

# ISHRA REPORT

Newsletter of the International Society for Human Rights-Australia Inc.

PO Box 168 Thomastown Victoria 3074

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## Thai-Burma Border

Email news from Dr Jonathan & Dr Elisabetta (2 September) with photos.

I sent some pictures others had taken. I do not have a digital camera, in fact since we were burgled in our absence I now have no camera at all.



Children of Teak school

The first group are Karen children near and in the Moei River which forms the border between Thailand and Burma. We have helped them for about six years now, treating their malaria episodes and other illnesses and trying to prevent the malaria with mosquito nets. We have also provided vitamin A and worm medicine every six months and measured the children to check their growth and provide extra food to those not growing. These are the children of the **Teak School** area where **ISHRA** have helped to provide lunches as part of this program.



We visit Karen patients homes and a school dormitory as part of our daily rounds, providing such health supplements as vitamin A .

We get around on motorbikes in all seasons as it is cheaper and they can get much further down small paths than a car and if they get stuck in the mud can be pulled out more easily.



'Cornfield' house

Various Karen families we have provided food and medical care to, can be seen at home in the "cornfield" near the border.



Teak school children Christmas party

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ISHRA  
PO Box 168,  
Thomastown,  
Victoria 3074,  
Australia.

778, Soi Don Kaew,  
Intarakiri Road,  
Mae Sot,  
Tak 63110,  
Thailand.

27th August 2009.

To ISHRA members and supporters

*This letter is written to acknowledge the several sums of money transferred to me on behalf of ISHRA that have been used to buy food for Karen and Burmese children attending Naw Bo Deng School, close to the Thai border with Burma, near Mae Sot, Thailand. This has helped to allow me to provide basic lunches for about sixty children for five days a week during*

school term time. For many of these children this is the most substantial meal of the day and has helped to maintain the children's health and to keep them in school and able to follow the lessons.



The school lunch provision has been part of a medical support programme to maintain the health of children in difficulty in this area. My involvement with this school started with the treatment of one of the pupils for leprosy as part of the McKean Hospital's Community Based Rehabilitation Programme for leprosy sufferers in Mae Sot district. The money from ISHRA to provide food has helped to support the acceptance of the treatment of leprosy patients in this community.

I am very grateful for the help provided to these people by ISHRA.

Jonathan Nield, (MB, DTM&H, GP)

Coordinator,  
Community Rehabilitation Programme,  
Mae Sot,  
Thailand.

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## ISHR-AFOF Flores

letter from Bro Gabriel

PO Box 168  
Thomastown 3074  
VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA

"Dear Mr. John Launder, Committee and Members of ISHR-AFOF. Warm greetings from Flores, Indonesia. I hope this letter finds you all in good conditions.

I do not know how to express my feelings. But I want to share with you what I have gained by working as Co-ordinator of ISHR-AFOF in Flores and Lembata.

I can not imagine that it is already 10 (ten) years (1999-2009) we have been working together as a

marvelous team. As a Co-ordinator of the ISHR-AFOF, I have responsibility to distribute ISHR-AFOF's donation to people who needed, especially for students and orphan children. In many occasion, meeting people (parents) and the students who are supported by ISHR-AFOF, they always asked me to give them name of the donors. They said "We have nothing to offer but at least we want to pray for the donors. That is our contribution".

In 2005, Hilary da Costa sent me a list of the donors. I put their name in a piece of paper and delivered it to them, they were asked to pray for the donor.

Every time I visited them, they always requested me to convey theirs sincere thanks to all donors. Parents were happy and found that donation from ISHR-AFOF is very helpful, particularly when the time come for them have had to pay school fee at the end of school year. Some of them expressed their wish, hope and sincere thanks via letters which were sent to Hilary da Costa last year. You will find in the attachment the other two letters, unfortunately all in Bahasa (Indonesian). Sorry for that.

Very often I heard this comment: you and ISHR-AFOF (the Australian people) are generous people. Why? I asked. They stated that every year ISHR-AFOF sent money for each of student to pay school fee. We received money directly by hand or via bank. Whereas other organizations like Plan International never give donation direct to students or parents. ISHRA-AFOF is so different to other organizations.

I just told them, ISHR-AFOF has a different policy of helping people. When bomb exploded in Bali some year ago and many of Australian were killed, we were very anxious. We thought that the Australian government would stop his diplomat in Indonesia. If it happened we can predict what will happen next. Luckily it did not happen and ISHR-AFOF still continue to support to the Flores and Lembata people until today. We (Flores and Lembata people) felt so lucky. It is very wonderful to be a partner ISHR-AFOF (Australian people) who are willing to help other people with heartfelt. Mostly the Flores and Lembata people have the same experiences.

I noted that ISHR-AFOF facilitated twice to sell traditional textiles from Lembata and Flores. Traditional textile were made by two different groups of women. Some of them still requesting, if I could sell their traditional textile. Unfortunately I can not do much for them. I want to say that this two projects were very much help. Your appreciation to sell pieces of traditional textile is another way to promote our culture. Furthermore your participation is really mean to the women, their family and the Flores and Lembata people in general.

As I have reported to Hilary da Costa every year, donation of ISHR-AFOF goes to the students who study at Secondary School, Senior High School and at University. Besides that, that donation also is given to the Sisters of ALMA Congregation who take care the orphaned and disabled children (at the moment 5 children); and for the sick and poor people who really needed.

Until today (from 1999-2009), ISHR-AFOF's donations have been distributed to the **65 students** including 33 students that we have at the moment . From the 65 students, there are:

- **31 students** who had completed their study at Senior High School
- **7 (six) students** went to university for their further studies .
- The two students Maria Jenita Pape and Kristina Leko have finished their study at university last year with a good marked. A third student did not finish his study. Since last year I stopped donation for him. The main reason is he married and he is now working as a journalist in Kupang, capital city of Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT) Province.
- There are two (2) students at secondary school and one (1) student at senior high school did not finish their study because of personal reasons.



*Jeni the first student who finished her study at university. She was with AFOF since she was at Senior High School (2001). That means she was helped by AFOF for 8 years. Photo of Jeni and her family at Maumere. Her father is a poor farmer, they are proud of their daughter.*

Bro Gab

- Nowadays we have **33 students**, which consist of 5 (five) orphaned & disabled children (live at dormitory of the ALMA Sisters), 10 (ten) students at Secondary school, 12 (twelve) students at Senior High School and 4 (four) students are at University.

I think that is all I can comment on ISHR-AFOF work in Flores and Lembata. On behalf of the parents, students in Flores and Lembata I would like to express our thanks and gratitude for the support of ISHR-AFOF (People of Australia) have and will continue to help us.

Thank you very much for your kindness, support and may the Good Lord always bless your mission work.

Yours sincerely,  
Br. Gabriel K. Wangak"

**Editor :**

*ISHR-AFOF has just forwarded \$1400 to Flores including a generous \$1000 donation from a small Maldon company which has a very altruistic management and has helped many charitable organisations.*

*Hilary DaCosta the Australian Coordinator of AFOF has expressed her gratitude to the company.*

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**RRA Haiti in association with :**

**Association Amis des Enfants**

La Gonave, Haiti - Update Sept 2009-09-14

The fund raising dinner hosted by Barbara Zoland and under the sponsorship of Refugee Relief on behalf of the Association Amis des Enfants has ensured one school meal a day for the 84 orphans under the Association care. We trust the amount raised will suffice for the next 12 months, so we thank all involved for the support and generous donation.

Thanks to other invaluable supporters at a more capillary level, and to Barbara for advancing the funds, we have been selling little badges imported from South Africa. Purchasing them supports HIV communities, and the net income is devoted to La Gonave, so much so that we have placed another order with the Association in La Gonave for more metal works, paintings and possibly paper mache' objects.

We trust to sell and/or auction them as Christmas gifts at the next fund raising dinner on **November 14<sup>th</sup> at Peter and Pam's house** – again and always thanks! -aiming to collect funds for the purchase of a land and build a school. The school will initially be private, but will be regularly registered with the government as soon as practicable, whereas the title of the land and property of the school will remain with the Association.

The Association's Committee has planned a meeting with Water4Haiti early in November to the effect of discussing the upcoming projects, namely the school building and related water tanks and latrines, once

we have secured a suitable land to build, which is the target for the November dinner fund raising. Meanwhile, with some latrines plans they could start building individual latrines for families and training other to build the same throughout the island, and this is the Association's immediate future project, after the meeting with the people of Water4Haiti..

The President of A.A.E. attended a seminar for composting in Haiti. He is now instructing the other members and the local community to the importance of composting and replenishing the soil. As we purchase more items for us to sell on the Association behalf, they are also contacting artisans and organizing for some of them to go to the island and train other people in their crafts. The Association is very keen to eventually establish a small cooperative, and it is all too aware that this will require time and a permanent place/workshop that could be housed in the new school.

Father Bob Maguire's market has unfortunately folded, so I have started the Docklands Market Sunday, 13<sup>th</sup> September. It looks promising and surely is an appealing venue over the summer months leading to Christmas.



Above is a photo of the land we have identified for a possible purchase. The land overlooks the town of Anse à Galets, where the Association is, and to the right of the photo the road leads to the island pier for the ferry to mainland. The land pertains to the right zoning for construction of a school, at walking distance from the town, it measures 40 mt x 40 mt. and it is enough elevated above sea level not to worry about a possible future rising water level. The land position is favourable to wind catchment for the generators that were donated and that are removable.

Orietta Labate

## Cambodia

At our September meeting the committee voted to donate \$1000 to the **Future Cambodia Fund**

organised by a young Australian Leigh Matthews. She was recently announced as the **Victoria Young Australian of the Year 2009** for her work founding the charity Future Cambodia Fund,

*"At just 23 years of age Leigh Matthews founded the Future Cambodia Fund, an organisation working with disadvantaged children and their families in Cambodia. After travelling the world she was struck by both the beauty of Cambodia and the tragic circumstances of its people. She made the decision to stay in Siem Reap, volunteering for charitable organisations until her money ran out and she returned to Melbourne to set up her own charity. Over the last four years she has worked seven days a week in her determination to help Cambodia's children, and in a short time has made an enormous difference. Programs delivered by the organisation include remedial education; health and dental support; and activities for children including sports, recreation, dance and drama. They also run a water, sanitation and health program to educate women, and have built a children's centre which now has 160 children in attendance. Despite devastating setbacks and enormous hurdles to overcome Leigh has never wavered in her vision and commitment. She demonstrates that when you truly believe in what you are doing you can achieve anything."*

**ISHRA has donated the funds to assist the community evicted from their homes. At 6am on Saturday 24th January, the community of Dey Krahorm in inner-city Phnom Penh was violently and forcibly evicted from their homes, losing a four-year battle.**

## Cambodia: A land in turmoil

**By Ambassador Julio A. Jeldres\***

There has been a marked deterioration of the situation of human rights in Cambodia, a country which Australia helped to restore to peace through the Paris Agreements of October 1991. Since launching a coup d'état in 1997 against his Co-Prime Minister, Hun Sen has run the country as a Potemkin democracy with a budget funded 70% by foreign countries, including Australia.

In Hun Sen's Cambodia one cannot but emphasize the dire human rights situation: over 4,000 women in Cambodia die each year from child birth; over half of its children cannot attend or drop out of primary school due to poverty or family illness; 250,000 people have been forcibly evicted from their land in the past six years; only 30 percent of forests remain intact; and just 30 percent of the population has access to clean, safe drinking water. In spite of many promises made to the international donors, the living standards of the poor have not improved.

In 2008, Cambodia received \$687 million in foreign

aid from donors like the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the European Union – almost half the government's annual budget. However, corruption and lack of accountability means very little of the money reaches its people. Cambodian Women particularly experience the brunt of economic marginalization – as they are highly vulnerable to forced trafficking for sex and labour.

Activists working to reverse the situation face serious challenges: Sochua Mu a parliamentarian that dared to raise her concerns over this appalling situation, has been taken to Court by Hun Sen for defamation and, not surprisingly, as the judiciary is wholly controlled by the ruling Cambodian People's Party of Hun Sen, her parliamentary immunity has been lifted and she risks being thrown into jail if her appeal to a higher Court is, as expected, rejected early in October. Other human rights' workers and journalists have also been threatened and thrown in Hun Sen's prisons accused of defamation. Hun Sen favours the Singapore model of the Lee Kwan Yew family of legal cases for defamation to clamp down on any dissenting voices.

What is rather disappointing is that Australia under the Rudd administration has shown no commitment to the human rights of the people of Cambodia. The Australian Embassy in Phnom Penh is often alone, among other diplomatic missions, in doing nothing to encourage the Hun Sen government to do more to protect human rights. Australia for instance has done nothing to protest the illegal forced evictions of people from their homes which have then been given for so-called "development" to friends or relatives of Hun Sen. Other countries such as Canada and Germany have been more active and even outspoken, drawing attention to this and other human rights issues.

If you feel you would like the Australian government to be more active in drawing to the Hun Sen government its concern over the dire situation of human rights in Cambodia please write to your local member of parliament and please send us a copy of any answer you may receive as we keep an eye on the situation in that unfortunate country.

*Ambassador Julio A. Jeldres is a former Senior Private Secretary to retired King Norodom Sihanouk of Cambodia, an Adjunct Research Fellow at Monash University's Asia Institute and ISHRA's Assistant Secretary.*

## Kenya

The President of ISHR-Kenya has sought ISHR assistance to complete a water project for a school and community near Nakuru in the Rift Valley in Kenya.



The school and community led by Bishop Joseph Kimani (ISHR Kenya President) came under threat and difficulties at the time of the ethnic riots and civil unrest following the Kenyan elections.

At our September meeting the Committee voted to raise US \$3000 to pay for the purchase of a large water tank to hold water from the bore they have recently drilled. We have approached Rotary of District 9780 to see if they can adopt the project as well, which requires approx a further \$17,000 for the provision of a water tower, a pump and plumbing to connect to the school and to provide facilities for a community of about 1500 people.

***Donations nominating this project:  
ISHRA PO Box 168 Thomastown 3074***

## Case work

### Kiran



ISHRA has been striving to assist Kiran and his family who are Bhutanese refugees in Timai Refugee camp, Nepal, to be accepted by Australia.

Representations have been made to the UNHCR and to the Australian Department of Immigration and Culture (DIAC) for some time, but as yet we have failed to achieve a positive outcome. However we intend to persevere as we believe that Kiran and his young family could be successfully resettled in Australia and would make fine citizens.

## Salah Shoaib Choudhury

Bangladeshi Journalist



Salah is a Moslem who has opposed Islamic extremism and campaigned for peaceful relations between Moslems, Jews and Christians. Zealots have persecuted and harassed him, he has suffered imprisonment, charges of sedition for past 5 years. In July this year Salah again was forced to go to court but his accusers still cannot mount a case.

ISHRA has followed his case for the past few years and made representations to the Bangladesh Government and sought Australian Government intervention..

## Iran

During the recent civil unrest following the elections in Iran, ISHRA was contacted by an Iranian dissident who sought our assistance to publicise the repressive situation in Iran. He sent a series of photos arising from the protests that enveloped Iran following the re-election of Arminedjad with the claims that the ballot was rigged.



Hundreds of thousands of Iranians took the streets and were attacked by the Iranian security forces including pro regime bunch of thugs called the Basij.



For a brief period, the regime wobbled but their brutality won out and appears to have forced the dissension underground.



A particular target of the Basij, were institutions of higher education such as the Universities, with lecture rooms and laboratories trashed.

## Iraq – Asraf Camp

On the 28<sup>th</sup> July Iraqi forces attacked Camp Asraf where some 3500 Iranis have been held in detention for a number of years, and up until recently were under the protection of the US military. But when the US handed over responsibility to the Iraqi Government, strong pro Iran elements in the Government have been pressing to close the camp and send the exiles back to Iran, where they will face imprisonment, torture and possible death because they rose up against the Ayatollahs years ago. They have desperately been seeking international support for protection since the US military abandoned them.



**Warning this edition contains graphic images that may disturb some people, but especially children**

In the July raid and subsequent siege of the camp, 12 camp residents were killed and many injured, with some 36 persons taken away by the Iraqis. The camp residents have been seeking international human rights support to lobby governments especially the US to help protect them.

ISHRA has written to UN Secretary General, the Australia Government and signed a petition to Barack Obama on their behalf. We have also written an appeal letter to the Iraqi Government. But we need to keep up the pressure on Governments to avoid a human rights tragedy,

Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have both vigorously campaigned on behalf of the Asraf camp people.

## Pakistan

News from our ISHRA contact in Pakistan

### Pakistan Victimization of the Minorities

SIALKOT: A mob protesting against alleged desecration of Holy Quran by some Christian youths torched a church in a village near Sambrial, about 30km from here, on Friday afternoon. The protesters also ransacked two houses adjacent to the church.

According to reports reaching here, 15-year-old Hina was going home after attending a Quran class in a mosque in her Jaithikey village when five people, identified as Fanish Maseeh, Saleem Maseeh, Qaisar Maseeh, Danish Maseeh and Nadeem Maseeh, allegedly snatched the holy book from her and threw it into a drain.



A large number of villagers armed with bricks, stones and sticks attacked the church and set it on fire. Rescue 1122 personnel rushed to the place and extinguished the fire. All markets in Sambrial and adjoining areas were closed and police patrolled the village to avert further violence. Gujranwala Commissioner Hashim Tareen, acting DCO of Silakot

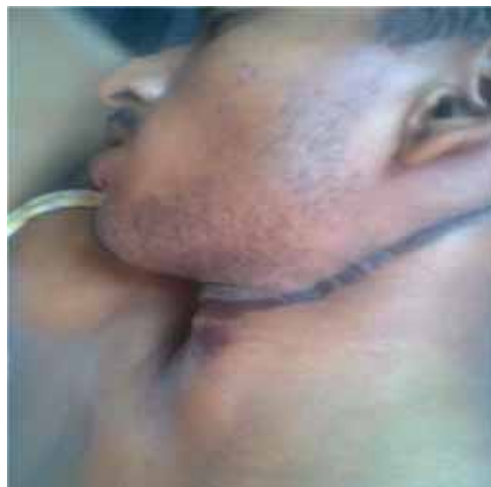
Tariq Zaman, DPO Waqar Ahmad Chohan and local legislators visited the village and held talks with leaders of religious groups. The DPO told reporters that the father of one of the accused had been detained and the people involved in the incident would be arrested soon. Local Christian leaders condemned the burning of the church. Emanuel K. Gill, Bishop Samuel Pervaiz and Javaid Silvestre told reporters that the situation was alarming and the government had failed to protect minorities and their places of worship. They demanded that those who attacked the church should be arrested. Senior police officials claimed that the attackers were local people.

There are more than 100 houses of Muslims and 30 of Christians in the village. All the Christians have left the village to save their lives.

### **Sad sequel to the above report:**

*“ Dear John Launder & ISHR Australia,*

*I feel myself very mourn to share that, in Sialkot last week there was a mishap of Church burning by Muslim extremists. This sad story started by a love affair of a Christian boy (Robert) and one non Muslim girl. Robert was living in a village, located in district Sialkot, Pakistan. He was a teenage boy. He had affair with a non Christian girl, living in front of his house. Muslim Community was not happy with all this. Few days ago, the girl was giving a poetry note book to Robert and few people saw all this. Robert wanted to avoid any tensive situation, so he threw the not book but those who were watching it they made an issue that Robert was given the Holy Quran and he threw it. This story was enough to activate violent local non Christians. They burnt local Church and tortured the Pastor and Robert’s family as well in the presence of police that was supporting violent people as usual.*



*Robert was arrested for fake allegation of Blasphemy against Holy Quran. Local non Christians and the girl, who had affair with Robert, supported the faced story that Robert threw their Holy Book rather. He had*

**Warning this edition contains graphic images that may disturb some people, but especially children**

*been killed by police today, (may GOD rest his soul in peace keep him under the shadow of HIS HEAVEN ) while police torturing him. It is clear police is lying after committing the murder of Robert. Police arrested Robert, they tortured him that lead to his death.*

*Just in the evening of Church burning incident, local Christian Community were protecting against the burning of Church and they were demanding action against those who had committed such an act but district management was not interested. They tortured, arrested and used bullets against the protestors. So far none of the violent/responsible person was arrested. Police claims that Mr. Robert had committed suicide by his own trousers's (pantaloon) belt but this is impossible in jail. In presence of many other prisoners in the jail, it can't be possible to commit such an act of suicide. These pictures show marks are not of belt but of string or a wire. To commit suicide one need a stool or table to hang him/his self but such things are not available in jail cabin. Jails are being permanently watched by police custody. Let us prayer for our brother's ( Robert) soul and protest it at international level."*

## China

### The Rise and Rise of China

Having visited China a number of times over the past 5 years I have had the opportunity to glimpse some aspects of Chinese society, to sense a dynamism operating there. The past 30 years has seen a remarkable economic, technological and social change in China. The pragmatic market reforms introduced by Deng Xiaoping, and pursued by CPC leaders since, had unleashed the pent up entrepreneurial skills of the Chinese people, for so long denied by feudal structures, wars and civil wars and the oppressive strictures of Revolutionary Maoism. The pace of change has also been fuelled in part, by massive foreign investment by global industries seeking cheap, controlled labour force. Nevertheless the industriousness of the Chinese people has wrought massive change in major cities which have virtually modernised overnight. No more so than in the spectacular redevelopment of Beijing in the decade leading to 2008 Olympic Games. Although this was not without some issues about displacement of citizens.

Chinese people are proud of what they have achieved and this is reflected in the modern architectural expression in the big cities, the steady development of a world class high speed train network, and the tens thousands of kilometres of modern expressways that also connect major cities. Chinese technological achievements in Space and in other hi-tech areas are further sources of national pride which has underpinned a China that is now

highly nationalistic (to the point that causes this observer to feel some what wary of which way this cat can jump).

But there is an often hidden and denied *under belly*, to this spectacular rise of modern China. China is currently celebrating 60 years of the 'Peoples' Republic'. In 1949 Communist forces led by Mao Tse Tung won a brutal, bloody civil war against their nationalist opponents, uniting China (except for Taiwan) under one government. So commenced the Mao Dynasty, the first of the Communist era.

This era was marked by massive human rights abuses which saw countless millions of Chinese die. The greatest single cause of death in China in which tens of millions died, was the failure of Mao's *Great Leap forward* 5 year plan which commenced in 1958 and brought about the great Chinese famine. Millions of other deaths came through purges and campaigns, right through to the Cultural Revolution, which Mao instigated, often to destroy his own Communist rivals. Torture of opponents was uncommon.

The *Laogai*, reform through work labor camp system the Chinese equivalent of the former Soviet *Gulag* system, also began under Mao and has been responsible for the torture, humiliation and deaths of many thousands of Chinese during its continuing existence. In recent years thousands of Falun Dafa adherents have been tortured and died in the camps, and often their body organs harvested, as that of other prison camp inmates. Former Canadian MP David Kilgour, along with human rights lawyer David Matas, have pursued the case of the systematic harvesting of human organs from living Falun Gong practitioners. This has seen a lucrative shady business for China of selling organs both internally but especially to foreigners.



Amnesty has prominently reported on the abuses of human rights in China especially in regard to the the persecution of Falun Gong adherents. Similarly



others like Human Rights Watch have also extensively reported on this abhorrent practice. Human rights organisations, including ISHR have campaigned on accusations of torture and abuse of psychiatric practice. Harry Wu, a former inmate of the Lao gai, has continually exposed the brutality of forced labour and the imprisonment of political prisoners in the *laogai*.

Despite all the changes that have reduced poverty and created individual wealth especially in the major cities which has given a better life to hundreds of millions of Chinese citizens, the political system is still controlled rigidly by the Chinese Communist Party. The protection of the Party is still the number one priority of all the organs of power, including the legal system, the Peoples Liberation Army, and the security apparatus. One of the latter's tentacles, the 610 Office, which has international reach, has the task of identifying Falun Gong adherents and their activities.

The ongoing civil conflicts in Tibet and with the Uighurs, have seen the spin off Chinese political pressuring of other countries and civil organisations in an attempt to silence people like the Dalai Lama and Kadeer Rebiya. We in Australia witnessed this outrageous bullying during the recent Melbourne Film Festival.

We must recognise and support the positive developments that are making life much better in China, but in the interests of the Chinese people we must also continue to expose the arbitrary injustice and abuse of human rights that still occur there.

J.Laundry

## John L's Soapbox

### The Individuality of Human Rights Abuse

In this edition of ISHRA Report I make no apologies for displaying graphic images that illustrate the real dark side of human rights abuse around the world. These photos depict, not the mindless or pre-conceived violence of thugs and criminals that occur weekly in any society, including Australia, as we well know from our own experiences of news reports, but are often the deliberate brutal political acts of governments to protect their own power. This is often through unjust and draconian laws, or where the rights of minorities are not protected by the just application of laws

We can read about such cruelty, but a picture does personalise to actual human beings.

People living in freedom where there is democracy and rule of law, would abhor and be sickened by the type of officially sanctioned brutality as reported and illustrated in the stories of this ISHRA Report.



*Neda, the Iranian Student whose murder by Iranian Government backed Basij thugs, shocked the world and has come to personalise that regime's human rights abuse.*

### Abortion is Human Rights abuse

However our own society needs to examine its collective conscience at the legally and socially sanctioned brutality in our own midst. Each year some 80,000 unborn children in our fair country die from the legally sanctioned killing of the unborn by abortion.

I acknowledge I am opposed to abortion except in the case of risk of death to the mother. I am morally opposed to the deliberate taking of innocent life based on my understanding of human life and including from a human rights perspective.

It is now 12 months since the Victorian Parliament voted to allow virtually unrestricted abortion including late term on infants of more than 20 weeks gestation. Dr David Van Gend who participated in a public debate at the time stated :

*"The truth is that most late abortions, which are 20 weeks of pregnancy, are done to entirely healthy babies of entirely healthy mothers, and by a method so cruel I am reluctant to describe it."*

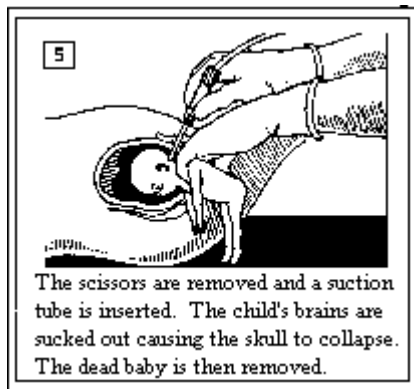
He further stated : ***For our generation, late abortion is the test of whether or not our society sinks into savagery, deaf to babies so callously sacrificed to the psychosocial comfort of adults."***

He was reluctant to describe, but allow me to quote from a letter I sent to all State MPs at the time of that debate.

*"The methodology of abortion procedures on the living, genetically unique foetus is appalling, especially the late term abortions. Although there has been much debate on the subject, there is no doubt that the foetus experiences pain, some medical research suggests from 8 weeks, but certainly from around 13 weeks. When an induced abortion occurs, depending on what stage of the pregnancy, the unborn child can die a variety of deaths – sucked to pieces, cut to pieces, twisted and dismembered, poisoned, right through to partial birth abortion (just*

prior to what would be a normal birth, when an induced death would be called infanticide) where after all but head has been delivered, the surgeon jabs the child's head with scissors and sucks the brain out to collapse the head."

Or as more clinically described on the Web : "Under the Intact D&X method, the largest part of the fetus (the head) is reduced in diameter to allow vaginal passage. According to the [American Medical Association](#), this procedure has four main elements. First, the [cervix](#) is [dilated](#). Second, the [fetus](#) is positioned for a [footling breech](#). Third, the fetus is partially pulled out, starting with the feet, as far as the neck. Fourth, the [brain](#) and material inside the skull is evacuated, so that a dead but otherwise intact fetus can be delivered via the [vagina](#)."



Consistency in respect of human life and human rights at all stages of life is one which any person could philosophically derive through a humanistic approach. and such a philosophy is reflected in such instruments as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. That each human life has value in its uniqueness and potential from the moment that life begins which by its very nature has to be at biological conception

If we deny such a position I believe that we adopt an increasingly utilitarian attitude towards human life, which has the potential to take us down many questionable roads. Ultimately we reach a point where the question has to be asked "Does the end justify the means?"

In the case of a Christian humanist and human rights activist, a position which I openly subscribe to, there is the added perspective of every human life as having a spiritual dimension and dignity. Whether conception is the moment of suffusion of a human soul in Christian theology I don't know, but it is certainly is the beginning of a human life from which it will progress through many stages until old age and death, unless terminated at some earlier stage before and after birth, by natural or human intervention or misadventure.

John Launder  
Editor : [jplaunder@vic.chariot.net.au](mailto:jplaunder@vic.chariot.net.au)

## RIP : Derek Cade

The ISHRA committee was sorry to hear of the recent death of one of our benefactors Mr Derek Cade.

Derek, who became blind in his senior years and lived past 5 or so years in a nursing home. He had been a bachelor and was an orchardist on the Mornington Peninsula. He had been a member of the RSL, a CFA volunteer and lived a simple life.

One day, whilst in the Nursing home and not been able to do much physically, he asked himself "What is my purpose in life?" Being rather disillusioned with big charities, he found personal satisfaction in supporting the work of small voluntary groups and ISHRA became one of his interests. He had found out about ISHRA through a member Rita Moore, who had done much to befriend and support him in his latter years.

Derek took a special interest in the work of Trish Franklin and her Loreto Vietnam School for the Blind in Saigon, and through ISHR and also directly, he made a number of generous donations to that cause. He saw it as an opportunity to give such young people an opportunity for "...a leg up in life."

On one of my visits to Trish Franklin in Vietnam I made a presentation of an ISHRA donation which included a generous infusion from Derek. She told the children about Derek and they sang some songs which I videotaped and gave a copy to him on my return. He was very pleased to receive. It gave him a personal identification with the children.

J.Launder

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### Apply to become an ISHRA Member

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