

Open Letter to Amnesty International UK Branch Members

11 March 2006

Dear Branch Members

In February 2005 United for Life launched its 'Make Abortion History' campaign and by June we had written to over 80 charities and other organisations, including Amnesty International UK.

However, by August 2005 United for Life learned that Amnesty International was to discuss the issue of Amnesty's policy on killing children by abortion and so we wrote specifically about this on that occasion. A further letter was sent out in October 2005 to charities and other organisations as a follow-up and this included Amnesty International UK.

Having received no reply from the Director of Amnesty International we wrote again to the Director on 23 February 2006. On this occasion United for Life set out in detail how the killing of children by abortion violates the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Conventions on Slavery and Genocide and the Sale of Children.

In our letter to Amnesty International special attention was given to the issue of 'non-person' arguments which have been used throughout history to justify acts of violence against various groups of people including the justification of slavery.

Having demonstrated to Amnesty International that a range of international human rights instruments apply to the unborn we were concerned that Amnesty International was ignoring the human rights issues that had been raised by us to them. As a consequence United for Life wrote a short email to Amnesty branches via their websites, providing them with a hyper-link access to the information we had provided Amnesty International HQ.

Some Amnesty individuals and branches replied stating that they would forward our email on to other members and branches and for this we are grateful.

However, Amnesty International Cirencester Branch replied, *'Please take us off your mailing list.'* Since Amnesty International Cirencester Branch is not on any mailing list of United for Life, our reply stated,

'You are not on any list of mine. You are however listed on an Amnesty International branch-website as a contact for that branch and only Amnesty International can take you off that list. I am contacting Amnesty International branches in connection with Amnesty International business. Amnesty International is currently discussing the issue of killing children by abortion. If you are a contact for an Amnesty International branch then please forward my email on to Amnesty International branch members.'

Amnesty International Cirencester Branch replied,

'We have asked you not to send any more of this material. Please stop.'

United for Life has a number of comments to make about the Amnesty Cirencester Branch reply. Firstly, Cirencester Branch, in their first reply to us, did not ask us to stop sending them *'any more of this material'*, they asked us to *'take them off our mailing list.'* Since we contacted them via their own website, they were not on any mailing list of ours.

Secondly, United for Life was contacting the Cirencester Branch about Amnesty International business, Amnesty's policy on the killing of children by abortion, which, if a policy change were to occur, may ultimately be in violation of a number of human rights instruments as illustrated in our publication entitled: *'Why Amnesty International Must: oppose the killing of children by abortion, oppose contraception, human embryo experimentation, IVF, human cloning, related activities, and how they are environmentally destructive, and how Human Rights apply'*.

United for Life's Make Abortion History campaign, our First and Second letters to charities and other organisations, demonstrates that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights protects the right to life of *'all members of the human family'*, and that, since the unborn are members of the human family the UDHRs protects the right to life of the unborn.

United for Life also demonstrates that the Declaration on the Rights of the Child applies to the unborn, which states that, *'...the child, by reason of his physical and mental immaturity, needs special safeguards and care, including appropriate legal protection, before as well as after birth.'*

The UDHRs proclaims these Rights as *'a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations'* and that *'every individual and every organ of society ...shall strive ...to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance ...among the peoples of Member States.'* In regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights United for Life, like other human rights organisations, has a duty to *'... strive ...to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance ...among the peoples of Member States'* and to bring possible violation scenarios to the attention of others including organisations which may be proposing such violations.

As a lobbying organisation Amnesty International and their branches like Cirencester, should be aware of the UN *'Declaration on Human Rights Defenders'* which states that,

'...everyone has the right, individually and in association with others... to communicate with non-governmental ...organisations (Article 5c)

and everyone has:

the right '...to know, seek, obtain, receive, and hold information about all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including having access to information as to how those rights and freedoms are given effect' (Article 6a)

the right '...to freely publish, impart or disseminate to others views, information and knowledge on all human rights and fundamental freedoms' (Article 6b)

the right '...to study, discuss, form and hold opinions on the observance, both in law and in practice, of all human rights and fundamental freedoms and, ...to draw public attention to those matters' (Article 6c)

the right '...to solicit, receive and utilize resources for the express purpose of promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms through peaceful means' (Article 13)

The UN Special Representative of the Secretary General on Human Rights Defenders states in his information entitled: *About Human Rights Defenders*,

'Human rights defenders must accept the universality of human rights as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. A person cannot deny some human rights and yet claim to be a human rights defender because he or she is an advocate for others. For example, it would not be acceptable to defend the human rights of men but to deny that women have equal rights.'

An Amnesty International member emailed me stating that, *'Women's reproductive rights are also a human rights issue, and if the two are in opposition then I support the rights of the sentient being, the woman, above one which is only potentially sentient.'*

My reply was that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights declares these rights *'...for all members of the human family.'* Clearly the unborn are members of the human family. Regarding the rights of the mother and the rights of the unborn you claim that the *'two are in opposition'*. However, the concept of the *'two are in opposition'* is completely alien to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and contradicts it directly since basic human rights are *'universal'*, that is, they are for *'all members of the human family'* which include the unborn. The first line of the Universal Declaration declares these rights as *'equal'*. We hold these rights *'equally'*, not in opposition with each other. There is no such thing as *'opposing rights'* in the Declaration since they are *'equal rights.'*

Article 7 of the UDHR's states that, *'All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law'*, and Article 6 declares, *'Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.'*

The Convention of the Rights of the Child declares that, *'...the child, by reason of his physical and mental immaturity, needs special safeguards and care, including appropriate legal protection, before as well as after birth.'*

This is what United for Life has shown in its Make Abortion History campaign. The Universal Declaration proclaims that *'...every organ of society... shall strive by teaching and education ...to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance ...among the peoples of Member States.'* Therefore every organ of society, regardless of *'remit'*, shall strive to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance. No *'organ of society'* can excuse itself from the requirements and obligations under the Universal Declaration on grounds of *'remit'*, *'mandate'* or any other grounds.

The Universal Declaration proclaims these Rights as universal, inherent, and inalienable: universal because they are for all (members of the human family), inherent because they are not given, and inalienable because they cannot be taken away. If a particular group of human lives are being excluded from universal protection, such as the unborn, then, *'...every organ of society ...shall strive by teaching and education ...to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance ...without distinction.'*

Amnesty International Programme Director, Scotland, emailed United for Life and stated,

'Members of Amnesty International around the world are at present meeting to discuss the issue of sexual and reproductive rights of which abortion forms a part. The final decision will be taken at an international council meeting in 2007. As Amnesty is a membership organisation, each member is entitled to take part in the debate and each member is entitled to his or her own opinion on the matter.'

Scotland's Amnesty International Programme Director confirmed that '*sexual and reproductive rights*' includes [the killing of children by] abortion. However, United for Life believes that any nation, charity, organisation or individual which supports, advocates or carries out the killing of children by abortion, violates the human rights of the unborn, violates the Declaration of the Rights of the Child and violates the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

It is also important to note that a report by the human rights organisation C-FAM entitled: *UN Data Show Banning Abortion Doesn't Increase Maternal Mortality*, found on the *UN World Mortality Report 2005*, shows that countries with legalized abortion have higher maternal deaths and that countries where abortion is illegal have lower maternal deaths.

United for Life does not endorse any political party. The notion of liberty is a factor of most if not all political parties in democratic countries. The Libertarian Party is the third largest political party in the United States yet not many people in the UK have heard of them or are familiar with them. However, they have been in existence since 1971. It may come as a shock to many in the UK who consider themselves liberal but an organisation called *Libertarians For Life* shows how (*the killing of children by*) abortion is not only a violation of liberty but that (*the killing of children by*) abortion is in fact a threat to liberty itself. Their document entitled '*Abortion and rights; applying libertarian principles correctly*', skilfully undermines any notion or argument that liberty requires the killing of children by abortion.

If Amnesty International were discussing the possibility of supporting the legalization of slavery and the slave-trade it would be right for United for Life and other human rights organisations to raise their concerns with Amnesty International and if the UK Director were to remain silent on the issue it would be right for them to contact Amnesty International branches especially if they publish their email addresses on their own websites. In United for Life's publication '*Why Amnesty International Must...*' we show how the killing of children by abortion is to treat these human lives as if they are owned or as if they are 'property' which is the bench mark definition of slavery in international human rights instruments and, as we argue in our publication, the killing of children by abortion is a modern form of slavery.

Amnesty International is against the death penalty. The real nun behind the movie *Dead Man Walking*, Sister Helen Prejean, who spoke at a special Amnesty International event in January 2006, has written a second book entitled: *The Death of Innocence*. The unborn too are innocent yet in an abortion they receive the death penalty simply because they exist or because they are disabled. Amnesty International, in its 2005 report on China, exposes the forced abortion policy in that country yet, for the unborn, all chemical and surgical abortions are 'forced abortion'.

It is right therefore that United for Life should call upon **Amnesty International** (and all its branches including Cirencester) to commit themselves to implement *in full* the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child *in regard to the unborn*, which states that, '*...the child, by reason of his physical and mental immaturity, needs special safeguards and care, including appropriate legal protection, before as well as after birth.*'

Yours sincerely

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