

LEGAL NETWORK

AMNESTY

INTERNATIONAL

Aotearoa New Zealand



Welcome to Amnesty International's Legal Network e-newsletter... for May.

This edition will inform you of what we have been working on, ways to get involved, upcoming events - including our Auckland-based legal network event for June - latest human rights legal news and three important TAKE ACTION asks. We also have included a new careers section!

Thank you to those who completed our survey. If you have not already done so, please [click here](#) – it only takes 2 minutes, and there are prizes to be won (to be



OUR LATEST WORK

Crisis in Fiji



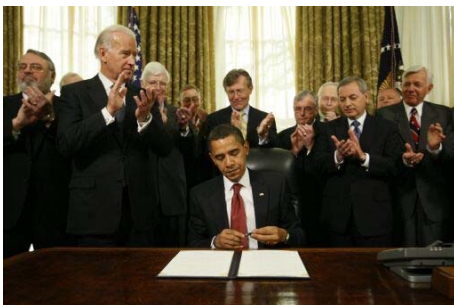
Apolosi Bose, Amnesty's London-based Pacific Researcher found himself in the midst of the latest Fiji crisis (he was completing a fact-finding mission on slums in Fiji at the time). Once safely in Australia he spoke out on the situation and warned that the human rights situation in the country is getting worse by the day. Also, that the civilian population is living in fear as a result of draconian measures implemented by the military regime.

Recently we have been hearing reports first hand from human rights NGOs in Fiji that since the abrogation of the Constitution the media has no freedom and those speaking out against the military regime are being targeted. Please watch our website which we will be updating with developments and options to take action on the Fiji crisis.

[Click here](#) to read more.

Amnesty NZ has launched an emergency appeal. You can make a difference by helping to fund Amnesty's effort to defend human rights in the Pacific and support Fijians fight to restore their freedoms. [Click here](#) to donate. You can also send your own personal message to Fijian President Iloilo, urging him to restore the Constitution and recommitting to the rule of law. [Click here](#) to download a sample letter.

Mixed messages: Counter terror and human rights: President Obama's first 100 days



Amnesty International's report on US President Barack Obama's first 100 days (released 29 April), finds that his human rights work amounts to "promises for change with only limited action". Advocacy Assistant, Olivia Rope recently met with the USA Embassy in Wellington to brief them on the report and reiterate our concerns on human rights violations in the USA's 'war on terror.'

To read the report and our media release, [click here](#).

Image: President Barack Obama caps his pen after he signed an executive order closing the prison at Guantanamo Bay, 22 Januray 2009, in the Oval Office of the White House in Washington. © AP/PA Photo/Charles Dharapak.

UN Durban conference on racism



Amnesty International expressed dismay that New Zealand joined Australia, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and Poland in their decision to disengage from the Durban Review Conference. To read our media release, [click here](#).

Image: University of Natal AI Group in Durban, South Africa being led by drummers whilst on an Anti-Racism Protest, during the World Conference Against Racism. © AI

Sri Lanka



More than 4,500 civilians are believed to have died in the fighting according to UN estimates in north eastern region in Sri Lanka. Immediate action must be taken by all parties concerned to prevent further mass killings of civilian/non-combatants. Amnesty NZ has consistently lobbied the government to issue a strong and immediate call to both parties for the protection of innocent civilians. As developments are happening fast see our website for the latest update. [Click here](#) to read our latest media release.

Image: A displaced Sri Lankan woman at a makeshift camp in Thampalagama © UNHCR/N. Ng

NEWS

USA: Federal judge rules that three Bagram detainees can challenge their detention in US court



A US federal judge ruled yesterday that three detainees held in the US airbase in Bagram in Afghanistan can challenge the lawfulness of their detention in US District Court. The ruling is narrow and leaves numerous questions open – not least what will happen to the majority of the more than 500 detainees currently held in indefinite detention in Bagram – but it is nonetheless a positive first step towards application of the rule of law to the Bagram detention facility. The new administration – which has until now adopted its predecessor’s position on the Bagram detentions – has not yet said whether it will appeal the ruling. [Read more here](#).

Image: Guards escort a Guantanamo detainee. © US DoD

Increasing Ethnic participation in law making

The Office of Ethnic Affairs is planning a series of seminars on how Ethnic communities can involve themselves in the legislative process. One of the Government’s priorities is to encourage participation in the select committee process, so that the views of Ethnic communities are taken into consideration before the law is passed. The Office of Ethnic Affairs intends to hold more workshops in the future for Ethnic communities on how they can play a role in making laws. [Click here](#) to read more on this.

Lawyers – A force for change by Darise Ogden

Darise Ogden talks about the Just Law: Minds Wide Open Conference:

Law is more than a profession and a business, it is a vocation, a calling. It was a passionate invocation, and with it, twenty-something lawyer Rebecca Elvin opened the Just Law: Minds Wide Open conference and called on those present to “Take a risk. Open your minds.” Amnesty International attended the Just Law conference, and sat on one of the panels. [Click here](#) to read more about how this conference went.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Auckland's Legal Network Event



Keynote Speaker: Jonathon Moses, Senior Trial Attorney for the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda

We have been busy organising an event in Auckland ... the aim is to promote the legal network, hear an interesting speaker, and have a wine! All members will be sent an invite separately so watch your inbox as spaces will be limited. But in the meantime, pencil in...

When: Wednesday 10th June, 6pm.

Where: Auckland City (we have a great venue tentatively booked)...more details to follow.

If you have any queries or want to help out with running the event please contact Legal Network co-group member, Lisa Young on lisyoun@gmail.com.

Introducing Jonathon Moses...

He has spent nearly seven years in Tanzania helping to prosecute those crimes and also war crimes committed in Rwanda during 1994. Mr Moses is a Senior Trial Attorney with the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), leading a team of lawyers from various countries. His cases include one against a priest, Father Seromba, accused of participating in the destruction of his parish church. Almost all the 2000 refugees who had taken refuge there were killed after the church was bulldozed in mid-April 1994. Father Seromba was convicted of genocide and of extermination and he has been sentenced to life imprisonment.

Professor Lauren Robel, 'Lawyers and Torture: Ethics in Extremis'

Professor Lauren Robel of Indiana University is giving a talk at The University of Auckland – Faculty of Law and International Law Association (New Zealand Branch) on 'Lawyers and Torture: Ethics in Extremis'.

When: Tuesday 19th May, 6pm

Where: Old Government House Lecture Theatre

RSVP your interest to Piers or Raewyn, phone 09 379 5026 or email raewyn@wwandd.co.nz

To find out about seminars held by other ILA Sub Branches, email ilanz@ilanz.org.nz.

Human Rights Film Festival

Wellington 7-15 May, Auckland 14-22 May, Christchurch 21-29 May, Dunedin 28 May-5 June.

Visit www.humanrightsfilmfest.net.nz for more info.

Internal Speakers Programme

Refugee Lawyer Emily Griffin will be coming to Amnesty's offices to talk about her work and the current climate around refugees in NZ at the moment.

When: Tuesday 19th May, 2-3pm

Where: Amnesty offices - 68 Grafton Road, Grafton, Auckland.

Feel free to join us... please rsvp to Mela Masser at advocacy.intern1@amnesty.org.nz

We have some great events coming up country-wide. Visit www.amnesty.org.nz/contribute/ainzevents to find out more. Also if you are interested in organising a legal network event in your area or have some ideas for a great speaker – please contact Mela Masser at advocacy.intern1@amnesty.org.nz.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL SUBMISSIONS

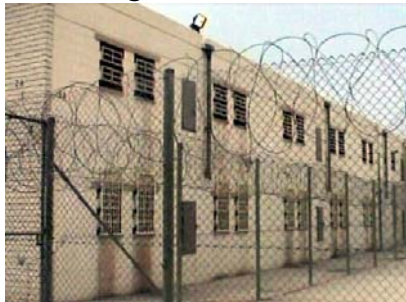
AIANZ will be making a submission to the Law and Order Committee on the Corrections (Contract Management of Prisons) Amendment Bill which is due on 22 May 2009. If you would like to assist in research and drafting this submission please contact advocacy assistant ASAP on olivia.rope@amnesty.org.nz

Amnesty will also be making a submission on the **Seabed and Foreshore Review**, and will be attending consultations. We do not need any assistance on this submission however it will be available on our website for an interesting read.

Big thanks to Cat Fleming who assisted in our submission on the 3-strikes Bill. To read all of our submissions [click here](#).

TAKE ACTION

A report by the Senate Armed Services Committee came out recently regarding the USA's military role in torturing detainees. While the Bush Administration was publically saying the horrors of Abu Ghraib were



just aberrations, this report clearly shows that in fact, torture was sanctioned and even encouraged in military detention centres.

There's a growing risk that the investigation may lack independence, legal authority, and the adequate funding necessary to tell the full truth about this alleged torture program. To find out more and take action, please [click here](#).

Image: Abu Ghraib © APGraphicsBank

Luís Vaz Martins, lawyer and president of the Human Rights League of Guinea-Bissau has received threats from an armed individual after publicly condemning the arrest and torture of prominent lawyer Pedro Infanda and the beating of former Prime Minister and current Court President Francisco José Fadul. As a result he and other members of the Human Rights League are concerned for their personal safety and have taken precautions such as altering their normal activities. To read more and take action, please click [here](#).

Free thwarted Olympics petitioner Ji Sizun



Chinese authorities should immediately release Fujian-based legal activist Ji Sizun who was originally detained while trying to submit an application to demonstrate during the Beijing Olympics, yet the alleged crimes he committed are seemingly unrelated to this application. To read more and take action, [click here](#).

Image: Protestors unite against the construction of a water sports venue for the 2008 Olympics on the outskirts of Beijing, June 2005. © EMPICS

CAREERS



Please find below some useful job sites for work in the NGO and humanitarian sector. If you know of any more good websites or links, please email Mela Masser to include in the next Legal Network Newsletter at advocacy.intern1@amnesty.org.nz

www.goodworks.co.nz/

www.dev-zone.org/

For more international-based work:

www.skillsforcauses.com/

www.eurobrussels.com/NGOs.php

www.thirdsector.co.uk/

www.humanrightsjobs.com/