



Since our last newsletter, Amnesty International has celebrated its 48th anniversary and launched a new global campaign "Demand Dignity." Here in New Zealand Amnesty has had a busy month filled with submissions, human rights crises in our region such as the situation in Fiji and Sri Lanka, as well as adding a voice to the Foreshore & Seabed Act Review.

This e-newsletter features news from here in New Zealand and around the world, as well as actions you can take.



Amnesty has launched a new campaign - Demand Dignity



The global efforts to end poverty are centred around the UN Millennium Development Goals which aim to halve the number of people living in poverty by 2015, but these targets set will not be met unless action is taken by the international community. As a result, Amnesty International is launching a new campaign called 'Demand Dignity' which is based around the issues of poverty and the economic, social and cultural rights which are often violated when poverty exists.

Poverty is not just a lack of income; it is the denial of access to the resources, capability, security and power that people need in order to realise their human right to live with dignity. **Poverty results from decisions made by governments**, companies, institutions and others who hold the power to change people's lives for the better.

Amnesty NZ will be tackling issues of poverty with a regional focus. Amnesty will be specifically looking at the Pacific and working to uncover some of the human rights issues prevalent in this region. Key thematic areas will be maternal mortality, slums and corporate responsibility.

Amnesty NZ will also be increasing its area of focus in NZ to include indigenous rights. To advance this work we recently made a submission to the review panel on the Seabed & Foreshore Act.

See more at our website www.amnesty.org.nz/dignity

OUR LATEST WORK

Amnesty International Report 2009 - www.thereport.amnesty.org



"It's not just the economy, it's a human rights crisis – the world is sitting on a social, political and economic time bomb," Irene Khan, Secretary General of Amnesty International.

AI's annual report, released on Amnesty's birthday 28 May, is Amnesty's global assessment of human rights covering human rights developments in 157 countries from January to December 2008. New Zealand's entry includes

the introduction of Taser stun guns, the Immigration Bill and the police 'terror' raids of October 2008. Human rights abuses in the Pacific documented include increasing reports violence against women and girls, attacks on media freedom and intimidation of journalists, a growing number of people assaulted or killed after being accused of sorcery in Papua New Guinea, and Solomon Islands' failure to provide basic services to thousands of people living in informal settlements, reflecting growing urban poverty.

Read more:

- New Zealand's entry in AI's annual report: <http://thereport.amnesty.org/en/regions/asia-pacific/new-zealand>
- Asia-Pacific regional overview in AI's annual report: <http://thereport.amnesty.org/en/regions/asia-pacific>
- Amnesty NZ's media release, highlighting the need for a greater Pacific focus on human rights: <http://tinyurl.com/mh9th4>

Latest conflict in Sri Lanka



Nearly 300,000 people displaced by the conflict are now held in camps without access to basic needs or protection from human rights violations. The Sri Lankan government and the United Nations have failed to act yet. The situation is worsening.

Last week, Amnesty released the report, *Twenty Years of Make-Believe: Sri Lanka's Commissions of Inquiry*, documenting the failure of successive Sri Lankan governments to provide accountability for serious human rights violations, including enforced disappearances, killings, and

torture. Read more at: http://www.amnesty.org.nz/archived_news/sri-lanka-end-twenty-years-of-impunity
More Amnesty coverage on Sri Lanka can be found at: <http://tinyurl.com/nnuezm>

UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Following Australia's support of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), New Zealand is now only one of three countries to have voted against the Declaration. We are lagging behind in indigenous rights.

Amnesty New Zealand has reiterated its call on the New Zealand government to adopt the Declaration in a letter to the Foreign Affairs Select Committee who are considering a petition on it.

The UN Declaration provides a much needed elaboration of human rights standards necessary to ensure the "survival, dignity and well-being" of peoples, who too often are forced to live in poverty, discrimination, marginalisation and oppression. Critically, the Declaration improves the understanding and realisation of existing inherent human rights. It does not create new rights but generates renewed hope for a promising and secure future. Read more at: <http://tinyurl.com/lgh6gm>

CONTROL ARMS

Week of Action for the Cluster Munitions Convention



Amnesty has urged the NZ government to ratify this Convention - to continue NZ's leadership on this Convention, and to be one of the visionary group of 30 countries bringing this historic treaty into force.

The international ban on cluster munitions is the most important humanitarian and disarmament treaty of the last decade. With full implementation, it will save countless lives with its prohibition on future use, and through its clearance and victim assistance obligations it will make a real difference to the lives of those already affected by these weapons. Read more at: <http://tinyurl.com/nafz7y>

An Effective Arms Trade Treaty: The World Can't Wait

While most states are now discussing in more detail the content and key elements for an Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and most governments do want some sort of treaty, too few are yet committed to achieving an effective ATT.

An effective ATT is one requiring governments to prevent arms transfers where there is a substantial risk that they:

- are likely to be used for serious violations of international human rights law or International Humanitarian Law,
- contribute to a pattern of unlawful gun violence, or seriously aggravate poverty.

Without this Golden Rule, a treaty would be virtually worthless.

This is why Amnesty International and its Control Arms partners held a Week of Action (June 15 – 21) to lobby governments to commit to an effective ATT – TAKE ACTION at www.controlarms.org

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's Case



Amnesty is calling for a unified international voice to condemn Ms Suu Kyi's detention and intervention by ASEAN and the UN. This must happen to prevent the regime in Naypyidaw continuing to act in utter disregard for human rights.

Read more at: <http://tinyurl.com/kpbbp6>

Take Action and add your voice to the international call to free Ms Suu Kyi at: <http://tinyurl.com/nvw6sa>

NEWS

Election protests grip Iran



Demonstrations against Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's disputed election victory have spread to all corners of the country. New reports suggest that around 15 protesters have been killed and hundreds more injured or arrested by security forces.

Read our full media release at:

http://www.amnesty.org.nz/archived_news/election-protests-grip-iran

Pacific Island Palau's offer to accept Guantanamo detainees would not excuse USA



Reports that the government of Palau has offered to temporarily accept up to 17 Guantanamo detainees leave many questions unanswered and even if the offer is taken up it would not relieve the US authorities of their responsibility to the men.

Read Amnesty International's statement on this at:

<http://tinyurl.com/ldo2fn>

Read Amnesty's statement on the agreement reached by European Union member states on practical steps that could facilitate the safe release of Guantanamo detainees at: <http://tinyurl.com/nuqxu>

President Obama defends Guantanamo closure

In a major speech on national security on 21 May 2009, US President Barack Obama restated his commitment to closing the Guantanamo detention facility and to ending the use of the so-called "enhanced interrogation techniques" approved under the previous US administration.

Read more: <http://tinyurl.com/nngwoc>

North Korea: US journalists' conviction highlights unfair system



The North Korean government should immediately release two US journalists, Laura Ling and Euna Lee, who were sentenced to 12 years imprisonment with hard labour. The two were convicted of an unspecified "grave crime" against the nation by the Central Court in Pyongyang, seemingly ruling out the possibility of any further judicial appeals.

Read more: <http://tinyurl.com/n5v2gl>

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL SUBMISSIONS

Submission on the Foreshore and Seabed Act 2004 to the Ministerial Foreshore and Seabed Review Panel:

Amnesty International believes that the Act breaches both domestic and international human rights law by extinguishing customary Maori property rights to the coastal areas and providing burdensome statutory process for the recognition of customary or aboriginal title. Amnesty International therefore recommends the Act is repealed in whole and the Government enter into re-negotiations, in particular with Maori on their customary rights and claims to the foreshore and seabed, in line with the March 2006 Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Read our submission at: http://www.amnesty.org.nz/files/Final_Submission_on_Foreshore_Seabed_Review_Version_19_May_2009.pdf

Submission on the Corrections (Contract Management of Prisons) Amendment Bill 2009 (Privatisation of Prisons): http://www.amnesty.org.nz/files/PDF_Correction%20Contract_Management_of_Prisons_%20Amendment_Bill_2009_Submission.pdf

Submission to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on New Zealand's Implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights: <http://www.amnesty.org.nz/files/090527-Amnesty-International-Aotearoa-New-Zealand-Submission-on-New-Zealands-ICCPR-List-of-Issues.pdf>