



## **CAMPAIGNING**

**GOOD NEWS.** The Azerbaijani journalist, Khadija Ismayilova, was released from a 7 year sentence. She is an outspoken critic of the government and was investigating graft and corruption. Her case was being taken up at the European Court of Human Rights. Our group had joined Amnesty's campaign on her behalf.

The Burmese student, Phyo Phyo Aung, was released in April. She and many other students were violently arrested in March 2015 during a protest against the new National Education Law. We had joined in the appeal to the recently elected President U Tin Kyaw who is a civilian.

**NAMCAR - North America and Caribbean Region.** We continued to campaign for the release of Leonard Peltier, a member of the American Indian Movement. He has been imprisoned in the USA for over 40 years despite concerns over the fairness of his trial. His attorneys have filed a clemency petition to the Obama administration so we also appealed to President Obama.

**ALI AARRASS** Moroccan authorities are silent after cancelling the investigation into Ali's allegations of torture. The Belgian government has 'effectively' disowned Ali, claiming that he is a dual national and the Belgian government is not under any particular obligation to provide him counsellor assistance. Also the Belgian foreign minister has stated in the media and in the Belgian

Parliament, that Ali has been convicted for alleged terrorist offences. This, in spite of UN, AI and EU confirming that Ali's confession was obtained under torture!

**WOMEN'S CAMPAIGN** has focused on women's human rights including the right to marry whom they choose. We are supporting Amnesty's campaign to provide human rights education in Burkina Faso. In many communities girls as young as eleven are forced to give up school to become wives and mothers. Some are defying family and social pressure.

Communication from Zimbabwe to the outside world has been somewhat stifled by the Robert Mugabe State. Therefore, since the beginning of 2016, there has been no news from WOZA, Women of Zimbabwe Arise in Harare. A new coordinator for Zimbabwe has been appointed and we await news from this section.

Actions were sent on behalf of Yolanda Alcino of the Dominican Republic, who has been struggling to register the births of her children because of her Haitian descent. In May 2014 the Dominican Congress passed a naturalisation law which should have allowed Yolanda access to these documents.

**STOP TORTURE CAMPAIGN** For over a half a century the Island group has campaigned against the use of torture.

**ANTI-DEATH PENALTY** During the period January to June 2016 we have dealt with cases from six countries below. Iran and the USA have provided most of the cases on whose behalf we have campaigned. There is

however some good news of prisoners having their execution stayed or postponed. Altogether we campaigned on behalf of 14 prisoners.

In particular Iran seems to have taken to executing young people or those who were under eighteen when the crimes for which they were accused took place. In the period 2014-2015, 73 young people under eighteen were executed, some girls as young as nine and boys as young as 15. This even though the law was changed in 2013 so that judges could use alternative punishments. Currently there are 49 young juvenile offenders on death row in Iran.

## **PUBLICITY**

Our Chairman gave a talk to students at the VI Form Campus about the work of Amnesty. This was illustrated by an exhibition on the theme of "How You Can Help". The badges and human rights booklets proved very popular. After two months the display boards were moved to the Lord Louis Library for a further fortnight.

## **FUNDRAISING**

We have been raising money in support of human rights for women and girls in Burkina Faso and Sierra Leone. Activities have included a coffee morning, 2 walks and tea, a collection at Morrisons in Lake and a stall at the Chale Boot Sale. The total raised was £608 and this sum will be matched pound for pound under the Department for International Aid Match Scheme.

## **PICNIC IN THE GARDEN**

Join us for poetry and music featuring Folk duo

*'Coppersmith'*

Ventnor Botanic Garden

31st. July 12:00 noon.

## **CAN YOU HELP?**

Amnesty is well supported on the Island but the group would welcome more active members.

The group meets on the first Friday of each month to plan future campaign activities and fund raising events.

It is not essential to attend group meetings to take part in any of our campaigns, as they can be effectively undertaken from home. Full instructions will be sent with each action.

If you can spare a half-hour or so a month why not give us a call on any of the numbers below? Further information on campaigns can be found on the Amnesty website [www.amnesty.org.uk](http://www.amnesty.org.uk)

If you would like to receive your Isle of Wight Group News via e-mail or information on any aspect of Amnesty's work, please contact either of the Officers listed below or email us at: [stubbsrw@btinternet.com](mailto:stubbsrw@btinternet.com)

For further news and latest updates visit our website at:-

[www.amnesty.org.uk/isleofwight](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/isleofwight)

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