

Solihull Amnesty Group

Minutes of Meeting Monday 16 May 2016

- 1 **Present. Cathy, Celia, Janet, David, Heather**
Apologies. Ruth, Pauline, Bernard, Amy

2. Minutes & Actions from April meeting -

- Cathy has received a reply from Caroline Spelman regarding human rights in Syria. CS has forwarded a letter from the Foreign & Commonwealth Office saying the UK Govt will do all it can to give aid and to help find a lasting solution. David will try to look through the letter and send a reply.
- Cathy & Janet had received email replies from Caroline Spelman to their enquiries about a possible change in the Immigration Bill which would allow 3000 child refugees to come to the UK. CS said that there had been challenges in the past in Solihull caused by unaccompanied children. The UK Govt is giving £10m to a new EU settlement scheme focussed on children. 75 UK experts are being sent to Greece to focus on children.
- Celia & Janet went to the Quakers talk about the Calais Jungle. There is a big difference between conditions at Calais and Dunkirk. Everyone knows who the people smugglers are because they wear smart clothes - there is a feeling that they could easily be arrested.
- Cathy has looked at an online AI update on Refugee & Migrants Rights. Research shows Turkey is rounding up approx 100 people every day, often using violence, and returning them to Syria. Forced returns are illegal under international law.
- Chris Peel, AI co-ordinator, says he is unable to give out email addresses for other groups. We all feel that any action taken is stronger if we work with other groups. Janet will write back to him to suggest he asks the other groups if they would be happy for their email addresses to be given out.

3. Future Events -

- **Amnestea** at Celia's home on Sunday 26 June. Everyone will try to source more tables. Celia has produced a flyer which we can photocopy or receive by email.
- **Fun in the Park** Sunday 18 September, we will plan this at future meetings.
- **Leamington Peace Festival** 18/19 June

4. Secretary`s Items.

• Monthly Action -

- **AZERBAIJAN** Khadija Ismayilova is an investigative journalist, sentenced to seven and a half years in prison on trumped up charges, thought to be as punishment for publishing articles exposing human rights violations and corruption in the country. The Azeri authorities are very sensitive to public criticism so media attention would be an good way to bring pressure on the regime to release political prisoners. Azerbaijan will be hosting the

Grand Prix on 19th June. We decided to send a group letter to the Solihull News and Observer to coincide with the Grand Prix, highlighting human rights abuses.

5. Campaign Reports.

- **Johan Teterissa.** 3 death row prisoners have recently been moved to the next-stage accommodation, a new round of executions is expected. Continue with rota .
- **Sombath Somphone.** David is trying to confirm that we have the correct contact names. The addresses will still be the same so we can send letters addressed to "The President" etc. Continue with rota.

6 Updating Publicity Leaflet

- Pauline has produced 2 versions of the leaflet. There was a lot of discussion over these and we agreed a final version. Celia will give this to Pauline to amend. David will arrange to pop round to proof read before any copies are printed.

7 Letter Writing Action MYANMAR

- 83 prisoners were released on 4/4/16. 1 prisoner is still detained and he has been sentenced to 6 months hard labour. He has mental health issues. The sentence may be politically motivated as he is human rights activist. Cathy handed out information so we can send individual letters.

8. AOB

- The whole group participated in composing a letter regarding the Grand Prix in Azerbaijan and their human rights record. Celia will send this to the Solihull News and Observer to coincide with the event on 19th June.

Next meeting 20 June 2016