



A.I.H.R.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

HUMAN RIGHTS

CARNEGIE MELLON UNIVERSITY

# From the President's Desk...

Friends of Amnesty International at Carnegie Mellon,

We at Amnesty International want to provide a platform for students so that they can bring human rights issues they care about to the attention of the campus community. Our goal is to form a cohesive group of students who are passionate about human rights and can trust each other to respect their opinions. This year, we've really seen this goal realized. We've gotten to know each other well by planning events and discussing human rights issues. Our members are a quirky bunch – funny, knowledgeable, frank, and united by our passion for human rights.

We've had a great year so far and there's more to come. Last semester, we screened a documentary about conflict minerals, lead a discussion and letter writing campaign centering on the death of Troy Davis, and contributed to the campus discussion about the new graduate program in Rwanda. Along with FORGE and UNICEF, we organized a concert in Skibo to raise funds and awareness for the famine in the Horn of Africa.

This semester, we've learned a lot from each other as students taught the group about improvements in human rights in Burma, governance changes in Syria, the Arab Spring, and the Kony 2012 campaign. Now, we're gearing up for "Fair Trade Week," a series of fun events to teach students about injustices in global trade and how fair trade seeks to address those injustices. Working with SIFE Global Threads, we will use these events as a springboard to petition Hershey to stop sourcing cocoa from farms in West Africa that use child labor.

We're so thankful for our members, our partner organizations, and our university. Carnegie Mellon is a great place to unite passionate and smart people and a great home for Amnesty International.

Caroline Roper

President 2011-2012

CMU Amnesty International

# A Word from the Editor...

Dear Friends,

It gives me immense pleasure to present the very first edition of AIHR, the official newsletter of the Carnegie Mellon University's Chapter of Amnesty International, a newsletter meant to highlight particular global issues which members of our club are passionate about. It is our wish to educate and inform the students of the university of instances of human rights violations which are taking place in some part of the world right now, while we are busy with midterms, homework assignments and deadlines.

Happy reading!

Arushi Chawla

Vice President and Editor  
CMU Amnesty International

# Migrant Detainees in Ukraine

By Catherine Ciriello

The Carnegie Mellon Chapter of Amnesty International has been actively involved in human rights awareness and justice around the world. In our February 22,



2012 meeting, we discussed alleged mistreatment of migrant detainees in a center in Ukraine. We discussed what was happening and how we could make a difference. We decided to write a letter. Amnesty International has been part of a letter writing campaign for many years and each person can do his or her part. Our letters were sent to Vitaly Zakharchenko, the Minister of Internal

Affairs for Ukraine, Oleksandr Lavrinovich, the Minister of Justice for Ukraine, and Vikror Pshonka, the General Prosecutor for Ukraine. Below is the body of the letter that each of us hand wrote to our chosen official.

*I am writing to express my concern over the alleged mistreatment of the detainees at the Migrant Accommodation Centre in Zhuraychi, Western Ukraine. Detainees have reported that they have been beaten, forced into isolation, and received death threats. Detainees in need of medical care have not received the care that they needed. I urge you to make sure that the detainees are not subject to maltreatment or torture. As your country has signed UN Convention against Torture and the European Convention on Human Rights, I ask that you adhere to those expectations.*

*The detainees have reported mistreatment and that is in violation of the conventions. I ask that you call for an investigation into these allegations. This investigation needs to take place as soon as possible to maintain the security of the detainees. As a country that ratified the UN Refugee Convention, you agreed to not send people in risk of human rights violations back to their home country. Current Somali and Eritrean refugees are in danger if they are returned to their home country. I ask that you release them and do not hold them for deportation. Based on the history of deportation in Ukraine, there is little chance of Somali and Eritrean nationals being deported. I urge you to not hold these people indefinitely without the chance of release or deportation.*

*I look forward to hearing from you on this important matter.*

# The Death of Bin Laden: A Human Rights Violation?

By Emily Furnish  
Edited by Kamy Wakim

Many argue that Osama bin Laden should have no right to life based on the crimes he organised and supported against the United States. But International Humanitarian Law does not change because of former crimes. Former President Pervez Musharraf claims that his civilians are quite sensitive to the concept of Pakistan autonomy and the ability of their own army to protect themselves (qtd. Ray and Srinivasan 2011). The case of Osama bin Laden is a prime example of how the United States abused another country's rights, and bin Laden's rights as a human being.

For months the CIA had gathered information about Osama bin Laden and the compound he and some of his cohorts were hiding in. After eight months of researching and deliberating, President Obama gave the order to descend upon the compound in Pakistani land where American special operation forces killed Osama bin Laden along with one of his sons and two others. President Obama declared this to be "justice" (Ackerman 2011).

It seems as if President Obama and many others have a distinctly different interpretation of International Humanitarian Laws and 'justice' than many human rights scholars. When Pakistani people found out that the US entered Pakistan to kill Osama bin Laden without their government's permission or knowledge, an overwhelming 90% of them disapproved. Ridden as Pakistan is with terrorist activity, "nearly half of all Pakistanis (46%) said his death made their country less safe from terrorism" (Ray and Srinivasan 2011). In fact, the number of suicide bombings after bin Laden's death increased, and these were attributed to a motivation for revenge (Ibid). But perhaps the lack of an effort to preserve Bin Ladin's life was due to American bloodthirstiness. 60% of Americans wanted Osama bin Laden to be killed upon sight, and agreed that he deserved no trial (Ray and Srinivasan 2011).

But in order to win any sort of war, in order to liberate any sort of people, in order to protect any sort of country, the United States must first ensure that its actions are justified and desired. This situation should be reevaluated.

# Why the United States Should Not Lift Sanctions on Myanmar

By Jake Housen

In response to certain actions that are intended to signal that political reform is being affected by Myanmar's ruling military junta, the United States has lifted some of the sanctions placed upon the country for its atrocious human rights violations, and has plans to lift even more in the future. These actions include the release of roughly five hundred political prisoners and the passage of a constitution in 2008. The United States should not lift any additional sanctions because the actions of the military junta have not been very effective and do not address many of the other human rights violations being carried out in Myanmar.

For example, the five hundred political prisoners released were only a small percentage of the political prisoners held, with an estimated 1700 still in captivity. In addition, the new constitution also features many flaws; it grants complete immunity to the ruling members of the military junta, requires that members of military backed party hold at least a quarter of the seats in parliament and, because any attempt to change the constitution requires the support of at least three quarters of the members of parliament, it makes changing the constitution without the juntas backing nearly impossible.



Even if these political reforms had been legitimate, the Myanmar government has done nothing to address the most egregious human rights violation being carried out in Myanmar, which is the ethnic cleansing of the Karen and the Shan minorities. Members of these minorities have been waging a guerilla war against the military dictatorship for many years, and while it is understandable that the military would try to put down these groups, its tactics for doing so are horrendous. The military burns down Karen and Shan villages and forcibly relocate the villagers to overcrowded cities, regardless of whether or not they are members of, or support, the guerillas. Members of the military also rape Karen and Shan women in order to dissuade people from joining or supporting the militias, and as a way of punishing those who do. There is also the issue of the Myanmar government forcing its civilians to perform labor, such as highway

building and maintaining national monuments. The practice of forced labor has been outlawed in Myanmar; however, rather than stopping the practice, it instead claims that the laborers are “volunteers”. This seems unlikely considering that one of the jobs that the military has Karen and Shan children “volunteers” perform is landmine sweeping, a process in which the children are sent out without any equipment to trip mines that will injure or kill them. In addition, many analysts believe that Burma has been working with North Korea to develop nuclear technology, including nuclear weapons.

In summary, while on the surface Myanmar’s political reforms appear to be steps in the right direction, they do not go far enough, and do not do anything to address many of the appalling human rights violations still being committed. As such, the United States government should not lift anymore sanction until these problems are addressed.

# Demystifying the Arab Spring

By Eve Stoffel

The region broadly known as the Middle East, an area of near-constant warfare, is currently undergoing regime changes of a different sort. In some countries, citizens have joined together to protest, and in some cases overthrow, repressive governments. So far, protesters have successfully removed leaders in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Yemen. Many other countries have experienced civil uprisings or major protests; these include Bahrain, Syria, Algeria, Morocco, Jordan, Kuwait, and Oman.



The protesters' demands generally fall into four broad categories: Islamism, women's rights, education, and use of the media. Even within the Middle East, there is much debate about the pros and cons of shari'a law and state protection of Islam. Both in the region and worldwide, perceptions about the role of Islam in government changed after the 1979 Iranian Revolution. Westerners tend to think that greater citizen involvement in government prevents tyranny, while Islamists think that the implementation of shari'a law prevents tyranny.

In many Middle Eastern countries, there is still much debate about the "proper" role of women. This issue has serious economic consequences, as restricting women's freedoms and employment abilities effectively halves a country's workforce. However, while some use Islam to suppress women, many Islamic feminists endeavor to promote the idea that Islam requires everyone be treated with justice and dignity, regardless of gender.

Countries in the Middle East have some of the highest unemployment rates for people ages 18 to 24 in the entire world. Educated workers are often not desired, and educational reforms have been largely unsuccessful. However, the recent Arab Spring uprisings have demonstrated that these same young people have created a citizen-journalist phenomenon. Some see media, especially social media, as a weapon against oppressive regimes, but the government also uses it to promote their own messages and regulate those of others.



Reactions in the United States and in the West more broadly to the Arab Spring uprisings have been mixed. Some advocate for an interpretation of the Carter Doctrine that would encompass increasingly democratic systems in the Middle East as in the interest of the United States. On some level, it is contradictory for an outside force to encourage democracy and increased roles for citizens in government. Finally, while at the present moment it is unlikely that the Arab Spring movements will devolve into a larger, global conflict it is still to be determined whether the West will be able to respect the sovereignty of Islamic regimes or try to mold them in its own image.

# FAIR TRADE WEEK

APRIL 23-28

SPONSORED BY AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL AND  
SIFE GLOBAL THREADS

Monday April 23rd

***The Dark Side of  
Chocolate:*** Screening & Debate  
Porter Hall 125B//4:30 PM

Wednesday April 25th

***Fashion Show and  
Marketplace***

UC Connan//7:30 PM

Saturday April 28th

***LaPrima Company  
Tour @ The Strip***

UC Turnaround//9:00 AM

Tour//10:00 AM