

Lambeth Amnesty Group Newsletter

April 2013

Forthcoming dates for the diary

Wednesday 8 th May	London Region meeting – 7.30pm Human Rights Action Centre
Tuesday 21 st May	Lambeth Amnesty Meeting with talk from Prisoners of Conscience Appeal Fund (www.prisonersofconscience.org/) See below for details

Meeting Notes 16th April 2013 at Clapham Community Project

Present

Ros Davidson, Anita Sollis, Anna Reisenberger, Elena Barbiero, Susan Evans

Secretary's Report and upcoming events

Venue for letter writing on 23rd April – decided on the Dogstar in Brixton. Ros to inform Southwark and Wandsworth groups and check Caroline has materials. Sue to check with Dogstar that this is OK.

Lambeth Country Show 20th – 21st July 2013 – the application deadline for a stall is May 3rd and there was no one at the meeting who was able to fill it in (and be there). Ros to take application form to letter writing in 23rd April and see if anyone wants to organise it.

Celebrating Sanctuary Stall – Refugee week is 17th – 23rd June and the Lambeth group usually has a stall at the Celebrating Sanctuary event on the Southbank. Gareth usually organises this so Ros to check with him about booking the stall.

Recruitment posters for the Lambeth group – if you are able to put up a poster in the Lambeth area please print off the attached recruitment poster (and add the Lambeth group email address and website) or call 01788 545553 and ask for the Local groups recruitment poster (code number GM309) and it will be posted to you. Sue to look into advertising in the Brixton Bugle. Ros to look into setting up a googlegroup.

There will be a speaker at the next Lambeth meeting - **Joab Omondi from the Prisoners of Conscience Appeal Fund**. He is an environmental scientist and geography teacher from Kenya, where he was also an active human rights campaigner. He organised peaceful mass protests against the government's draining and pollution of wetlands in the Lake Victoria region. Joab was detained several times by the government's secret agents during the single party era. On several occasions he was a victim of torture, receiving death threats, severe beatings and being held in cells flooded with water for long periods. In 1996, Joab's environmental organisation (The Lake Victoria Wetlands Team) was officially deregistered and he was expelled from his postgraduate degree programme. The group continued operating secretly until Joab escaped to the UK in 2007. With the help of a PoC grant, Joab completed a PGCE in Geography at the Institute of Education in 2002 and became head of his department in the school at which he taught. He continues with his environment conservation work and has run several school programmes that enable students to visit other countries and be involved in short-term environmental conservation and management projects. With PoC assistance, Joab is now undertaking a PhD in Climate Change at Anglia Ruskin University.

Please make every effort to attend – Ros to let other London groups know and ask that reminders are sent to the Lambeth group.

Campaign updates

The monthly mailing contained a Roma petition which is calling on the President of the European Commission to show leadership and enforce compliance of member states within the EU to its own anti-discrimination law and human rights standards.

Over 10 million Roma live across Europe - six million of them within the EU. They are the largest and one of the most disadvantaged minorities in the region. Discrimination over the centuries has pushed the great majority of Roma to the

very margins of society - and it keeps them there. The group signed the petition and Ros will bring it to the letter writing on Tues 23rd.

The April 2013 groups newsletter was also included.

End violence against women in Afghanistan

Anita then spoke about Amnesty's campaign to End violence against women in Afghanistan. She explained how this is a crucial time to protect Afghan women's rights, as international forces – including those from the UK – prepare to leave the country next year. Instability and conflict could increase. If the current systematic problem of violent abuse faced by Afghan women and girls is not addressed now, the situation will only get worse. We urgently must stand with Afghan women and demand an end to the epidemic of violence they face.

The UK Government has the potential to make a real difference to the lives of women and girls in Afghanistan. Secretary of State for International Development Justine Greening has acknowledged that violence against women in Afghanistan is an issue her department needs to prioritise. However, we must see concrete actions from DFID and the FCO – support for brave human rights defenders running women's shelters, programmes to see women represented in the police force, political leverage to make sure the Afghan government abides by international laws protecting women from violence.

The group thanked Anita.

Staying in touch with Amnesty in London

There are numerous ways to find out about what Amnesty is doing in London:

- Lambeth Amnesty website: <http://www2.amnesty.org.uk/groups/lambeth>
- London Amnesty website: <http://london.amnesty.org.uk>
- London Amnesty Google group (you can sign into this to get regular updates of events and opportunities for volunteering): <http://groups.google.com/group/amnesty-london-region>
- Amnesty UK website for events: www.amnesty.org.uk/content.asp?CategoryID=10011

Next Meeting

Normally, meetings are held on the 3rd Tuesday of every month at the Clapham Community Project starting at 8pm (no meeting in August). The next meeting will be on **Tuesday 21st May 2013**.