ARTISTS FOR AMNESTY

ARTISTS FOR AMNESTY IS A GROUP OF ARTISTS COMMITTED TO PREVENTING HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES, SAVING LIVES AND PROMOTING A GREATER UNDERSTANDING OF UNIVERSAL HUMAN RIGHTS.

MONTHLY BULLETIN

APRIL 2007

WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS IN MEXICO

Guest edited by Natalia Calderon, Jessica Barker and Ana Cuellar

March was International Women's Month and AFA hosted two events that focused on Amnesty's work on behalf of women and children.

On March 25th, we three high school students and AFA interns, spoke at an Amnesty International benefit concert at the Museum of Latin American Art in Long Beach featuring Emmy-nominated actress, musician, and author Michele Dominguez Greene to pay tribute to the women of Juarez. Since 1993, more than 400 women in the border city of Juarez, Mexico have been kidnapped, raped, and murdered. To learn more about what you can do to help stop this gender-based discrimination, log on to www.amnestyusa.org/bordertown.

Ciudad Juarez © Amnesty International

Lydia Cacho Ribeiro © Amnesty International USA

We also attended a salon honoring Amnesty International's 2007 "Ginetta Sagan Award" winner Lydia Cacho Ribeiro. Ms. Cacho Ribeiro, an investigative journalist and specialist on gender-based violence, is one of Mexico's leading defenders of children's and women's rights. She founded and directs the Centro Integral de Atencion a las Mujeres (CIAM) in Cancun. CIAM is a crisis center and shelter for victims of sex crimes, gender-based violence, and trafficking. Some of the victims of these crimes are as young as five years old. Throughout the course of her advocacy work, Ms. Cacho has received numerous death threats, and in 1999 was raped in an attempt to intimidate her. This incident only served to embolden her to further protect and advance the rights of women and children in her country. Ms. Cacho also initiated an innovative educational project to help children deal with the emotional and psychological impacts of abuse. She helped establish *Escuelas Para la Paz* (Schools for Peace), Mexican schools dedicated to promoting non-violent conflict resolution methods to help stop the cycle of violence in society.

On December 16, 2005, Ms. Cacho was again arrested and denied access to her lawyer and medicine. In response to these tactics of indimidation, she filed a successful counter-suit for corruption and human rights violations. Ms. Cacho is the first woman in Mexico who has ever filed a federal suit against a Governor, a District Attorney, and a judge for corruption and attempted rape in prison. This lawsuit is ongoing. In the face of personal danger, Ms. Cacho continues to champion the advancement of human rights for women and children.

Learn more about Lydia and the Ginetta Sagan Fund at www.amnestyusa.org/Our_Mission_and_the_Movement/The_Ginetta_Sagan_Fund/

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Fear for the Safety of Haitian Migrant Workers in the Dominican Republic

In 2006, Amnesty International representatives visited Santo Domingo, Dajabon, and other communities of Haitian migrant workers in the Dominican Republic. What they found led them to express concern for the safety and human rights of undocumented migrant workers and Dominican nationals of Haitian descent. They
interviewed representatives of NGOs, the public, Haitian migrant workers, and Dominicans of Haitian descent. Haitians have been crossing the border into the Dominican Republic for decades, whether to flee political persecution or to escape economic hardship back home. Most of them live and work year round in the *bateyes*, the permanent communities of migrant workers surrounding the plantations of the highly profitable sugar industry. Conditions in these communities are characterized by inadequate healthcare, education, nutrition, and other basic human rights.

Among the 1,000,000 Haitians currently living in the Dominican Republic, many work in construction sites, the tourist industry, hotels, restaurants, and manufacturing plants. In the last 20 years, more Haitian migrant workers have moved to urban areas for work in other sectors, leading to calls for state action to limit the number of Haitian immigrants. Amnesty International's major concern is that the Dominican Republic's immigration laws are inconsistent with international human rights standards, and that the basic human rights of these populations are being denied. Haitian migrants are targeted by immigration officers for checks of identity documents, often leading to arbitrary detention and mass expulsions.
Furthermore, thousands of Dominican children of Haitian descent are consistently being denied economic, civil, political rights, education, and freedom from discrimination.

Read the report "Dominican Republic: A life in transit – The Plight of Haitian Migrants and Dominicans of Haitian Descent" and take action:

http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGAMR270012007?open&of=ENG-DOM

GUANTANAMO: DAVID HICKS PLEADS GUILTY TO ONE COUNT

At a hearing in Guantánamo Bay on 26 March, in his sixth year of detention and at the start of the U.S. administration's second attempt in the last three years to try him before a military commission, Australian national David Hicks pleaded guilty to one charge of "providing material support for terrorism." He has been sentenced to seven years, but will serve only nine months in an Australian prison with credit for time served. A condition of his sentence will prohibit him from ever making claims of mistreatment while in U.S. custody.

This plea was made after years of indefinite detention, isolation and allegations of torture and ill-treatment, and after a day in which Hicks' legal representation was reduced by the military judge overseeing the commission.

David Hicks was one of 10 detainees to be charged under military commissions established under President George W. Bush's Military Order of November 2001. Those proceedings were halted in November 2004 by a US District Court judge and ruled unlawful by the US Supreme Court in *Hamdan v. Rumsfeld* in late June 2006. In early March 2007, David Hicks was the first person to be charged under the Military Commissions Act, legislation signed into law by President Bush in October 2006 in response to the *Hamdan* ruling.

David Hicks. © Private

The proceedings in the Hicks case do not bode well for the 60 to 80 people that the government says it will prosecute under the military commission system. The proceedings reaffirm the need to close the Guantánamo detention camp as a matter of urgency and to end the lawlessness that it has come to symbolize.

The military commissions should be scrapped. Guantánamo detainees should be charged with recognizable criminal offenses and brought to fair trial before a competent, independent and impartial tribunal, such as a U.S. District Court, or else released with full protections against further abuse.

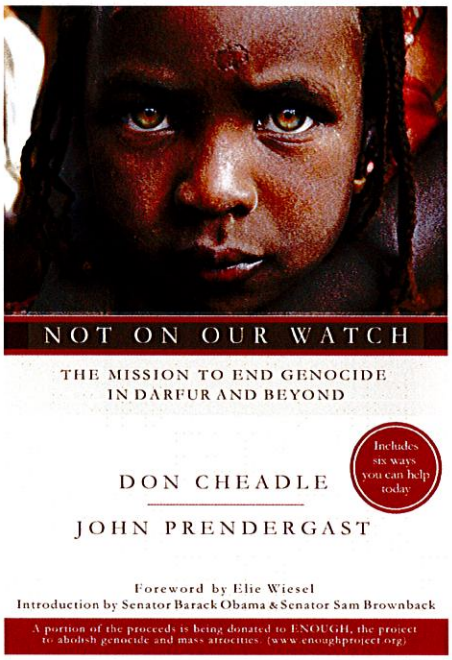
Learn more at www.amnestyusa.org/waronterror/reportonhicks.html

NOT ON OUR WATCH: THE MISSION TO END GENOCIDE

While Don Cheadle was filming *Hotel Rwanda*, a new crisis had erupted in Darfur, Sudan. Though the conflict has claimed over 200,000 lives and displaced nearly three million people. Shocked and angered by this ongoing tragedy, Cheadle joined forces with activist John Prendergast to focus the world's attention on this humanitarian crisis. The result, *Not on Our Watch*, analyzes the crisis in Darfur and offers readers six strategies that they can implement in order to make a difference in the fate of a nation and a people.

Join Facing History, Amnesty International USA and Jewish World Watch as we welcome Don Cheadle and John Prendergast for the Los Angeles launch of *Not on Our Watch: the Mission to End Genocide in Darfur and Beyond*, on Thursday, April 26, 7:30-9:00 pm. Wilshire Theater, 8440 Wilshire Blvd. This is a free event. Tickets are limited to 2 per person and attendees will receive a complimentary copy of the book while supplies last. Doors open at 6:30 pm.

Please RSVP to LNoyce@aiusa.org.



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