

NEWSLETTER

Volume 2 No. 1

Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada

February 2003

Promoting human rights by protecting those who defend them

Those of us who practice law in safe environments such as Canada owe a duty to those who risk not only their freedom but sometimes their lives to protect rights.

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NEWS

IRELAND

Patrick Finucane, murdered 1989

Rosemary Nelson, murdered 1998

Mr. Justice Cory of the Supreme Court of Canada has been appointed to review whether there should be a public inquiry into the alleged 'dirty war' against the IRA carried out by the British intelligence service. Mr. Justice Cory will review information and reports compiled on six cases including the assassinations of lawyers Patrick Finucane on 13 February 1989 and Rosemary Nelson in March 1998. Both lawyers represented high profile IRA clients and both had received warnings prior to their deaths that some police officers wanted them dead. Mr. Justice Cory's mandate enables him to recommend a public inquiry with respect to any of the cases reviewed.

GUATEMALA

In November 2002 Kofi Annan recommended that the mandate of the United Nations Verification

Mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA) be extended for another year. The decision recognizes that groups with ties to paramilitary organizations and former military officials continue to operate and are suspected of involvement in attacks and threats against human rights defenders.

On January 23 2003 Hina Jilani, UN Special Representative on human rights defenders, reported an increase in violations against human rights defenders in Guatemala over the past two years including killings, death threats, acts of intimidation and harassment, and that violations were rarely properly investigated. Says Ms. Jilani:

"The involvement of clandestine structures and groups in attacks against defenders and allegations of their links with state security forces is a matter of serious concern that must be addressed by the Government on an urgent basis."

NEW CAMPAIGNS

SINGAPORE

Dr. Chee Soon Juan

Dr. Chee Soon Juan, chair of the 18-nation Alliance for Reform and Democracy in Asia, former prisoner of conscience, and one of the two most prominent critics and victims of the Singapore government is appealing two

judgments which highlight many issues of concern to Lawyers Rights Watch Canada (LRWC).

Vancouver lawyer Howard Rubin is in Singapore to monitor the appeals in Singapore's High Court for LRWC. The US based Lawyers Committee for Human Rights (LCHR) is sending Australian lawyer Laurie Berg. LRWC and LCHR hope to produce a joint report.

BACKGROUND

Summary judgment against Dr. Chee was awarded August 2002 to the plaintiffs Lee Kuan Yew and Goh Chok Tong, the former and current Prime Ministers of Singapore, in the two cases under appeal.

Similar libel suits initiated by members of the ruling party against other governments critics have resulted in arbitrarily large damage awards and have had a chilling effect not only on freedom of expression in Singapore but also on the right to legal representation. Singapore lawyers have become unwilling to jeopardize themselves by representing litigants in cases brought by members of the ruling party or which are otherwise politically sensitive.

Dr. Chee was unrepresented when the Senior Assistant Registrar, proceeding summarily in Chambers, awarded judgment against him in both cases. He was not able to find a Singapore lawyer competent and willing to represent him, and his applications for leave to be represented by foreign lawyers were dismissed. Stuart Littlemore, a senior Australian Queen's Counsel who authored a report critical of the use of libel suits in Singapore, was judged by the High Court of Singapore to be not a 'fit person' to appear in a Singapore court. Both Martin Lee, Hong Kong senior counsel, and Henric Nicholas,

Australian Queen's Counsel, were rejected by the High Court on the grounds that the cases against Chee were not sufficiently complex to require representation by foreign QCs. The High Court of Singapore then required Dr. Chee to post a S\$10,000 bond in order to appeal these rulings.

LRWC is concerned with the resulting effective rights violations including the right to legal representation to enforce human rights or to obtain remedies for human rights violations.

LRWC previously expressed concern, in reference to J.B. Jeyaretnam, that defamation proceedings against government critics have impaired the right of Singaporeans to fully engage in professions that carry with the duty or responsibility to be critical of government. This affects lawyers, parliamentarians, journalists, human rights defenders and all those who depend on their services.

ONGOING CAMPAIGNS

GUATEMALA

Myrna Mack Trial

Vancouver lawyer Brenda Wemp was in Guatemala City from 10–26 September 2002 on behalf of LRWC. The primary purpose of her trip was to attend the trial of three former high ranking military officials charged with planning and ordering the 1990 murder of anthropologist Myrna Mack (the Myrna Mack trial). LRWC was asked to attend the trial, together with other international observers, to signal concern for the safety and independence of the jurists, interveners, and witnesses involved.

BACKGROUND

On 11 September 1990, Guatemalan anthropologist Myrna Elizabeth Mack Chang died after being stabbed 27 times outside of her office. Ms. Mack, who had been investigating

military atrocities in rural indigenous communities, had recently published a ground-breaking study in which she had concluded that Guatemalan government counter-insurgency policies had caused the internal displacement and subsequent suffering of the country's (Mayan) indigenous people.

In 1990/91 two police investigators concluded Myrna Mack had been murdered for political reasons and named Noel Beteta, a member of the military, as one of the suspects. Beteta, convicted in 1993 and sentenced to 25 years, subsequently revealed that he had been acting on orders from higher levels in the military.

In 1996 retired General Edgar Augusto Godoy Gaitan, Colonel Juan Guillermo Oliva Carrera and Colonel Juan Valencia Osorio were indicted, and finally brought to trial on 3 September 2002. On 3 October 2002 Colonel Osorio was convicted of ordering the murder of Myrna Mack and sentenced to 30 years imprisonment. The others were acquitted on the grounds of insufficient evidence.

IMPEDIMENTS TO PROSECUTION

Throughout the case, lawyers, judges, police officers and witnesses have been subjected to serious threats, intimidation, and violence as a result of their involvement in the investigation and trial. One of the police investigators who concluded that Myrna Mack had been murdered for political reasons was himself murdered in 1995 and his colleague fled the country. The president of the Guatemalan Constitutional Court was assassinated in 1994 just as he was about to rule on an appeal regarding the case.

Roberto Romero, one of the lawyers prosecuting the case, has received death threats, and had his home fired at. His family were subjected to threats and intimidation and eventually fled the country for their own safety.

Concerns for the safety of the jurists and witnesses involved in the prosecution have been heightened by Amnesty International's (AI) report that human rights in Guatemala have deteriorated in the past two years.

CURRENT STATUS

The fact that the involvement of high ranking military officers in ordering the assassination of Myrna Mack was tested through a trial process sets a precedent in the struggle to end impunity in Guatemala. The successful conclusion of the trial and the appeals, with attendant guarantees for the independence and security of the lawyers witnesses and judges involved, will set a very important precedent in Guatemala and internationally.

The Myrna Mack trial is an important step in lifting the veil of official secrecy and impunity regarding the violence that terrorized the nation from 1960 until 1996 and resulted in more than 200,000 deaths. Valencia's conviction represents the first time that a high-ranking military official has been tried and convicted for a crime committed during Guatemala's 36-year internal conflict. Only once before (see the Bishop Gerardi case) has a military officer been convicted for a political crime in Guatemala.

Valencia's conviction is also the first time in Guatemala that an officer has been convicted for ordering a crime carried

GUATEMALA

Appeal of Bishop Gerardi Verdict

On 9 October 2002 the Guatemala Appeal Court overturned the June 2001 convictions and ordered a retrial of Colonel Byron Lima Estrada, Captain Byron Lima Oliva, Jose Obdulio Villanueva and the priest Mario Orantes. The military officers had been convicted by the Supreme Court of Guatemala of the 'extra-judicial' murder of Bishop Gerardi and sentenced to 30 years imprisonment each. Priest Mario Orantes had been convicted of being an accomplice and was sentenced to 20 years.

The Appeal Court found, inter alia, that the trial court did not give appropriate weight to all of the evidence including the contradictory statements of witness

Ruben Chanax Sontay. Information about LRWC's previous involvement with the Gerardi trial is at www.lrwc.org and in the report by James Tate, "*The Gerardi Murder Trial: Report to LRWC on a visit to Guatemala June 3-9 2001 (August 2001)*," who attended the final week of the Gerardi trial in Guatemala City.

MEXICO

DIGNA OCHOA

Lawyers representing LRWC and the Bar Human Rights Committee (BHRC) will visit Mexico City April 5-12, 2003 to conduct a follow-up assessment of the Digna Ochoa murder investigation and the adequacy of security and independence safeguards for human rights advocates. LRWC and BHRC will produce a report on the progress and problems of investigation since their report of July 2002. The BHRC has applied for joint funding for the follow-up assessment. Leo McGrady Q.C. will represent LRWC and Nicholas Stewart Q.C. BHRC.

RECENT ACTIVITY

On 13 January 2003, a team of international experts from the Inter American Commission of Human Rights/Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos (CIDH) went to Mexico City to assess evidence found in the investigation of the murder Digna Ochoa y Plácido.

The team of experts, funded in part by Canada, is composed of Drs. Pedro Díaz Romero and Maria Dolores Morcillo Méndez and Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) officer Alan John Voth, experts in criminology, forensic pathology and ballistics. In accordance with the terms of reference for CIDH, the international team will assess evidence gathering and analysis to ensure that they conform to international standards. The experts

will report in camera to the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights. Identifying those responsible and bringing them to justice remains the exclusive responsibility of the Mexican authorities.

BACKGROUND

Digna Ochoa, who worked on some of Mexico's most politically charged cases, was found murdered in her small Mexico City office 19 October 2001. Prior to her murder the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (Court) had ordered the government of Mexico to investigate attacks on and threats against Ms. Ochoa, bring the perpetrators to trial and provide adequate security to Ms. Ochoa and her colleagues. Digna herself attributed the threats and attacks to the military groups accused of criminal acts during her defense of peasant ecologists in Guerrero. The investigation proved ineffectual and was prematurely shelved in May of 2001.

After her death, The Court again ordered the government of Mexico to conduct an effective investigation resulting in appropriate prosecutions, this time of Ms Ochoa's murder, and to put in place adequate protections for lawyers.

Many international human rights organizations, including FIAN (FoodFirst Information and Action Network, an NGO with consultative status with the United Nations) called on the government of Mexico to conduct an exhaustive investigation of the possible link between the murder of Digna Ochoa and the threats against her during her defense of the ecologist peasants.

The investigation ordered by The Court in November 2001 has been plagued with problems and delays. These include the failure to follow up at all or

adequately lines of investigation that may indicate government involvement; three changes in the investigating prosecutor; delays occasioned by negotiations over sharing of information; apparent lack of political will to conduct an exhaustive investigation particularly of the extent to which Ms Ochoa's work as a lawyer made her the target of attacks; and focus on a suicide theory to the exclusion of other theories.

In July 2002, Mexican Attorney General D.F. Batiz announced the

creation of a Special Prosecutor's office to assume responsibility for the investigation. Margarita Guerra was appointed as lead prosecutor.

John McAlpine, Q.C. represented LRWC during the initial fact finding trip to Mexico City in March 2002. The information gathered by Mr. McAlpine and Nicholas Stewart of BHRC during their 2002 trip to Mexico formed the basis of the LRWC/BHRC's July 2002 "*Report on the Digna Ochoa Murder Investigation.*"

LETTER CAMPAIGNS

Members of LRWC's Letters for Lawyers and Latin America Committees write letters on behalf of lawyers in danger. Letters are written on LRWC letterhead and generally state the particulars of the case; recite relevant international standards binding on the state where the violations are occurring; make a request for cessation of illegal activity; call for investigation of rights' violations (such as death threats or attempts on persons' lives); and ask for a report to LRWC on the subsequent status of the situation and actions taken to remedy the abuse. Letters are sent to government officials directly responsible for the issue being addressed with copies to various other government and police officials, members of the press, and NGOs. More information about individual cases, and copies of the letters, is available at www.lrwc.org.

Letters of support written during this reporting period include:

➤ ARGENTINA

Claudio Pandolfi, lawyer

On 26 June 2002, photographs were taken during disturbances in Avellaneda, Buenos Aires province that clearly showed police involvement in the events leading to the killing of Dario Santillan and Maximiliano Costeki. Lawyer Claudio Pandolfi of the Association against Police and Institutional Repression, Coordinadora Contra la Represion Policial e Institucional (CORREPI), was using these photographs in a case against the police officers believed to be involved in the deaths when he himself received death threats.

Laura Figueroa, human rights lawyer

Fernanda Sanssone, archaeology student; Emilio Ferrer, federal court prosecutor

Laura Figueroa, Fernanda Sanssone, and Emilio Ferrer were all involved in the investigation of reported human rights violations within the Tucuman Province when Amnesty International reported that they were being kept under surveillance, their homes and offices had been ransacked, and they had received a number of threats by telephone and in person. These violations appear to involve some level of the government.

➤ **BANGLADESH**

Rabindra Ghosh, lawyer

Mr. Rabindra Ghosh, a lawyer in the Supreme Court of Bangladesh experienced harassment, threats and physical abuse occasioned, in the opinion of Amnesty International, by his political and religious orientation and his advocacy for stronger government measures to protect members of the Hindu minority who had experienced attacks and rape following the general elections of October 2001. On 1 July 2002 there was an alleged physical assault on Mr. Ghosh and illegal confiscation of his personal property at a Bar Association meeting.

➤ **BURMA**

Ko Htay, U Aung or Maung Htay, Aye Kyaw Zwa and others

At least 30 people were arrested and detained after 25 September 2002 were believed to be possibly at risk of torture and/or ill treatment by the military. All but four of those arrested are known to be former political prisoners who since 1990 have served sentences of between three to ten years. Two or three of the detainees are lawyers. There was no information about whether charges had been laid and there were concerns that they had been arrested for peaceful political activities.

Update – October 2002

Amnesty International reported that eleven of the people detained by the military had been released.

➤ **BRAZIL**

Dr. Agisandro da Costa Pereira

Dr. Agisandro Pereira, his family and his colleagues at the Ordem dos Advogados Brasileiros (OAB), of which he is president, have been the targets of harassment, death threats, and murder attempts. Recent threats are believed to have been sparked by Dr. Pereira's call for an investigation into the murder of lawyer Marcelo Denaldai. On 25 July 2002, a bomb exploded in the offices of the OAB in Vitoria, the capital of Espirito Santo state, during a ceremony recognizing new members of the OAB. There were 130 lawyers and functionaries present in the building at the time.

Reports provided by Amnesty International suggest involvement of Brazilian police organization Scuderie Detetive le Coq (SDLC) in human rights violations and organized crime in Espirito Santo. Brazil has been internationally criticized for an abusive police force that has been accused of committing massacres, torture and killings of civilians, and for a judiciary that has repeatedly failed to bring offenders to justice.

Update – 17 September 2002

The Ministério Da Justica Secretaria de Estatio des Direitos Humanes replied by letter received 17 September 2002 that the murder of Marcelo Denaldai had precipitated the creation of a special unit of police officers and prosecutors to assist victims of violence in the state of Espirito.

➤ **CANADA**

Cameron Ward, lawyer

Cameron Ward was arrested in Vancouver on 1 August 2002 while attending a public event in Chinatown. Reports indicated that Mr. Ward was handcuffed, searched by three police officers, held in custody for five hours and finally released without charge. Mr. Ward's car was seized from the street and impounded by the VPD, apparently on suspicion that there might have been a pie in the trunk.

The VPD said that Mr. Ward's arrest was occasioned by a mistake as to Mr. Ward's identity and that the arresting officer(s) arrested Mr. Ward because he fit the description of a man whom the officer believed might throw a pie at the Prime Minister. Mr. Ward is well known to the VPD as a lawyer who has acted against the VPD, the Prime Minister and the RCMP in the well-publicized RCMP APEC Inquiry and in various civil actions.

Update – 11 September 2002

The VPD indicated that a Police Act investigation of Mr. Ward's arrest and detention was being conducted by the Abbotsford Police Department under the oversight of the Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner. Mr. Ward has initiated civil proceedings.

John Richardson, lawyer

John Richardson, a lawyer of record for some of the Woodward's store protestors, was arrested 22 September 2002 for obstruction when crossing Hastings Street to advise his clients. Mr. Richardson's clients were gathered on the sidewalk adjacent to the Woodward's store and were apparently being (wrongfully) arrested by Vancouver municipal bylaw offences.

Mr. Richardson was detained in custody for approximately nine hours, was refused access to his lawyer for approximately five hours and attempts were made to strip search him. Mr. Richardson was well known to the VPD as the Director of Pivot Legal Services which was at the time preparing a report on illegal police practices in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside.

➤ **COLOMBIA**

Daniel Prado and Gladys Avila

Daniel Prado and Gladys Avila and other workers for the Association of Families of the Detained-Disappeared/ Asociacion de Familiares de Detenidos Desaparecidos (ASFADDES) have been subjected to death threats, intimidation and illegal surveillance in incidents reported to have occurred between 8 June and 29 July 2002. The ASFADDES is a human rights defence organization.

Diana Milena Murcia, lawyer, and members of the José Alvear Restrepo' Lawyers' Collective

Amnesty International reported that human rights lawyer Diana Milena Murcia and other members of the José Alvear Restrepo Lawyers' Collective involved in the investigation of reported human rights violations towards three Irishmen detained in Colombia were under surveillance, apparently by government agents.

➤ **EGYPT**

Dr. Saad Eddin Ibrahim

Internationally respected human rights advocate and sociology professor Dr. Saad Eddin Ibrahim was sentenced to seven years of hard labour after being convicted on 29 July 2002 by the High State Security Court in Egypt of accepting of foreign funds without the proper permission of authorities, distributing false information abroad harmful to Egypt's interests, and making false expense claims to the European Commission. His co-defendants received prison sentences ranging from one to five years in duration.

Update – 3 December 2002

The Egyptian Court of Cassation overturned Dr. Saad Eddin Ibrahim's conviction and sentencing and ordered a third re-trial. Dr. Eddin Ibrahim has been released on bail pending the new trial which is expected to begin in February 2003. The new trial will be before the Court of Cassation.

➤ **GUATEMALA**

Roberto Romero and Carmen Aida Ibarra, lawyers

LRWC received reports from a number of sources that there had been additional threats to the lives, personal security and independence of Roberto Romero and Carmen Aida Ibarra, advocates involved in the trial of General Edgar Augusto Godoy Gaytan, Colonel Juan Guillermo Ovica Carrera and Colonel Juan Valencia Osorio on charges that they planned and directed the 11 September 1990 murder of Myrna Mack Chang. These included death threats against prosecutor Roberto Romero and his son Manuel Gerardo Romero; an armed attack of Roberto Romero's home; and intimidation by surveillance of Carmen Aida Ibarra.

➤ **IRAN**

Nasser Zarafshan, lawyer

On 18 March 2002 a Military Court sentenced Mr. Nasser Zarafshan, age fifty-six, to seventy lashes, five years' imprisonment and banned him from practicing law for five years. The sentence was confirmed on appeal on 16 July 2002 by the Military Tribunal of Tehran. Amnesty International expressed concern that the charges against this lawyer were politically motivated.

Mr. Nasser Zarafshan, a prominent lawyer, had been charged with disseminating information relating to a controversial and well-publicized legal case in which he represented the children of political activists who were murdered in 1998, allegedly by officials of the Ministry of Intelligence. Mr. Nasser Zarafshan had criticized the manner in which these murders had been investigated, including the absence of important information from court files.

➤ **MEXICO**

Arturo Requenses Galnares, human rights defender

Arturo Requenses Galnares, a human rights defender working with Christian Action for the Abolition of Torture/ Acción de los Cristianos para la Abolición de la Tortura (ACAT), was reported to have received a threatening phone call on 17 July 2002 and to have been under surveillance on 16 July 2002. Mr. Galnares had been working on a number of politically sensitive cases for ACAT, including several involving torture cases and a possible disappearance.

Update – 12 October 2002

Director General of Human Rights for the Federal District of Mexico City wrote advising that: an investigation into the matter had been concluded, Mr. Galnares was safe and Attorney General Bernardo Bátiz Vázquez was committed to complying strictly with human rights.

Digna Ochoa

LRWC sent copies of the Digna Ochoa report to President Vicente Fox and other officials of the government of Mexico urging compliance with the orders of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and the recommendations of Dr. Diaz, consultant to the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights.

➤ **NEPAL**

Hari Prasad Phuyal

Mr. Hari Prasad Phuyal, a lawyer representing members or sympathizers of the armed political group Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), was arrested by police on 22 May 2002 at his home. He was taken to the District Police Office and held for two days before being transferred to Morang prison under a preventive detention order.

Mr. Phuyal received visits at prison from lawyers and family members until July 23, when his family members were denied access to him. It has been reported that his wife was told on July 23 that orders "from the top" prohibited visits to him. His wife, however, was allowed to see him on July 29, at which time he was unable to walk without physical support from two men. His body was covered with bandages, his face swollen, and Mr. Phuyal told his wife he was unable to eat. A lawyer who visited him on July 29 in the presence of several police officers confirmed that Mr. Phuyal's face and legs were swollen, and that he had been unable to eat for ten days because of difficulties swallowing.

Update – 1 September 2002

Mr. Phuyal was released on or about 1 September 2002 on condition that he publish a statement in several Nepali newspapers saying that he would not represent suspected members or sympathizers of the Communist Party of Nepal.

Raman Kumar Shrestha, lawyer

Mr. Raman Kumar Shrestha, a lawyer working at a Legal Relief Centre in Kanuni Uddhar Kendra, Bagbazar, Kathmandu, was reported to have been arrested by army personnel 23 August 2002 on his way to work. Information on the reasons for his detention, as well as his whereabouts, has not been forthcoming. Mr. Raman Kumar Shrestha may have been detained because of his work as a lawyer representing alleged sympathizers with the CPN (Maoist).

➤ **ZIMBABWE**

Sternford Moyo, President and Wilbert Mapombere, Secretary Law Society of Zimbabwe

On 3 June 2002 Mr. Sternford Moyo and Mr. Wilbert Mapombere were arrested under the Public Order and Security Act (POSA), released on bail and required to relinquish their travel documents. The POSA passed by the Zimbabwe parliament in January 2002 appears to have regularly been used to suppress peaceful opposition, political organizing, criticism of the government and independent media reporting.

Update

Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs, W.C. Graham wrote indicating that Canada has responded to the arrest of Mr. Moyo and other events in Zimbabwe by withdrawing Canadian funds from the Zimbabwe government and supporting the Commonwealth Committee decision of 19 March 2002 to suspend Zimbabwe from the Councils of the Commonwealth for one year.

ARE LETTERS FOR LAWYERS EFFECTIVE?

This question was put to Amnesty International (AI) and the Lawyers Committee on Human Rights (LCHR). ***AI responded*** that in about one third of their letter campaigns there were positive results, one third were still open or had had negative results, and in one third they have received no further information. On the basis of reports from 'freed' subjects of AI letter writing campaigns, AI believes that letter writing is often instrumental in creating a positive outcome. AI also believes that letter writing serves to prevent or discourage further or additional violations. (See www.amnesty.org click on Campaigns, click on Amnesty Works.)

LCHR believes that letters provide a check on abuse of power and at minimum serve as a reminder to government officials that the LCHR is concerned and is monitoring a particular situation. Anecdotal evidence received by LCHR overwhelmingly indicates that letter writing is effective. LCHR agree that letter writing must be carried out, at minimum to signal that human rights organizations are aware that the identified abuses are occurring and are illegal.

LRWC's experience also indicates that LRWC letter writing has been effective. In three cases replies from governments advised that changes were being made to address the identified problems or an inquiry had been initiated (Brazil, Mexico, Canada). In another three cases, jurists were released from custody (Burma, Nepal and Zimbabwe). In one case, the Canadian government responded to LRWC with details of the Canadian government response (Zimbabwe).

INTERNATIONAL LAW NEWS

International Criminal Court

Ratifications: On Friday, 31 January 2003, Albania ratified the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, thereby becoming the 88th State Party to the treaty. 139 states have signed the Rome Statute. The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court entered into force on 1 July 2002. The Court will likely begin investigating and prosecuting cases in mid-2003. A full list of ratifications can be viewed at www.amnesty.org/icc.

US status at the International Criminal Court

In recent months, the USA has been asking states around the world to sign impunity agreements providing that they will not surrender US nationals accused of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes to the new International Criminal Court. Amnesty International has analyzed these agreements and concluded that they violate the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and international law. Furthermore they threaten the worldwide effort to end impunity for the worst crimes known to humanity by seeking to exempt people accused of these crimes from the jurisdiction of the Court—no one should be given impunity for these crimes.

In response to the US initiative, in September 2002 Amnesty International launched a worldwide petition calling on all states not to sign impunity agreements with the USA. The petition closed on 30 November, with approximately 85,000 signatures.

Election of Judges to the ICC takes place February 3–7, 2003. Canada has nominated Phillippe Kirsch. Mr. Kirsch was chairman of the Committee of the Whole of the Diplomatic Conference of the Plenipotentiaries on the Establishment of an International Criminal Court which resulted in the creation and signing of the Rome Statute in July 1998. He is also president of the Preparatory Committee for the International Criminal Court. Mr. Kirsch, a graduate of the University of Montréal and a member of the Bar in Québec, is currently Canada's Ambassador to Sweden.

According to Human Rights Watch, there are 10 female and 33 male candidates. There are 10 candidates from Africa, eight from Latin America and the Caribbean, 12 from Western Europe, seven from Eastern Europe and six from Asia. A complete list of candidates can be found at the UN website, http://www.un.org/law/icc/elections/judges/judges_nominations.htm

International Criminal Bar

The International Criminal Bar (ICB) was founded in Montreal on June 15, 2002. LRWC was represented at the

organizational meetings of the International Criminal Bar by Victoria lawyer Steven Kelliher.

At the 24–25 November 2002 ICB conference in Paris, committees were formed to work on a Code of Ethics, Training and Qualification, Discipline, and Finance and General Assembly. Steven Kelliher is a member of the Finance and General Assembly and Organization Committee and will attend the first General Assembly meeting of the International Criminal Bar in Berlin, Germany March 21–22, 2003.

CONFERENCES

6 June 2002: San Francisco. G. Davidson attended the Global Exchange Awards Ceremony. Human Rights Awards presentation to Mexican human rights lawyer Digna Ochoa.

6–7 June 2002: Montreal, P.Q. Canada. Steven Kelliher attended the International Criminal Defence Attorneys Association (ICDAA) Conference.

24–25 November 2002: Paris, France. Steven Kelliher attended the conference hosted by the ICDAA and the Barreau de Paris.

18–19 October 2002: LRWC was invited to attend the opening of the Digna Ochoa y Plácido Human Rights Centre on 18-19 October 2002. In lieu of attending, LRWC and the Bar Human Rights Committee of England and Wales prepared a statement which was read at the opening by a representative of Global Exchange.

Up-Coming Conferences

21–22 March 2003: Berlin, Germany. The first General Assembly meeting of the International Criminal Bar. Steven Kelliher will attend.

PUBLICATIONS

(copies available online at www.lrwc.org)

Davidson, Gail, "*LRWC/BHRC Report on the Digna Ochoa Murder Investigation*," (July 2002)

Houle, Elizabeth A., "*Canadian Group Takes Up Defense of International Human Rights Advocates*," (Dec. 2002) Law Society of Upper Canada <http://www.lsuc.on.ca/>

Hustins, Nancy-Louise, *Latin America Newsletter (May 2002), No. 1.*

Kelliher, Steven, "*Pieces Falling into Place for the International Criminal Bar*," (January 2003).

Wemp, Brenda, "Guatemala: Myrna Mack and Gerardi Appeal observations" (September 2002). Preliminary report.

VOLUNTEERS

Thanks to LRWC volunteers:
Journalism – Elizabeth Houle; Office assistance – Jenna Virk, Rosalind Wong and Rong Liang; Research – Benita Ling; Translations – José Garcia, Susana J. Santa Maria Bravo and Carlos Franco; Letters for lawyers – Michael Rough, Jenna Virk, Rosalind Wong and Paulo de Tarso Lugon Arantes; Website development, design and maintenance and data base creation, Xin Lui; Website design – Lori Dagg.

WEBSITE

Members can now join or change their contact particulars, areas of interest or other information via the website: www.lrwc.org. Existing members can email lrwc@portal.ca to obtain their entry password.