



## The Amnesty International Government Network E- Newsletter

### Issue 3



This e –newsletter informs you of relevant Amnesty news. It is emailed every six weeks to MPs and government staff.

## Current Human Rights Issues of Interest

### In NZ

#### **Amnesty NZ encourages "Yes" vote for S.59**

As the postal referendum on the repeal of Section 59 of the Crimes Act approaches, it is important to remember that this parliamentary decision was a major victory for children's rights. The Amnesty's Children's Rights Network was proud to take an active part in the campaign for the repeal and welcomed the outcome. It gave children the same rights to protection against violence as adults and honoured this country's commitment to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

Read more at [www.amnesty.org.nz/contribute/specialistnetwork/childrensrights](http://www.amnesty.org.nz/contribute/specialistnetwork/childrensrights)

#### **NZ SAS must comply with international humanitarian law and human rights standards**

While the Prime Minister has said that the Government has sought an assurance that anyone captured by the SAS and transferred to the Afghan Army would be treated humanely and in accordance with international conventions, bilateral agreements do not absolve New Zealand of their obligation to uphold international law and protect detainees from torture and ill-treatment.

Read more at [www.amnesty.org.nz/media\\_release/redeployment-of-nz-sas-to-afghanistan](http://www.amnesty.org.nz/media_release/redeployment-of-nz-sas-to-afghanistan)



#### **Double bunking threatens prisoners' right to be free from degrading or inhumane treatment**

Amnesty International has been concerned about the announcement of increased double bunking in five NZ prisons. Amnesty has been invited to inspect a model shipping container and plans to do so in the next month. If you would like further information on this issue, please contact [Rebecca.emery@amnesty.org.nz](mailto:Rebecca.emery@amnesty.org.nz)

#### **How is NZ going with its first human rights assessment under the UPR system?**

New Zealand had the first Universal Periodic Review of its human rights in May this year. The United Nations Human Rights Council facilitated review resulted in 64 recommendations on how the New Zealand government could improve human rights in this country. The outcome report of New Zealand's review will be adopted at the 12th session of the UN Human Rights Council in September in Geneva and provides an important opportunity for the government and non-governmental organisations to highlight this country's key human rights concerns.

If you would like further information on this, please contact [chris.kerr@amnesty.org.nz](mailto:chris.kerr@amnesty.org.nz)

Read more at [www.amnesty.org.nz/files/Human\\_Rights\\_Council\\_UPR\\_Report\\_on\\_NZ\\_7May2009.pdf](http://www.amnesty.org.nz/files/Human_Rights_Council_UPR_Report_on_NZ_7May2009.pdf)

View UN webcast at [www.un.org/webcast/unhrc/archive.asp?go=090507#am](http://www.un.org/webcast/unhrc/archive.asp?go=090507#am)

## NZ must take a leadership role to the Arms Trade Treaty

We recently received a letter from the Ambassador for Disarmament, Dell Higgle, expressing New Zealand's strong commitment to the Treaty. A legally binding Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) has the potential to ease the suffering caused by irresponsible transfers of conventional weapons and munitions. The campaign is run jointly by [International Action Network on Small Arms](#), [Amnesty International](#), and [Oxfam International](#).

Amnesty welcomes the New Zealand government's extremely constructive involvement at the latest Arms Trade Treaty Open-Ended Working Group in New York. We encourage the government to take a leadership role by lobbying other countries to support the Treaty as well.

Thousands of people are killed, injured, raped, and forced to flee from their homes as a result of the unregulated global arms trade. Read more at [www.amnesty.org.nz/media\\_release/arms-trade-treaty-the-world-cannot-wait](http://www.amnesty.org.nz/media_release/arms-trade-treaty-the-world-cannot-wait)



## Around the World

### Shameful verdict - Aung San Suu Kyi found guilty

Myanmar's pro-democracy leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was sentenced to a further 18 months' house arrest by a court in Yangon's Insein prison on Tuesday. The leader of the National League for Democracy has been detained for over 13 of the past 20 years, mostly under house arrest.

Read more at [www.amnesty.org.nz/archieve\\_news/iran-open-tehran-trial-to-international-observers-amnesty-international-challenges](http://www.amnesty.org.nz/archieve_news/iran-open-tehran-trial-to-international-observers-amnesty-international-challenges)

Take action at [www.amnesty.org.nz/action\\_centre/assk120809](http://www.amnesty.org.nz/action_centre/assk120809)



### Iran: 'Show trials' must be open to international observers

"The trials now going on in Tehran appears to be nothing but a 'show trial' through which the Supreme Leader and those around him seek to de-legitimise recent mass and largely peaceful protests and convince a very sceptical world that Mahmoud Amadinejad was re-elected fairly for a second term as president," said Amnesty International Secretary General Irene Khan. "It is vital, therefore, that there is an international presence to observe the proceedings at this trial and uphold the rights of the defendants, and I urge the Iranian authorities to allow this."

Read more at [www.amnesty.org.nz/archieve\\_news/iran-open-tehran-trial-to-international-observers-amnesty-international-challenges](http://www.amnesty.org.nz/archieve_news/iran-open-tehran-trial-to-international-observers-amnesty-international-challenges)



### Over 1,000 injured in ethnic violence in China

On 5 July, protests in Urumqi, capital of China's Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, turned violent involving Uighurs, Han Chinese and others as well as the security forces. 156 people have been reported by the authorities as dead, over 1,000 injured and 1,434 detained in connection with the protests.

Amnesty International recognises the Chinese government's right and duty to defend all individuals and property from violence, and regrets tragic loss of life and racially-based attacks that occurred. At the same time international law requires that the Chinese authorities handle such crises in ways that uphold fundamental human rights.

Amnesty has called on the New Zealand government to join the international community in demanding that an independent and impartial investigation to be carried out.

We urge the Chinese authorities to respect the right to freedom of expression and assembly.

Read more at [www.amnesty.org.nz/archived\\_news/ethnic-violence-in-china](http://www.amnesty.org.nz/archived_news/ethnic-violence-in-china)



## Chinese exile: Rebiya Kadeer's controversial documentary

Rebiya Kadeer's documentary, *10 Conditions of Love*, will be screened on Maori TV on 1 September. Kadeer is head of the World Uighur Congress, which represents the Uighur community in exile. She now lives in the US, and the documentary was recently shown at the Melbourne Film Festival.

Read more at [www.melbournefilmfestival.com.au/content/341/film\\_id/13847.html](http://www.melbournefilmfestival.com.au/content/341/film_id/13847.html)



## Increasing concern over detained San Lu lawyer

Amnesty International has also noticed a growing and concerning trend that sees Chinese officials targeting human rights lawyers. For example, legal scholar Xu Zhiyong, who provided legal assistance to victims of the San Lu tainted milk scandal, has been arbitrarily detained and his whereabouts are unknown.

Read more at [www.amnesty.org.nz/archived\\_news/china-legal-scholar-xu-zhiyong-in-arbitrary-detention](http://www.amnesty.org.nz/archived_news/china-legal-scholar-xu-zhiyong-in-arbitrary-detention)

## Niger Delta: Impact of oil industry on human rights

A devastating and detailed report by Amnesty International has revealed how the Nigerian Government and the extractive industry have failed to protect the human rights of people living in the Niger Delta.

Amnesty's Environmental Defenders Network (EDeN) has sent the report, *Nigeria: Petroleum, Pollution and Poverty in the Niger Delta*, to Shell New Zealand, the Nigerian High Commissioner to New Zealand and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

If you are interested in human rights and the environment, then read more about EDeN at [www.amnesty.org.nz/contribute/specialistnetwork/EDeN](http://www.amnesty.org.nz/contribute/specialistnetwork/EDeN)



Read Amnesty's report *Nigeria: Petroleum, Pollution and Poverty in the Niger Delta* at [www.amnesty.org.nz/archived\\_news/amnesty-disappointed-by-shells-response-to-niger-delta-report](http://www.amnesty.org.nz/archived_news/amnesty-disappointed-by-shells-response-to-niger-delta-report)

## In the Pacific

### Abolishing the death penalty in Papua New Guinea

Amnesty International is concerned over the recent statements made by the Minister of Justice of Papua New Guinea, which suggests that the death penalty might be soon implemented for the first time since the country gained independence.

Amnesty International urges Papua New Guinea to ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which abolishes the death penalty.

Amnesty has been encouraging the New Zealand government to put pressure on the government of Papua New Guinea to abolish the death penalty.

Read more at [www.amnesty.org.nz/archived\\_news/papua-new-guinea-dont-regress-on-death-penalty](http://www.amnesty.org.nz/archived_news/papua-new-guinea-dont-regress-on-death-penalty)



To read the letter from Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International to Dr. Allan Marat, Justice Minister and Attorney General of Papua New Guinea, see [www.hrw.org/en/news/2009/07/10/letter-papua-new-guinea-minister-justice](http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2009/07/10/letter-papua-new-guinea-minister-justice)

### Pacific leaders address high levels of violence against women

Pacific countries will only fully achieve the development goals discussed at last week's Pacific Island Forum Leaders' meeting if they address one of the gravest human rights violations in the region – violence against women. Rates of violence against women in a number of Pacific Island countries are among the highest in the world. Amnesty International welcomed the leader's communiqué reference to this important issue as this is the first time in 40 years the Pacific Forum Leaders have specifically addressed sexual and gender based violence.

Read more at [www.amnesty.org.nz/media\\_release/pacific-leaders-must-address-high-levels-of-violence-against-women](http://www.amnesty.org.nz/media_release/pacific-leaders-must-address-high-levels-of-violence-against-women)

### Amnesty International Pacific Researcher visiting NZ

Amnesty International's Pacific researcher, Apolosi Bose, will be in Wellington on 2nd and 3rd September where he will be available to meet to discuss human rights and Pacific issues.

To arrange a meeting, please contact [Rebecca.emery@amnesty.org.nz](mailto:Rebecca.emery@amnesty.org.nz)

# Other News of Interest

## **MP Brendon Burns fundraises for Freedom**

As an individual impassioned by human rights, Mr Burns is taking freedom into his own hands for Freedom Week (2-8 August), Amnesty International's annual fundraising and awareness drive. This year is especially important as the world is faced with increasing human rights violations from Gaza to Suva, from Tehran to Guantanamo.

Read more at [www.amnesty.org.nz/media\\_release/christchurch-central-mp-fundraises-for-freedom](http://www.amnesty.org.nz/media_release/christchurch-central-mp-fundraises-for-freedom)

## **Amnesty Government Network Event (AIGN)**

Amnesty International is planning a Government Network event for all MPs and government staff. We are considering having a speaker on New Zealand's latest Universal Periodic Review (UPR) - the process and how New Zealand's human rights were reviewed. We are open to suggestions for further topics and venues for this event so please get in touch with [chris.kerr@amnesty.org.nz](mailto:chris.kerr@amnesty.org.nz) to discuss ideas.