Truro and District Amnesty International Group

Minutes of Meeting held on 11 March 2020

1. Present: Margaret George, Chris Ramsey, Melissa Ward, Georgie Wong, Hetty Tye, Sally-Ann Parker.
2. Apologies: Carole Liesse, Wailim Wong, Else Welde, Linnea Glynne Rule, Karen Cooper, Shirley Sweeney.
3. Minutes of the meeting held on 12 Feb 2020: agreed. Margaret had received a reply from Cherilyn Mackrory MP who denied that the UK Government supports the US Israel-Palestine Peace plan, said she supports welcoming child refugees, and she hopes to work with us in future. The Groups Planning Pack has been submitted to HQ.
4. Treasurer’s report: Karen had sent the following report:
* Balance on account as of 1 March was £666.92. Various subs came in.
* I noted from the minutes that it is suggested I send an email reminding people subs are now £7.50 BUT having gone through the list of subs paid in during Feb, most are not on our current mailing list.
* In the next couple of months we need to pay both rent and Pride Stall so this will bring the balance down to around £500.
* I would love somebody to sit down with me to look over the books as I feel nobody has seen them except me. For several AGMs we have said that they need to be audited but this has never happened.

If anyone wants a job then I would love to hand over updating our website under AI groups. Meike was going to do it so it got neglected then and I haven't managed to catch it up. It doesn't take long. I'm fine with Twitter and Facebook and I think Chris is too?

Twitter - done lots of tweets regarding Princess Latifa - will now start on the Welcome Ari Arrass - hoping Hetty will send me more details though.

It was agreed that Chris would contact Karen about checking the books. Melissa will contact her about updating the website

1. Regional Conference feedback: this was as usual an interesting and inspiring day, especially because of the input from two HR Defenders – Geraldine Chacon from Venezuela and Laize Benvenides Pinheiro from Brazil. Kate Allen the UK Director spoke and concern was raised in questions to her about the attitude of the UK organisation to supporting local groups. It was felt that that there are not enough materials for events (eg for International Women’s Day there were no cases available). Chris endorsed this – the same questions were asked at the Annual conference last year, and nothing seems to have changed.
2. AI Global Strategy: Chris explained that work is going on to plan the AI Global Strategy for 2021-2018. There are 2 main areas i. Freedom of Expression and Civic Space and ii. Inequality and Discrimination – to include gender equality and climate change. Papers will be circulated and view sought.
3. Campaigns:

Israel and Occupied Palestinian Territories: Chris reported. The UN has issued a letter to firms like TripAdvisor not to do business in the Occupied territories. Netanyahu has again been narrowly elected but lacks a majority. He has approved a plan for more settlements in the West Bank. The Israelis are gradually taking more land from the Palestinians and fragmenting their lands. World Water Day is on 22 March: on the West Bank water from aquifers goes 73% to Israelis, 17% to Palestinians, and 10% to illegal settlers. The River Jordan has been dammed so that water is disappearing and the remaining flow is polluted with sewage.

Central America: Georgie had circulated the recent newsletter. She highlighted, in Mexico, the murder of rangers protecting monarch butterflies. The number of disappearances is increasing. There have been strikes over femicides, which president ‘Amlo’ has blamed on opposition to him. In Honduras it is the 4th anniversary of the murder of Bertha Caceres. Georgie had brought a letter to sign to the Ambassador. In Nicaragua indigenous people have been massacred.

North Africa: Hetty had news from Egypt. She brought a letter to sign on behalf of Patrick Zaki George, a Human Rights Researcher and prisoner of conscience detained in Egypt. We signed a card for Azza Soliman’s birthday. We will be getting new action cards, which we could put in the cathedral. *(Georgie reported here that the table with AI things seems to have gone from the cathedral. Margaret would look into this – and indeed it is no-where to be seen. I will investigate this once we are allowed to circulate again. MG).* 93 detainees including HR defenders and prisoners of conscience were to be released in February, which is good news, though some were immediately re-detained.

Former Soviet Union: urgent action cases seem to arrive shortly after our meetings, and are circulated as appropriate.

1. Events:
2. Possible AI pub quiz. It was agreed to postpone this until the autumn. The AI quiz is not ready and we will create our own f necessary.
3. Street collection – Georgie has booked 30th May for Truro.
4. Pride is over 3 days in August. We will need to book for one day probably.
5. Next meeting: will be on **Wed 8th April 7pm** at Sambells Café, Truro.

Please note all future planned events are now on hold because of the current coronavirus clampdown.