

AIUSA Mid-Atlantic Weekly Update

March 11, 2008

ACTION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS. HOPE FOR HUMANITY

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Calendar

3/15: DE State Meeting

3/15: Internship Application Deadline

3/18: We Care Concert

3/19: Religion in GITMO

3/29: Maryland State Meeting

3/31: RPG Application Deadline

3/31-4/4: National Week of Student Action

4/13: Global Day for Darfur

4/25-28: AIUSA's Annual General Meeting & National Lobby Day

Highlight

New Member Packets Now Available!

The Mid-Atlantic Regional Office has compiled a new member welcome kit sample and template for your group to use in recruiting and welcoming new members. The kit was developed based on feedback from our 2007 group leader training and other conversations with groups and volunteer leaders. We hope that you will review the sample kit, which contains materials as they would exist for our example group, 555, and utilize the available template versions to create your own material. We envision the new member welcome kits to be distributed in a folder for ease of transportation.

To see the materials (in word & PDF format) and sample packet (PDF) please visit <http://www.amnestyusa.org/members/mid-atlantic/#NewMemberWelcomePacket>

To access this page you must have a password for the Members section. All members can apply for a password by filling out this form: <http://amnestyusa.org/signup.html>

Please let your Field Organizer know if you have any questions about the material.

Take Action

President Bush Vetoes Anti-Torture Law

Saturday, President Bush blocked a tough anti-torture law that would have restricted the CIA from using waterboarding and other "alternative interrogation techniques."

The bill would have required the CIA to abide by the same guidelines the military forces use when conducting interrogations.

Experienced, professional interrogators continue to testify that torture is not an effective interrogation tool.

We believe torture is wrong, ineffective and does not make us safer.

Don't let Bush have the last word. Submit a Letter to the Editor (LTE) to your local paper or call your local radio station.

For more information about how to write an LTE visit: <http://tinyurl.com/2ovvww>

For more information or to add an event to the calendar contact: maintern4@aiusa.org.

To find talking points and contact information for your local paper visit: <http://tinyurl.com/3bore8>

It is Time to Repeal Maryland's Death Penalty – MD ONLY

Tell Your Legislators What You Think – Thursday, March 13th 1 pm

The Death Penalty Repeal Bill (House Bill 1328) will be heard in the House Judiciary Committee - House Office Building, 1st floor, 6 Bladen St. RSVP here: <http://mdcase.org/civicrm/event/info?reset=1&id=3>

Attend the hearings on Thursday!

Hearings start at 1:00 pm. Multiple bills will be heard each afternoon so it is hard to predict exactly when the repeal bills will be called. Note: you will need ID to enter the buildings. Info on parking can be found at: <http://www.annapolis.gov/info.asp?page=8305>

Oral testimony will be limited, but if you would like to submit written testimony, please let us know: Contact saraklemm@mdcase.org or call 301-779-5230.

Can't make it to Annapolis?

Call your *Senator on the 6th* and *Delegates on the 13th*. Urge them to support repeal of the death penalty – House Bill 1328 & Senate Bill 645. General Assembly switchboard: 800-492-7122

Find out who represents you here: www.mdelect.net

If you need to know where your legislators stand on the death penalty, email saraklemm@mdcase.org or call 301-779-5230.

Expert Organizing Tip: The larger our numbers, the stronger the movement. Form coalitions with other Amnesty groups! The National Week of Student Action is coming up and it is not limited to students, local groups can still be involved. Contact area coordinators and student area coordinators to find the closest Amnesty chapter to you and work together.

Campaign Updates

Individuals At Risk

Iryna Kazulina, the wife of prisoner of conscience, Alyaksandr Kazulin, Dies

Almost a thousand people attended the funeral of Iryna Kazulina on February 27 at Minsk church. After threatening a no liquids hunger strike, former presidential candidate Alyaksandr Kazulin was allowed a three day leave from prison to attend the funeral of his wife. This time allowed him to give a public assessment of ongoing political processes. At an online conference arranged by RFE/RL's Belarus Service, Kazulin declared he is not broken by prison.

Kazulin was arrested during antigovernment demonstrations after the March 2006 presidential election. He was

then sentenced to five and a half years in prison for disturbing the public.

"Earlier, I was not a politician, but I have turned into one now after passing all these ordeals," Kazulin said during the conference. "My goal is to serve my people and my Belarus. I will not spare anything for this, including my life. And these are not hollow words,"

Opportunities

Summer Internships With Amnesty International

Attention all college students interested in a summer internship!- DEADLINE APPROACHING

Did you know that the Amnesty International office in Washington, DC offers internships for summer, fall, and spring? Now is the time to start thinking about applying for the internship. The deadline to apply for the summer term is March 15th, 2008.

The Mid-Atlantic Office currently has 2 spots open for the summer. This is a highly competitive internship program, so we recommend you start preparing early.

More information about the requirements for the DC internship program, and other programs in the DC office offering internships, please see the following link: <http://tinyurl.com/36ah6p>

Regional & National Events

Annual General Meeting

Attention MARO Volunteer Leaders: The AGM is QUICKLY APPROACHING!!!

Washington, DC • April 25-28, 2008

The AGM is a great opportunity to learn more about the organization, exercise your organizational citizenship by voting on resolutions, and meeting with organizational leaders. This year you'll have the chance to hear from Irene Kahn, Amnesty International's Secretary General. For more info on the AGM, visit www.amnestyusa.org/agm.

Is your group ready? Get prepared by reminding group members of the dates and details, creating an attendance goal and a budget, and fundraising to meet that goal. Your budget should cover travel, lodging, registration fees, food, and cool Amnesty stuff! Remember that every member who volunteers 5 hours on site will receive free registration! Fundraise by seeking sponsors, collecting group dues, selling Equal Exchange merchandise, t-shirts or other items, or holding a fundraising event. For more ideas and how-to's contact your Mid-Atlantic Field Organizer at 202.544.0200.

Breanna Peterson (VA, MD, WV) ext. 269
Jen Horwitz (DC, PA, DE) ext. 344

Mark Your Calendar – 2 events coming up

Global Day for Darfur – April 13th

The conflict in Darfur began in April of 2003. For the last five years civilians have been caught in conflict, children have grown up in refugee camps, and the crisis has only gotten worse. This April you will have a opportunity to learn more about the conditions on the ground in the Darfur region and to take action to end the crisis. Five years is five years too many.

When: Sunday, April 13 from noon to 4 pm
Where: Washington DC (exact location TBD)
For more information contact bpeterson@aiusa.org

GITMO Cell Tour Coming Soon

Wonder what life on Guantanamo is really like? An exact replica of a Guantanamo Bay prison cell will tour the country beginning in mid-March as a part of AIUSA's Denounce Torture Campaign. The cell is a part of our prioritized campaign to close Guantanamo and to stop the abuse of prisoners there as well as at other U.S. detention facilities. It will be a very powerful way for visitors to conceptualize the plight of Guantanamo detainees since they will be able to step into the cell themselves. The launch will take place in Los Angeles and thereafter the cell will travel to different parts of the country. This is a great opportunity to actually see how inmates in Guantanamo live and at the same time take a stand for their rights.

The cell will visit Philadelphia and Washington, DC. Look out for exact dates in the coming weeks.

Local Events

Delaware State Meeting

March 15th Delaware State Meeting

Where: University of Delaware, Newark, DE

For more information or to RSVP visit: <http://www.idealists.org/en/event/103239-88>

Join other Amnesty members from all across Delaware for our 2008 Delaware State Meeting to be held at the University of Delaware. If you have any questions, please contact Jen Horwitz at jhorwitz@aiusa.org or 202.544.0200 x344.

Maryland State Meeting

Join Us at Towson University on March 29th

This is an opportunity for you and your group members to meet other Amnesty members from Maryland, attend workshops, learn more about AIUSA's priority campaigns, and begin to create a plan for your group to have an impact on our priority campaign work in your community and across the state.

To register visit: <http://www.idealists.org/en/event/103352-225>

“We Care” Concert – DC, MD, VA ONLY

Come support Amnesty's efforts to end displacement here in the US and abroad!

On Tuesday, March 18 at the 9:30 Club in downtown DC, we will come together to say we care - we care about the tens of thousands of Hurricane Katrina survivors who are still displaced here in the U.S, and we care about the Iraqi people and the millions who have been displaced from their homes.

Amnesty International USA is partnering with the Hip Hop Caucus to sponsor this concert. The concert will raise funds and awareness around the issues of displacement and feature DC's own Mambo Sauce, as well as featured artists from Iraq and New Orleans.

How Can you Get Involved?

Promote the event to your networks. People can buy tickets directly from the 9:30 Club's website at www.930.com. Tickets are \$15

Volunteer at the concert: Doors open at 7:30PM, but volunteers will be needed as early as 5:30PM to distribute and collect Amnesty petitions on displacement as well as to collect and distribute an Amnesty International survey. This survey will help Amnesty International USA in its assessments of its growth needs. All volunteers will be asked to volunteer at least 2 hours and will get free entrance to the concert, dinner on us and tons of freebies onsite! We need 40 volunteers, and they will be accepted on a first-come, first-serve basis. Sign up now!

If you are interested in volunteering or need more information, please contact Jen Horwitz at jhorwitz@aiusa.org or 202-544-0200 x344

Taking the Metro:

Take the Green Line to the U Street stop. Make sure you walk out on the Vermont Ave. side and NOT 13th street side. The Vermont street side is at the intersection of Vermont, 10th, and U. When you get to the ground level, make a "U" turn and walk to the right (east) along U street to Vermont, and walk up Vermont one block to the club. (If you get out on the 13th street side of the metro stop, it's a much longer walk.

Where to park:

9:30 Club

There is a monitored lot on 9th Street, run by the club. \$10. On busy nights it fills up quick so we recommend purchasing advance parking ticket along with your concert tickets.

Sonar

Directly across from the front door is enough free parking to accommodate almost our entire capacity. Arriving a few hours prior to the concert is highly recommended to ensure the best parking. Find more info at sonarbaltimore.com

Religion in Guantanamo – DC, MD, VA ONLY

Learn More About One Man's Experience as a Chaplain in GITMO

Free event open to the public: Chaplain James J. Lee will speak about his experience as former Muslim Chaplain for the U.S. prison camp in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. While ministering to prisoners at Guantanamo Bay, Captain Yee advised camp commanders on detainee religious practices and objected to the cruel and degrading abuses to which the prisoners were subjected.

Where: University of the District of Columbia David A. Clarke School of Law, 4200 Connecticut Ave., NW, Washington, D.C. The event will take place in the Windows Lounge, Building 39, Second Floor.

When: March 19, 6:00PM

Organized by the ACLU with support from Amnesty International and others.

Your Local Event Title Here

Advertise for Your Groups Events in the Weekly Email

There are two great ways to advertise your events to other AIUSA activists.

1. Email your field organizer with information about your event (date, location, background info, and contact info). We'll include it in this **weekly email** which goes out to group leaders across the region.
2. Post your event on the **Mid-Atlantic Events website** by filling out this form: <http://www.amnestyusa.org/members/eventform.html>. (To access this page you must have a password for the Members section. All members can apply for a password by filling out this form:

<http://amnestyusa.org/signup.html>)

Human Rights Painting Project – MD, DC ONLY

For the last 5 years the Takoma Park group has sponsored Arts and Amnesty events. This year's event is an exhibit of paintings by a member of the Takoma Park group who is also an artist. Proceeds from the exhibit go to benefit Amnesty's work. For more info on the project see the website:

<http://www.humanrightspaintingproject.com>.

Human Rights Painting Project

Washington Theological Union
6896 Laurel St. NW
Washington D.C. 20012
800-334-9922

January 2 – March 21, 2008

Volunteer Opportunities

Help Support AI's Activist Work in the Mid-Atlantic

Apply to join the Regional Planning Group

The Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Group (RPG) seeks one (1) new member for a two-year term beginning April 2008. The RPG is a volunteer body, which acts as the voice of the membership and serves as an advisory board to the Regional Office. The RPG charter provides most of the job description

<http://www.amnestyusa.org/events/mid-atlantic/marrpgcharter.pdf>. Our tradition in this region is to seek RPG members who have few other AIUSA volunteer leadership responsibilities, so RPG work can be their primary focus. Members need to spend several weekends (Fall leadership meeting, one all-day RPG organizing strategy meeting, the regional conference, your state leadership meeting, and monthly conference calls (usually one to one and half hours) on RPG business. RPG members are also strongly encouraged to attend the Annual General Meeting (April 2008). We are particularly looking for a youth/student activist from the state of West Virginia in order to maintain geographical diversity of the group.

Non-West Virginian AI student/youth members are also encouraged to apply! If you have any questions, please email Kerry Kauffman (kerryak31@hotmail.com) or Jonathan Cohen (jonathanacohen@hotmail.com), the current co-chairs. Please apply by including the following information:

Why do you want to join the RPG and what qualities would you bring to the RPG's work?

What is your AIUSA experience? What leadership roles have you held?

What other responsibilities (AI and non-AI) will you have in next two years? What gives you confidence that you will be able to meet your RPG responsibilities in addition to these responsibilities?

What is the greatest challenge that faces AIUSA and/or the Mid-Atlantic Region? How would you help solve/address it?

Please send all applications by March 31, 2008 to folagbai@aiusa.org

Human Rights Education

Apply for our Summer Human Rights Education Service Corps Internship

The Human Rights Education Service Corps (HRESC) operates through Amnesty International USA's Mid-Atlantic Regional Office. The program works to build a nation of human rights defenders and inspire future

activists by training undergraduate and graduate student facilitators to engage high school students on human rights issues. The intern works with staff to recruit dedicated volunteers from the local universities, provide training in human rights education, and connect them to our partnerships with DC public high school teachers to facilitate classes on human rights. Aside from a basic introduction to human rights, the HRESC lessons may include poverty, the death penalty, torture, women's rights, children's rights, and other urgent human rights issues.

The intern is responsible for the day-to-day project management of HRESC which includes volunteer outreach and support, teacher outreach and support, and organizing and conducting trainings and support meetings. The HRESC intern may also be responsible for curriculum development, evaluation needs, policy research, additional human rights education projects, etc. Highly organized persons with an interest in education and a commitment to human rights are strongly encouraged to apply. Applicants interested in a summer and/or academic year internship are welcome to apply.

To apply, please send a cover letter, resume, and writing sample to ic-dc@aiusa.org and copy HRESC@aiusa.org by March 15.

1. In your cover letter, please indicate the number of days per week that you will be available for an internship, including start and departure dates. Also be sure to include the programs of interest.
2. Your writing sample does not have to be of any specific length or on any particular topic. It could be a recently written term paper, news article, etc.

Finally, it is best to submit all of your materials at once. An incomplete application will not be considered.

For more resources and information for the Mid-Atlantic Region go to our website at www.amnestyusa.org/MARO. For questions or comments please contact the Mid-Atlantic Regional Office (MARO) at aiusama@aiusa.org.