

**AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL
HAMMERSMITH AND FULHAM BRANCH
May, 2012 Newsletter**



Migrant Domestic Workers

Home Secretary Theresa May has announced changes to the overseas domestic workers visa scheme which risks leaving thousands of vulnerable workers, overwhelmingly women, open to labour or sexual exploitation. Under the changes which took effect on 6 April 2012, overseas domestic workers in private households will only be allowed to enter Britain for a maximum of six months and will not be allowed to change employer. Under the new rules, they are barred from extending their stay, switching employer, sponsoring dependents to come to Britain, or applying for settlement. We wrote to the Home Secretary to request the previous rights of the Overseas Domestic Worker Visa be restored, and to ensure that all overseas domestic workers have the right to change employer, including those in diplomatic households.

Feminist Punks detained in Russia

Three young women, (Maria Alekhina, Ekaterina Samutsevich, and Nadezhda Tolokonnikova) are being detained and charged with hooliganism by the Russian authorities for allegedly performing a protest song in a cathedral as part of a

feminist punk group 'Pussy Riot'. The video can be watched on YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ALS92big4TY> . We have written to the Russian authorities calling for the charges to be dropped immediately and for the unconditional release of the three women.

Journalist detained in Sudan

A prominent journalist, Faisal Mohammed Salih, was arrested in Sudan on 8 May by the National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS). He is believed to be detained for giving an interview critical of the government. He is being held incommunicado and is at serious risk of torture and other ill-treatment. We have written to the Sudanese authorities requesting that Faisal Mohammed Salih be immediately and unconditionally released.

Amazon Communities threatened by Loggers

Rural leaders and farmers in the south-east of Amazonas state, are facing death threats and attacks from illegal loggers and land-grabbers (grileiros) encroaching upon their lands. At least six people have been killed in the region since 2007, while the Pastoral Land Commission (CPT) reports receiving reports of at least eight people receiving death threats in 2011. Dinhana Nink was shot dead and Nilcilene Miguel de Lima, a community leader who had spoken out about the encroachment of illegal

loggers onto the reserves, has been beaten and threatened at gunpoint, her house was burned down and she had to be provided with armed protection by federal authorities. We have written to the Brazilian authorities calling for immediate steps to be taken to ensure the safety of all those living on reserves in Lábrea municipality, including providing them with a permanent public security presence.

Wanted: A Bulletproof Arms Trade Treaty

It is now crunch time for the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). After a series of preparatory meetings, formal negotiations on the final treaty will take place at the UN between the 2nd and the 27th of July. These negotiations are our LAST opportunity to ensure that the treaty is robust and not just hollow law.

We must urge world leaders to champion robust legislation and lobby for a Treaty that:

- Protects human rights by guaranteeing that any transfer of arms is stopped if there is evidence that they are likely to be used in violation of international human rights or humanitarian law.
- Is comprehensive so as to include all types of conventional weapons and equipment and all transfers and transactions, including those undertaken by middlemen.
- Is enforceable and transparent to ensure all governments must adopt strong national rules and regulations and publicly

report on their arms sale so they can be held accountable for their actions.

- Actually enters into force because, believe it or not, even once the Treaty is agreed it will only be binding if a set number of states introduce national legislation to ratify it. This number is to be determined at the final negotiations in July.

For these reasons, the subject of the May stall is the ATT and we will be signing and sending open letters to key players to ensure that they really do create a bulletproof treaty.

EVENTS

Arms Trade Stall

On Saturday 19th May from 10am to 4pm we will be holding a stall and signing petitions in support of the Arms Trade Treaty on King Street in Hammersmith. The more signatures we get, the more certain we can be of a bulletproof arms trade treaty.

Contact Victoria Brignell, stall coordinator on 02087467750 for more details.

Garden open in aid of Amnesty International

On Monday May 28th from 10 am until 2 pm the garden of Swan House, (Chiswick Mall, London, W4 2Ps) will be open in aid of Amnesty International. Swan House garden is an informal walled garden on the river Thames with a herbaceous border, fruit trees, a small vegetable garden, and two tiny ponds. There is a suggested minimum donation to Amnesty of £1.50.

Refugee Week: 18th – 24th June

Refugee Week is a UK-wide programme of events including arts, culture, and educational events that offers a fantastic opportunity to discover and celebrate the contribution that refugees bring to the UK and to encourage better understanding between communities. Two events of note during Refugee Week are:

***Celebrating Sanctuary London,
Sunday 17 June 2 -7 pm***

Bernie Spain Gardens, upper Ground, London SE1 (adjacent to Oxo Tower Wharf) Free Admission. It's a one day multi-arts festival that launches Refugee Week with new talent across its three stages, pulsating with the sounds of live music, the flow of the spoken word, the sizzle of food and the rhythms of dance.

***Casablanca Event
Friday 22 June 6 – 10 pm***

This Friday evening event at the Victoria & Albert Museum will be a secret cinema style event with screenings of the film Casablanca, music, dance, performance art and the V&A exhibits.

Our next meeting is on;

Date : Monday, 12th of June.

Time : 7:45 for 8pm.

Duration : 1 hour.

Address : Amnesty Bookshop, 139B King Street, Hammersmith.

Telephone (Bookshop) : 02087463172

And afterwards we go to the pub! **See you there!**