

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

ORANGE COUNTY

GROUP #141 ORANGE

GROUP #178 IRVINE

Newsletter

July 2002

UN Security Council: No Double Standards on International Justice

This article is taken from July 1 and July 3 AI press releases.

Amnesty International believes that there should be no double standards in international justice and no immunity for anyone, under any circumstances, for crimes such as genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. The organization today called on the USA to reconsider its position seeking immunity for its own personnel from the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court (ICC). The Rome Statute of the ICC enters into force today.

At the Security Council on June 30, the USA vetoed the extension of the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMBIH) as it did not get support for such immunity. It then agreed to a 72-hour extension of UNMBIH's mandate to allow for further discussion.

"We welcome the fact that the other members of the Security Council have stood firm. We call on them and on all other countries committed to the struggle against impunity for the worst possible crimes to continue to give full support to the ICC," Amnesty International said.

"The US position threatens the integrity of the international system of justice as a whole and challenges the universal applicability of one of its most fundamental principles: no immunity for crimes such as genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity," Amnesty International said as it stressed that the issue goes beyond the fate of UNMBIH or even beyond the ICC.

The 1949 Geneva Conventions already require any country to search for perpetrators of the most serious war crimes, regardless of their rank or nationality, and allow states to bring them to justice before their own courts. These Conventions have long enjoyed nearly universal ratification, including by the USA. The 1948 Convention on Genocide also provides no immunity for suspects of such a crime. Amnesty International believes that the same principle applies to crimes against humanity. "The concerns expressed by the USA are utterly misplaced," Amnesty International stated.

The Rome Statute of the ICC has strong safeguards against politically-motivated, unfounded prosecutions. These include an independent Prosecutor elected by the state parties. The Prosecutor will need authorization from a panel of judges before starting an investigation. The Security Council has the authority to defer of any investigation. The ICC will only act if national courts are unable or unwilling to take action.

Failure to extend UNMBIH's mandate until December 31, 2002, when its police-training functions are due to be taken over by a European Union Police Mission, will create a major disruption in the international efforts to assist the rebuilding of Bosnian police forces. It will also threaten the credibility of the overall work of the international community in Bosnia after years of considerable investment in personnel and other

resources, with the USA itself playing a leading role.

The US opposition to the jurisdiction of the ICC over Bosnia and Herzegovina is also inconsistent with US recognition of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, which is already exercising its jurisdiction over the country for similar crimes as those included in the Rome Statute.

So far 73 countries—including Bosnia and Herzegovina—have ratified the Rome Statute, and further ratifications are expected in the coming days. Countries that have ratified the Rome Statute will elect the first Prosecutor and 18 judges of the court.

Open Letter to All Members of the Security Council

Dear Ambassador,

Amnesty International is deeply concerned by proposals made by the United Kingdom and the United States of America to introduce language into Security Council resolutions that would exempt United Nations peace-keepers from the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court and any national court other than a court of the contributing state, and possibly from the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.

The first paragraph of the proposed text embodying these proposals provides that the Security Council will automatically request the International Criminal Court to defer any investigation or prosecution involving current and former officials and personnel from a contributing state that is not a state party to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court for acts arising out of UN established or authorized operations. The Security Council would also decide in advance that for such acts, occurring during a 12 months deferral period, the contributing states shall have and retain jurisdiction to investigate and prosecute.

The second paragraph would provide that the deferral and the decision would automatically be renewed for successive one year periods, unless the Security Council decides otherwise.

These proposals take away the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court to decide these questions and as such violate the integrity of the Rome Statute and undermine the rule of law by in effect granting immunity to nationals of non-states parties to the Rome Statute responsible for the worst possible crimes.

Amnesty International calls upon all members of the Security Council to reject this proposal or any proposal that would undermine the integrity of international justice.

Yours sincerely,

Yvonne Terlingen

Amnesty International Representative at the United Nations

June Meeting Minutes

Group #141 Orange

Attendees

Joe Azadi, Kevin Gaffney, David Hartman, Deidre Jackson, Tami Jacoby, Gordon Johnson, Vangee Oberschlake, Priscilla Rocco.

New Adopted Prisoner

The group was excited about the new POC Thich Huyen Quang from Vietnam. Vangee brainstormed about contacts in the local Vietnamese community, such as targeting Vietnamese newspaper and television stations with public service announcements, Asian market bulletin boards, the Catholic center and Buddhist temples with posters. The group is also considering a visit to Rep. Loretta Sanchez since her district includes Garden Grove. We decided we should probably start with a letter, however. We also thought we should start thinking about fundraisers around our POC. We still need a coordinator for this!

Outreach and Tabling

Tami, Priscilla, Jeannine, Vangee, Gordon and Deidre did outreach at the Gypsy Den in the Santora Arts complex in Santa Ana, Friday night and Saturday morning, June 28 and 29. We had four people sign up to be on the mailing list.

Russia Campaign

The group signed up for the Russia Campaign. We still need a volunteer to coordinate.

Summer Picnic

We've decided to have our yearly summer picnic August 24, from 12 PM to 4 PM at Santiago Park and Lawn Bowling Center, 510 E. Memory Lane, (across from Main Place). All AI group members are invited! We will decide the potluck assignments at the July meeting.

June Meeting Minutes

Group #175 Long Beach

Attendees

Mary Kay Dunne, Cecilia Elgueta, Bobbi Kendig, Stan Leiberon, Jim Roberts, and first-timer Linda Wright.

Letter-Writing Actions

We wrote 5 letters on behalf of our POC, Nguyen Dinh Huy of Viet Nam as well as 1 postcard and 1 petition from the AIUSA Monthly Mailing.

Planning and Upcoming Meetings

The group discussed the need to do a little fundraising soon. The checking account is getting too low.

We planned upcoming meetings. In July we'll bring cards for the Summer Postcard Action. August will be principally devoted to a presentation by Kevin Gaffney and Deidre Jackson on the latest developments in the implementation of AI's New Mission aka New Core Concept (NCC) which replaces our old mandate.

In September, we'll have guests from the Viet Nam Human Rights Network, an international NGO to discuss the human rights situation in Viet Nam in general and Nguyen Dinh Huy's situation in particular. AI members from Orange, Huntington

Beach and Laguna Beach who have an interest in Viet Nam are invited to attend.

NDH's daughter is living in the U.S. and we are trying to contact her to see if we can be of any assistance to her and the rest of the family should she or they require or need it.

June Meeting Minutes

Group #178 Irvine

Letter-Writing

We had several actions on our current campaigns:

- Rebiya Kadeer: Prisoner of Conscience
- West Africa: letter-writing for Amina Lawal, who received the death penalty under Sharia law for having a baby out of wedlock in Nigeria.
- We also wrote postcards for Amnesty International's Summer Postcard Action.

Other Activities

We discussed adding a section on our new Action File (Rebiya Kadeer) to our website

The Area Coordinator mentioned that she has heard from two people wanting to start new Amnesty International groups in Orange County, including one in Tustin.

We will try to have a representative from the Council on Arabic-Islamic Relations (CAIR) speak at our meeting in July or August; check the website for the meeting agenda.

At least one of the group members will attempt to contact his place of worship for the National Weekend of Faith in Action on the Death Penalty, October 12-13.

We watched a portion of the PBS documentary *Islam: Empire of Faith*.

Rights Readers Book Discussion Group

Amnesty International Group #22 in Pasadena/Caltech sponsors book discussions the third Sunday of each month at Vroman's Bookstore, 695 E. Colorado Boulevard in Pasadena. This month's discussion, on Sunday, July 21, 6:30 PM, is on *Coyotes: A Journey through the Secret World of America's Illegal Aliens* by Ted Conover.

From the *New York Times Book Review*: "This is the most objective account of illegal immigration from Mexico I've read, and one reason is that the writer is so subjective. . . . There is grace in this book, even more wisdom. What makes it really glow on every page is Mr. Conover's realization that he is dealing neither with a crime nor a tragedy, but with another of those human adventures that make America a country that is constantly renewing itself."

The August book will be Cheryl Benard's *Moghul Buffet*, and the September book will be *In Our Own Best Interests*, by William Schulz, AIUSA Executive Director.

Our July and August books are shorter and lighter for summer, so it's a great time to give Rights Readers a try! *Coyotes* can be found in the Current Affairs section at Vroman's. Our August book, *Moghul Buffet*, is shelved in the Mystery section. Copies of both books should also be available at Will Call under Amnesty International.

For further information, contact Martha Ter Maat at maat@hsc.usc.edu.

Amnesty International USA Summer Postcard Action 2002

Summer is often a time for vacations, picnics and other forms of relaxation. But for prisoners of conscience or those who defend human rights in many countries, summer brings no relief from the potential danger and sense of isolation they may face. By simply sending a postcard, however, you can help support these women and men. On these pages, you will find information on several cases of concern to Amnesty International. Please send cards expressing your support and encouragement.

Tips for Sending Cards

- Keep your message simple and personal, such as: "We are thinking of you, and hope you are well."
- Don't mention the political situation or the accusations against any prisoners.
- Picture postcards would be good, but please be sensitive to different cultural and religious mores. Pictures of men or women in revealing swimsuits or references to alcoholic beverages could be offensive.
- International Airmail postage is 70 cents for standard size postcards and 80 cents for one-page letters. Mark your cards and letters "AIR MAIL."
- You may send cards until August 31, 2002.

Important! Should you receive a reply to your cards, please send a copy to:

Amnesty International USA
National Casework Office
131 Ponce de Leon Avenue, Suite 220
Atlanta, GA 30308

María Luisa Acosta

Nicaragua

Concern for Safety

María Luisa Acosta coordinates the Legal Aid Center for Indigenous Peoples (CALPI), which defends the rights of indigenous groups. Indigenous groups have been concerned about the lack of consultation regarding major state initiatives that would directly affect them. One such project involves the construction of a train line or "dry canal" joining the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean, which would run through sacred indigenous land. On the evening of April 8, 2002, Ms. Acosta returned home from work to find her husband shot dead with his hands tied behind his back. Although there were valuables in the house, nothing was taken, indicating that theft was not the motive of the attack. Prior to her husband's murder, Ms. Acosta had reportedly received death threats, which may have been connected to her work. It is feared that María Luisa Acosta may have been the intended target of the attack in which her husband died.

Please send cards to María Luisa Acosta expressing condolences for the loss of her husband and offering messages of solidarity for the human rights work undertaken by her and others at CALPI.

María Luisa Acosta
El Centro de Asistencia Legal
Para Pueblos Indígenas (CALPI)

A.P. 87 Bluefields
RAAS
NICARAGUA

Sister Namibia

Namibia

Concern for Safety

Elizabeth Khaxas and the workers at Sister Namibia, a non-governmental women's organization that provides resources and services to women, have been regularly harassed and kept under surveillance by Namibian authorities. The organization, directed by Ms. Khaxas, coordinates a center that collects materials on gender issues, conducts research, publishes a bi-monthly magazine, and provides training for women on women's leadership, human rights and HIV/AIDS. The organization's aim is to increase awareness among women, men and young people of the ways in which political, social, cultural, legal and economic systems of power control girls and women. The group opposes racism, sexism, homophobia and other practices that divide and oppress people. Sister Namibia was the first organization in the southern African nation of Namibia to become active in defending the human rights of lesbians and gay men. Namibia's president and cabinet members have frequently described lesbians and gays as "unnatural" and "against the will of God," statements that could serve to promote widespread intolerance of sexual minorities and make them more vulnerable to targeted acts of violence by state officials or members of the public.

Send message of support to the workers of Sister Namibia:
Sister Namibia
PO Box 40092
Windhoek
NAMIBIA

AI Members Israel, Occupied Territories & the Palestinian Authority

Fear of Violence

In responding to the escalation of violence in Israel, the Occupied Territories and the Palestinian Authority, Amnesty International has made addressing this crisis a movement-wide priority, mobilizing its membership to help stop the killing. The organization has condemned grave human rights abuses committed by all sides in the conflict. The crisis and Amnesty's response to it have presented AI members in Israel, the Occupied Territories and the Palestinian Authority with challenges to their work. Travel restrictions have severely hampered the work of activists in the Palestinian Authority. The offices of AI Israel have received threatening calls and letters. AI members in Bethlehem have written to AIUSA from homes without water or electricity and surrounded by tanks. AI members in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv tell us they are afraid to take a bus, shop for food or even walk outside. Morale is low, but all of these members consider their connection to the international human rights movement to be a lifeline. As one member put it, "The fact that we all, as members of AI, have a common goal—that is to promote and protect human rights—helps to keep us unified in these times when we could become divided."

Please send messages of support to AI members in the Palestinian Authority and to those in Israel. You can send cards and letters to the address below, and AIUSA will pass them along to the appropriate offices:

AI Members in Israel

or

AI Members in the Palestinian Authority

c/o Amnesty International USA

600 Pennsylvania Avenue S.E., 5th floor

Washington, D.C. 20003

Tian Chua and 5 Other ISA Detainees Malaysia *Prisoners of Conscience*

Six opposition political activists are being held under Malaysia's notorious Internal Security Act (ISA), which allows for people to be detained indefinitely without charge or trial. The six prisoners of conscience, all leading members of the National Justice Party, were arrested in April 2001 and denied access to lawyers. In June 2001, Malaysia's Minister of Home Affairs ordered that they be detained for two years. Most of the activists were arrested a few days before a planned demonstration in support of prisoner of conscience Anwar Ibrahim, the former Deputy Prime Minister who has been imprisoned since 1998 on fabricated charges. The rest of the activists were arrested a few days later. The six are accused of undertaking activities that threaten national security and stability. However, the authorities have failed to substantiate these allegations, and Amnesty International believes the men have been jailed because of their peaceful dissenting political activities. The Internal Security Act has been used to detain prominent politicians, trade unionists, teachers, religious activists and community workers and to suppress the legitimate activities of non-governmental organizations. The six men detained are: Tian Chua, Mohd Ezam Mohd Noor, Haji Saari Sungip, Hishamuddin Rais, Lokman Nor Adam, and Dr. Badrul Amin Baharom. All are held at Kamunting Detention Center.

Send cards of support to:

[name of prisoner]

Kamunting Detention Center

34600 Taiping

Perak

MALAYSIA

Hamma Hammami, Abdeljabbar Madouri and Samir Taamallah Tunisia *Prisoners of Conscience*

Hamma Hammami, Abdeljabbar Madouri and Samir Taamallah have been jailed in Tunisia on account of their peaceful political activity. The three men had been sentenced "in absentia" in 1999 on charges of membership in an unauthorized organization, the Tunisian Workers' Communist Party. After living in hiding for several years, the men came forward in February 2002 to hear a court decision on their application to set aside the decision of the 1999 trial. However, the February hearing was marked by serious irregularities, and the accused and their lawyers were unable to present their case before the verdict was delivered. The verdict confirmed prison sentences of up to more than 11 years. At an appeal hearing in March,

the sentences were reduced to a maximum of three years and nine months. Amnesty International considers Mr. Hammami, Mr. Madouri and Mr. Taamallah to be prisoners of conscience and seeks their release. Nearly 1000 political prisoners, the majority of whom are prisoners of conscience, remain in detention in Tunisia. Some of them have been in prison for more than a decade. They were convicted after unfair trials and are often held in conditions that are unacceptable according to international standards.

Send cards of support to:

Hamma Hammami, prisonnier no. 5381

pavillon E

or

Abdeljabbar Madouri, prisonnier no. 5382

pavillon B

or

Samir Taamallah, prisonnier no. 5383

pavillon B

prison civile de Tunis

1006 Tunis

TUNISIA

Russian Environmental Whistleblower's Appeal Denied

In a decision widely viewed as a blow to press freedoms and the rights of environmentalists in Russia to collect and report information on environmental abuses, the Russian Military Collegium of Supreme Court on June 25 denied the appeal of Russian military journalist and environmental whistleblower Grigory Pasko. The ruling means that in all likelihood Pasko will have to serve the remainder of his 4-year term in a prison labor camp, though he still has the option of appealing his case to the European Court of Human Rights.

Pasko has already endured four-and-a-half years of legal battles since his arrest in 1997 for his efforts to publicize Russia's Pacific Coast Fleet's practice of illegally dumping radioactive waste into the Sea of Japan. Pasko, who provided information on the waste-dumping to Japanese media, was charged with espionage and revealing state secrets. A ruling last December actually found that Pasko had not revealed state secrets, merely that he intended to. On this charge, Pasko was convicted and sentenced to four years in a prison labor camp. All of this in spite of the fact that the Russian Constitution explicitly protects environmental whistleblowers from reprisals.

The Sierra Club, the European Parliament, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, the International Helsinki Federation, the Committee to Protect Journalists, and the Norwegian environmental organization Bellona have all criticized Pasko's conviction. According to the Sierra Club, "This ruling is a serious blow to Russia's standing as a free and democratic country. It also stands as a stark warning to environmentalists in Russia."

Take Action

Write a letter to Russia's President Vladimir Putin expressing your concerns about this case. You can either e-mail it to president@kremlin.ru or mail it to: Embassy of the Russian Federation, 2650 Wisconsin Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20007.

Good News Stories for 2001

In 2001 Amnesty International learned of the release of many prisoners of conscience, commutations of death sentences and improvements in the situation of many other victims of human rights abuse. Here are a few of their stories. Countless other people are still in need of our help.

Honduras

Coronado Avila, Lombardo Lacayo and Horacio Martinez, three activists campaigning to defend the land rights of peasant farmers in Honduras, had been receiving death threats. An Urgent Action was issued on March 3, 2000. In July 2001 Coronado Avila wrote the following:

"Let me tell you from the bottom of my heart how grateful I am to all of you who . . . [fight] for the respect of life and of the universal rights of societies around the world. I would also like to take this opportunity to tell . . . everyone at Amnesty International that thanks to your support on 3 March 2000, when I was being persecuted and my life was under threat, I am still alive today. I will never forget the people who supported me and my organization . . .

"Finally, I would like to urge you not to become discouraged in your work to help men and women who raise their voices in protest to support their people."

Togo

Amnesty took worldwide action in November on behalf of Houndjo Mawudzro, a student leader and human rights activist in Togo who had been detained and tortured in September. There were fears that he would be tortured again when he was rearrested in November and charged with "efamation of character and false accusation" because of a press statement he issued giving details of the torture he suffered when first detained in September. An urgent appeal issued on his behalf was posted on AI's website www.stoptorture.org, and a press release was issued to coincide with the visit of the President of Togo to France. 10,900 appeals were sent on his behalf. Houndjo Mawudzro was released on November 28, after being summoned to the prosecutor. Houndjo Mawudzro thanked his supporters and said that he had been aware of AI's campaign on his behalf.

Malaysia

A detainee from Malaysia, although not released, wrote to thank AI and its supporters for the work they have done in preventing torture.

"My sincere thanks to all of your efforts and hard work since our arrest My two-month detention has been totally free of newspapers, TV or radio. I am slowly getting used to this sense of 'detachment' from the world However, in my quiet and lonely nights, I have thought of a lot of things to say to all of you.

"Your continuous campaign has kept us in high spirits and we are confident that the injustices would come to an end soon. We will just have to wait patiently for our freedom—not us alone but the whole of Malaysia."

Sent from Kamunting Detention Centre, June 2001.

Brunei Darussalam

In Brunei Darussalam, prisoners of conscience Yunus Murrang, Freddie Chong and Malai Taufick, were released in October 2001 after being held without charge or trial for nine months under the Internal Security Act. They were all linked to a Christian evangelical church and had been accused of seeking to convert "by deception" members of the country's majority Muslim community. They were released after making a statement regretting their "past involvement in subversive activities", taking an oath of allegiance to the Sultan and pledging not to repeat their alleged wrongdoings. They had been held incommunicado and subjected to intense pressure.

Democratic Republic Of Congo (DRC)

N'sii Luanda Shandwe, president of one of the DRC's most active human rights organizations, the Comité de observateurs des droits de l'homme, was arrested in Kinshasa on June 2, 2001 because of his human rights activities. He was held with some 60 other detainees in Kinshasa's main prison in appalling conditions. He was allowed just one family visit a week, lasting no more than 10 minutes, and had no access to lawyers. He was finally released on September 6, 2001, after three months as a prisoner of conscience. One of his first acts on being released was to plead on the radio for the release of fellow human rights activist and cell-mate, Golden Misabiko.

N'sii is convinced that the campaigning of human rights organizations was instrumental in securing his release.

Golden Misabiko was released without charge on September 13, after seven months as a prisoner of conscience. Although relieved to be free, he requires medical treatment after being tortured. Golden Misabiko sent his thanks to all those who appealed on his behalf. He said that when he was informed that AI was campaigning for his release he said to himself: "I'm going to get out" (je vais sortir).

If you would like to continue receiving this newsletter and supporting the work of Amnesty International Group #141 and Group #178, please return this coupon to the appropriate address 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
Group #141 Orange
P.O. Box 864
Orange, CA 92856

Amnesty International
Group #178 Irvine
P.O. Box 16243
Irvine, CA 92623

Please make your check payable to either Amnesty International Group #141 or Group #178. Contributions to AI are tax-deductible. Thank you for your interest and support!

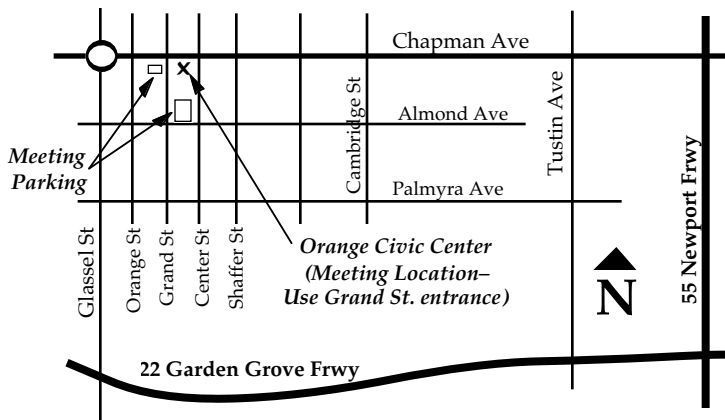
Calendar July

16 Tuesday 7:00 PM

Group #141 Orange Monthly Meeting at the Orange Civic Center, Conference Room C, at 300 E. Chapman Avenue, in Orange. For further information about the group, contact Deidre Jackson at (562) 430-7381.

23 Tuesday 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. Group #175 meets on the fourth Tuesday of each month. For further information about the group, contact Bobbi Kendig at (562) 420-1155.



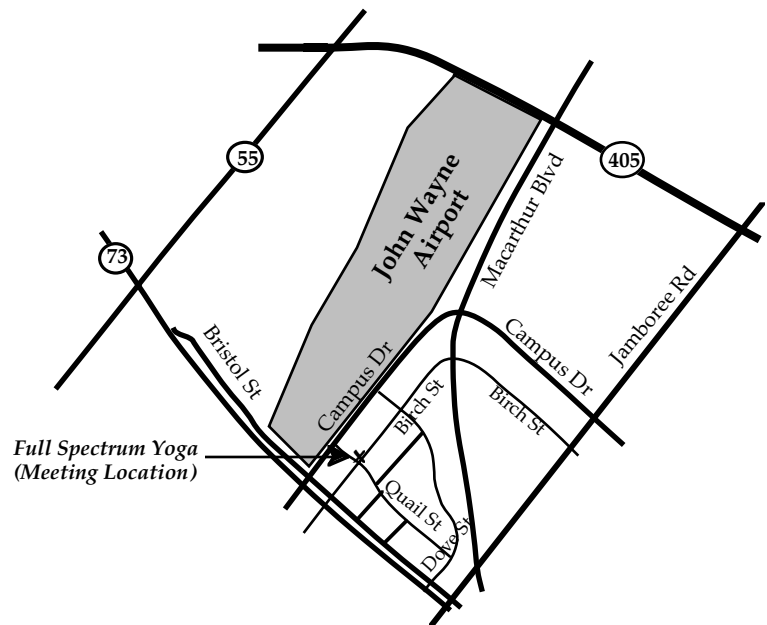
Group #141 Orange Meeting Location

29 Monday 7:00 PM

Huntington Beach Group Monthly Meeting at Saints Simon and Jude Church, Room 7B, 20111 Magnolia Street in Huntington Beach. For further information about the group, contact Darcie Guy at (714) 374-5786.

30 Tuesday 7:30 PM

Group #178 Irvine Monthly Meeting at Full Spectrum Yoga, 2018 Quail Street, Newport Beach (across from John Wayne Airport). Group #178 meets the last Tuesday of each month. For more information about the group, contact Jacques Kilchoer at (714) 557-8427.



Group #178 Irvine Meeting Location

Amnesty International Group #178
P.O. Box 16243
Irvine, CA 92623