

Action by

Christians

Against

Torture

August / September 2007

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CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

Dear friends,

From the FIACAT Website...

“On 26 June 2007, the United Nations Convention against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment was 20 years old. To date, 143 countries have ratified it. And it will be 10 years since the United Nations General Assembly designated this date as the *International Day in support of victims of torture*.

Over these 20 years, nations have undertaken to put an end to torture. Prevention mechanisms have been set up at regional and international level. But torture still goes on, in too many places in the world. The absolute ban on torture, whether on moral or legal grounds, is now openly questioned in the name of the fight against terrorism.

More than ever, the International Federation of ACAT must be the voice of a strong commitment by Christians to uphold this ban. Nothing and nobody can justify torture. Human dignity is inviolable and indivisible. It cannot be made to depend on any contingency or compromise. It is universal.

FIACAT calls on Christian Churches all over the world to speak out publicly and resolutely for a total and unconditional repudiation of torture. There is an urgent need for Christians to reject any argument for legitimising the use of torture.”

To a person imprisoned and subject to torture, one day must seem much like another. Certainly anniversaries aren't going to mean anything, even if the person's memory were strong enough to remember what day it was in the first place. However, such anniversaries can shock those of us who are free into thinking, “Why haven't all countries ratified the UN Convention... 143 is good but what about the other 51? Why do we still have torture after 20 years of campaigning?”

Let's face it; torture has been part and parcel of the human scene for a very long time indeed. Maybe it's a fact that it is always going to be here with us, all the time that human beings exist on the face of the earth.

Such a statement should not be the pessimism that causes us to give up trying; rather it should be the realism that fuels and re-energizes our efforts to work and campaign and speak out on behalf of all those who are being tortured today, and to prick the conscience of all those who perpetrate the pain, or who by their inactivity give silent assent to it, even within the Church.

Maybe it's true. Maybe the reason for the existence of such evil is because there are still too many who regard themselves as 'good people' doing nothing. Maybe what we need is not the same 'good people' trying to do more, but more 'good people' starting to share the task that we have already begun. Why not see how many more people and churches you could persuade to take up the ACAT challenge. What a difference it might make if every Church were an active ACAT Church.

Best wishes to you all,

Tom Bayliss

NEWS FROM GROUPS AND MEMBERS

ST LEONARD'S CHURCH, LASSWADE, EDINBURGH DIOCESE

We have seven members in our ACAT Group - some elderly, some working full time, all caring for families, grandchildren, friends and neighbours. Some of us only write campaign letters from the ACAT UK Newsletter, others only write and support individual prisoners, some do both.

The work of ACAT and the plight of those tortured or/and in prison are prayed for regularly during intercessions in church as well as in our personal prayers.

At the last meeting of our Group we discussed again how we could respond to the appeal for ACAT UK funds. Originally we had thought of running a coffee morning, but decided this would be too difficult, so opted to run a raffle instead. Those who did not want a raffle ticket were asked for a donation. Members of the Group donated prizes or sold tickets or both. We sold tickets from the first Sunday in May to Sunday, 27th May when we held the draw, after coffee in the church hall, following morning service.

It was not too much work and publicised ACAT UK by giving a leaflet and membership form to those who had not heard of ACAT before. We were able to send a cheque for £121 to the treasurer, Margaret Russell,

Rosemary Garrod, St. Leonard's ACAT Group Co-ordinator.

SALTASH ACAT GROUP

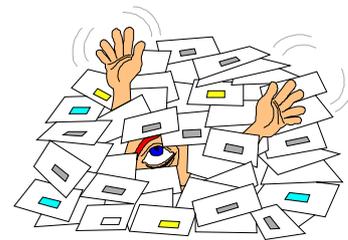
The Saltash Group was recently reformed - it was one of the first groups to be set up following the formation of ACT in 1984 but lapsed in the late 1990's because of the pressure of other work on the part of Terry and Eleanor Newland. The first of our monthly meetings was held in May with Lesley Margetts, lay reader at St. Nicholas and St Faith's Church, the previous Chairman, again in the Chair. A small article about ACAT and the date etc of the first meeting were given in the appropriate Churches Together in Saltash newsletter. We now have 6 members - four who belonged to the original group, with another two unable to attend meetings but who are keen letter writers. All 8 are Anglicans. Members of the original group came from a number of churches so we will hope to draw in members from the other churches in the area over the next few months.

To mark United Nations Torture Victims Day on June 26th we held a service in a side chapel at St. Stephens Church. We used the form of service produced by ACAT (UK) with other prayers for compline added in. Because we were very few in number we sat in a semi circle in front of a table on which had been placed candles, wreathed with greenery to symbolise life and hope - set on a large foil cross to symbolise Christi's suffering and identification with all who suffer and because we did not want to burn down the church! These were lit at points during the service. The highlight and most moving part of the service was the lighting of tiny candles for individual prisoners etc by each of those present. All took part in the readings but because we were few in number and not confident as singers we read the hymns but managed a passable rendering of Kum Ba Ya with its changed wording. The service touched us all and brought home to us very sharply the terrible suffering of the tortured and their families.

We will be asking Churches Together in Saltash to include this service on its calendar of accepted ecumenical services so that hopefully next year we will see a few more people joining us.

Eleanor Newland

APPEALS FOR AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2007



PLEASE SEND APPEALS ON BEHALF OF CHEN GUANGCHENG, CHINA

Chen Guangcheng, a lawyer, involved in denouncing the extensive use of violence by the authorities of Linyi, Shandong Province, in relation to birth planning policies, was arrested in March 2006. In August 2006 he was sentenced to 4 years 3 months imprisonment - no lawyers were present. The Court of Appeal ordered a review but in December at the People's Court of Yinan Canton the sentence was upheld - for "intentionally disrupting traffic and inciting material destruction". An appeal was launched in December to the Intermediary Court of Linyi City.

He is held in Linyi City Prison and on June 16 guards forced 6 prisoners to beat him after he refused to have his head shaved. He suffered broken ribs. His wife protested about the ill-treatment and demanded that the prison arrange for him to be sent to hospital for a check-up but this was refused.

Mr Chen is convinced that he was punished for requesting an appeal. He has been blind since infancy and cannot prepare an appeal without his lawyer and wife to draft it - the authorities refuse to give them sufficient time to do this.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS TO:-

Minister of Justice, Zhang Fusen Buzang, Sifabu, 10 Chaoyangmen Nandajie, Chaoyangqu, Beijingshi 10020, Peoples Republic of China (Dear Minister or Your Excellency)

Copies can be sent to :-

The Ambassador, The Embassy of the People's Republic of China, 49-51 Portland Place, London W1N 3JL

SUGGESTED DRAFT LETTER:-

I respectfully wish to bring to your attention the case of CHEN GUANGCHENG, a blind lawyer, sentenced in August 2006 to 4 years and 3 months imprisonment for "organising a mob to disrupt traffic and the deliberate destruction of property". I understand that he had campaigned with others against the implementation of the Government's birth quotas, which had involved extensive violence in the Linyi area of Shandong Province. He is held in Linyi City Prison.

His case was reviewed in the People's Court of Yinan Canton and he was sentenced again on December 1 2006 to the same term of imprisonment. His lawyer has appealed against the decision to the Intermediary Court of Linyi City. Because he is blind, Chen Guangcheng needs help from his wife and lawyer to prepare the case. Extra visiting time has been denied, which means that he cannot continue with his appeal. May I call upon the authorities to ensure that he is allowed extra time to enable his lawyer to prepare his appeal. I call for this appeal to be considered with proper regard to the fact that he is a human rights defender and as such has the "right, individually or in association with others, to promote and to strive for the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms," as laid down in the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, Article 9.

From what I have learned the guards on June 16 forced 6 prisoners to beat him after he refused to have his head shaved; he was refused a visit to the hospital for a check up although he was suffering from broken ribs. I request that the authorities ensure he is not subjected to further beatings, ill-treatment or torture and that he is held under conditions which conform to the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners.

Yours faithfully or Yours respectfully

PLEASE SEND APPEALS ON BEHALF OF PEDRO MARIA ANTONIO, PAULO MAZUNGO, ANDRE CONDE AND DOMINGOS CONDE, ANGOLA

The four men were arrested on 14 July by Provincial Criminal Investigative Police officers in the province of Cabinda. They had been protesting against the appointment of a new bishop, Bishop Filomeno Vieira Dias in June 2006 to the diocese of Cabinda, who is not from the province. There are reports that they have been tortured. They held up placards during a special Catholic mass celebrating the visit of a Cardinal sent by the Vatican. They have been charged with "injuries against a public authority" and "inciting violence against a religious authority". They appeared before the Cabinda Provincial Criminal Court for a summary judgement on 23 July. At the moment no further information is available. The nomination of the Bishop has been marred by controversy with Roman Catholics expressing discontent

They were taken to the headquarters of the Provincial Investigative Police where they have developed fevers but have not been granted access to a doctor and have only received medication brought in by their families.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS TO:

Exmo. Sr Dr Augusto da Costa Carneiro, Procurador Geral da Republica, Procuradoria Geral da Republica, Rua 17 Setembro, Luanda, Republica de Angola - Procurator General (Excelencial)

Sua Excelencia General Roberto Leal Monteiro, Ministro do Interior, Ministerio do Interior, Avenida 4 Fevereiro No 106, Luanda, Republica de Angola - Minister of Interior (Excelencia)

Sua Excelencia Manuel Aragao, Ministro da Justica, Ministerio da Justica, Rua 17 Setembro, Luanda, Republica de Angola - Minister of Justice (Excelencia)

Copies can be sent to:-

Her Excellency Mrs Ana Maria Teles Carreira, Embassy of the Republic of Angola, 22 Dorset Street, London W1U 6QY (Your Excellency) Email: embassy@angola.org.uk

SUGGESTED DRAFT LETTER:

I have learned with very great concern of the arrest on 14 July of PEDRO MARIA ANTONIO, PAULO MAZUNGO, ANDRE CONDE and DOMINGOS CONDE by members of the Provincial Criminal Investigative Police force in the province of Cabinda. I understand that they were arrested during a peaceful demonstration expressing their discontent at the appointment of Dom Filomeno Vieira Dias as Roman Catholic Bishop of Cabinda, during a visit from a cardinal sent to Angola by the Pope.

According to reports the four men have been charged with "injuries against a public authority" and "inciting violence against a religious authority". There are also reports that they have been subjected to torture.

I urgently seek assurances that the torture of these four men has ceased and that while in detention they are held under conditions which conform to the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, which states that prisoners must have access to medical care. May I call for an impartial investigation into the torture of these prisoners, the publication in full of its findings and the prosecution in a civilian court of law of those found responsible.

These four men have, in my opinion, been arrested and charged solely because they exercised their right to freedom of expression in a peaceful manner. I call for their immediate release as prisoners of conscience.

Yours faithfully or Yours respectfully

PLEASE SEND APPEALS ON BEHALF OF ANDRES JULIAN MELAN, COLOMBIA

On June 6 a group of armed men attacked Hernando Melan Cardona's family in their home in the municipality of Rionegro, Department of Antioch. They assassinated his son, Andres Julian Melan, aged 27 and seriously hurt his wife, Luz Angela Velazques and his other son - unnamed. Hernando is the union leader with the company, Textiles Rionegro and has been active in defending the process of unionization in the whole Colombian textile industry. He had already received threats against his life.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS TO:-

Dr. Eduardo Jose, Maya Villazon, Procurador General de la Nacion, Cra.5. 15-80, Santa Fe de Bogota, Colombia Email: cap@procuraduria.gov.co (Dear Procurator General)

H. E. Alvaro Uribe Velez, President of the Republic, cr. 8 7-26, Palacio de Narino. Santa de de Bogota, Colombia (Dear President)

Copies can be sent to:

The Ambassador, The Embassy of Colombia, Flat 3A, 3 Hans Crescent, London SW1X 0LR

SUGGESTED DRAFT LETTER:-

I have learned with great concern of the attack on the family of HERNANDO MELAN CARDONA at their home in the municipality of Rionegro, Department of Antioch. I understand that on June 6 two armed men assassinated his son, ANDRES JULIAN MELAN and seriously wounded his wife, LUZ ANGELA VELAZQUES, and another son. I understand that Hernando Melan Cardona had been the subject of death threats because of his work as union leader with the company Textiles Rionegro and throughout the textile industry in Colombia. There are reports that other unionized workers in the Department of Antioch have also received threats. JOHN JAIRO ARCILA PARRA, was murdered on 5 June in Armenia, Department of Quindio - he was a community and political leader, who was about to denounce corruption in the municipal administration.

I respectfully call for a full, impartial investigation into the assassination of ANDRES JULIAN MELAN and the wounding of LUZ ANGELA VELAZQUES, and another son of HERNANDO MELAN CARDONA, the publication in full of its findings and the prosecution of those found responsible. I also call for a similar investigation into the murder of JOHN JAIRO ARCILA PARRA.

I appeal for adequate compensation to be paid to both families. I call for measures to be taken to bring to an end the harassment, death threats and assassinations of trade union and community leaders in Colombia and that action be taken to implement the recommendations made by various international and regional human rights organisations

Yours faithfully or Yours respectfully

INFORMATION

The death sentences on 5 Bulgarian nurses and a Palestinian doctor convicted of infecting more than 400 children with HIV in Libya were upheld on 11 July. There has been a world wide campaign to overturn the convictions and enormous international pressure. A panel is expected to commute or reduce their sentences, leaving the way open for a compensation deal for the families. It is thought the compensation fund may be worth about £25 million. The nurses and doctor have been in prison since 1999. **GOOD NEWS** - these prisoners were released on 24th July and flown to Bulgaria! The European Union campaigned vigorously on their behalf once Bulgaria became a member. All were severely tortured following their arrest.



PLEASE SEND APPEALS ON BEHALF OF MOHAMED BOUCEKKINE, ALGERIA.

Mohamed Boucekkine, aged 34, was arrested on 15 June at his home in Fouka. Two men, who did not identify themselves, arrested him, searched his house. His wife was told only that he was being taken for interrogation. He is held incommunicado. No charges have been made against him. Because he is held incommunicado, there is a grave risk of torture.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS TO:-

Mr Tayeb Belaiz, Minister of Justice, Ministry of Justice, 8 Place Bir-Hakem el-Biart, Alger, Algeria
Email - info@mjustice.dz (Dear Minister)

Mr Abdelaziz Bouteflika, President of the Republic, El-Mouradia-BP, Alger Gare, Algeria
(Your Excellency or Mr President)

Copies can be sent to:-

The Ambassador, The Embassy of Algeria, 54 Holland Park, London W11 3RS (Your Excellency)

SUGESTED DRAFT LETTER:-

It was with very great concern that I learned of the arrest on 15 June of MOHAMED BOUCEKKINE, aged 34. I understand that he was arrested at his home in Fouka and is held in incommunicado detention.

I seek guarantees that he has not been subjected to torture or ill-treatment and is held under conditions which conform to the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners.

I call for his place of detention to be published and immediate access granted to his wife, his lawyer and medical care if necessary. May I point out that Algeria is a state party to the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which states that no one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest or detention.

I appeal for his immediate release unless he is to be charged with a specific criminal offence and brought to trial in accordance with the international standards of fair trial.

Yours faithfully or Yours respectfully



STEPHEN NDAKWE, CAMEROON

We received a call from a friend of Stephen Ndakwe, a failed asylum seeker, asking if we could take up his case as a matter of urgency as he was to be deported back to Cameroon. We had already been involved in his case and had contacted another former asylum seeker from Cameroon, now accepted as a British citizen, to help him with his appeal. Unfortunately his appeal failed and he was moved to a detention centre prior to deportation. Cameroon is a country where torture is practised. Stephen Ndakwe had been an active member of an opposition political party and been forced to flee to save his life. It looked likely that he could well be arrested on arrival.

We wrote a letter from the office to his Leicester MP, Keith Vaz, and also drafted a suitable letter which was sent out to a number of individuals and to some groups, asking them to campaign. Unfortunately he was sent back very shortly afterwards. But we did learn from his friend here that he had arrived and had not been arrested. Hopefully if he keeps out of politics he will be safe. Thank you to all who took up this appeal.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS ON BEHALF OF 'ABDULLAH ABU BAKIR HASSAN, SAUDI ARABIA

'Abdullah Abu Bakir Hassan is a Libyan national. He has only one arm, has recently had a stroke and is suffering from a serious stomach infection. He was arrested at the offices of al-Mabahith al-'Ammah in Mecca, on 17 May. His home is in Ireland where he runs a company arranging for Muslim pilgrims to travel to Mecca, mainly from Europe. He called his family in Ireland to say he had been detained and would not be able to contact them. He was also arrested in November 2005 while on business in Saudi Arabia and detained for 9 months incommunicado. He was beaten repeatedly and denied a lawyer. He was released without charge in July 2006. The Ministry of the Interior retained his passport, preventing him from returning to Ireland. In April 2007 he complained about the way he was being treated on Al-Jazeera satellite TV.

Detainees are regularly held incommunicado, tortured and ill-treated. Critics of the state are routinely held without charge or trial, without access to their families or lawyers. Trials which do take place are held behind closed doors and fail to meet the most elementary standards of fair trial.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS TO:-

His Royal Highness Prince Naif bin 'Abdul 'Aziz Al-Saud, Minister of the Interior, Ministry of the Interior, PO Box 2933, Airport Road, Riyadh 11134, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (Your Royal Highness)

King Abdullah Bin 'Abdul 'Aziz Al-Saud, The Custodian of the two Holy Mosques, Office of His Majesty The King, Royal Court, Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (Your Majesty)

Copies can be sent to:-

His Excellency HRH Prince Mohammed Bin Nawaf Bin 'Abdul 'Aziz Al-Saud, Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, 30 Charles Street, Mayfair, London W1J 5DZ (Your Excellency) Email: ukemb@mofa.gov.sa

SUGGESTED DRAFT LETTER:

I respectfully wish to bring to your attention the case of 'ABDULLAH ABU BAKIR HASSAN, a Libyan national, whose home is in the Republic of Ireland; he arranges for Muslim pilgrims from Europe to travel to Mecca. I understand that he was arrested on 17 May at the offices of al-Mabahith al-'Ammah and is held in incommunicado detention. He had previously been detained from November 2005 until July 2006 and subjected to repeated beatings. He was released without charge but his passport was retained by the Ministry of the Interior; this resulted in his being forced to remain in Saudi Arabia,

I wish to express my great concern over the incommunicado detention of 'Abdullah abu Bakir Hassan. I respectfully urge that he is granted immediate access to a lawyer of his own choice and to any medical treatment he may require and that his family are informed of his whereabouts.

I appeal to you to ensure that he is held under conditions which conform to the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners and has not been subjected to torture, beatings or other forms of ill-treatment. May I urge that he be given suitable and adequate medical treatment in view of his very poor health and transferred to hospital if necessary.

I call for his immediate and unconditional release unless he is to be charged with a specific criminal offence and brought to trial in accordance with international standards of fair trial. I appeal for the return of his passport once he is given his freedom so that he may return to the Republic of Ireland.

Yours faithfully or Yours respectfully



FOR YOUR PRAYERS

HERNANDO MELAN CARDONA, COLOMBIA, his wife, and family; he is a leading trade union leader in the textile industry, threatened with death; his son, **ANDRES**, 27 was assassinated in the family home in June and his mother seriously injured; pray for all human rights defenders and particularly trade unionists.

CHEN GUANGCHENG, CHINA, blind lawyer, from Linyi, Shandong Province, arrested in March 2006 because of his campaign against the violence associated with the birth planning policies in his area; sentenced to 4 years 3 months imprisonment, held in Linyi City Prison; is appealing against the sentence; severely beaten by fellow prisoners at behest of guards.

MOHAMED BOUCEKKINE, ALGERIA, 34, arrested in June at his home in Fouka; he is held incommunicado and is at serious risk of torture.

PEDRO MARIA ANTONIO, PAULO MAZUNGO, ANDRE CONDE, DOMINGOS CONDE, ANGOLA, arrested 14 July in Cabinda for staging peaceful protest over the appointment of a Roman Catholic bishop to the diocese of Cabinda by the Pope; they have been severely tortured ;they had favoured a local bishop.

'**ABDULLAH ABU BAKIR HASSAN, SAUDI ARABIA**, Libyan national, residing with his family in Republic of Ireland; ran a company organising pilgrimages to Mecca; arrested November 2005, held incommunicado for 9 months, beaten repeatedly; released but his passport was not returned; complained to al Jazeera TV station and was arrested again in May; he has one arm, has had a stroke and now has a serious stomach infection.



PRAYER FOR THE TORTURED

Loving Lord

We pray for all prisons, places of secret detention and police stations where torture and ill-treatment occurs, and where our brothers and sisters are broken mentally and physically.

Grant, Lord, that your love will shine even in the worst of the torture chambers. We ask that you will bring comfort and solace to all who will be tortured tonight.

We lift up to you especially all who will betray others, all who will die before morning comes and all who will suffer for the rest of their lives because of what will happen to them.

Loving Lord, you know the names of each one. Hold them in your loving arms and bring them your peace and comfort even in the midst of their despair and suffering.

We pray too for each family, who will be living in a torment of distress and fear. Hold them close and bring them the support of loving friends.

We pray for all who will take part in torture tonight. We lift up to you especially those who will torture for the first time. Have mercy on them, Lord and give them courage to understand what it is that they do and the strength to say no.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

I read with interest the Information on Executions and The Death Penalty offered in the June/July issue and welcome the attention given to this important issue. May I contribute some additional thoughts on the basis of my own experience in working against capital punishment in the United States.

When, in 2002, a senior Amnesty activist asked if I would be interested in joining their campaign against the USA Death Penalty, I readily agreed because I have never believed that any clear distinction could be made between it and inhuman and degrading treatment. And in the years that followed, the cases in which I became involved (drawn from 15 states, with one federal matter) served only to confirm this. It proved possible to challenge the system on several levels.

One was the method used. In April 2002, in filing a petition for clemency with Alabama Chief Justice, Roy Moore, it was argued that evidence from many States and many cases in the period 1890-1999 showed that the use of the electric chair amounted to Cruel and Unusual Punishment and as such, violated the prohibition in the Eighth Amendment to the US constitution. This was because such executions frequently went wrong.

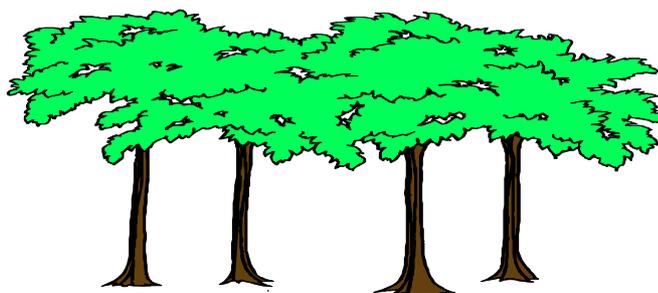
In December 2006, the focus shifted to Florida, where Governor Jeb Bush, who had suspended all executions by lethal injection there, owing to concerns about errors in administration of the chemicals, was duly urged to use his influence to make an end to the practice and replace it with mandatory life imprisonment. I drew to his attention the problems identified with this in Alabama (where it is thought to be a more humane innovation), Arkansas, Missouri and California. The bottom line is that no method has ever been introduced that can be prevented from going wrong and when it does, it is torture.

On death row, where men are, as inmate Caryl Chessman wrote in the 1950's, "held suspended between two worlds for weeks, months and years", despair has resulted in at least 50 known suicides and in other cases, a refusal to co-operate with the filing of any further appeals in State and Federal Courts. Though lawyers refer, colloquially, to this latter category as "volunteer executions", the reality is that men and in some cases women, under threat of death, must be presumed not to be capable of giving free and informed consent.

Your article rightly highlights the deficiency of defence. I was reminded of Napoleon Beazley, the juvenile offender, on whose behalf I appealed to the hardline Board of Pardons and Paroles. It rejected all appeals by a 10-7 majority vote and this young African American male (who had shown remorse) was executed. In a civil action filed shortly beforehand in Federal District court, it was alleged that the list of court - appointed defenders included "... at least 4 lawyers who had been disciplined by the Bar, and one lawyer who is dead." Such is justice in Texas.

As Hilary Mantel recently pointed out, there are two arguments going on in the States - one about the US constitution and what it means, another about God and what He means. Having seen the cruelty and injustice that I have seen, I have no doubt about what God means and what Hewould want us to do.

Stephanie Jefford
Ireland Wood, Leeds



NOMINATION FORM - ACAT COMMITTEE 2007/8

CURRENT COMMITTEE AND OFFICERS

Rev Tom Bayliss - Chairman

Margaret Russell - Hon Treasurer & Membership Officer

Eleanor Newland - Hon Secretary/Information Officer

Rev Richard Dent - Resigned as Publicity/Development Officer

(but willing to stand for Committee)

Brother Anselm - SOS Torture Co-ordinator

Terry Newland - Information Officer

Ken Watson - Prisoner Support Co-ordinator (Ex-officio - does not have to be elected)_

Kevin Burr - Representing Peace and Justice, RC Church - (Ex-officio - does not have to be elected)

The following are willing to stand again:-

Tom Bayliss, Brother Anselm, Richard Dent, Eleanor Newland, Terry Newland, Margaret Russell, Ken Watson

POSITION	NAME	ADDRESS	TEL-NUMBER
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CHAIRMAN _____

NOMINATED BY _____

SECONDED BY _____

TREASURER _____

NOMINATED BY _____

SECONDED BY _____

SECRETARY _____

NOMINATED BY _____

SECONDED BY _____

COMMITTEE - UP TO SIX MEMBERS

NOMINATED BY _____

SECONDED BY _____

Please ensure that you have the consent of the person before you nominate. Nominations should be received by **8th October 2007**.

Nominations to be sent to:- ACAT Office, 8 Southfield, Saltash, Cornwall PL12 4LX

Registered charity no: 1072628

CONFERENCE AND AGM

The Conference and AGM will be held at Broadmead Baptist Church in Bristol on Saturday, 13th October from 10.30 am (Registration/ Coffee) until 4.30p.m. It is a chance for members to meet with the Chairman and Committee and to share with other like minded people similar views on human rights and especially on torture. So please come if you can - it will be good to meet you. It should be a rewarding day.

As in other years the Annual Report will be presented in the morning session together with the Annual Accounts; there will also be a time of worship. The speakers in the afternoon will include Craig Murray, former Ambassador to Uzbekistan together with Andrew Hogg, Publicity Officer at the Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture.

The Committee has decided that there will be no charge for the day, although donations will be welcome. There is disabled access - a lift is available. Tea, coffee and biscuits will be provided but those attending should bring their own lunches.

Please note that a nomination form for elections to the Committee is enclosed. At present the Committee is small. It is very important that we recruit other members willing to join the Committee. There is so much that ACAT (UK) could do if only it had more active members willing to devote more time to it. This would enable it to work more effectively against the evil of torture. New Committee members do not need years of experience of human rights etc - information can be provided. What is needed is commitment and devotion to the battle against torture. The Committee meets every two months for an afternoon session in Guildford at the home of the Chairman. Travelling expenses are paid and lunch is kindly provided by Tom Bayliss.

Any resolutions to be presented at the AGM should be sent to the Chairman, Rev Tom Bayliss c/o 8 Southfield, Saltash, Cornwall PL12 4LX by 22nd September. Resolutions should have a nominator and a seconder, both of whom should be individual members, Nomination forms should also be sent in by 22nd September.

ACAT - EARLY HISTORY

The ACAT Committee is asking for early memories, reminiscences etc regarding the formation, early history of ACT, as the organisation was first called, and the first local groups. I have written to a number of people I know were involved in its formation and its early days and also members of the very first ACT groups. There has been some response but more will be welcome. If you or your Group have early memories, or know of anyone who has, do please either write them down or phone me - or I can phone if given a number to contact. It is very important that we have some written record of ACAT's history.

Eleanor Newland

Phone No: 01752 843417

or

8 Southfield, Saltash, Cornwall PL12 4LX

Email : uk.acat@gmail.com

FROM BROTHER ANSELM - SOS TORTURE CO-ORDINATOR

Prayer

From Break a Body, Save a Soul by Roy Jenkins p.39

"The Russian poet, Irina Ratushinskaya has written famously of sensing in her freezing cell, "Someone is thinking of me now, petitioning the Lord for me."

I have not the faintest idea how this works. But it is what believers are called to, this conviction that Christ who was tortured to death has a special concern for those being tortured today, and therefore they should be held before him."

OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN

HALLOWED BE YOUR NAME in the dark places of our world
YOUR KINGDOM COME in the dark places of our world
YOUR WILL BE DONE in the dark places of our world
ON EARTH AS IN HEAVEN
GIVE US TODAY OUR DAILY BREAD in the dark places of our world
FORGIVE US OUR SINS in the dark places of our world
AS WE FORGIVE THOSE WHO SIN AGAINST US in the dark places of our world
LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION in the dark places of our world
BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL in the dark places of our world

Start with me, Lord, so that I may be strengthened to pray and work to bring heaven to the dark places of our world.

SOS TORTURE REPORT

We faithful few, we band of sisters and brothers, continue to send about 80 appeals a month - recently we've had two writers who have hung up their pens after long and faithful labour, and - two have joined us, one from the Republic of Ireland and one from England - no-one yet from the capital.

We believe that this work meets the very real need for the urgency which cannot be attained in the slower process of the regular mailing appeals.

**So - how about it? Write to me -
Brother Anselm, SSF, 3 Pool Field Avenue, Birmingham B31 1ER**

You may say, "What evidence is there that we make any difference?"

Answer - "Very little"

So - Why do we do it?"

Answer - "Because we believe."

From the Editor (*Terry Newland*)

Letter writers receive few replies from those in authority but remember that even if governments do not acknowledge letters, they are regarded as important. Prisoners can be freed, re-investigation of particular cases can be ordered or investigations started into disappearances and extrajudicial executions, prison conditions are often improved even if prisoners are not released, lives can be saved, particularly those of human rights workers. Governments are always concerned about their image, even if they are dictatorships.

It is worthwhile quoting again what a former prisoner of conscience in Zimbabwe said when he looked at the great file of letters written on his behalf when he visited us in the UK after his release. It still applies today just as it did then - "after these letters the beatings stopped... after these I had a bed... and a desk and books ... and then I was allowed to go shopping in the village without a guard, **but other men were dying.**" There are many such cases which I have learned about over the years some first hand, others from Amnesty etc.

Do take up Brother Anselm's call and join SOS Torture and rest assured you **WILL** make a difference.

PRISONER SUPPORT NOTES

In a previous Newsletter I mentioned that I had just been informed by Father Bohan that steps were to be taken to deal with the overcrowding in the Maximum Security Prison in Kabwe (amongst others, I presume). The present situation is that the Great Exodus is underway, as one of our members put it. I have encountered one prisoner who is being released and know of others who are being transferred to an open prison in Kitwe.

As many of you will know, Father Bohan is away from the Zambia until the end of July and it is not possible for me to obtain any comprehensive information as to exactly what is happening in his absence. I am hoping therefore, that he will be able to obtain a list from the prison authority that will give information as to which men are to be released, which are to have their sentences reduced and which are to be transferred away from Kabwe.

The situation is of importance in particular in respect of those prisoners for whom I have received funds due to be included in the money transfer. I had expected to arrange this during the first few days of August. I would first want to satisfy myself that the men for whom funds are intended are still in one of the prisons in Kabwe, or perhaps in a prison away from the town or even somewhere else, to which Father Bohan would be able and willing to travel to distribute funds. I will not know the situation in this respect until I have been in touch with him. If it is not possible for him to travel outside Kabwe, for instance, to Kitwe, then it will be necessary for me to arrange alternative methods of payment of donations to the men in such places.

In view of this situation, therefore, it may be necessary for the transfer of funds to be deferred until later in August, depending on the time taken to deal with the points I have mentioned.

In the meantime, if any of our members receive information concerning the change of address or the possible release of any prisoner with whom they are in touch, please let me know as soon as possible.

The next transfer of funds is due to take place at the end of November

Ken Watson, Prisoner Support Co-ordinator 34 Wantage road, Reading RG30 2SF
Phone 0118 950 9047 E-mail : ken335@btinternet.com“

ALAN JOHN DAVIES

We have received an e-mail from Alan John Davies in which he expresses his thanks to all members of ACAT who have supported him. We wish him well for the future.

Ken Watson

CORRECTION TO JUNE/JULY NEWSLETTER

SUBSCRIPTION RATES ARE AS FOLLOWS:-

<i>GROUPS</i>	<i>£50.00</i>
<i>INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS(FULL RATE) PRINTED</i>	<i>£20.00 - NOT £10.00 AS</i>
<i>“ “ (UNWAGED, RETIRED)</i>	<i>£10.00“</i>

APOLOGIES FOR THE MISTAKE!

PRAYER AND REFLECTION

Who will separate us from the love of Christ?

Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through Him, who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. *Romans 8 v 35 to end.*

I call on you, Lord, in a time of persecution.
Hear me, God of justice,
deliver me from my enemies.
I have been labelled a subversive, and arrested by the military,
torn from among my people, to the terror of the village,
of women and children terrified by the violence of cowardly men.
I have disappeared with those who are called terrorists,
in a headspinning journey.
full of threats and humiliations, blows and questions,
thrown among prisoners.
In secrecy and isolation,
far from my people and my friends,
lost in time and space,
I am abandoned to an unknown fate.

I was a caricature of a man,
my eyes blindfolded,
my clothing torn,
subject to mockery and oaths,
defenceless and vulnerable.
I was a target, exposed to treacherous blows.
From the first moment,
they pulled the trigger of their sub-machine gun
to simulate an execution,
to make me confess to crimes
invented by my enemies.

Robbed of all my dignity,
with death for close companion,
in those hours of trial, Lord,
I was not alone.
I knew your presence, you who are my strength,
you who are my hope,
you who are my deliverer.
Psalm of an unknown Brazilian prisoner -from Prayers Encircling the World

Loving God Open our hearts, so that we may feel the breath and play of your Spirit. Unclench our hands so that we may reach out to one another, and touch and be healed. Open our lips that we may drink in the delight and wonder of life. Unclog our ears to hear the agony in our inhumanity. Open our eyes, so that we may see Christ in the tortured. Breathe your spirit upon us, and touch our lives with the life of Christ.
Amen

From Bread of Tomorrow

Lord, in this world, men and women are hungry, for bread of course, but also for love, dignity and justice.
Lord, in this world men and women die because they have no hope.
Lord, in this world, hands are weary, knees buckle, hearts suffer.
We ask for your living bread for those hungry for love, your living light for those who are lost, your word of life for those who despair.
We ask for your strength for those who can go no further, your peace for refugees and migrant workers,
your love for those who have been abandoned, your comfort for those who are persecuted,
pursued, imprisoned, and tortured.
We give thanks for those men and women who give witness to their faith and who, even in the face of death, pursue justice without fear.
Lord Jesus, righteous before God, declared guilty and abandoned at the hands of men, We bring before you the suffering of men, women and children.
Have mercy on them all and bring them hope, for You died for the dying and You were raised to lead them to new life.
A Prayer written for the International Federation of ACAT's

Give us courage, O Lord, to stand up and be counted,
to stand up for those who cannot stand up for themselves,
to stand up for ourselves when it is needful for us to do so.
Let us fear nothing more than we fear you.
Let us love nothing more than we love you, for thus we shall fear nothing also.
Let us have no other God before you, whether nation or party or state or church.
Let us seek no other peace but the peace which is yours,
and make us its instruments,
opening our eyes and our ears and our hearts,
so that we should know always what work of peace we may do for you. *Alan Paton*

I am the light of the World, he who follows
Me will not walk in darkness but will have

Once again we hope this Newsletter provides a rewarding read.

Articles are always welcome. Let us know what you have been doing for ACAT or other human rights work (typed, hand written or e-mail). The next mailing will be produced by Margaret Russell so any items should be sent to her by 10th September 2007. Eleanor and I will be doing the December/January one and the Christmas Card list. Any news about mailing appeal prisoners or queries about ACAT should be sent to Eleanor Newland

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ACAT(UK) MISSION STATEMENT

ACAT, for reasons of Christian faith:-

- a). Works to educate and inform the general public, but particularly the churches regarding the existence, extent and evil of torture, as set out in Article 5 of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- b). Campaigns for the world-wide abolition of torture and extrajudicial executions (Government sponsored assassinations of opponents or "undesirables")
- c). Provides help, comfort and support to the victims of torture and the families of those who have been tortured, executed or face the threat of death.
- d). Remembers in constant prayer, the victims, their families and their communities. Prays also for those who order, inflict or tolerate the torture of their fellow human beings.
- e). Exercises vigilance to ensure these same human rights are secured, without exception, for all people in the United Kingdom.

ACAT uses all established methods to realise these aims and such new methods as may from time to time be appropriate to the work in hand

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