



action

by

Christians

against

torture

‘A Powerhouse of Prayer’

All that is required for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing”

Edmund Burke

In this Mailing:	-Page	2	Chairman’s Letter
		3	waziland Spotlight
		4	At long last! - genocide tribunal indicts Khmer Rouge leaders
			Appeals are only available for members
		5	AGM and Conference further details
		6	Replies Russian Federation, Judicial Review - UK
		7	WOMEN HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGNERS, IRAN
		8	For your Prayers
		9-10	Prisoner Support Notes
		11	Christmas Card Campaign, Zimbabwe, meeting of survivors of torture
		12	A truly moving affair, Westminster Abbey
		13	Good News --- and Bad News
		14	Prayer and reflection

October, November 2010

Chairman's Letter

I have to confess that when reading a newspaper I turn to the obituaries! Others may turn first to the sports page, or the financial reports, but my attention usually goes to the obituary section. It's probably deeply psychological, I don't know.

I was recently reading the obituary of Lord Bingham, the former Lord Chief Justice and Senior Law Lord, who died in September. Regarded by many as the greatest English judge since the Second World War, Tom Bingham was forthright in his many decisions, one of which was to reject evidence in court which may have been obtained by torture. The government wanted such evidence admitted, Bingham said 'No'. 'This judgement resonated around the world' wrote one obituary writer, a fellow lawyer.

It is this high profile reporting of the various facets of the evils of torture that keep it in the public eye. Because 'it only happens over there' we can easily ignore it, even if we don't forget it. And the next stage is to say to ourselves 'There's nothing I can do about it anyway. I can't influence other governments'.

The plain fact is, however, that we can and do. Our letter writing and campaigning are vital parts in the 'drip-drip-drip' process of the anti-torture lobby.

Fresh and Inspired

That is why it is so important to keep our knowledge and efforts fresh and inspired. A big part of that is not only our day to day concern for the tortured and the torturers in our prayers and letter writing, based on our Newsletter, but also knowledge we can gain from coming to events such as the Annual General Meeting.

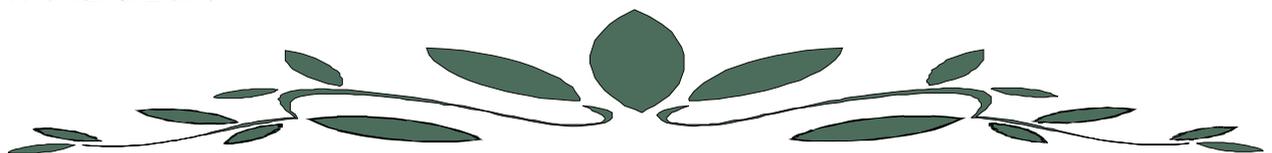
As you will know from previous Newsletter, this is on Saturday 16th October at Broadmead Baptist Church, Union Street, Bristol at 10.30 am for 11.00. There will not only be a full report of our many activities during the year but also two informative, challenging and illustrated talks. The first, in the morning, will be by Steve Goddard, our former Treasurer, on his several trips to North Korea and the regime there. The other, after lunch (please bring your own!), will be by Nawaz Hanif from 'Reprieve'. He will speak about police torture in Pakistan.

I do hope you will make every effort to be with us. We not only meet friends with mutual interests but also can keep our minds active and be encouraged to maintain our campaigning against torture. We also have plans to expand both our work and our membership, so please come and hear about them, and help us!

Eglantyne Jebb, the founder of the charity 'Save the Children', said the organisation "must work for its own extinction, it must seek to abolish, for good and for all, the poverty which makes children suffer"

Our job, in ACAT(uk) is also to work for the charity's extinction, because only then will we know that torture has been abolished.

Richard Dent.



SWAZILAND - SPOTLIGHT

BACKGROUND

The Kingdom of Swaziland is a small landlocked country, bordered to the north, south and west by South Africa and to the east by Mozambique. It lies across the Great Rift Valley and has a variety of landscapes from the mountains along the Mozambican border, savannas in the east and rain forest in the north west.

Swaziland covers an area which has been inhabited since prehistory. The earliest inhabitants were Khoisan hunter-gatherers. There is evidence of agriculture and the use of iron dating from the 4th century. Ancestors speaking languages similar to the present Sotho and Nguni began settling as early as the 11th century. In the 15th and 16th centuries members of the southern Bantu tribes migrated and settled after crossing the Limpopo River, and set up iron working and farming colonies. The Swazi people are descended from these groups.

The majority of Swaziland's population is ethnically Swazi, with a small number of Zulu and white South Africans together with some Portuguese settlers and refugees from Mozambique. The official language is SiSwati, a Bantu language of Ngoni origin, also spoken in South Africa, together with English.

ECONOMY

The economy is closely linked with that of South Africa. 70% of its exports are sent to South Africa and it receives 90% of its imports from the same source. Agriculture, mining and forestry are important sources of income. High value crops such as sugar, forestry products and citrus fruits are grown using high levels of investment and irrigation. Textiles are also produced on a large scale. Despite this, about 75% of the population is employed in subsistence agriculture. Traditionally Swazi have been subsistence farmers and herders, although many now work in the mines, urban industries and government. *The country's economic growth and also social cohesion is at very great risk as a result of the HIV epidemic. The United Nations Development Program has written that if the epidemic continues at the present level, the "longer term existence of Swaziland as a country will be seriously threatened."*

HEALTH

The country has the highest HIV infection in the world and the lowest life expectancy at 32 years. It has almost halved in the last few years from 61 in 2000. 61% of all deaths in 2002 were from HIV/Aids. Over 50% of adults in their 20's are infected. In 2004 the government declared a humanitarian crisis, due to the combined effect of drought, land degradation, increased poverty and HIV/Aids. Many patients have a multi-drug resistant strain. TB is also a significant disease with an 18% mortality rate.

HISTORY

Swaziland was part of the British Empire during the 19th and 20th centuries. In 1981 the British Government recognised Swazi independence but its administration was placed under the South African Republic (Transvaal) in 1890. At the beginning of the Boer War it became a Protectorate - the king and his councillors were ignored. Independence was granted in 1964. It adopted a Westminster-style constitution in 1968 but this was suspended in 1968 on the advice of parliament. Eventually a new constitution came into force in 2005, although it had been strongly criticised by civil society groups within the country and human rights organisations elsewhere. From the early 70's there has been active resistance to the absolutist rule of the king but there is strong support from the majority of the population.

CURRENT STATE OF AFFAIRS

Swaziland has been ruled by King Mswati III, an absolute monarch, since 1983. By tradition he rules along with his mother. The king was seen as the administrative head of state with his mother as a spiritual and national head of state, with real power counter-balancing that of the king. The role of the king's mother is now largely symbolic. The king appoints the prime minister from the legislature; he appoints some of the members to the senate, together with

others to the House of Assembly, on the recommendation of the advisory council. Others are elected.

More than 70% of the population live in poverty. At least 25% require aid. Poverty and limited access to adequate food, limits the ability of those suffering from HIV/AIDS particularly in rural areas to obtain health care and keep to treatment programmes. At least 35% of children have been either orphaned or classed as "vulnerable" because their parents or carers are either sick or dying; 15% of households are headed by orphaned children. Sexual abuse, rape and violence against girls and women is on the increase.

HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES

In 2008 the Government passed a Suppression of Terrorism Act, with sweeping and ill-defined provisions. Despite civil organisations calling for its repeal, and international criticism, it refused to amend or repeal it. This act and other security legislation are used to harass, arrest and prosecute critics. There are reports of searches, the seizures of materials, and monitoring of electronic communication systems, telephone calls and the forced break up of meetings. Journalists working in the media face continuous pressure and acts of intimidation.

Police and other officials, including informal policing groups, use excessive force against criminal suspects, political activists, and ordinary demonstrators including trade unionists and political groups. Torture and ill-treatment is also used. The President of the Swaziland Youth Congress was arrested by four police officers and taken to a forested area, interrogated about weapons and subjected to suffocation with his hands and ankles tied behind him. He was dumped seven hours later and needed hospital treatment for his emotional and physical injuries. No one has been brought to justice although he knew the names of the officers. There is almost total impunity. The new Police Commissioner has stressed the need for action to ensure that the police limit brutality but victims of police abuse continue to have no access to an independent complaints body.

Eleanor Newland **September 2010**

AT LONG LAST! - GENOCIDE TRIBUNAL INDICTS KHMER ROUGE LEADERS

The trial of four top surviving leaders of the Khmer Rouge regime held to be responsible for 1.7 million deaths in the 1970's, is due to start in mid-2011. The four include Nuon Chea, 84, the Khmer Rouge's ideologist, Khieu Samphan, 79, former head of state, Ieng Sary, former foreign minister and his wife, Ieng Thirith, ex-minister for social affairs., both in their 80's. All face charges including crimes against humanity, genocide, war crimes and a combined charge of murder, torture and religious persecution. They deny the charges.

FORTHCOMING UN REPORT

A 600-page investigation by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to be published shortly will accuse Rwanda of wholesale war crimes, including possibly genocide during years of conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo. This followed the defeat of the Hutus by the Tutsis, after the Rwandan genocide. It will cover the period following the invasion into the DRC aimed at clearing the UN refugee camps of armed Hutu soldiers and others and two years later the invasion which led to a regional war. The Report will catalogue seven years of murder, rape and looting during which hundreds of thousands of Hutus were targeted. This will be the first time that the UN will have published such forthright allegations against Rwanda, a close ally of the US and the UK. It accuses Rwandan forces and local allies of rounding hundreds of men, women and children at a time and butchering them with hoes and axes. On other occasions Hutu refugees were bayoneted, burned alive or killed with hammer blows. The UN report describes "the systematic, methodical and premeditated nature of the attacks on the Hutus which took place in all areas where the refugees had been tracked down".

AGM AND CONFERENCE
AT
BROADMEAD BAPTIST CHURCH BROADMEAD, BRISTOL

DISABLED ACCESS - LIFT AVAILABLE

ON
16TH OCTOBER 2010

11.00 AM - 4.00PM (COFFEE - FROM 10.30 AM)

11.00 AM: SERVICE

**ACAT AGM - PRESENTATION OF ANNUAL REPORT AND
ACCOUNTS**

**ACAT (ABOLITION OF THE DEATH PENALTY)
PRESENTATION OF REPORT**

1.00 PM LUNCH - BRING YOUR OWN

AFTER LUNCH - SPEAKERS & QUESTIONS

STEVE GODDARD - VISITS TO NORTH KOREA

NAWAZ HANIF, REPRIEVE - TORTURE OF BRITISH SUBJECTS IN PAKISTAN

THERE IS NO CHARGE FOR THE DAY BUT DONATIONS WILL BE WELCOME

Please do your best to come. It is always an interesting day and it is an excellent chance for us all to meet other members and the Committee.

We are also in urgent need of new members to serve on the Committee who will be happy to take on some of the tasks and projects which we currently do not have time for. Do think seriously about this and if you think you can help, do get in touch with the Chairman, Rev Richard Dent 01934 861070

or

Eleanor Newland, Hon Secretary 01752 843417

INFORMATION - REPLIES FROM RUSSIAN FEDERATION

A considerable number of replies have been received from the Prosecutor's Office in St Petersburg in connection with the case of Ali Dzhaniyev, Magomed Adzhiev, Yusup Dpbriev, Yunus Dobriev, Russian Federation April/May 2010 Newsletter.

I have sent out replies to a good number of members about this case but there will no doubt be others whom I have not contacted - my apologies! Here is a translation of the letter most members received:-

"On 1.7.10 we received from the Prosecutor General's Office your request about the importance of carrying out quickly the preliminary investigation into the disappearance of the members of the following Ingush families:- Dobriyev, Adiyev and Janiyev. And also about the necessity to guarantee physical and psychological protection to the members of these families, including Ms Fatima Janiyev.

We have examined your request.

Earlier the Prosecutor's Office in St Petersburg had received similar requests from M Fatima Janiyev and Ms Tanzyl Dobriyev. We have examined those requests and have sent full and proper replies to these ladies, informing them that on 25.1.2010 criminal case No 122407 was instituted concerning the disappearance of Mr Dobriyev Un M, Mr Dobriyev Us.M, Mr Adjiyev M.A, Mr Janiyev A.M

The investigation is in progress at the moment. In the course of the investigation we will consider all possible leads and motives not excluding the possibility of a blood feud. The preliminary investigation's period is extended until the 25.07.2010.

We have also sent the copy of your request - the part concerning the physical and psychological protection of the missing men in case we find them and also of the members of their families including Ms Fatima Janiyev - to the head of the investigation department which deals with the especially important criminal cases in order to provide this protection.

The course of the investigation is under strict control".

As the preliminary investigation has now ended, those members who received replies may like to consider writing again to ask for the findings of the preliminary investigation to be published. Address:- Mr Yuriy Chaika, General Public Prosecutor, Prosecutor of the Russian Federation, 125993 Moscow GSP-3, 15a B. Dimitrovka str. Russian Federation (Dear Prosecutor)

Eleanor Newland.

JUDICIAL REVIEW - UK

The high court has given permission for a judicial review of the Government's failure to hold a public inquiry into the allegations of serious human rights abuses by members of the armed forces in Iraq. It said it could be argued that ill-treatment was systematic and not, as had been argued, carried out by a very small number of individual soldiers.

The documented abuse includes 59 allegations of detainees being hooded, 11 of electric shock treatment, 122 of sound deprivation through the use of ear muffs, 52 of sleep deprivation, 131 of sight deprivation using blackened goggles, 39 of enforced nakedness.

WOMEN HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGNERS, IRAN

The Islamic Revolution which took place in 1979, quickly revoked the family protection law introduced under the Shah, which gave women equal rights in issues such as divorce, but still allowed women to continue voting. On the other hand Mohammad Khatami, during his reformist 8 year presidency authorised the setting up of a Centre for Women's Participation, which resulted in the number of women's NGO's in Iran increasing from about 45 to over 500. From that time, feminism and wider human rights took hold in the country. There were contradictions - even as women were being encouraged to take part in human rights issues, the regime's conservative elements were working to silence them.

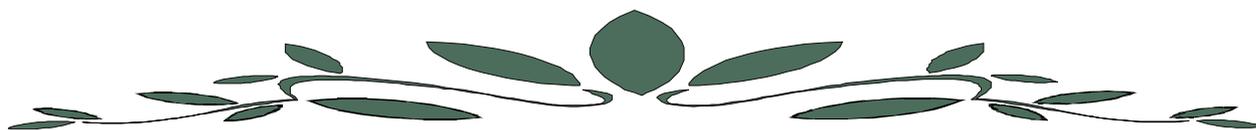
The scene was set for confrontation following the formation by veteran women activists of the One Million Signatures Campaign in 2006, the year which saw the election of Ahmadinejad for the first time. The Campaign was successful in forcing the temporary shelving of the new family protection law, which would have made polygamy easier for men and divorce more difficult for women. However, the power of the women activists, leaders in the street protests against the validity of the 2009 election results, set them on a collision course with the increasingly hard-line regime. The authorities have attempted to dismantle the women's rights movement and to cow it into silence under cover of dealing with national security concerns. There have been claims that the movement has links with "terrorism" or collaboration with foreign countries. In 2009 the authorities identified the women's rights movement as being one of six groups behind the attempted "velvet revolution". Women activists have in effect three options - to give up their roles as activists, to go to prison, or to leave the country.

Shirin Ebadi, the most prominent of the women activists, former judge and winner of the Nobel peace prize, and founder of the Centre for the Defence of Human Rights, and one of the leaders of the Million Signatures Campaign was constantly threatened, together with her family. She was warned not to return from a seminar in Spain at the time of the 2009 elections and has lived abroad since. Her non-activist sister was arrested in December, to put pressure on her and secure her silence.

Nasrin Sotoudeh, 45, an outspoken lawyer and colleague of Shirin Ebadi, member of the One Million Signatures Campaign was arrested in August. She had represented a number of opposition activists and protesters. She had become one of the very few lawyers and women's rights activists still working in Iran.

Shiva Nazar Ahari, 25, a member of the Committee for Human Rights Reporters, journalist and member of the One Million Signatures Campaign, had been arrested a number of times. She was arrested again in December and has been held incommunicado in Evin Prison. She was accused of links to terrorism and has recently been sentenced to 6 years imprisonment for muharebeh - waging war against God. This usually carries the death penalty. Charging her gives a clear message to other women activists that they could face execution if they continue their campaigning work.

Another women's activist who fled abroad is Shadi Sadr, who ran Rahai, a women's legal advice centre, campaigned against stoning and acted as defence lawyer for Shiva Nazar Ahari. She was abducted on the street in Tehran and taken to Evin Prison where she was held in solitary confinement and interrogated about other women's rights activists and told she would be charged with endangering national security by causing riots. In court she was accused of attempting to overthrow the republic. She managed to flee to Turkey. (Ref. The Guardian)



FOR YOUR PRAYERS

NORBOY HOLJIGITOV, UZBEKISTAN, human rights activist, sentenced to 20 years in prison in 2005; critically ill with multiple medical problems for which he receives no medical treatment; has been beaten and threatened with removal to a psychiatric hospital when he complains; pray for his release and for adequate medical treatment for him.

NASRIN SOTOUDEH, IRAN member of One Million Signatures Campaign and prominent human rights lawyer; she is held in Evin Prison; also for **SHIVA NAZAR AHARI, 26**, speaker for Iran's Committee of Human Rights Reporters and human rights activist arrested December 2009, held in solitary confinement, sentenced in August to 6 years' imprisonment, for "waging war against God", which often carries the death penalty.

NAOREM BUNGOCHANDRA, NAOREM BIKRAM,(cousins) INDIA/ MANIPUR, the two field workers were abducted by Police Commandos and a force of 12th Madras Regiment; Naorem Bikram died from torture in the police station and Naorem Bungochandra was severely injured; pray for their families and for justice.

SAKINEH MOHAMMADI ASHTIANI, IRAN, (update) sentenced to death by stoning but following international outcry, sentence replaced by death by hanging; she has been sentenced to 99 lashes for the publication of a photo in a western newspaper reputedly showing her not wearing suitable head covering - the photo was not of Sakineh; her family has been denied all access.

ABDULJALIL AL-SENGAIS, ABDULGHANI ALI ISSA AL-KHANJAR, BAHRAIN, and other human rights campaigners, arrested, tortured and now held incommunicado.

OMAR KHADR, GUANTANAMO/CANADA, aged 15 when he was captured by US forces and has been held for almost 8 years; now on trial by military commission; statements made under torture and ill-treatment are being allowed as evidence against him contrary to international law.

LIAO MEIZHI, CHINA, has been held for past 6 months in Yanshi mental hospital, Quianjiang, Hebei province because of her regular petitioning; she is not mentally sick

VAKHTANG MAISAIA, GEORGIA, investigative journalist, arrested in 2009, confessed to spying under duress, sentenced to 20 years imprisonment; severely beaten in August; he is held in Gldani Prison, Tbilisi.

PRAYER

Loving Lord Jesus, you who cried out to your Father from the cross,
hear the cries of those who have been abandoned, the tortured, the disappeared,
those awaiting execution, those held in incommunicado detention.

Here the cries of desolation of their loved ones.

For those oppressed by grief, remember Lord, your agony.

You, who came out of the tomb alive,
open your garden of life to death's captives.

Christ, in agony to the end of the world, remember all who suffer

Speak to them your words of comfort.

May they know that you are with them, in their loneliness, their fear, their suffering.

Help us to fully understand that nothing can separate them or us from your love.

PRISONER SUPPORT NOTES

I am pleased to say that all donations have been sent across to Fr. Bohan. The next transfer of funds will take place in late November, and I shall be glad to receive cheques, made payable to ACAT No.2 Account please by 15th of November. Please make sure you confirm the name of the prison where the person for whom the funds are donated is being held.

One of our members, Jennie Henderson, recently sent me a copy of what she had written and which shows how correspondence with a prisoner has affected her life. The letter follows these Notes.

Very many men in prison need some kind of support. Our Committee is looking into the situation in countries in addition to Zambia and I will report further on this in a future mailing. Thank you for all you do to help prisoners.

Ken Watson
34, Wantage Road,
Reading, RG30 2SF e mail uk.acat@gmail.com

PRISON CONDITIONS IN ZAMBIA

In May 2010 a 135 page report was published entitled "Unjust and Unhealthy" by a group of organisations, including Human Rights Watch, AIDS and Rights Alliance for Southern Africa and the Prisons Care and Counselling Association. These organisations were granted access to 6 prisons to research health conditions and related human rights violations. They found massive overcrowding, prisoners frequently abused and denied healthcare. Many were weak and malnourished, forced to sleep seated or in shifts, in dark, cramped and airless cells. They had no clean water for drinking and no soap to wash their blankets and clothes. TB and other infectious disease were rife. Inmates and staff receive little treatment for AIDS/HIV and other related illnesses, resulting in a death rate of around 20%. There are few healthcare workers, only one doctor to serve 15,300 prisoners; most prisons have no sick bay and those which do provide only the most basic care and medication. More than a third of prisoners are on remand. Some of these have been awaiting trial for more than five years. In that time they are likely to contact serious and life threatening diseases

FROM A MEMBER OF THE PRISONER SUPPORT SCHEME

I joined ACAT in 2007, having been a member of an Amnesty International Group since 1979. In recent years Amnesty has placed its emphasis on more general campaigns and, although I see the importance of these, I felt I wanted a commitment towards an individual prisoner. I therefore joined ACAT's Prisoner Support Scheme as well and was put in touch with Ken Watson.

In January 2008 Ken passed on a letter from a man called Moses, who was on death row in Mukobeko Prison in Kabwe, Zambia. This first letter, scattered liberally with biblical texts, described his desolation after his arrest in 1999, his re-birth in Christ ("His amazing grace found me in this dark slimy pit - praise God!) and his "new ambitions in the Kingdom of God". He also said how he had become so excited by his new life in the Lord that he had become "conceited" and how he believed God had humbled him when he was diagnosed with HIV/AIDS. Anti-retroviral drugs were prescribed and these had unpleasant side effects leading Moses to quote 2 Corinthians, "My grace is sufficient for you for my power is made perfect in weakness." He said that his suffering was "for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it."

I replied to Moses and thus began regular and frequent correspondence as we built up a trust and understanding of each other. I am the same age as Moses' mother and it made my heart ache when he told me she had been abandoned by his father years ago in favour of a younger woman and how she lived a long way from Kabwe and was unable to visit him. After a few months, Moses felt that he could confide to me the details of the crime for which he was

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS CAMPAIGN

The List should be ready to be sent out to all members and groups by the first week in November. It will include names and addresses of prisoners, persecuted Christians and human rights organisations. Full instructions will be given as in other years. More copies can be sent free of charge if requested. This List is available upon request for a small donation, to individuals and churches who are not ACAT subscribers. The List will then be sent out by post or email although only when a postal address is provided, in the case of email inquirers. Information about the Campaign but not the List will be available on the website.

This Campaign gives Christians the opportunity to send greetings and encouragement to those in prison, under persecution because of their faith or their work as human rights defenders. The List can be photocopied and cut up for distribution at church services and events.

This Campaign also gives ACAT a great opportunity to reach out to Christians and church congregations, with little or no knowledge of the work of ACAT. Do please do all that you can to publicise the Campaign in your area and among your friends. This is one way in which ACAT can gain new members and supporters.

ZIMBABWE

(Info from an extract in The Observer from a book by Peter Godwin, a Zimbabwe-born journalist, on a return visit)

It is two years since the signing of the treaty that brought into being the "unity government" of Robert Mugabe and Morgan Tsvangirai when it was hoped power would be shared and the country moved towards democracy. But few of the agreement's requirements leading to political reform have been met. The military, the police and the courts are all partisan. There is little freedom of the press. The intelligence service, the CIO, has not been curbed and remains totally unregulated. Public meetings and consultations which should be leading to a referendum on a new constitution and supervised elections are broken up by force and intimidation.

Since the advent of the "unity government" no one has been brought to justice for any of the appalling atrocities - the assaults, rapes, abductions, torture, murders, house burnings - carried out by Mugabe's henchmen during the year survivors have called "The Fear" - the year of the elections.

A MEETING OF SURVIVORS OF TORTURE

He speaks of a meeting in the wild grounds of a Catholic convent on the edge of Harare where he meets with 9 torture survivors who sit in an "agreement circle" and share their stories of torture". This is a "Tree of Life" - a self-help organisation, with its own facilitator, who has also been tortured, trying to assist the country's many tortured to heal themselves. They work out how they will share their stories, retreat to each sit under his/her own tree to reflect; they pick a totem - a pod, a twig, a seed etc. When they go back to the "trauma circle" they share their horror stories and help each other to rebuild their shattered minds and their self esteem. At the end of the meeting each person discards the totem - "we burn **them**, bury them, and throw them away without looking back. It reinforces the idea of starting anew."

Kojana, a former physical education teacher and facilitator told Peter Godwin:- "I was suicidal when I came to the Tree of Life. Then I began to see that, like a tree that has been through droughts, fires, limb cutting, I too could survive. Like a tree, which still gives fruit and shelter to birds and insects and man, I can also do that; I can fend for my family. I am still someone. A human being. There is still a reason for me to live. I can still be something in my society".

A TRULY MOVING AFFAIR

ACAT(uk) were very privileged to be invited to the service in Westminster Abbey to mark the visit of Pope Benedict xvi on 17th September.

Margaret Russell, our Membership Secretary and I, representing the charity, were part of the large congregation which comprised Roman Catholic, Protestant, Greek and other Orthodox priests and Ministers and very many lay people.

The Pope had first come across the Thames in the 'Popemobile' to Westminster Hall where he told a large crowd, including four former Prime Ministers, to beware of 'aggressive atheism' in this country. Large TV screens were strategically placed in the Abbey so we saw and heard the ceremony in the Hall, although it was difficult to follow the Pope's argument because his English was tinged with a heavy German accent and he spoke quickly.

The Abbey was alive with people and colour. It was significant that the many Bishops seemed to have been arranged sitting alternately Anglican, Roman, Anglican, Roman ! The long procession of representatives from many Christian churches, interspersed with bright banners of religious organisations was most impressive. The singing of the hymns was full-blooded, of course and the architecture and statues added greatly to the importance of the occasion.

This is not a full report by any means. You have probably read accounts in the national press. What I can tell you, however, is something which perhaps was not apparent from either newspapers or TV: the atmosphere inside and inside the Abbey.

Outside, the crowds against the barriers mingled with police, some people were singing hymns and choruses, others held small placards, both in favour of and hostile to, the Pope. We saw no 'demonstrations'. Apparently many people traipsed through London chanting 'He belongs in jail' but we didn't hear any of that.

Inside, the atmosphere and the very service itself were special and, moving. After the Pope's address I said to myself that although there are many subjects: authority, women priests, contraception, homosexual relations, on which I disagree with him, the feeling of being 'all one in Jesus Christ' was very strong. Different ways of worshipping God and expressing theology are inevitable and even desirable because human beings are all very different in themselves. Anything else would be undesirable and even unthinkable.

We came away feeling optimistic for the Church, in all its various forms. The Christian faith is strong in those who believe and the Holy Spirit's power, gentle but persistent, was much in evidence.

Our charity was indeed privileged to be represented at such a momentous and rare event. Fifty years ago it could not have been talked about, let alone taken place.

Richard Dent

GOOD NEWS ----

We mentioned in the last Newsletter the nineteen Turkish officials, including police officers and prison guards, who have been imprisoned for life for their part in the torture and subsequent death of political activist Engin Ceber.

We should add that this judgment and sentence marks an important step in the struggle against impunity in Turkey. This is the first time in the country's legal history that state officials have received life sentences for causing death by torture.

Engin Ceber was arrested after taking part in a protest against the shooting of another activist, and died after being beaten in police custody.

(Thanks to Amnesty International for this information)

----- AND BAD NEWS

There is evidence that at least two British citizens have been severely tortured in Bangladesh during the last 18 months and one in Cairo in July 2008.

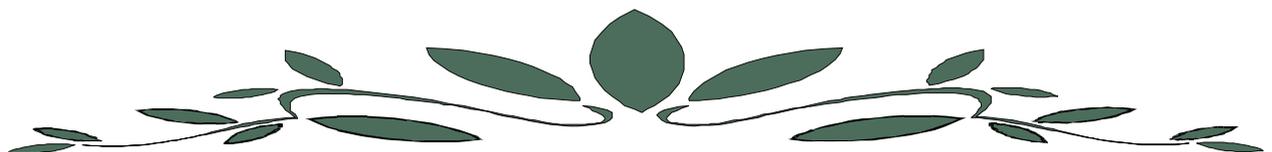
One of the men tortured in Bangladesh, Faisal Mostafa, was detained in March 2009. He has twice been cleared of terrorism offences in the UK. He says he was suspended from his wrists for days at a time, hung upside down, given electric shocks, beaten, deprived of food and exposed to bright lights for long periods.

Faisal Mostafa is a chemistry lecturer from Greater Manchester.

The other man, Gulam Mustafa, aged 48 and no relation, is a restaurateur from Birmingham and was detained in Dhaka in April this year. Following interrogation he was transferred to a prison hospital, where he spent the next three months being treated for injuries sustained during that questioning.

(from 'The Guardian')

(NOTE: This is what torture is like. Sometimes we forget that. We MUST continue our efforts to bring about its abolition. RD.)



PRAYER AND REFLECTION

"Words, words, words" is what Hamlet replied to Polonius when asked what he was reading.

Too often our prayer is made up of "words, words, words."

Today I would invite you to join in prayer, in your own way, in your own time, and using pictures, words and pure silence.

You might like to meditate and pray on one or more of the following themes:-

The centre of our faith is an innocent young man tortured to death.

Picture the CROSS, the PAIN, the HUMILIATION, the DEATH

None of these scenes, be they only in our imaginations, is pleasant

MEDITATE upon the role of the soldiers, whose job it was to crucify.

Was it just a job? Were their feelings or prejudices ever involved?

NOW, in the present age picture men and women wait in prison cells, hearing the cries of their fellow prisoners being tortured. They wait for their turn to come.

Try to imagine yourself in their predicament.

PRAY FOR THEM, FEEL WITH THEM, for their torturers and for those who permit and encourage it.

REFLECT upon what it must mean to be those named in at least one of our Appeals.

TRY TO IMAGINE their feelings, their fears, their worries.

PRAY FOR WISDOM IN YOUR PRAYING
PRAY FOR KNOWLEDGE IN YOUR PRAYING
PRAY FOR INVOLVEMENT IN YOUR PRAYING

PEOPLE MATTER. In the end human rights are about people being treated and feeling like people who matter. The multitude and complexity of the problems of oppression and injustice often seem to overwhelm us.

BUT WE CAN DO SOMETHING.

ABOVE ALL WE MUST TAKE RISKS FOR GOD. **LISTEN** to those who experience oppression;

ENGAGE in the mutual process of liberation.

Quaker Yearly Meeting 1986

**LORD, in all the suffering and torture in your world
may I be ready to take risks for You.**



Pause for thought

*"Father of all mercies,
have mercy we pray
on all those under persecution
for the testimony of their
conscience"*

(Sir Walter Raleigh – 1585)

We hope you will find this mailing stimulating and challenging! We welcome contributions from members - from your own experience or your recent activities in ACAT or other human rights work.

Contributions, written, typed or e-mail to:-

Margaret Russell
c/o ACAT office(address below)
Please send to arrive by 17th November 2010

E mail uk.acat@gmail.com
Web www.acatuk.org.uk

Contact address:

ACAT UK
8 Southfield
SALTASH
PL12 4LX

President: *Rev. Dr. Paul Oestreicher*

Patrons: *Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, Bishop Peter Price, "Chas" Raws,
Rev. David Deeks, Professor Lord David Alton, Rev. David Cornick*

Registered Charity No. 1072628