

FOR AI MEMBERS



**AIUK  
NATIONAL CONFERENCE  
AND AGM 2007**

**DECISIONS**

## **A1 HUMAN RIGHTS OF ILLEGAL MIGRANTS IN BRITAIN**

We believe that it is wrong that in modern Britain tens of thousands of illegal migrants, who have made new lives in our country, and make a vital contribution to its economy, should be deprived of essential human rights. Illegal migrants are subject to exploitation in the workplace, are denied access to regular health care, education and the law, and are forced to live in the dark.

We believe that Britain should follow the example of other European countries and regularise those who are eligible for citizenship by virtue of having put down roots in the United Kingdom. Noting the “Strangers into Citizens” campaign promoted by Citizens Organising Foundation, **we therefore ask the Board to support their campaign and urge our government to give legal status and human rights to illegal migrants who meet specified requirements.** I.e. four years of continuous residence in Britain, no serious criminal record, character references from community leaders or employers and a proficiency in English language.

We propose that those who are eligible under the above criteria be admitted to a two year “sponsored pathway”. During their two-year “pathway” the migrants would be allowed to work. At the end of that period, they would present positive character and employer references, and be admitted to full citizenship.

We believe that this is the best means of making these vulnerable people accountable to the law, and of them receiving its protection.

**PROPOSER: BOURNVILLE LOCAL GROUP**  
**THE MOTION WAS WITHDRAWN**

## **A2 INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT AND THE IRAQ WAR**

This AGM calls on Amnesty International to support calls both publicly and actively for an investigation by the International Criminal Court and the United Nations of war crimes and breaches of the Nuremburg, Geneva and Hague Conventions committed by the leaders of the US and UK governments in the 2003 Iraq war.

**PROPOSER: JOHN PEPPARD**  
**SECONDER: LIZANN PEPPARD**  
**THE MOTION WAS CARRIED OVERWHELMINGLY**

## **A3 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT**

This AGM expresses its concern at the negative interpretation and representation in the media of the Human Rights Act and is concerned that this could lead to a detrimental effect on human rights.

This AGM calls upon AIUK to take positive action to counteract this threat to sound human rights law and practice

**PROPOSER: WYTHALL LOCAL GROUP**  
**THE MOTION WAS CARRIED OVERWHELMINGLY**

## **EM1 HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS AND JOURNALISTS IN RUSSIA**

As more than 500 delegates, representing two hundred and fifty thousand members from Amnesty International in the UK assemble for their annual conference in Edinburgh, the March of Dissent, another gathering of activists from a variety of human rights and political organisations is similarly attempting to exercise their right to freedom of assembly and of expression by peacefully marching on the streets of Nizhnii Novgorod in Russia.

Previous such marches have resulted in the police and security forces' violent dispersal and arrests of sometimes hundreds of participants.

Amnesty International has received reports from civil society activists that in the days running up to the march the authorities have been harassing and intimidating human rights defenders, journalists and political party activists. Intimidatory visits have been made to homes of family members. A raid was carried on the offices of the Nizhnii Novgorod Foundation to Support Tolerance with the reported intention to arrest members Oksana Chelysheva and Stanislav Dmitrievskii. 60,000 copies of a newspaper promoting the March of Dissent were seized.

This AGM of Amnesty International (UK) expresses its serious concern at this latest concerted attempt to restrict the rights to freedom of expression and the right of freedom of assembly in Russia.

We call on AIUK to apply pressure on the UK Government to urge the Russian authorities to respect the right to peaceful protest such as that due in Nizhnii Novgorod today and the rights of human rights defenders and journalists, including Oksana Chelysheva and Stanislav Dmitrievskii, to monitor and report on this basic democratic activity.

**PROPOSER: GRAHAM JONES**

**SECONDER: BARRY HAY**

**THE MOTION WAS CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

## **B1 CONFLICT PREVENTION, INTERVENTION AND CONDEMNATION OF FORCE**

**This AGM:**

Instructs the AIUK Board to:

1. Continue pressing the International Executive Committee (IEC) to provide a detailed statement on how:
  - a. Each call made under the 2005 International Council Meeting (ICM) Decision 2 (Conflict Prevention, Intervention and Condemnation of Force) met the published guidelines and procedures for the policy's implementation.
  - b. Calls were made when no policy guidelines and procedures had been agreed.
2. Consider submitting an emergency motion to the 2007 International Council Meeting to seek clarification of the definition of "exceptional circumstances" if further use of the policy is made before August.

**PROPOSER: AIUK BOARD**  
**THE MOTION WAS CARRIED UNOPPOSED**

## **B2 CORPORATE FUNDRAISING**

This AGM DECIDES

that the Board shall seek the support of the International Council Meeting for the following resolution

“The International Council

DECIDES that the IEC should review the impact of the international policy on corporate fundraising and report on its findings to the 2009 ICM, and to each ICM that follows. This review should pay particular attention to the impact of the policy on our campaigning work and reputation, particularly on our ability to campaign effectively to change the behaviour of corporations.”

**PROPOSER: AIUK BOARD**  
**THE MOTION WAS CARRIED OVERWHELMINGLY**

## **B3 CORPORATE FUNDRAISING**

This AGM views with serious concern trends towards corporate fundraising by Amnesty International with the attendant risk to Amnesty’s reputation for independence and impartiality.

This AGM believes that any money or support in kind received from companies must be of marginal significance and never crucial to Amnesty’s core activities either internationally or nationally. This AGM regards as “significant”, funding from corporate sources, at whatever the level of that funding, that would in principle make Amnesty partly dependent on that corporate funding for its core activities.

This AGM instructs the Board of Amnesty International United Kingdom to express the concerns of this AGM to the IEC at the earliest opportunity and at the forthcoming International Council meeting and to seek greater transparency in corporate fundraising from the international movement to reduce dependence on corporate fundraising.

This AGM further instructs the Board to keep the United Kingdom membership fully informed of any decisions made on corporate funding by the International Executive Committee, and at the International Council Meeting in 2007, and any subsequent policy adopted by the international movement.

**PROPOSER: SUE WALLEY**  
**SECONDER: DAVE PLUMB**  
**THE MOTION WAS CARRIED OVERWHELMINGLY**

## **B4 AI VISION**

With the ever-broadening remit of Amnesty Vision, it is important that Amnesty International does not lose sight of its original aims and principles. Whilst appreciating that our present campaigns are indeed relevant to protecting human rights, groups and individual members are increasingly being asked why Amnesty is involving itself in areas in which other organisations would be seen to have far greater experience and effectiveness. Often the answers these questions are not self-evident and there are doubts as to how the proposed campaigns fit into our goals.

Amnesty's original mandate had four clear parts based on the UDHR:

- To seek the release of all prisoners of conscience as long as they have not used or encouraged violence
- To work for fair and prompt trials for all political prisoners
- To campaign to abolish the death penalty, torture and other forms of cruel and degrading treatment or punishment
- To end extrajudicial executions and "disappearances"

This has now been expanded into our current "vision", encompassing the above and also abuses perpetrated by both non-governmental bodies and private individuals.

This AGM decides therefore, that all actions should include a clear and concise addendum explicitly citing references to the AI Vision and, where otherwise appropriate, the UDHR itself. Where a broadening of the existing mandate is being addressed, a general statement of extension should be made that will cover the new proposal, thus allowing it to be seen in full context for better decision-making.

**PROPOSER: MID-WARWICKSHIRE LOCAL GROUP**

**THE MOTION WAS DEFEATED**

## **C1 GROUP INVOLVEMENT**

This AGM notes the valuable contribution local, student and youth groups can make to campaigns, in particular to raise public awareness. This AGM notes that, notwithstanding that the possibility of a campaign on China leading up to the 2008 Olympic Games was raised at the AGM in 2002, local groups have not yet been asked to do any work relating to the Olympics. This AGM instructs Amnesty International UK to consider at the outset of every campaign the assistance that could be provided by local, student and youth groups and involve such groups at the earliest opportunity, beginning with involving them in the China Olympics campaign.

**PROPOSER: LAMBETH LOCAL GROUP**

**THE MOTION WAS CARRIED OVERWHELMINGLY**

## **C2 PROGRAMME OF CAMPAIGNS**

This AGM Notes that;

- The only international campaigns of recent years have been the Control Arms Campaign and the Stop Violence Against Women Campaign
- Short-term campaigns used to focus for a defined period on a particular country, or on a particular type of abuse, or both. They were often done in connection with an anniversary, in the lead up to an election or in the lead up to the enactment of key legislation.

This AGM believes that;

- Local Groups and Affiliates lose their dynamism if they have to rely solely on a diet of one-off actions and long term unchanging campaigns or networks with no turnover of new, shorter term focussed campaigns.

This AGM instructs the Board to put in place a review of campaigning in the movement in order to inform the UK membership on what could be done to improve the situation. The review would cover, but not be restricted, to the following points;

- How an ongoing programme of short term (under a year) and longer term (over a year) campaigns could be re-started.
- How these campaigns could be generated from Amnesty UK as well as the international movement.
- How these campaigns could be resourced adequately with case sheets and ideas disseminated regularly during the campaigns.

This AGM further instructs the Board to publish the review and issue it to Groups and Affiliates to the 2008 AGM.

**PROPOSER: SHEFFIELD LOCAL GROUP  
THE MOTION WAS WITHDRAWN**

**C3 VISIBILITY OF LOCAL GROUPS**

This AGM recognises the work that has been put in by AIUK staff in recent years which has greatly improved the visibility of local groups to existing and new members. However, this AGM believes there is still more to be done.

This AGM notes that AIUK membership is around 250,000 people. AIUK has found that on average each group has 11 to 15 active members and that there are 280 local groups. This means that there are around 4,200 active local group members.

This AGM believes that, while it is not expected that everyone in AIUK will become active in their local groups, there is no reason why we cannot double this figure of 4,200 over the next 5 years. Local groups can be and often are effective in recruiting more members securing local media coverage, lobbying local MPs and raising awareness of Amnesty's campaigns among the general public.

This AGM decides that AIUK should do more to promote local groups to its members and the wider public. This should be best done within the context of Amnesty's current campaigns. This promotion could take a number of formats, for example

- Promotion of local groups and their activities in conjunction with existing AI advertising campaigns
- Provision of more promotional materials for local groups (for example, access to a professionally designed group leaflet)
- Articles and interviews in the Amnesty magazine about local groups and their work.
- Proactively informing local groups of AIUK members and other AI structures operating in their catchment area who are willing to be contacted.
- A special effort should be made to encourage and support local groups in the recruitment and retention of recent graduates and other under represented activist constituencies including Black and minority ethnic communities and the 14 – 35's.

**PROPOSER: ISLINGTON & HACKNEY LOCAL GROUP**  
**THE MOTION WAS CARRIED OVERWHELMINGLY**

#### **C4 ASYLUM SEEKERS CAMPAIGN**

This AGM notes that;

- Excellent work is being done by Amnesty UK on Asylum issues in 2007. Namely the ongoing action in October on the conditions of asylum seekers in the UK, and the launch of the report "*Down and Out in London*" in November.
- This still does not amount to a permanent long-term campaign with materials, case-sheets and ideas for groups to use, as called for by the 2005 and 2006 AGMs.

This AGM instructs Amnesty UK to further develop opportunities for sustained year on year campaigning at a local level on the issue of Refugees and Asylum Seekers.

**PROPOSER: SHEFFIELD LOCAL GROUP**  
**THE MOTION WAS CARRIED OVERWHELMINGLY**

#### **D1 TORTURE IN EGYPT: CAMPAIGN MATERIALS**

After a long, strenuous campaign, in which Buckingham and Northampton Amnesty groups were involved, three prisoners of conscience known as "The Egypt Three" returned to Britain on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2006. Their names are Maajid Nawaz, Ian Nisbet, and Reza Pankhurst. All had been tortured by the Egyptian authorities.

After a separate campaign, another man the three met in Taura Mazrah prison was returned to Britain on the 9<sup>th</sup> October 2006. That he had survived the abuses he experienced is extraordinary. Negative publicity about the Egyptian regime probably contributed to the success of the campaigns. Sir Geoffrey Bindman (Knighted in the New Year for his services to Human Rights) has agreed to act for the three in a legal capacity. This should ensure more publicity about the extensive use of torture and other abuses in Egypt.

Accordingly, this AGM instructs AIUK Section to exploit this opportunity and to provide local groups with model letters, publicity leaflets and other campaigning materials regarding the human rights abuses committed by the Egyptian regime, in furtherance of the campaign against torture.

**PROPOSER: NORTHAMPTON LOCAL GROUP**  
**THE MOTION WAS CARRIED OVERWHELMINGLY**

## **D2: INTERNET REPRESSION**

This AGM welcomes the launch of the irrepressible.info website in May last year, the success of the associated campaign and the subsequent warm reception received by the Amnesty International delegation to the Internet Governance Forum in Athens in October;

This AGM notes the National Union of Journalists' (NUJ) actions criticising Yahoo! for its actions in relation to the arrest of journalists and bloggers in China;

This AGM believes that campaigning for human rights on the Internet is a key area of work that Amnesty International (AI) should continue and expand;

This AGM further believes that this area of work presents unique possibilities for AI to work with other organisations with similar goals, including the NUJ;

This AGM therefore instructs AI UK to work with the NUJ on this issue, as well as to work with them to seek to foster a relationship between the AI International Secretariat and the International Federation of Journalists to renew and expand the organisation's work on the Internet repression.

**PROPOSER: NATIONAL UNION OF JOURNALISTS**  
**THE MOTION WAS CARRIED UNOPPOSED**

## **D3 GAO ZHISENG AND HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS IN CHINA**

### **This AGM notes**

- The Chinese government's recent crackdown on human rights defenders, particularly the sentencing of Beijing lawyer Gao Zhisheng on charges of "inciting subversion."
- Gao was detained following months of harassment after he wrote an open letter calling for religious freedom and an end to the 'barbaric' persecution of the Falun Gong spiritual movement, as well as publicly resigning from the Chinese Communist Party.
- Following an unfair trial, Gao was given a three-year suspended prison sentence and released, but remains under tight surveillance and is liable to be arrested should he engage in human rights work.
- Gao is a leading figure in a grassroots movement for rule of law and human rights in China. His sentencing appears to be an attempt to intimidate and silence activists and citizens supporting such reforms.

### **This AGM welcomes**



- Gao's contribution to Chinese society by representing and aiding its most mistreated members, including but not limited to miners, evicted tenants, Christians and Falun Gong adherents.
- The courageous and non-violent activities of all human rights defenders in China.
- The work carried out by AI and AIUK to protest Gao's arrest, protect activists, and promote human rights in China.

**This AGM resolves**

- To condemn Gao's sentencing and the persecution of his family, and to call for the reinstatement of his right to freely practice law.
- To call for the immediate release of all human rights defenders in China.
- To call on AIUK to further raise the persecution of Gao and other human rights defenders in its representations to the Chinese authorities, Her Majesty's Government and the media in the run-up to the 2008 Beijing Olympics.
- To call on AIUK to forward a copy of this motion to activists in China as an expression of solidarity, insofar as such action does not place them in danger.

**PROPOSER: SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL AND AFRICAN STUDIES  
STUDENT GROUP**

**THE MOTION WAS CARRIED UNOPPOSED**

**D4. CHINA AND THE BEIJING OLYMPICS**

This AGM instructs AIUK to run a series of campaigns highlighting the People's Republic of China's human rights abuses in both the run-up to, and during the Beijing Olympics 2008. The aim of such action should be twofold: to put pressure on the Chinese government to address certain human rights issues, and to ensure that the British public gain further awareness of China's human rights record. As such, AIUK should allocate adequate resources and staff time to this issue.

**PROPOSER: BATH UNIVERSITY GROUP**

**THE MOTION WAS CARRIED UNOPPOSED**

**D5 BURMA**

This AGM

Recalls the significant date of 8/8/88 on which a peaceful popular democratic uprising in Burma was brutally suppressed by the military authorities;

Notes that the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this uprising, 08/08/08, will be an ideal opportunity to focus world attention on the continuing grave abuses taking place in Burma;

Calls on AIUK to work jointly with UK-based groups concerned about human rights and democracy in Burma on a common campaign or protest to focus public attention and pressure on the Burmese Authorities on or around 08/08/08;

Also calls on AIUK to make representations through AI's International Secretariat to approach EU institutions, human rights and pro-democracy groups worldwide for a globally coordinated protest along the same lines.

**PROPOSER: ENFIELD, BARNET & PALMERS GREEN LOCAL GROUP  
THE MOTION WAS CARRIED OVERWHELMINGLY**

**E1: SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS**

This AGM reaffirms its 2006 decision that Amnesty International should support:

- the decriminalisation of abortion;
- access to quality services for the management of complications arising from abortion;
- legal, safe and accessible abortion, subject to reasonable limitations, in cases of rape, sexual assault, incest and risk to a woman's life.

**PROPOSER AIUK BOARD  
CARRIED: 699 FOR 598 AGAINST**

**E2 SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS**

This AGM decides that women should have access to legal and safe abortion, subject to reasonable limitations.

**PROPOSER AIUK BOARD  
DEFEATED: 415 FOR 762 AGAINST**

**E3 SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS**

This AGM decides that AIUK will recommend to the ICM in July 2007 that AI remain neutral on abortion, so that Amnesty members can continue to work together without compromising their personal beliefs, whether for or against abortion.

**PROPOSER: LUTON AND DUNSTABLE LOCAL GROUP  
CARRIED: 749 FOR 611 AGAINST**

**E4: CONSULTATION ON SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS**

This AGM instructs the AIUK Board to take note of the upswell of protest against the heavy-handedly, pro-abortion presentation initiated in the July 2005 "debate" on Sexual and Reproductive Rights and consistently maintained in the later regional conferences. It further urges that, to make its consultative process democratic, the Board should henceforth give a voice to the opponents of abortion, by no means always of religious motivation, who to date have been conspicuously absent from practically every platform.

**PROPOSER: DR. R. ELLIOT  
SECONDER: VINCENT ALLERTON  
PROPOSER NOT PRESENT - THE MOTION FELL**