

**Justice and Peace - You can make a difference!**

***When all the prisoners in a country are crushed underfoot,  
When human rights are overridden in defiance of the Most High,  
When someone is cheated of justice, does not the Lord see it?***  
(Lamentations 3, 34-36)

The "Justice and Peace" group from Our Lady of Peace and Blessed Dominic Barberi parish has chosen the following case from Amnesty International for our prayer and support this month. We hope you can join your prayers with ours and consider writing a letter or sending a fax to the appropriate authority which is listed below.

**Azerbaijan:** Three teenagers, Ruslan Bessonov, Maksim Genashilkin and Dmitri Pavlov, have been detained since March 2005, charged with murdering another teenager, Vusal Zeynalov. All three boys allege they have been tortured and ill-treated since their arrest. Ruslan Bessonov stated that on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2005 police investigators punched him and beat him with truncheons on his head and body. He said they hung him up by his legs, sat on his chest and stamped on his fingers. They allegedly threatened to tear out his fingernails, as well as other acts of violence against him and his family. The other two teenagers alleged similar threats and beatings. All three claim they were forced to sign confessions incriminating each other for the murder of Vusal Zeynalov. They all maintain they did not commit the murder and have alibis for that time. Family members believe the boys may have been targeted because of their Russian ethnicity, allowing the crime to be explained as ethnically motivated.

Court hearings had been repeatedly postponed for two years. When two hearings eventually took place in October & November 2006, one investigator admitted forging the signature of Dmitri Pavlov's attorney on one of the protocols and of destroying documentation relevant to the case. During a court hearing on 1<sup>st</sup> June local journalists were not admitted into the court room. On 18<sup>th</sup> June 2007, after an unfair trial, the Court of Grave Crimes sentenced the three to 10 years' imprisonment in a strict regime prison. The parents of the three detainees told AI that the alleged time of the murder had shifted a number of times in the light of the alibis presented during the trial. They also believe that forensic evidence brought in support of their sons' conviction was artificially manufactured. The three are to remain in detention until their appeal is heard.

The health of Ruslan Bessonov, Maksim Genashilkin and Dmitri Pavlov has reportedly deteriorated. They have complained of stomach pains, swollen abdomens and poor quality food and water, and have reportedly been refused medical treatment while in detention. Ruslan Bessonov and Dmitri Pavlov turned 18 years old in April and July 2006 respectively, and consequently fell under the adult regime, requiring their parents to receive the judge's permission to visit them, which has often been denied.

Please write to the authorities listed below:

- Urging them to ensure that the allegations of the torture and ill-treatment of Ruslan Bessonov, Maksim Genashilkin and Dmitri Pavlov are fully investigated, that those responsible are brought to justice and that the victims receive reparations;
- Calling for assurances that Ruslan Bessonov, Maksim Genashilkin and Dmitri Pavlov will receive appropriate medical treatment, including transfer to a civilian hospital if necessary;
- Expressing concern at the unfair trial of Ruslan Bessonov, Maksim Genashilkin and Dmitri Pavlov, including the use of confessions allegedly extracted as a result of torture, and allegations of forged and destroyed case materials during the trial;
- Expressing concern at the length of time that elapsed before their parents and lawyers were notified of their arrest, and the restrictions on family visits;
- Urging them to investigate allegations that evidence against the three detainees was fabricated.

**Please send polite appeals to either or both of the following:**

President Ilham Aliyev  
Office of the President of the Azerbaijan Republic  
19 Istiqlaliyyat Street  
Baku AZ1066  
Azerbaijan  
Fax: +994 12 492 0625  
E-mail: [president@gov.az](mailto:president@gov.az) OR [office@apparat.gov.az](mailto:office@apparat.gov.az)  
**Salutation:** Dear President

His Excellency Mr. Rafael Ibrahimov  
Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan  
4 Kensington Court  
London W8 5DL  
Fax: 0207 937 1783  
**Salutation:** Your Excellency

Optional helpful tips on writing appeals are available at:  
<http://www.amnesty.org/campaign/letter-guide.html>

You can check for updates on the status of previous appeals at:  
<http://web.amnesty.org/web/www.nsf/activebycountry>

**Thank you!**

**Your parish Justice and Peace group.**

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*The day was long, the burden I had borne  
Seemed heavier than I could longer bear,  
And then it lifted - but I did not know  
Someone had knelt in prayer;  
Had taken me to God that very hour,  
And asked the easing of the load, and He,  
In infinite compassion, had stooped down  
And taken it from me....*

Anonymous - found in a church