



ASIAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION



The protection of the rights of torture victims in Asia and Hong Kong.

2010 United Nations International Day in Support of the Victims of Torture: HKU Panel Discussion

June 9th, 2010, The International Day in Support of Torture Victims is on 26th June and this year Hong Kong charity '*Vision First*' will team up with Asia wide advocacy NGO '*Asian Human Rights Commission*' to highlight the current situation of torture victims in Asia and those fleeing to Hong Kong and the abuses they face .

According to The United Nations **Convention against Torture** and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT), torture is defined internationally as: “the act of inflicting severe pain or suffering especially as a means of punishment or coercion,” when conducted by state officers for the purposes such as punishment, interrogation, discrimination or intimidation. It is intentionally inflicted on a person and results in the victim experiencing “extreme anguish of body and / or mind”.

When: 26th June, 2-4pm

Where: The Convocation Room, Main Building, HKU and streamed live on the internet

Speakers: Mark Daly (Barnes and Daly Solicitors), Richard Tsoi (SOCO), Brian Barbour (HKRAC), Bijo Francis (AHRC, India Desk), Baseer Naweed (AHRC, Pakistan Desk)

What: Talks from five prominent figures working in Hong Kong and Asia against torture about the situation here and Asia wide.

Subjects for discussion include: The implementation of CAT regarding police practices, detention facilities and the mechanisms of complaints against police in Hong Kong; The general situation of torture in Asia and the reforms required to address the problem; The situation of torture in Pakistan; The situation of CAT (Convention Against Torture) claimants in Hong Kong.

Each speaker will be followed by a video of interviewing torture victims in Asian countries.

The whole event will be streamed live across Asia and the panel will be answering questions from online viewers, using social networking sites twitter and facebook, as well as from those at the physical venue.

Ends



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If you would like more information about The International Day in Support of Torture Victims, the organisations involved or to interview any of the speakers please email Danielle Spencer of AHRC at danielle.spencer@ahrc.asia or call Danielle on 61077962

Connecting with AHRC

You can find out more about the AHRC and the work they do, at:

www.humanrights.asia & www.ahrchk.net

<http://notorture.ahrchk.net/profile/activities.php>

Connecting with Vision First:

You can find out more about Vision First and the work they do with torture victims and asylum seekers at:

www.visionfirstnow.org

About AHRC

The Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) was founded in 1986 by a prominent group of jurists and human rights activists in Asia. The AHRC is an independent, non-governmental body, which seeks to promote greater awareness and realisation of human rights in the Asian region, and to mobilise Asian and international public opinion to obtain relief and redress for the victims of human rights violations. AHRC promotes civil and political rights, as well as economic, social and cultural rights.

About Vision First

Vision First currently meets the needs of its clients by providing food, medication, clothing, shelter and financial aid. It also facilitates access to free or discounted medical services, legal advice, psychological counselling, education, vocational training and housing support.

Moreover, Vision First advocates on behalf of its clients with the aim of furthering the community's understanding of the plight of Hong Kong's asylum seekers and refugees, and thus reducing the widespread prejudice and discrimination they face.



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About Mark Daly

Partner, Barnes & Daly, Hong Kong SAR, China

Working in Hong Kong since 1995, Mark has concentrated on human rights and refugee issues. He previously worked with Pam Baker and Company on judicial review and habeas corpus cases and on Vietnamese refugee cases. In addition to refugee cases he has since conducted a substantial number of judicial review cases in the High Court, Court of Appeal and Court of Final Appeal, including a number of the landmark Basic Law constitutional cases on the “Right of Abode”. Recent significant cases include the Court of Final Appeal case of *Prem Singh v Director of Immigration* (FACV 7 of 2002, Judgment 11 February 2003—resident rights for persons not of Chinese nationality) and the Court of Final Appeal case of *Sakthevel Prabakar v Secretary for Security* (FACV 16 of 2003, Judgment 8th June 2004) involving the question of refugees and the Convention Against Torture “CAT”. Success in the recent case of *FB & Ors v Director of Immigration & Anor* (HCAL 51/2007, Judgment 5th December 2008) has been the impetus for the unprecedented “Joint Position Paper by the Law Society of Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Bar Association on the Framework for Convention Against Torture (“CAT”) Claimants and Asylum Seekers”, 31st March 2009.

As Amnesty International’s representative he has attended, as international legal observer, the trial in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, of former Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim and the appeal of opposition politician, Lim Guan Eng. In May 2000 & November 2008, he represented the Hong Kong Human Rights Monitor before the United Nations Committee Against Torture in Geneva.

About Mr. Richard TSOI Yiu-cheong

Community Organizer

Hong Kong Society for Community Organization

Society for Community Organization (SoCO) firmly believes that everyone should be entitled to equal rights. Equal opportunity for participation and fair distribution of social resources is the foundation of human rights.

About Bijo Francis:

Bijo Francis was admitted to legal practice in India in 1994. He started his practice as a Junior Associate at the office of the Advocate General, where he specialised in various aspects of corporate legal practice. He was later a founding partner of *ABA Associates*, a top tier law firm in India. In 2001, he started appearing in cases of



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human rights violations in India representing victims. He received his LL.M in Human Rights Law from the University of Hong Kong in 2004 and joined the Asian Legal Resource Centre (ALRC) in the same year.

Francis is currently responsible for the South Asia Desk at the ALRC as its Programme Officer. In addition to specific responsibility concerning the work of the ALRC and the Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) on India, the South Asia Desk is also responsible for coordinating regional activities like the consultations on the Asian Charter of Rule of Law. He also coordinates the Right to Food Programme, and represents the AHRC in the Executive Governing Council of the International Dalit Solidarity Network (IDSN). He has authored and published various materials concerning human rights issues in India, including as a columnist for the United Press International writing for the weekly column *Incredible India*.

About Baseer Naweed:

Baseer Naveed, Pakistan country desk officer, is responsible for the response of the AHRC and ALRC to human rights violations in the country and for monitoring the conditions that affect human rights. This work is achieved through producing urgent appeals, statements, press releases and reports on such topics as torture, women's rights and disappearances.

Prior to joining the AHRC, he was a radio broadcaster, journalist and columnist who worked for many years on stories about political and social affairs in Pakistan. Moreover, as a community organizer, he worked for the resettlement of 300,000 people who were threatened by the construction of the Lyari Expressway in Karachi, a large project planned by the Musharraf government. Because of his long-time work for human rights in the country, he suffered the loss of his son as part of the Pakistani government's policy of intimidating those it believed to be its critics and opponents through disappearances and extrajudicial killings. He earned a master's degree in philosophy at the University of Karachi.

About Brian Barbour

Brian Barbour is the Executive Director of The Hong Kong Refugee Advice Centre.

The Hong Kong Refugee Advice Centre ("HKRAC") is the only dedicated provider of *pro bono* legal aid to refugees seeking protection at the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees ("UNHCR") in Hong Kong.



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Our mission is: "To provide high-quality, pro bono legal advice to refugees in Hong Kong, protect their rights, and generate awareness."