face challenges as regard their human rights responsibilities. It is incumbent on them to reevaluate their ethical policies and standards in order to explicitly address human rights issues. Thus, even as we call on President Bush to support a thorough, independent and public investigation into the abuses at Abu Ghraib, we also call on companies to support independent investigations; to help ensure that any person guilty of committing acts of torture or cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment is brought to justice; and to acknowledge their human rights responsibilities by adopting and implementing a comprehensive human rights policy.

### Take Action

Please write to the CEO of the Titan Corporation at the address below to express your concern about the human rights risks associated with operating in a complex environment such as Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq, and to request clarification about the company's human rights policies and practices. A sample letter appears on page 3 of this newsletter.

Dr. Gene Ray  
The Titan Corporation  
3033 Science Park Road  
San Diego, CA 92121-1199

### Background Information

For over a year, AI has been investigating human rights violations including allegations of torture and ill-treatment of detainees by Coalition forces. Addressing these incidents must be a priority if the Iraqi people are to live free of brutal and degrading practices. For Iraq to have a sustainable and peaceful future, human rights must be a central component of the way forward.

Titan's name has appeared in reports of alleged human rights violations at Abu Ghraib prison. Irrespective of whether Titan employees were involved in these abuses, we are concerned about the inevitable risks that can arise when companies choose to operate in environments where human rights are imperiled. Under international law, all corporations have obligations to uphold, respect, and protect fundamental human rights. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) calls upon every individual and every organ of society, which includes companies and business operations in general, to promote and protect human rights and "to strive to secure their

universal and effective recognition and observance." In addition, the Geneva Conventions contain binding standards for military and non-military personnel during times of armed conflict and the Convention Against Torture prohibits cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment at all times. Thus it is essential for Titan to adopt and implement a code of conduct explicitly referencing the UDHR, helping to guarantee that its employees will not be implicated in human rights violations. Though Titan has a code of conduct concerning ethical behavior, it is inadequate in that it does not explicitly reference the UDHR or address fundamental human rights concerns.

AIUSA Executive Director Bill Schulz has written directly to the CEOs of both Titan Corporation and CACI International Inc, companies whose employees have been identified as working in Abu Ghraib prison. Regardless of the presumption of innocence in the case of prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib, companies such as these have a responsibility—to their employees, their shareholders and to the people they serve—to develop and implement a comprehensive human rights policy; publicly disclose and report on this policy; and to incorporate human rights into all hiring procedures, contracts and training.

The situation in Iraq highlights a recurring issue concerning the legal accountability of companies, and their employees, contracted to provide services to the US military, or US companies operating in Iraq. Alongside efforts with individual companies, AIUSA has been actively pressing for reforms of existing laws governing the use of private contractors by the Departments of Defense and State. AIUSA has pursued these reforms in the context of the annual budget bill that funds the Department of Defense, as well as through separate legislative initiatives still in development. AIUSA has proposed these legal reforms based in part on research in the report *Unmatched Power, Unmet Principles*.

AIUSA's recommendations reaffirm the principle of accountability for human rights violations committed by private contractors and attempt to close any legal loopholes that would prevent criminal prosecutions of contractor employees when they commit abuse or violations of international standards. In addition, the reforms seek to:

- Increase congressional oversight over the use of private contractors;
- Ensure that all recipients of U.S. training, whether by US forces or private contractors, are fully vetted for past human rights abuses; and
- Ensure that all private contractors receive basic training in international human rights and humanitarian law.

## July Meeting Minutes

### Group #178 Irvine

#### Attendees

Ting Huang, Stephanie Jones, Dan Krawitz (a new member), Maung Nyeu, Julie Ralls, Rhonda Seiter, Liza Vick, Al White.

#### Group Business

A motion was made to remove Jaques Kilchoer from office as group coordinator due to lack of attendance and replace him with either Liza or Stephanie, both of whom attempted to ignore the suggestion. Several members hadn't even noticed that we had no leadership.

We had our usual meeting with letters and discussion and then watched a section of the documentary *A Force More Powerful* that covered the Danish resistance to the Nazis in World War II, which was quite moving.

#### Comedy Club Scholarship

The AI Irvine group now has a scholarship fund of \$300 (with strings attached) to send an area AI member to the Irvine Improv's 6-week school of stand-up comedy. For details write jralls7959@aol.com. Minimal information about the class can be found at [www.improv.com](http://www.improv.com).

#### August Meeting

Our speaker in August will be our very own Stephanie Jones talking about the Women's Campaign and AIKIDO.

## July Meeting Minutes

### Group #596 Huntington Beach

For our July meeting we had about 50 people in attendance. Mahsa Abassi and Beth McFarland ran the meeting and did a wonderful job! We signed 73 letters on human trafficking for children in Uganda (child soldiers) and women and girls in Kosovo. Thanks to everyone for your support.

#### August Meeting

For August, we will be hosting an event on issues affecting the gay/lesbian/transgender community, which will include a screening of the film *Jim in Bold*, and three speakers. The documentary *Jim in Bold* was inspired by Jim Wheeler, a young gay man from Lebanon, Pennsylvania, who committed suicide shortly after graduating high school. In his memory, three young gay men embark on a journey across the United States interviewing other young gay and lesbian individuals about their experiences both positive and negative. This documentary is also interlaced with interviews with Jim Wheeler's family that is often sad, thought-provoking and finally inspiring. Trailers of the documentary are available at the website [www.jiminbold.com](http://www.jiminbold.com).

Our first speaker is Truly St. Bonore who will describe her experiences and struggles after learning during her adolescent years that her father was actually gay. Our second speaker, Dr. Doug Hamill, is a pediatrician who has worked on issues affecting gay, lesbian and transgender teenagers. Our final speaker is Ken Saragosa, chair of Soka University's English Department, who himself has been a victim of hate crimes due to his homosexuality.

Our August meeting will be on a special day, Friday, Au-

gust 27, at 7:00 PM, at Sts. Simon and Jude Church, in the gym building of the Adult Center. The church is located at 20444 Magnolia Street, Huntington Beach. For more information contact: Darcie Olson at (949) 742-5524 or Mahsa Abassi at (909) 818-1389.

## Upcoming Events

### Afghanistan Event

The Irvine and Huntington Beach groups are working together to put on an event to educate and raise awareness of the current issues in Afghanistan. The event is scheduled for Tuesday, September 14, 7:00-9:45 PM, at Cal State Fullerton, University Hall 252. The enclosed flyer has details. It will include a panel of speakers who will discuss and take questions and answers on the following topics:

- Human rights in Afghanistan.
- The past and present history of the women's movement in Afghanistan along with the struggles they have faced through the various governments that have held power.
- The current situation in Afghanistan, presented by a woman who is currently in Kabul with Relief International.
- Democratic elections and security.

In addition, the movie *Osama* will be shown. This is the first film produced in Afghanistan since the fall of the Taliban, where the director, Barmak, explores the suffering of women under the Taliban regime. It was the winner of the 2004 Golden Globe for Best Foreign Film. Food and refreshments will be provided.

### Refugee Training

Amnesty International USA's Refugee Program is holding a training in refugee and asylum law and policy, to be followed by a visit to a detention center, in Los Angeles on September 11, 12, and 13. The training will begin on Saturday September 11, and will continue throughout the day on Sunday. Participants will learn about the international refugee protection system, and about the United States' own refugee and asylum policy in a series of concise, candid talks followed by plenty of time for questions and answers. To participate in this training, you need not have any background in refugee or asylum law.

On Monday participants will visit San Pedro Service Processing Center, a detention center. Training participants will interview immigration detainees who are seeking relief from deportation back to their home countries and have asked for help from AIUSA's Refugee Program.

#### Details

Participants must be Amnesty members and be able to take the day off on Monday, September 13.

**Costs:** AI can pay your travel expenses to Los Angeles and all other costs except lodging. If that is a hardship for you, we can arrange for you to stay with an AI member.

**Commitment:** If you take part in this training, we expect you to be willing to conduct two or three interviews at detention centers near your home, in the course of the next year.

**Application:** Please send a one-page statement on why you would like to participate in the training, along with your resumé, to Susan Benesch at [sbenesch@aiusa.org](mailto:sbenesch@aiusa.org) by 5 PM Friday, August 13.

## Nobel Peace Laureates Urge End to the Juvenile Death Penalty

On July 19, former Nobel Peace prize winner Amnesty International and fifteen other Nobel Peace laureates jointly filed an amicus curiae brief to the United States Supreme Court urging an end to the execution of juvenile offenders. The country's leading child advocacy groups, medical associations, legal organizations, and faith communities joined with them in filing friend of the court briefs in the case of *Roper versus Simmons*, which will determine the constitutionality of the juvenile death penalty.

While customary international law explicitly prohibits the execution of juvenile offenders, the United States is the only country in the world that proclaims its legal right to do so. Since 1998, the United States has executed 13 juvenile offenders while the entire rest of the world carried out 8 such executions. The briefs filed in this case highlight the distinctiveness of children as a protected class and focus on issues ranging from adolescent cognitive development to the treatment of minors within international human right law.

"When it comes to the juvenile death penalty, the US justice system stands in sorry isolation from the international community," said Dr. William F. Schulz, Executive Director of Amnesty International USA. "While we pay lip service to the rhetoric of protecting our children, our enthusiasm for executing the young is unparalleled and is considered shameful by the rest of the world."

In October 2004, the case of *Roper v. Simmons* will allow the US Supreme Court to weigh the constitutionality of executing individuals who were under age eighteen at the time of the crime. "The Simmons case will be an opportunity for the US to conform to international human rights standards and to genuinely honor the obligations that we have to protect the rights of our children," said Sue Gunawardena-Vaughn, Director of AIUSA's Program to Abolish the Death Penalty.

"With almost total unanimity among the international community that state-sponsored execution of children is unconscionable and unlawful, it is time for this human rights tragedy to end once and for all," concluded Schulz.

## Sample Letter to Titan Corporation

Dear Dr. Ray,

I am writing to you as a member of Amnesty International USA to express my concern over the human rights abuses com-

mitted in the Abu Ghraib prison facility and to ask for some clarification of your company's human rights policies and practices.

Amnesty International has condemned the abuses allegedly committed by U.S. agents in the Abu Ghraib facility in Iraq as torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. AI has documented a pattern of abuses by U.S. agents against detainees in this and other facilities and we feel that those responsible for abuses should be brought to justice in accordance with U.S. obligations under international and domestic law. Your company has performed services contracts with the U.S. military that have led to public allegations of complicity in abuses against detainees by some of your employees. I hope and expect that Titan will support and facilitate public investigations and help bring persons found responsible to justice.

I would like to know if Titan has a human rights policy, and if it does what that policy is. Under international law, all corporations have obligations to uphold, respect and protect fundamental human rights. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) calls upon every individual and every organ of society, which includes companies and business operations in general, to promote and protect human rights and to strive "to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance."

I would like to know what processes and policies your company has in place to ensure that your employees never commit human rights abuses. In the event that you do receive information indicating your employees have committed human rights abuses, I would also like to know how your policies and procedures would ensure that those individuals are brought to justice.

If you do not have such policies I urge you to:

- Develop and implement a comprehensive human rights policy, which shall include an explicit commitment to support and uphold the principles and values contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- Publicly disclose this human rights policy and periodically issue public reports on its implementation.
- Incorporate a policy on human rights into all hiring procedures, contracts and training.

I also call on you to make public the results of your own investigations into any alleged human rights abuses by your employees, and the terms of your service contracts with the U.S. military with respect to human rights. Thank you for your attention, and I look forward to your response.

If you would like to continue receiving this newsletter and supporting the work of the Orange County and Long Beach Amnesty International groups, please return this coupon to the address below with annual dues of \$10.00. Dues are used to cover the costs of this newsletter and of letters on behalf of prisoners. Your address label contains your membership expiration date.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State & Zip \_\_\_\_\_

### Return to:

Amnesty International  
P.O. Box 14485  
Irvine, CA 92623-4485

### For (check one):

- ☐ Orange Group  
☐ Irvine Group  
☐ Huntington Beach  
☐ Long Beach

Please make your check payable to Amnesty International. Contributions to AI are tax-deductible. Thank you for your interest and support!

# Calendar

## August

25 Wednesday 7:00 PM

**Group #175 Long Beach Monthly Meeting** at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 5450 Atherton Street, Long Beach. Letter-writing from 7:00–7:30. For further information about the group, contact Bobbi Kendig at (562) 420-1155.

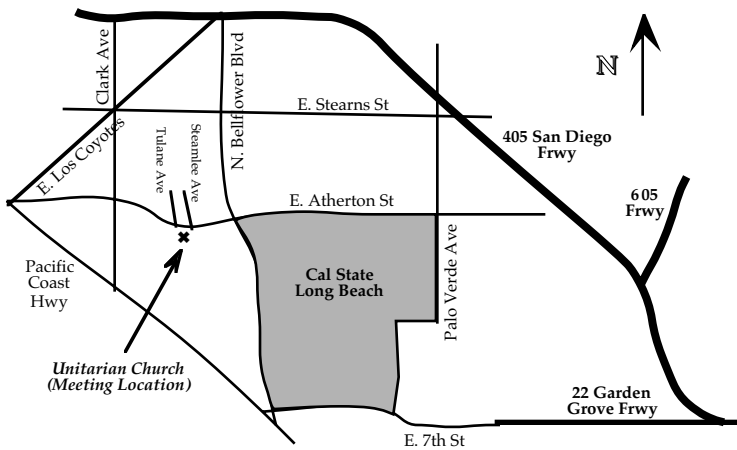
27 Friday 7:00 PM

**Group #596 Huntington Beach Meeting** at Saints Simon and Jude Church, Room 7A, 20444 Magnolia Street in Huntington Beach. Group #596 meets the last Monday of each month. For further information about the group, contact Darcie Olson at (949) 650-5375.

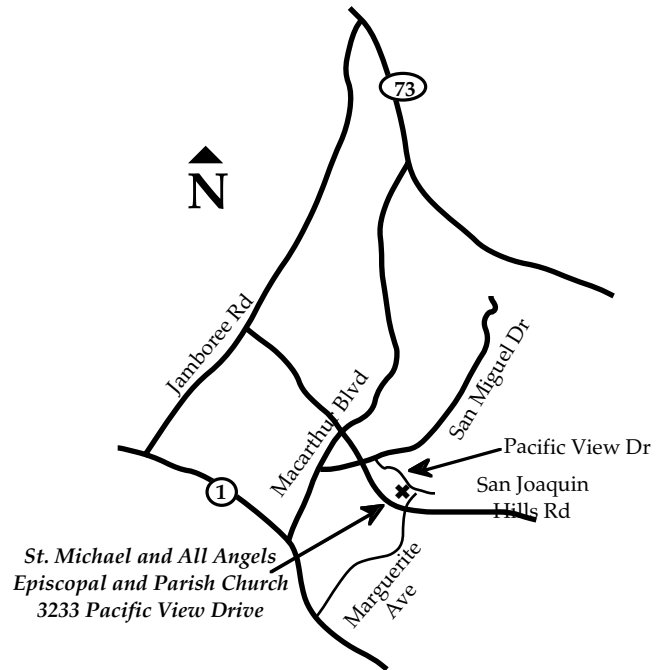
31 Tuesday 7:00 PM

**Group #178 Irvine Monthly Meeting** at St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal and Parish Church, 3233 Pacific View Drive, Corona del Mar. See full details on the web page <http://www.aiusaoc.org>. Group #178 meets the last Tuesday of each month. For more information about the group, contact Jacques Kilchoër at (714) 557-8427.

Group #141 Orange is on hiatus for the summer and will resume meeting in September on the third Tuesday of each month.



**Group #175 Long Beach Meeting Location**



**Group #178 Irvine Meeting Location**

Amnesty International  
Post Office Box 14485  
Irvine, California 92623-4485