

SOLIHULL AMNESTY GROUP

Minutes of meeting held on 20 November 2017

Present: Celia, Cathy, David, Janet, Pooja, Clare

Apologies: Bernard & Pauline

Minutes & Actions

- Celia has obtained a copy of the DVD 'Syria's disappeared' which Pauline will show at January meeting.
- Pooja offered to keep our facebook page updated. ACTION POOJA

Recent Events

- **Regional Conference** 4 November at Birmingham University. Good location and well organised programme including talk by Kate Allen on BRAVE Campaign, workshops on Burma and Egypt, presentation by Richard Ratcliffe's sister and news from local groups. Community organiser Jenni Dixon asked to be kept informed about our stall at Solihull College next September with a view to starting a group there. The one major problem was short notice given for the conference. Regional coordinator Rose Bennett apologised for this and will ensure better notice next year.
- **Talk on Rohingya and Politics in Burma** (attended by Janet & Celia) organised by Leamington UN Association. Anna Roberts from Burma Campaign UK described the current horrendous suffering of the Rohingya people. The fact that the military continues to dominate most relevant areas of government plus strong belief in Bhuddhist nationalism and the reluctance of the international community to intervene with a state supposedly in transition towards democracy have all contributed to the present situation.
- **Talk organised by British Council on short story writing in Burma.** (attended by Celia & Cathy) An ex political prisoner spoke about a British Council funded project which encouraged people in all regions of Burma to write short stories. These stories have been published and we now have free copies.

Future Events

- **Write for Rights card signing stalls to mark International Human Rights Day**
We have selected 2 cases to use at our stalls: Azza Soliman – Egypt
Issa Amro & Farid Al-Atrash – Israel /Occupied
Palestinian Territories
- 1) Saturday 9th December Stall outside Tesco, Knowle 11 – 2
David to provide table and chairs
Celia to provide board displaying pictures of card recipients and cards
Celia to write to local papers giving details of event
Pooja to put details on facebook page
Caroline Spelman will come to sign cards between 1 and 1.30
Cathy to help at stall and take photo to be sent to local papers
Other helpers **Janet** and **Pooja**. Times to be confirmed.
 - 2) Tuesday 12th December Manor House, Solihull High Street 11.30 – 2.30
Celia and Pauline to set stall up at 11.15
Cathy to take over from 1.30 and pack up
Other helpers **Janet, Pooja, Maggy Jennings**. Times to be confirmed.

- **No December business meeting. Social event** 7.30 at Cathy's house, 2 Creynolds Close, Cheswick Green, B90 4EU.
Celia will circulate a list for people to say whether they will bring a dessert or a bottle.

Secretary's Items

- **Write for Rights Launch in Parliament – 6 Dec, 12.30 -2pm.**
Pooja will help at this event.
Pooja to write to Julian Knight, Cathy to write to Caroline Spelman and Clare to her MP inviting them to attend

ACTION Cathy, Pooja, Clare

- **Monthly Action**

We will each write an appeal letter for one of our selected Write for Rights cases as instructed on pages 8 and 11 of the booklet

Campaign Report

- **Laos:** David has received a suggestion of an alternative case, an individual from Thailand, who we may wish to campaign for instead of Sombath Somphone. We will discuss this in the new year.

Coordinated Group Action for Johan Teterissa

An email asking if relevant groups would like to participate in a coordinated letter writing action to Mark Johan's birthday on 31st December was sent to 7 groups. 5 responded positively.

Pooja will contact Leeds and Oxford groups who have not yet responded via facebook.

Celia and Janet will meet with Bernard to plan the coordinated action.

ACTION Pooja, Celia, Janet

South Sudan

Cathy gave us information about the history of South Sudan and the current situation. This is a landlocked country surrounded by politically unstable countries. As a result of many years of warfare between governments and ethnic groups large sections of the population have been displaced. Despite large oil reserves a large proportion of the population live in extreme poverty.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

MONDAY 15TH JANUARY 2018

Minutes – Pauline Teas etc Cathy