

## CHILDREN'S RIGHTS NETWORK

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**  
Aotearoa New Zealand



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October 2010

Co-ordinators – Christine Richardson & Jan Marsh

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### EDITORIAL

The Christchurch earthquake presents a sobering insight into the plight of people young and old around the world where governments cannot cope after a major natural disaster.

Take a moment to reflect on Haiti, Peru, Pakistan, and after Hurricane Katrina add the USA to that list. These countries have all struggled to meet people's basic human rights such as shelter, safe drinking water and education in the aftermath of earthquake, flood and hurricane.



And when the moment is right for you, please take whatever action you can to challenge and change this situation with children in mind.

### TAKE ACTION

This Newsletter comes out about six times each year but AI's cases often require a rapid response. Why not sign up to Amnesty's Children's Rights Facebook page so you can be informed more quickly on the cases we alert you to in this newsletter? It's free and comes right to your desktop. Sign up via [Facebook](#).

### Release Patrick Okoroafor

Meanwhile please take action on the case of **Patrick Obinna Okoroafor**. We have featured his case since Amnesty started campaigning on behalf of Patrick in April 2008. He continues to be unfairly detained in Nigeria.

Patrick was 14 when he was arrested in 1995 and has now been in prison for 15 years - half of his lifetime. He was initially sentenced to death for robbery. In 2001, when a Nigerian High Court judgement declared his death sentence to be illegal, his sentence was changed to one of indefinite detention 'during the pleasure of the governor' of Imo State.



*14-year-old Amnesty youth activists at the Nigerian Embassy in London in June 2009, calling for the release Patrick Okoroafor.*

On 29 May 2009, following AI's campaign, Patrick's sentence was reduced to 10 years imprisonment, starting immediately. This sentence did not take into account the 14 years Patrick has already spent in prison.

If Patrick completes his sentence he will have spent a total of 24 years in prison - for a crime he says he did not commit. Besides Patrick's age at the time of arrest, there were many irregularities in his trial and subsequent detention. He also alleges that he was tortured.

Patrick is now 30 years old and has a serious and deteriorating asthmatic condition. A prison doctor has already recommended that Patrick be released.

Please draw on the above information to send messages calling for his immediate release to:

His Excellency - Goodluck Jonathan  
President of the Republic of Nigeria  
Office of the President  
Nigerian Presidential Complex,  
Aso Rock Presidential Villa  
Abuja  
Federal Capital Territory  
NIGERIA

*Send copies to:*  
His Excellency Professor S Olu Agbi,  
High Commissioner  
High Commission for the Federal Republic  
of Nigeria,  
PO Box 241, Civic Square,  
Canberra, ACT 2608,  
Australia  
Email: [chancery@nigeria-can.org.au](mailto:chancery@nigeria-can.org.au)

For updates and an audiovisual plea from Patrick's family visit [AI UK's website](#).

## NEWS FROM AMNESTY NEW ZEALAND (AIANZ)

### Aung Khaing Min Speaking Tour

As part of its priority Myanmar "Freedom" campaign AIANZ is touring Burmese political activist and former Prisoner of Conscience (PoC) **Aung Khaing Min** through the four main centres October 10-20.

If you are in one of the centres visited please do make every effort to attend public meetings. Check out when/where meetings will be taking place near you [here](#).

Aung Khaing Min has been active since he was 14-years old and paid for that activism with five years in prison in Myanmar – a country renowned for appalling prison conditions and where torture is rife.

If attending please bring two passport-sized photos to add to our petition calling for the release of all of Myanmar's PoCs. And if you haven't already please do take action on this [e-petition](#). One signature targets nine Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN).

### AIANZ's Human Rights Defender Award

Nominations are open for **AIANZ's Human Rights Defender Award**. We encourage readers of this newsletter to consider nominating someone whose work revolves around children's rights. [Click here](#) for more information and to download a nomination form.

One of the five shortlisted candidates from last year's inaugural event was former Green MP Sue Bradford who worked so hard to Repeal Section 59 of the Crimes Act.

### Children Rights Network focus

Our research headquarters, the International Secretariat no longer has a dedicated researcher solely for the Pacific. This part of the world is within the "Asia Pacific" region. That covers an enormous area of the world's population and includes many countries where grave human rights violations are rife. As part of our contribution to the global Demand Dignity campaign to counter the human rights abuses that cause or contribute to poverty AIANZ is prioritising work in the Pacific.



*Once an activist, always an activist..... Aung Khaing Min is holding the "Free Burma" sign at a candlelight vigil in Thailand.*



Within that campaign we will be looking at developing some specific actions and events that relate specifically to children. We want to highlight the situation for children in poverty, at risk of violence, and with little or poor access to education.

More details in our next Newsletter.

### **The Human Rights in Schools Project**

The Human Rights in Schools Project [web-pages](#) links to teacher and student resources and is the first step in detailing the direction AIANZ is developing regarding human rights education, alongside our existing Amnesty in schools programme.

If you have contacts with teachers, teacher trainees, schools please do alert them to this resource, which will continue to grow and be updated with new resources, such as AIUK's series of activities for Primary School Teachers wishing to cover Human Rights with children aged five to eleven.

## **HERE IN NEW ZEALAND**

### **Reports to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC) 2010**

New Zealand's record in regard to UNCROC is currently under review by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. In response please now see:

- The **Commissioner for Children** recently presented his reports to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. You can read it [here](#).
- **Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa (ACYA)**'s report, which AIANZ contributed too as part of a number of NGOs co-ordinated by ACYA , can be found [here](#).
- **The Human Rights Commission** has commented on New Zealand's implementation of UNCROC and the draft discussion chapter on the Rights of Children and Young People in its major project Review of Human Rights in New Zealand 2010. [Click here](#) for more information.

A Member's Bill to overturn the amendment of s59 Crimes Act 1961 was defeated at First Reading in Parliament on 10 September.

Best wishes,

Christine Richardson and Jan Marsh

**Contact us by email - [childrensrightsnetwork@amnesty.org.nz](mailto:childrensrightsnetwork@amnesty.org.nz)**

