



Update

Amnesty International Edmonton Group 12/26

March 2013

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March Meeting on Women's Issues

Our March Meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 26th at 7.30p.m. in the Knox Metropolitan Hall on 83rd Avenue just east of 109 Street. Please ring the bell for entry.

Everyone is welcome to join us.

We will be discussing sexual violence against women and writing on current cases that relate to women. Please feel free to bring cases that you are interested in writing for. Follow us on Twitter@AmnestyEdmonton

Minutes General Meeting February 26, 2013

Speaker: Kate Quinn, Executive Director of the Centre to End All Sexual Exploitation. CEASE

Our Vision: A community where there is hope, respect, and transformation for individuals, families, and communities affected by sexual exploitation.

Our Mission: CEASE is a caring community. We work through partnerships to create and pursue strategies to address sexual exploitation and the harms created by prostitution.

Our work includes public education, client support, bursaries, counselling, trauma recovery and emergency poverty relief for individuals working to heal and rebuild their lives after experiencing exploitation.

In 2013 CEASE is participating in an information course with applicants for body rub parlour licenses. This is the inside world of the prostitution industry. CEASE has advocated for the course. The course includes information for applicants on options of how to support themselves outside the industry.

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Update Appeals

Please sign and send the appeal letter that is attached or write a letter in your own words making the same requests as outlined in the sample letter. If you receive a reply please forward a copy to the National Office, at 312 Laurier Avenue East, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 1H9 or fax it to 613-746-2411.

The first letter is on behalf of Members of Belén Migrants' Shelter (Casa del migrante – Posada Belén), in Saltillo, Coahuila state, northern Mexico who have been subjected to threats and information theft.

On 19 December, the window of a car belonging to Catholic priest and director of the shelter was smashed and a briefcase containing confidential work documents was stolen.

On 27 December, the car of shelter coordinator Javier Martínez Hernández was also broken into and another briefcase with confidential important documents was taken. Valuables were not taken in either case, despite access and opportunity.

The second letter is on behalf Alexandre Anderson de Souza and Daize Menezes de Souza his wife of AHOMAR. Created in 2003, it now represents over 1800 traditional fishermen and women living and working in Rio de Janeiro.

Led by Alexandre Anderson de Souza, the organisation was set up to denounce the increasing environmental damage to the Guanabara bay, which was threatening their livelihoods. Since 2007 it has been campaigning against Comperj (Complexo Petroquímico do Rio de Janeiro), a consortium constructing gas pipelines in Guanabara bay. In 2009 they halted work on the pipeline during a 38-day protest, when they anchored their boats along the pipeline site in the bay. Since the protest, Alexandre Anderson has complained of threats. In December 2010, an Amnesty International delegation visited AHOMAR's headquarters in Magé where delegates received numerous denunciations of violence and harassment against the association.

Implementation of the Federal Human Rights Programme has been inconsistent in Rio de Janeiro state, which is awaiting the signing of a decree to create a state-level Human Rights Defenders protection body. Alexandre Anderson de Souza has received protection of varying quality in a series of ad hoc arrangements; despite being included in the programme, his wife has not received protection. In the case of AHOMAR, the situation has been compounded by the withdrawal of the Mauá beach police post [Destacamento de Policiamento Ostensivo (DPO) da Praia de Mauá] near the Association's headquarters in February this year.

Thank you for taking these actions on these cases.

Minutes of the February 26, 2013 General Meeting continued

CEASE speaks out for human rights. It facilitates, presents and talks to women, mothers, who have a right to a sustainable livelihood. Many girls and women see no other means of survival. Aboriginal women are very vulnerable and their rights are not respected. A mother brought her child to the course and it was evident she did not have child care. Prostitutes frequently have no skills and no other opportunities.

CEASE got started in the early 1990s. The majority of women do not want to offer their bodies for sale. Women do not have the same earning power as men. Women have the children and are in poverty. Choices are necessary and women need choices. The organization grew out of community action. Think globally and act locally.

Kate lives near to the Commonwealth Stadium and prostitution moved into her neighbourhood. Prostitutes were moved by police to the Boyle street and MaCauley neighbourhoods. Neighbours started to mobilize against prostitution and prostitutes would seek refuge in her home. It all began by talking to the women. This repeats itself even today. Women have been assaulted in close proximity to Kate's home.

Community meetings started, 300 angry people were there, police came, city councillors came, women themselves came, student legal services came and talked about the law. The men made the neighbourhood unsafe. The demand side of prostitution was targeted. Public walks began during child safety hours. They walked during the daytime in twos. They talked to the women during the walks. Parents of women on the street started to walk with them.

Women who had been prostitutes joined the organization. Police did low level activities such as parking outside Sacred Heart School to do their paperwork. They did a count of vehicles circling the neighbourhood and found that there was six times the normally expected traffic in their neighbourhood. The city had to take notice. The John School started in 1996 and was used in sentencing. The money from fines goes back into the community and then CEASE was started as a non profit organization. CEASE works in cooperation with Catholic Social Services, E4C, Health Centres, outreach workers and in poverty relief. The average age when girls are pulled into exploitation is 14 years. The girls are not in school and so bursaries were created enabling them to return to school when they leave prostitution.

There is a Trauma Recovery Fund and CEASE liaises with the counsellors.

A Board of Directors was formed and the non profit organization started to speak

Minutes of the February 2013 General Meeting continued

out. CEASE partners with Grant McEwan University and sponsors a bursary which is now an endowment. Friends of CEASE was started in 2005 in order to raise funds. Both parts were consolidated into a charitable organization in May 2010 and has 5 people on staff.

Sylvia: works with police RCMP and Project Kare to obtain the DNA of women. Over 35 women have been murdered in the last 30 years. There were many men who killed the women.

In 2003 two women were murdered within 2 weeks. Project Kare started then and wanted to improve on what happened in Vancouver. KARE builds relationships with community organizations. Hair samples were taken for the DNA testing. 800 samples were gathered in Alberta. There were 18 men last week in the John School. There are less men cruising the streets now. Men now cruise the internet! Back page website Edmonton Escorts 253 ads, different classes of women have been created. 60% women on the street, Asian women are viewed as submissive and compliant, on the internet. Advertising young women, Asian beauties, exotic, what is their story? CEASE is partnering with the University of Alberta and Edmonton Police Services. Text messages were sent out and as a result some calls were received and cries for help from women.

It is still possible to report a John just take the licence plate number and report this to police.

The Salvation Army started going into massage parlours. They sit down and offer to talk to people and made some good connections!

Laws in Canada; in the first 100 years the laws were directed at the women. They were viewed as fallen women. In the 1970s some consideration was given to the role of men that forced change. In 1985 the first men were charged. Both parties can be charged now. Coming up soon is a charter challenge in BC and Ontario to remove all laws relating to prostitution from the criminal code. The result would be to put the existing laws aside. The Federal Government would need to come back with a new model. In Sweden women are not charged. The men are charged as well as traffickers are charged and fined. All money from fines goes into women's programs. In Sweden this has been the law since 1989 and men who grew up with this new outlook have a different relationship with women.

The Edmonton Police Service Vice Unit now has embraced the Swedish model. The law is used as a tool to help someone who is addicted. A diversion program was created and the Crown would withdraw the charges. Criminal record checks are required for many jobs. Last year the Federal Government took away pardons in their Omnibus Crime Bill.

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Public housing does not accept anyone with a criminal record. Senior's Homes require criminal record checks. If "sex trade worker" is mentioned on the form it stigmatizes women. Vic Toews MP, Minister of Public Safety is quoted as saying "We are not about mercy".

Juanita a CEASE staff member had criminal record and waited 5 years for a pardon. A surcharge was placed on her which she did not know about and as a result she had to wait another 5 years for her pardon.

In February 2011 Government placed fees to apply for a pardon. These user fees were in the Omnibus Crime Bill. The fee is \$600 because of the pardon board. Protests were triggered by the decision to raise the fees. The Advisory Committee supported the protesters however the Government raised the fees regardless and put the fees into the Omnibus Crime Bill. Some transgender people are waiting for a pardon since before the new bill was in place and report that those who have paid the new \$600 fee are jumping the queue! CEASE is providing assistance with the fees.

The Red Cross has programs in schools. Juanita will go anywhere and speak to anyone. Poverty is the driver for prostitution. More awareness is needed. Pornography on the internet is so accessible. Today we need different tools to fight prostitution than we used in the past.

Men are involved in the boom and bust economy cycle. Men involved in the boom and prices go up and women suffer.

First time offenders go to John School. A fee of \$500 must be paid to participate in the program as an alternative to a court imposed fine for the charge. This fee, as the offenders learn throughout the program, gets redistributed within the community and all money collected goes towards combating sexual exploitation within the City of Edmonton. If the offenders pay the fee and complete the one-day program the original charge is withdrawn. Through the Prostitution Offender Program (POP), eligible offenders spend a full day hearing directly from the survivors, families, neighbourhoods and businesses harmed by their actions. A team including a Psychologist runs the 8 hour program. It plants the seeds of awareness. It can be an addictive behaviour. During the last week of April there will be a public John School.

Minutes submitted by Isabelle Nash

Edmonton Group 12/26

Edmonton Groups 12/26, Box 52060, Garneau Post Office, Edmonton, Alberta T6G 2T5
Meetings are held at 7.30 p.m. in the Knox Metropolitan Church Hall on 83 Ave at 109 Str the fourth Tuesday of each month except July, August and December.

Amnesty International is a worldwide voluntary, activist movement that works impartially to prevent violations of people's fundamental civil and political human rights by governments and opposition groups. We campaign to free all prisoners of conscience: people detained anywhere for their beliefs or because of their ethnic origin, sex, colour, language, national or social origin, economic status, birth, or other status, provided they have not used or advocated violence; ensure fair and prompt trials for political prisoners; abolish the death penalty, torture, and other cruel treatment of prisoners; end political killings and "disappearances".

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