



Amnesty UK Anti-Death Penalty Project

First Annual Report

How time flies. It doesn't seem anything like one year, but there it is, December 2017 when the Amnesty Anti-Death Penalty Steering Group first met to start planning what we were going to do to try and rid the world of the scourge and barbarity of the death penalty.

We started, as most such groups do, with the admin, assigning roles and setting objectives. We went on to identify priority countries, setting up Facebook and Twitter feeds and agreeing our branding and strapline. "End the Death Penalty" may not be very original but it absolutely sums up what we are here for.

We formally launched the project to the wider world at the AIUK AGM in April. Those of you that came may remember the ADPP stall, the tree and the wishes that we asked you to write which we had decided that we would present to the Japanese Embassy. More on that later. We also ran a workshop where we received a very positive and enthusiastic reception. I cannot tell you how much that meant to us and how it spurred us on.

Other activities around that time included working with the Amnesty speaker programme on the revised and updated anti-death penalty speaker materials, an embryonic tourism and postcard campaign and a new theory of change to act as a basis for our planning.

We launched our monthly newsletter in July which has become the bedrock of our communications to Amnesty members and the wider world. We will be adding to this as we move into 2019.

We also set up an ADPP network, getting people to sign up for our newsletters and other mailings. We registered around 100 people at the AGM, but since then we have gone on to sign over 2,000 people to our network. We are thrilled at the level of interest and commitment to this cause shown by Amnesty members.

As the year went on we started to plan for the 2018 World Day Against the Death Penalty (WDADP) on 10th October. We ran two events this year. On 9th October we organised a film screening and panel discussion, including some poignant readings on the subject. The film that we screened was 'Death Row – The Final 24 Hours' and we followed this up with a panel discussion focusing on the conditions that many prisoners face on death row. We were very grateful to be joined in the discussion by representatives from Reprieve, the Death Penalty Project and from AI International Secretariat and by over 50 audience members.

On 10th October we made our way to the Japanese Embassy in Piccadilly with two bamboo trees festooned with your wishes for an end to the death penalty in Japan, marking the Japanese tradition of Tanabata. I should say that we received around 1,500 'wishes' from members all over the country. This was a fantastic response by Amnesty members for which we are extremely grateful.

The Embassy kindly received us on the doorstep where we presented them with the trees and a signed letter calling for the release of Matsumoto Kenji who has been on death row in Japan for many years despite having a severe intellectual disability. One of our members was then invited in to make the formal presentation and to put our case. Although the embassy wouldn't take the trees they did accept many hundreds of additional 'wishes' that we could not squeeze onto the trees and the signed letter. We understand that they will have been passed on to the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Tokyo.

Other events have included a number of speaker events with local Amnesty groups and other external bodies. We have also run further workshops at the Amnesty HRE conference and the Scottish Students conference.

So it has been a busy year, a year of setting up and establishing our presence and in those terms we believe that it has been a very successful year. We are now planning our 2019 campaign when we want to raise our profile further, get our message out to a wider audience and run more high profile events. We want to get our message across to Parliament too so that our political leaders know that we expect them to join us in continuing to fight for a world free of the death penalty.

In closing I would just like to express my gratitude to the members of the ADPP Steering Group who have all worked so hard and to all Amnesty members for your help and encouragement. We hope that you will continue to support us as you have so wonderfully during 2018.