



Christians Against Torture

a campaign of churches in Wales

Autumn mailing 2011



- Hu Jia – released, but not free
- William – the struggle goes on

Details inside of our Autumn Actions for China and Egypt



A good idea still waiting for a UK signature

The United Kingdom has still not signed an important agreement to protect people from abduction by government agencies – even though it was instrumental in drawing it up.

Twenty-eight years ago the then Conservative administration declared its support and Christians Against Torture delivered a 20,000 signature petition from Wales to the Foreign Office. The Labour government echoed this support in 2006 when the convention was adopted by the United Nations.

Yet today the UK remains the only state in Western Europe, except Switzerland, which has failed to sign and ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance. It requires states to take preventative measures, including a ban on secret detention, and affirms the right of victims to reparation and compensation.

Extraordinary rendition

The Ministry of Justice tells us that ‘the UK only signs a treaty once it is confident that it can properly implement it, following any necessary changes to domestic legislation to make our law compatible with the treaty...We are considering what changes in our law might be necessary.’

The government rejects suggestions that the delay may be linked to extraordinary rendition – seizing a person in one country to be detained (and often tortured) in another – a practice it ‘unreservedly condemns.’ This is good to hear, because the UK record on this is murky. But it remains legitimate to continue to ask why this signature is taking such a depressingly long time.

TIME TO THINK AGAIN ON TORTURE INQUIRY

News that ten human rights organizations have declined to take part in the government’s detainee inquiry because it lacks the ‘credibility or transparency’ to establish the truth is disturbing.

The inquiry, into alleged complicity by British intelligence agencies in the torture of individuals overseas, was welcomed by Christians Against Torture when it was announced a year ago. We expressed the hope that it would ‘be rigorous, and exercise total impartiality, and that its findings will establish a significant marker for all future conduct in this area.’

Concerns expressed by the lawyers of former detainees, and such organisations as Amnesty International, Freedom from Torture and Human Rights Watch, raise fears that a valuable opportunity will be missed, with justice further denied. We hope those responsible will think again.

The Welsh MPs supporting Pakistan plea

We are grateful to those who asked their MPs to sign the Parliamentary Early Day Motion condemning the assassination of Shahbaz Bhatti, the Pakistan Minister for Minorities, and urging review of the country's blasphemy laws.

When this mailing was being prepared in August, the motion (EDM 1518) had 95 signatures. Only six of these were from Welsh MPs – Alun Cairns (Vale of Glamorgan), Martin Caton (Gower), Paul Flynn (Newport West), Alun Michael (Cardiff South and Penarth), Martin Williams (Ceredigion), Roger Williams (Brecon and Radnor). They had all signed before our request went out.

We know that one Member declined to sign because of his position on the Opposition front bench; another promised to do so several times, but his name never appeared on the list. *If any of our supporters received a response (or failed to receive one) from any MP, it would help if you would let us know.*

In Rwanda and Vietnam, your greeting will tell them they're not forgotten

A friendly greeting can mean a great deal to a person suffering unjustly. Here are three suggestions.

Francois-Xavier Byuma, president of an organisation in Rwanda which investigates violations of children's rights, is serving a 17-year sentence after a grossly unfair trial. He was tried by a judge whom his organisation had recently accused of raping a 17-year-old girl. *Send greetings to* François-Xavier Byuma, Kigali Central Prison, BP 14, Kigali, Rwanda



Nguyen Van Dai and Le Thi Cong Nhan are prominent human rights lawyers now under house arrest following their release from prison. They were convicted of 'slandering the state'. *Send greetings to*

Mrs Vu Minh Khanh (*wife of Mr Nguyen Van Dai*) Phong 302, Nha Z8, Bach Khao, Hanoi, Vietnam.

Ms Tran Thi Le (*mother of Ms Le Thi Cong Nhan*) Nha 316-A7 Khu Tap, The VP Chinh Phu, Ngo 4 Phuong Mai, Dong Da, Hanoi, Vietnam.

Freedom Feast – ideas available

A Christians Against Torture Freedom feast, celebrating freedom and remembering particular prisoners, may be held at any time of the year, but many opt for an autumn date. Such events across Wales take many different forms, but always prove a great encouragement. If you would like a leaflet on organizing a Freedom Feast, we would be happy to send you one.

Please join in the praying

Our thanks to Mrs Jean Hackett, of Newport, for the prayers included in this mailing. Please encourage those leading worship to use them and to remember the prisoners in whom Christians Against Torture takes a special interest. Mrs Hackett is Women's World Day of Prayer National President and European Representative on the World Day of Prayer International Committee.

Our Treasurer, Mrs Anne Morgan, 9 Pilgrim Close, Radyr, Cardiff CF15 8GD, is always happy to receive and acknowledge your support.

Christians Against Torture encourages Christians of all traditions to work and pray for the abolition of torture and the care of its victims. It is independent, but functions as an agency of Cytun, Churches Together in Wales, and is linked with the International Federation of Christians for the Abolition of Torture. It was launched in 1981 by the former Council of Churches for Wales, with the support of the Welsh section of Amnesty International. Supporters receive three mailings a year - for Easter, Christmas and the autumn Freedom Feast. Christians Against Torture, 60 Ty Wern Road, Rhiwbina, Cardiff CF14 4SF. Tel: 029 2062 7431 email: admin@torturecymruwales.org.uk