



AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Bromley & Orpington Group

October 2017 Newsletter



Our thanks to Roy Parker of Bromley for sponsoring this month's Newsletter

COME TO OUR NEXT MEETINGS

Tuesday 10th October

Tuesday 14th November

Tuesday 12th December

Campaign Meeting

Speaker: Cindy Asokan, AI Zimbabwe country co-ordinator

Greetings Card Campaign 'Send a Message of Hope'

Prisoner Action File: Zimbabwe

With the recent death of our long-standing prisoner **Liu Xiaobo**, the case file has been closed. We will continue to campaign on behalf of his wife **Liu Xia** who has disappeared since her husband's death. With our long standing links to Zimbabwe, the group has decided to take on a new case. **Ital Dzamara** is a journalist and pro-democracy activist who was abducted on 9th March 2015 and has not been seen since. His whereabouts remain unknown. We have featured Ital from time to time in our monthly letters, and led by Waultraut, the Group, will now take on his case



Speaker: Jihyan Park

*We were privileged to welcome Kenny Latunde-Dada, Amnesty's North Korea co-ordinator and **Jihyan Park**, a North Korean refugee now living in Manchester to the meeting. Jihyun told us about her life in North Korea and her decision to leave. She was trafficked to China and tricked by the broker. He promised a well-paid job but instead she was sold to a man for 5,000 yuan (about £530) and spent six years as his slave. She had a son and was sent to a prison camp. Eventually she was repatriated and separated from her child. Jihyan explained that the North Korean labour camp was worse than the Chinese prison; prisoners were forced to clear the land with bare hands. Four women had to pull an ox-cart, two in front and two at the back, carrying a ton of soil in the cart. There was little food, just raw potatoes straight from the ground. They ate seeds from animal dung to survive. She was eventually released from the camp and was later again trafficked to China – this time by choice – to find her son. From there she made it to the UK in 2008. Her heart breaking story (but now happily settled and working for human rights) concluded with her saying that In North Korea, one's happiness is not one's own – happiness belongs to the regime. Back then, she did not know what it meant to be human or to be happy.*



Death Penalty Roundup

There has been some positive news, with US death sentences commuted or reviewed. The Arkansas Governor commuted the death sentence of **Jason McGehee** in August after the parole board recommended clemency. McGehee, who was 20 at the time of the crime, was part of a group of three men who killed. The parole board argued that McGehee's sentence was disproportionate as the other offenders had been handed life sentences. In a further move, the Missouri Governor issued a stay for **Marcellus Williams** in August and has set up a Board of Inquiry to review the case and make a recommendation of clemency. Williams was convicted in 2001 for a murder on circumstantial evidence. Despite recent DNA evidence that conclusively exonerated him, the State Supreme Court ruled it inadmissible, and the execution scheduled. The Governor's action, overruling the Supreme Court is to be welcomed. As we reported over the summer the **Maldives** has stated its intention to resume executions by the end of September – this would reverse the country being abolitionist in all but name and see executions resume for the first time since the 1960s.

Group Finance

Balance brought forward	£487.40
Income	£1,678.86
Expenditure	£1,350.74
Balance at 12 th September	£815.52
CHANGE	£ 328.12

Our first finance roundup since the spring confirmed income of £1,200 from BLT and £349.50 from the Cudham Fair. Private donations of £105 were also received. Expenditure included a donation of £1,250 to Amnesty. The total contribution the Group has made in 2017 now stands at £2,422 – nicely ahead of budget.

Cudham Fair

The team had a beautiful, hot day for selling cakes at our Amnesty stall this year. Our usual 'bucket game' raised £75 with the winner donating their half (£37.50) to Amnesty. Overall the day raised £349.50, among the best outcomes in recent years. Our grateful thanks to all who made the day so successful, especially Margaret for making so many cakes!

Monthly Letter: Cambodia

This month's letter concerns a community activist **Tep Vanny** who has been detained for over a year for defending housing rights in the Boeung Kak Lake community. Thousands of families have been forcibly evicted from their homes to make way for a tourist development following the granting of a 99 lease to a private company over the lake and surrounding land. We understand the lake has been filled in, but the land has remained undeveloped. Tep Vanny peacefully defended housing rights of families in her community for over a decade before she was arrested on 16th August 2016 during a peaceful demonstration. We view Tep Vanny to be a Prisoner of Conscience. Please address, sign and post this letter, which will cost £1.17 if within 10g.



Amnesty at Risk!

As part of the crackdown against human rights defenders in Turkey, **Taner Kılıç**, Chair of Amnesty Turkey, was detained in June along with 22 other lawyers on suspicion of involvement with the "terrorist organisation" Fethullah Gülen. He has now been officially charged with membership of the organisation and remains in prison awaiting trial. No evidence has been given to back this up and Taner denies all the claims. These charges have drawn widespread international condemnation, including from the US State Department, the EU and many international and domestic human rights organisations. We have written to the Turkish authorities calling for his immediate and unconditional release.



Save The Date!
Amnesty Jazz will return
Friday 9th February 2018
Details to Follow!

Present on 12th September: Neville White, David Howkins, Vivien Glanz, Patsy Paine, Vivienne Andrews, Margaret Coppard, Waultraut Gilchrist, Wendy Simmons, Peter Martin, Patrick McDonnell, Rindy Bakker, Chris Taylor and Ian Jackson and family were welcomed. **Apologies:** Gladys Edmonds.

Meetings are held in the Wesley Room, Orpington Methodist Church, Sevenoaks Road, Orpington commencing at 7.30pm. **E-mail** amnestybromley@gmail.com **website:** www.amnesty.org.uk/bromley

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