



Amnesty International

Orange County

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

August 2006

<http://www.aiusaoc.org>

Recognition of the Human Rights of the World's Indigenous Peoples is Long Overdue

This article is taken from an August 9, 2006 AIUSA press release.

In its forthcoming 61st session the United Nations General Assembly will have an historic opportunity to stand up for the human rights of some of the world's most marginalized peoples by adopting the long overdue UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The Declaration affirms the right of Indigenous peoples to have meaningful control over their own lives, to maintain their distinct cultural identities, to live free from discrimination and the threat of genocide, and to have secure access to the lands and resources essential to their well-being and ways of life.

After more than two decades of negotiation and debate in the UN, the Declaration gained momentum in June when it was adopted at the first meeting of the new Human Rights Council.

The Declaration is supported by a wide range of states in the North and the South as well as by the vast majority of Indigenous peoples' organizations that have participated in its development. However, a few states remain firmly opposed to the Declaration becoming part of the body of international human rights standards.

The Canadian government, which led the opposition to the Declaration at the Human Rights Council, has said that the Declaration could lead to criticism of how Canada has treated Indigenous land rights in the past. The USA has strongly opposed the very notion of an international human rights standard by which the treatment of Indigenous peoples might be judged.

The human rights situation faced by Indigenous peoples the world over highlights the desperate need for their rights to be recognized in principle and respected in practice.

- In Monduliri province, Cambodia, Indigenous Phnong people lost both ancestral land and farmland when the government granted a concession in 2004 for a private company to establish a tree plantation, which vastly exceeded the legal limit of 10,000 hectares. Villagers and local authorities were never consulted and no environmental or social impact studies were undertaken. The Phnong people's requests for information about the concession have continuously been ignored.
- Adivasi (Indigenous) communities in a remote forest region of Chattisgarh, central India, are trapped in the escalating conflict between security forces and Maoists belonging to the People's War Group. There has been an alarming increase in the number of fatalities in recent months. Reports indicate that more than 40,000 people, including

adivasis, have been displaced from their homes and remain confined to temporary camps where they cannot adequately support themselves or their families.

- Indigenous women in Peru are often denied maternal and infant health services. Those who are unable to get to a health centre or choose to give birth at home are fined and their children denied birth certificates, meaning that they have no legal identity, which can have serious consequences for their enjoyment of their human rights.
- The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has repeatedly warned of a humanitarian crisis facing a growing number of Indigenous communities that have been forced from their lands by the armed conflict in Colombia, which for more than 40-years has pitted the security forces and army-backed paramilitaries against guerrilla groups. Noting Indigenous peoples' close dependence on their traditional lands for sustenance and for cultural life, the UNHCR warned in April 2006 that "some of the world's oldest and smallest Indigenous groups are at high risk not only of displacement, but even of extinction because of the Colombian conflict."
- According to the US Bureau of Justice Statistics, Native American and Alaska Native women suffer a rate of sexual assault 3.5 times higher than any other racial group. However, only a small portion of these crimes are ever investigated or prosecuted. The lack of victims' services, in particular culturally sensitive services, and the lack of appropriate training for law enforcement, contribute to inadequate investigations and discourage women from reporting sexual assault. Denied fair and adequate protection under the law, Indigenous peoples around the world face the threat of being uprooted from lands and natural resources essential to their traditional economies and the ways of life that make them who they are. All too often, the consequence is impoverishment, ill-health and abuse. Indigenous leaders and communities who speak out for their rights or persist in using land coveted by others, face intimidation and violence, often with the collaboration of the state. In many instances, the peaceful support for the right of an Indigenous people or ethnic minority to maintain their own cultural identity or exercise the right of self-determination is branded treason or support for terrorism, leading to violent treatment at the hands of authorities. Indigenous women often face multiple discrimination—on grounds of their gender and their ethnic or national origin.

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July Meeting Minutes

Group #141 Orange

Attendees

Marie Anglin, Jeannine Christensen, Kevin Gaffney, Deidre Jackson Gaffney, David Hartman, Cathleen Kilgallen, Daryl Prietto, Ernie Solheid.

Letter-Writing Actions

Along with several postcards and petitions, the group sent a total of 25 letters this month. These included letters to Rep. Dana Rohrabacher asking him to co-sponsor HR 952 Torture Outsourcing Prevention Act, which would prohibit transfer of detainees to countries that have a history of torture; to Chinese officials protesting the arrest and detention of the children of Rebiya Kadeer, a former prisoner of conscience released earlier this year; to Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice asking for action on the killing of women and girls in Juarez, Mexico; and to Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and President Bush asking them to uphold Geneva Convention protections for detainees.

Todd Anglin

Todd Anglin was a group member who died at the age of 28 in a motorcycle accident last year. His mother Marie Anglin attended the meeting and spoke at length about her son and her current efforts in setting up the Todd Anglin Home for Children, an orphanage in Nicaragua which she is establishing as a memorial to her son and to continue his legacy of caring. Marie spoke how she was motivated to start the home and current progress in Nicaragua. She has a building, which she is working to prepare, but has been held up by some government red tape due to the elections taking place there now. More information is available on the website for the orphanage: <http://www.toddanglinhomeforchildren.org/>.

Juarez Killings

Jeannine talked about US House and Senate resolutions dealing with the killings in Juarez of women and girls and Amnesty's reaction to the Mexican government's investigation. Amnesty is trying to put pressure on US Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice to put more US government pressure on the Mexican government.

Artists' Walk Tabling

The group decided to table at the Artists' Walk in downtown Santa Ana on Saturday, October 7.

Orange County/Long Beach Potluck Picnic Party

We discussed the upcoming picnic for the Orange County and Long Beach groups scheduled for Saturday, September 23, at Mile Square Park in Fountain Valley. David volunteered to locate a specific location in the park for the groups to meet.

July Meeting Minutes

Group #596 Huntington Beach

About twenty people were in attendance at the Huntington Beach Amnesty meeting on July 31st to learn more about the School of the Americas. We began the meeting by watching the documentary *Hidden in Plain Sight* (<http://www.soaw.org/new/article.php?id=547>) and then wrote letters to our representatives urging them to sponsor HR 1217 calling for the

closing of the School of the Americas, now known as the Western Hemispheric Institute for Security Cooperation. We then had a discussion about US corporations who might directly profit from doing business with countries whose regimes were trained at the School of the Americas and how they could be linked directly to the deaths of individuals at the hands of graduates from the school. Ideas for making this information available as a way to use the public's economic power (in the form of boycotts) to compel the closure of the school were also discussed.

August Meeting

For this month's meeting, scheduled for Monday, August 28, because Sts. Simon and Jude will be shut down for the month of August, we will be meeting at an alternate location and working on the annual postcard action. We will serve appetizers and drinks. For more information on the location, please contact us at amnesty596@gmail.com.

We will be doing our semiannual letter writing marathon for prisoners of conscience, legislative campaigns, etc. So bring your fingers and let your fingers do the talking. We'll have the pens. Join us for a good time, food, and global (and local) chit chat as we work together to help all those suffering around the world. They need us and we need you!

Indigenous Peoples

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Amnesty International urges all states to work in close collaboration with Indigenous peoples to ensure that effective systems of protection are established at the domestic, regional and international levels. Critical measures requiring immediate action include:

- Adopting the draft United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples during the upcoming session of the UN General Assembly;
- Establishing fair and effective processes to provide timely resolution of outstanding land and resource disputes consistent with the rights of Indigenous peoples and other human rights protections in domestic and international law;
- Ensuring that Indigenous activists and communities can safely exercise their rights without fear of violence or arbitrary arrest and imprisonment.

Background Information

The UN General Assembly has encouraged the international community to observe August 9 as the International Day of the World's Indigenous People throughout the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People (2005–2014).

At the 2005 World Summit, heads of states and governments reaffirmed their "commitment to continue making progress in the advancement of the human rights of the world's indigenous peoples at the local, national, regional and international levels, including through consultation and collaboration with them, and to present for adoption a final draft United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples as soon as possible." On June 29, 2006, the Human Rights Council adopted the United Nations Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and recommended its adoption by the UN General Assembly.

July Meeting Minutes Group #175 Long Beach

Attendees

Lizette Ashcraft, Mary Kay Dunn, Norma Edwards, Mike Ferris, Deidre Gaffney, Kevin Gaffney, Bobbi Kendig, Cathleen Kilgallen, Genevieve McClain, Shean McMahon, Elizabeth Petras, Jim Roberts, Robin Schneider, Arnold Tuason, Linda Veazey, Sara Wall.

Walk for Hope

Be the Cause is a fantastic altruistic non-profit based in Orange County that does good deeds. For the last several years they have put on a Walk for Hope, which Amnesty groups have tabled at and walked in (it benefited various other nonprofits). This year Be the Cause has offered their event for nonprofits to use as a fundraiser for their own group. Anyone who walks gets a t-shirt and snacks, and there is entertainment. In past years it cost \$20/25 so if you got a group together and everyone just paid \$10 to go and didn't get sponsors, that would still be money to your group. If individuals get sponsors, even better, of course! This year we will again be tabling at the event. The walk will take place at El Dorado Park in Long Beach. See more info and pictures from last year at <http://www.bethecause.org/walk>.

Some information from the Be the Cause web site:

1. Promote the Walk as your fundraiser.
2. Ask all walkers to select you as their charity of choice.
3. When the walkers collect sponsorships they should ask all their friends to make checks payable to your group (and not Be the Cause).
4. Before the walk, the walkers should record their sponsorships on our web site (www.bethecause.org), or let us know how much they raised on the day of the event.
5. The walkers should mail or submit all their sponsorships directly to you.

On the day of the walk, everyone enjoys the same incredible five-kilometer walk as before which includes hundreds of inspiring quotes, interactive activities, free snacks, free t-shirt, and live entertainment.

Please contact Norma for more information at beachykeeno@yahoo.com or (562) 425-4353.

Death Penalty News

Mary Kay Dunn reported that in June the Phillipines repealed the death penalty. There are 1,200 inmates on death row whose sentences will be commuted to life in prison. The death

penalty was abolished once before in 1987 but was reimposed seven years later after a rise in crime. Under that law seven executions were carried out by lethal injection, but in 2000 the then president, Joseph Estrada, ordered a moratorium after strong lobbying by the church, the European Union, and human rights groups.

Also, Mary Kay told us that The American Society of Anesthesiologists called on its members not to attend executions of death sentences by lethal injection, even if called to do so by a court. In a letter addressed to some 37,000 members, association president Orin Guidry recalled the American Medical Association's code of ethics, which says: "A physician, as a member of a profession dedicated to preserving life when there is hope of doing so, should not be a participant in a legally authorized execution." Missouri has halted executions for the time being because they don't have a certified anesthesiologist for them.

Lastly, Mary Kay alerted us to the case of Carlos DeLuna. A *Chicago Tribune* investigation revealed groundbreaking evidence that Texas may have executed an innocent man in 1989. Carlos DeLuna was executed for the fatal stabbing of Texas convenience store clerk Wanda Lopez in 1983. New evidence uncovered by reporters Maurice Possley and Steve Mills casts doubt on DeLuna's guilt and points towards another man, Carlos Hernandez, who had a record of similar crimes and repeatedly confessed to the murder. Similar questions have been raised in the cases of Cameron Todd Willingham and Ruben Cantu in Texas, and Larry Griffin in Missouri.

Aung Sun Suu Kyi

Jim reported that Aung Sun Suu Kyi (leader of the National League for Democracy) was not allowed to attend a Martyr's Day ceremony commemorating the death of her father, General Aung San, in 1949. Also, in more bizarre news from Myanmar/Burma, the government announced that it will no longer feed prisoners. Jim has left messages for the country specialist in London to see what if any action Amnesty will take on this issue.

Group News

- The group is planning on participating in and tabling at the Walk for Hope this year. Robin has arranged for Wild Oats to donate food that we can offer to make some extra money for the organization.
- The group sent 77 letters (including summer postcards).
- Please bring postcards to our August 16 meeting for the Summer Postcard Action.

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 shown with annual dues of \$10.00. Dues cover the costs of this newsletter and of stamps used for saving lives. Your address label contains your membership expiration date. Join us!

Name _____

Address _____

City, State & Zip _____

Return to:
Amnesty International
Group 178
P.O. Box 14485
Irvine, CA 92623-4484

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

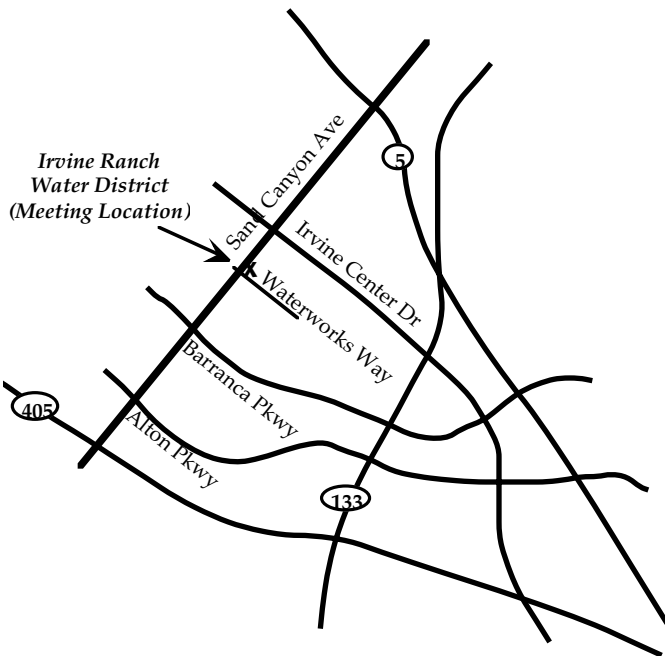
August

15 Tuesday 7:00 PM

Group #141 Orange Monthly Meeting in Classroom 3 at the Sisters of St. Joseph, 480 S. Batavia Street, in Orange. Look for the classroom/auditorium building behind the main building. Drive around and to the back. Group #141 meets the third Tuesday of each month. For further information about the group, contact Kevin Gaffney at xhuskr@aol.com.

16 Wednesday 7:00 PM

Group #175 Long Beach Monthly Meeting at the Unitarian Universalist Church, Rooms 1 and 2, 5450 Atherton Street, Long Beach. Letter-writing from 7:00–7:30. For further information about the group, contact Norma Edwards at (562) 425-4353.



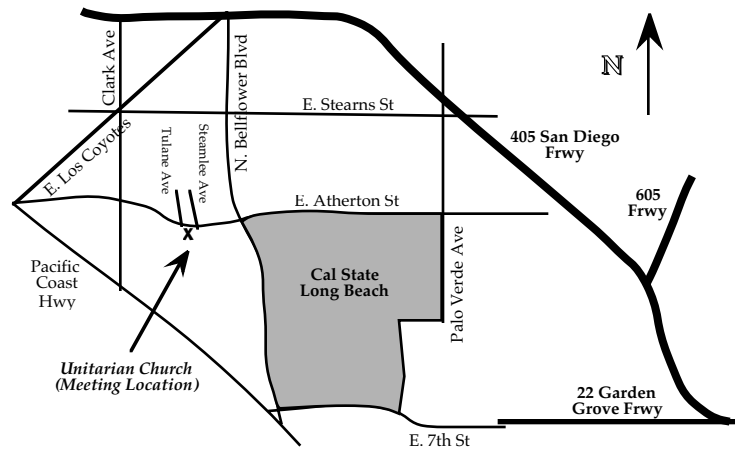
Group #178 Irvine Meeting Location

28 Monday 7:00 PM

Group #596 Huntington Beach Meeting at an alternate location this month. For information on the location, please contact us at amnesty596@gmail.com. For more information about the group, consult the website <http://www.hbamnesty.com/main.htm>.

29 Tuesday 7:00 PM

Group #178 Irvine Monthly Meeting at the Irvine Ranch Water District, 15600 Sand Canyon Avenue, Irvine, between the 5 and 405 freeways. See details on the web page <http://www.aiusaoc.org>. For more information about the group, contact Glen Nielsen at nielsen-electric@cox.net.



Group #175 Long Beach Location

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