



Update

Amnesty International Edmonton Group 12/26

May 2014

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May Meeting on South Sudan

Our May Meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 27th 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.

Agenda

Film: Saving South Sudan

Letter writing for South Sudan

Short Business Meeting

Film: Saving South Sudan

Late last year, South Sudan's president, Salva Kiir, accused his former vice president, Riek Machar, of attempting a coup d'état amid accusations of rampant corruption within the government. Infighting immediately broke out within the presidential guard, sparking what has now become a brutal tribal and civil war that has pitted Machar's ethnic Nuer loyalists against the majority Dinka, who have sided with Kiir. Machar narrowly escaped assassination, fleeing to the deep bush as Kiir's troops razed his home and killed his bodyguards. And now the world's newest sovereign nation is in imminent danger of becoming a failed state.

In February, journalists and filmmakers Robert Young Pelton and Tim Freccia set out on a grueling mission to locate Machar in his secret hideout in Akobo and get his side of the story. Accompanying was Machot Lat Thiep, a former child soldier and Lost Boy who had advised on South Sudan's constitution and now works as a manager of a Costco in Seattle. Machot acted as a guide of sorts, arranging Pelton and Freccia's rendezvous with Machar through a series of endless satellite-phone calls to old contacts and rebel platoons, who would eventually guide the group to the deposed vice president.

After spending a couple days with Machar, he granted Pelton and Freccia unprecedented access to the front lines of a battle in Malakal, where for the first time in history the pair documented the heretofore mythical White Army as they looted, murdered, and pillaged their way to some twisted interpretation of "victory."

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 Leonard Peltier

<http://www.freeleonard.org/case/>

Leonard Peltier is an imprisoned Native American considered by Amnesty International, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, National Congress of American Indians, the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Center for Human Rights, Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Rev. Jesse Jackson, among many others, to be a political prisoner who should be immediately released.

Leonard Peltier was convicted for the deaths of two FBI agents who died during a 1975 shoot-out on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. Mr. Peltier has been in prison for over 29 years.

Mr. Peltier has served over 29 years in prison and is long overdue for parole. He has received several human rights awards for his good deeds from behind bars which include annual gift drives for the children of Pine Ridge, fund raisers for battered women's shelters, and donations of his paintings to Native American recovery programs.

Mr. Peltier suffers from diabetes, high blood pressure, and a heart condition. Time for justice is short.

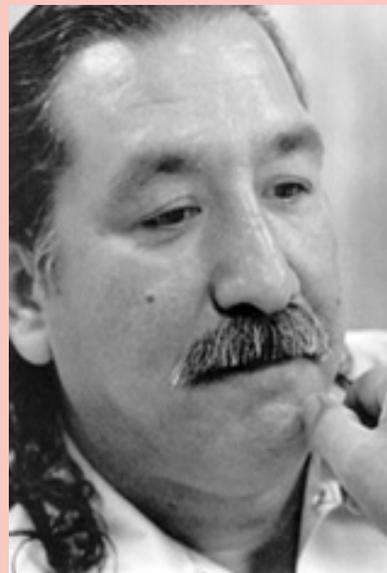
The second letter is regarding the murder of three men in Mexico.

On June 3 the bodies of Arturo Hernández Cardona, Ángel Román Ramírez, Félix Rafael Bandera Román were found blindfolded and with apparent signs of torture on a nearby highway.

Four of the other five missing men reportedly managed to escape their captors and have gone into hiding. An investigation by Guerrero State Attorney General's Office is underway but the suspected involvement of local officials in the abductions and killings has led UP activists to urge for the investigation to be carried out by the Federal Attorney General's Office (PGR).

On 2 and 4 June UP members reported being watched and followed, on two separate occasions, by men in vehicles. On 8 June, a UP leader, Justino Osoreo Narciso, received an anonymous note warning the group to stop its activities. On 17 June the wife of Arturo Hernández Cardona and a UP activist, Sofía Lorena Mendoza, reported being followed by suspicious cars on route to a meeting with government officials. On 19 June, Bertoldo Martínez Cruz, a local political activist linked to the UP who had been in contact with the survivors, received a threatening

Thank you for taking these actions on these cases.



Minutes of the 2014 April 22 General Meeting

New Meeting Location

St George's Church down the street from the Butterdome is our possible new location. Next week we will look at the room at the church.

Charlene Fieldworker Campaign against Torture

-Charlene is on a Campaign Committee. Webinar will be online soon. This is a Global campaign. Following our last campaign in 2001 against torture there was legislation the Convention against Torture adopted. There is alarming use of torture since 9/11. The focus is on the conditions and making sure that conditions where torture is likely to occur are not present. There should be immediate access to lawyers and medical services. Torture goes on unobserved because of hiding people and moving them around. Our focus will be Canada, Mexico and Philippines. The optional protocol establishes an inspection system and Canada is not a signatory to this optional protocol. Seventy-two countries are signatory to this. There is hesitancy on the part of the Canadian Government for foreign inspection of our immigration detention centres. Mexico uses its own standards not international standards. In the Philippines there are many undisclosed detention centres. A torture wheel was found in one of these centres. Police behaviour can also be a problem as police act with impunity.

May 13 is the launch of this campaign and there will be materials on the website.

June 26 is a "Day Against Torture". The Mennonite Centre has a Centre for Survivors of Torture. They have psychologists and professional staff who assist survivors. It has been open for many years.

August 2014 there is youth organiser training.

Bylaws

Our bylaws need review. We should have them done by summer and submitted for approval to Ottawa.

Syria

The Battle for Syria. Journeyman.tv

The film crew was embedded with the rebels.

The rebels do not follow orders, it is not like a regular army. The rebels are difficult to control. A defector from the Russian army is leading them. They are all civilians. Government soldiers are defecting. Sunni Muslims were persecuted under Assad's Regime.

Aleppo City

Military service was compulsory. He was arrested and tortured and joined the rebels. The fighters are vying for the Salahuddin an old fortress that is under siege. Attacks from the air and snipers of the government forces cause many casualties. They target young, old, women, children.

A quarter of million people have fled the city. There are still children in the city and many wounded even while in their homes from shrapnel. Anyone who can leave is leaving. Only the poor remain who have no means of leaving. The bombing is relentless day and night.

There are makeshift graveyards in parks so stop the spread of disease and stench of rotting bodies. A civilian army has little training. They have a bomb capable of destroying a tank. They make them themselves.

Assad's soldiers are not winning the war either. Many fight with no conviction. The rebels have a government soldier as a hostage. There is vigilante justice on one hand and the killing of civilians on the other. Dead bodies are used as bait by Government snipers.

There is a fear that after the revolutionaries win the war, victory may be hijacked by the Muslim extremists and then there will be another war to maintain the revolution.

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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