



Amnesty International
Reading Group
NEWSLETTER

Spring 2012

PROTECT THE HUMAN

We are ordinary people from across the world standing up for humanity and human rights. Our purpose is to protect individuals wherever justice, fairness, freedom and truth are denied.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

- Next group meeting - Thursday 12th April, discussing conference motions
- National Conference & AGM, Manchester – 13-15 April
- Quiz night – Wednesday 23rd May, RISC – more info, see below
- WOMAD – 27-29 July

RECENT MEETINGS

March 2012 - Towards an International Arms Trade Treaty

Oliver Sprague, AIUK's programme director for arms control, gave a passionate talk about the history of Amnesty's campaigning for an arms trade treaty and explained to us the 4 week negotiating conference that is taking place in July this year to finalise the international treaty. He explained that Amnesty will be campaigning to ensure that the treaty is comprehensive, protective of human rights, protective of the victim, includes strong enforcement mechanisms, and will be applied quickly. He noted that once the treaty has been agreed the next step will be to campaign for its ratification. Much of the campaigning is likely to be directed towards our MPs and there is likely to be some repaid response campaigning required in July.

AMNESTY AND GROUP NEWS IN BRIEF

- **Quiz night** - Come and pit your wits against Amnesty supporter!! £10 ticket includes fish and chip supper. If you'd prefer the veggie option, please let us know when booking. To book a place, please contact us on amnesty.reading@googlemail.com
- Japan has just executed three prisoners on death row, after nearly two years of no executions, bucking international trend and recommendations from senior legal organisations in the country to stop using the death penalty – see action below
- Rachel Foxley has decided to stand down as the group's co-ordinator for North Africa. Rachel has worked tirelessly for this region. Rachel was the lead person for our group's former PoC, Gamal Al'Din, when he was released in 2008. Since then, Rachel has lead the group's work for North Africa, inviting many AI country co-ordinators to our group meetings,

including Morocco, Egypt and Algeria. Thanks Rachel, for all your hard work and dedication!!!

- Our WOMAD stall is booked! Please let Sue Bingham (s.bingham748@btinternet.com) know if you're able to volunteer on the stall this year, as it's a fantastic opportunity to get a great response to our festival campaign – more info on that to follow!

ACTIONS

Please scroll to the end of this document or follow the links for actions you can take to support issues that the Reading Group follows closely.

1. Students in **Azerbaijan** held incommunicado
2. Two brothers sentenced to 2/3 years' imprisonment for peacefully exercising their right to freedom of expression – **Cuba**
3. **WEST PAPUA** – can you help get your local MP to support Filep Karma?
4. **Japan** resumes use of death penalty - call upon their Justice Minister to put an end to executions http://action.amnesty.org.uk/ea-action/action?ea.client.id=1194&ea.campaign.id=13468&utm_source=aiuk&utm_medium=Homepage&utm_campaign=DP&utm_content=japanex_main

Don't forget to keep up to date with our group website:

<http://reading.amnesty.org.uk/> and our facebook page

<http://www.facebook.com/groups/36991953109/> which is frequently updated with photos from recent events.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL READING GROUP MEETINGS

All at RISC, 35-39 London Street, Reading, RG1 4PS

MEETINGS: second Thursday of each month at 8pm. All are welcome. See programme leaflet or website (www.reading.amnesty.org.uk) for details.

CAMPAIGNS: We campaign on a wide range of human rights issues. We work Filep Karma, a prisoner of conscience in West Papua, on countries in Africa, South-East Asia, and particularly on human rights issues in Cuba, Russia, Burma, and Zimbabwe; for an end to the Death Penalty; to stop violence against women; on poverty; and on other issues and cases as they arise.

ALSO: We raise funds for Amnesty International, and can provide speakers about Amnesty and human rights issues for local organisations: contact our secretary Anne McFarlane, ammcf@o2.co.uk.

Amnesty Reading Newsletter editor Helen Ball, Tel: 07900 886 306
email: helenball03@yahoo.co.uk

AZERBAIJAN - YOUTH ACTIVISTS BEATEN, RISK POLICE TORTURE

Three youth activists have been beaten in police custody, and are at risk of torture. They were arrested while performing at a peaceful protest in the capital, Baku, after one of them swore about the President's family. They are now detained incommunicado. Letters to be sent by 1st May 2012.

Prosecutor General
Zakir Qaralov
7 Rafibeyli Street
Baku 370001.
AZERBAIJAN

April 2012

Dear Prosecutor General,

Jamal Ali, Etibar Salmanli and Natig Kamilov

I am writing to express my concern about three men- Jamal Ali, Etibar Salmanli and Natig Kamilov.

I call on you to allow Jamal Ali, Etibar Salmanli and Natig Kamilov immediate access to their lawyer and family visits.

I politely request you to ensure that the police immediately stop ill-treating the activists.

I urge you to order an immediate investigation into the police assault on the activists.

I look forward to hearing from you about these men shortly.

Yours sincerely,

TO:

Raúl Castro Ruz

Head of State and Government
Presidente de la República de Cuba
La Habana
Cuba

Fax: +53 7 83 33 085 (via Foreign Ministry);
+1 212 779 1697 (via Cuban Mission to UN)
Email: cuba@un.int (c/o Cuban Mission to UN)

FROM:

Date: 2012

Your Excellency,

Antonio Michel Lima Cruz and Marcos Máiquel Lima Cruz

I am writing to you as I am very concerned about the two brothers, Antonio Michel Lima Cruz and Marcos Máiquel Lima Cruz, who have been sentenced to two and three years' imprisonment after a Christmas celebration at their home in Holguín. I believe they have been detained solely for peacefully exercising their right to freedom of expression, and am therefore calling on the authorities to release them immediately and unconditionally, as they are prisoners of conscience.

I would also urge the authorities to remove unlawful restrictions on freedoms of expression, association and assembly in Cuba.

Yours truly,

Copies to:

General Abelardo Coloma Ibarra

Interior Minister
Ministro del Interior y Prisiones
Ministerio del Interior,
Plaza de la Revolución,
La Habana,
Cuba

Fax: +1 212 779 1697 (via Cuban Mission to UN)

Email: correominint@mn.mn.co.cu

Her Excellency Esther Armenteros

Cuban Ambassador
Embassy of the Republic of Cuba
167 High Holborn,
London WC1 6PA

Fax: 020 7836 2602 embacuba@cubaldn.com

LETTER FROM SEAN RE: THE GROUP'S PoC – Filep Karma

Dear All,

Help me to get 30 MPs to lobby William Hague for Filep Karma

I'm trying to get a target group of 30 MPs to write to the Foreign Secretary about the imprisonment of Filep Karma.

The pretext is the recent UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention Opinion (attached) which declares his imprisonment is in violation of International Law. Some of you have already written to our local MPs about it.

My partner Louise and I have identified 19 MPs in constituencies in which friends live, and those friends have agreed to help. But we have run out of friends...and need your help.

Can you think of anyone who would send a letter like the attached, to their MP (I will update it a bit with the latest news)?

All we need from you is a name and where they live (postcode best) - I will find out their MP, prepare the letter and forward it to you, so all they have to do is print it out, sign it and send it off - or personalize it as they see fit of course.

Easy?

These are the MPs I have contacts for already, so try to get some new ones:

1. John Howell (Henley)
2. Rushanara Ali (Bethnal Green and Bow)
3. Ed Vaizey (Wantage & Didcot)
4. Caroline Lucas (Brighton Pavilion)
5. Richard Harrington (Watford)
6. David Lidington (Aylesbury)
7. John Bercow (Buckingham)
8. John Denham (Southampton Itchen)
9. John Redwood (Wokingham)
10. Nick Herbert (Arundel & South Downs)
11. Rob Wilson (Reading East)
12. George Eustice (Camborne, Redruth & Hayle)
13. Norman Baker (Lewes)
14. Vince Cable (Twickenham)
15. Jeremy Hunt (SW Surrey)
16. Sarah Newton (Truro & Falmouth)
17. Andrew Smith (Oxford East)
18. Alok Sharma (Reading West)
19. Alan Campbell (Tynemouth)

If we get more than 30 in total, I will bring a bottle of Cava to the next Amnesty meeting to celebrate. Virtue may be its own reward, but a glass of Cava helps.

Sean

PS if you need reminding about Filep's dire situation, here are the details from AIUK website:

http://action.amnesty.org.uk/ea-campaign/action.retrievestaticpage.do?ea_static_page_id=1048

As usual for this page, they are way out of date. The most recent developments are Filep's deteriorating health:

<http://westpapuamedia.info/2012/03/06/filep-karma-undergoing-medical-care-at-hospital-dok-ii/>

the UN Working Group Opinion of course, and the question asked in the House of Lords on 12 March by Lord Harries:

<http://www.theyworkforyou.com/wrans/?id=2012-03-12a.13.4&s=speaker%3A13168#g13.5>

