



# MANCHESTER AMNESTY GROUP NEWSLETTER

April 2013

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## Arms Trade Treaty

The world now has an international Arms Trade Treaty! The United Nations has adopted its first ever treaty aimed at controlling the trade in conventional weapons, voting it through by a large majority despite earlier being blocked by three countries. Member states represented in the UN general assembly voted by 154 to three, with 23 abstentions (including Russia and China), to control a trade worth an estimated £46bn a year.

The treaty is not ideal but prohibits states from exporting conventional weapons in violation of arms embargoes or weapons to be used for acts of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes or terrorism. It also requires states to prevent conventional weapons reaching the black market. At the moment, the treaty is adopted but "asleep" -- it needs to be ratified by 50 countries before it will enter into force. Campaigning organisations, like Amnesty will need to keep up the pressure to ensure that the treaty actually becomes a reality.



Justus Nyan'aya (Amnesty Kenya) and AIUK staff send their thanks from New York

We've got an Arms Trade Treaty that has the power to save lives. We couldn't have done it without you. Thank you.



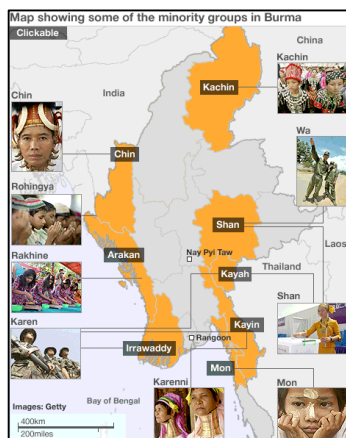
This is a major step forward which Amnesty, including the Manchester Group, has long campaigned for. Many thanks to all who have organised, signed, written, badgered MPs, demonstrated etc etc. We will be marking this achievement at the April group meeting with a photo op.

Read more on [the AIUK website](#).

## Campaign news

### Burma – Dr Tun Aung

Ethnic and religious tensions remain high in Burma, with the trouble in Rakhine State (where our PoC was arrested and detained following his attempted peaceful intervention to calm civil unrest) spreading to other parts of the country, including Rangoon and in particular in Meiktilar, central Burma.



Sadly, since our last meeting in March there has been no further news on the case of Dr Tun Aung, who has now been detained in Sittwe Prison, in Rakhine State, for nearly 10 months following his arrest in June 2012.

We are asked to continue writing to Lt. Gen. Ko Ko, Ministry of Home Affairs and U Aung Min, Ministry of President Office with copies to the Burma Human Rights Commission. The IS has stressed that it is of critical importance to avoid endangering Dr Tun Aung and his family that all correspondence in relation to his case is sent to the above named contacts only, and not to any other individuals/organisations.

For full contact details for the target individuals for letters for this campaign as outlined above, please see/contact [Laura Barsby](#)

### Women in Afghanistan

In early March the Secretary of State for International Development, Justine Greening, spoke at the AIUK office to outline her department's approach to addressing, as she put it, 'the greatest unmet challenges of our time' – the inequality and discrimination faced in some form by women and girls in pretty much every society around the globe. There was much to applaud in Justine Greening's speech – not least her commitment to supporting the rights of women and girls in Afghanistan. But we

need to see this commitment translated into a clear programme of work that includes funding for women's shelters and helping the Afghan police force support, not punish, the victims of abuse. It is also vital that the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office similarly prioritises tackling violence against women and girls in Afghanistan.

An important way to get this message through to Ministers is via our MPs, therefore we're looking for people to contact their local MPs on this campaign to ask them to champion it within parliament. If you're able to either write to or visit your MP please get in touch with Katie for more information (eg template letter with key asks) at [ktkatjena@hotmail.com](mailto:ktkatjena@hotmail.com)

## Group News

### Letter Writing session

Four of us met up on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> March at 'On the Eight Day' café on Oxford road and wrote 27 letters on behalf of Amnesty cases around the world, from Russia to Zimbabwe, whilst enjoying the excellent tea and cakes. I haven't written so many letters for ages – it really got me on a roll.

This is an excellent way of reconnecting with Amnesty's core work.

The next session will take place on 18<sup>th</sup> May- same time and place. Put it in your diary and come along to swell the number of letters written.

### Group Meetings

2nd Wednesday each month  
Cross Street Chapel - 7.30pm

#### 10<sup>th</sup> April

Celebrate the Arms Trade Treaty and help prepare our delegates for the expected fireworks at the forthcoming national meeting.

#### 8<sup>th</sup> May

Workshop on the Afghan Women Campaign

*If you are in town, why not join a few of us for a pre meeting meal at The Grinch, immediately adjacent to Cross St Chapel. We normally gather before each meeting just after 6pm.*

### Sad News

A long standing member of the group, Mavis Shankland, passed away last month after a short illness. Mavis hasn't been able to come to meetings for the last couple of years but many of us will remember her as 'catering manager' in charge of drinks at meetings. She was a stalwart of the group in many ways, impeccably masterminding the Christmas Card Stall for many years, leading work on adopted prisoners and setting up the Didsbury festival stall – who can forget her famous 'Egg Game'.

Four of us represented the group at her funeral and a card was sent from us all. Mavis' commitment to Amnesty was mentioned during the sermon and donations to Amnesty were requested in place of flowers.

### Group Calendar

To help us plan, we have put together a calendar with events that we aim to be involved with:

Month	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June
Group Meeting				AIUK AGM resolutions	Workshop on Afghan Women	Speaker on Burma?
Event				AIUK AGM (13/14)	Letter writing(18)	Didsbury Festival Manchester Day Parade (2)
Month	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Group Meeting						
Event	Letter writing (20)	Pride (24)	Street Collection (28) Letter writing (21)	Manchester Lit Festival (4-13)	Letter writing (23)	Greeting Cards

### Subscriptions please.

Annual donations from members are vital to keep the Group going. The suggested sum is £20 if you have a wage, £3 otherwise, or whatever you can afford to give. If you haven't already donated this year, please bring your cash or cheque to the next meeting or contact Treasurer ([manchestergroup@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:manchestergroup@amnesty.org.uk)) if you aren't going to be at a meeting in the near future and he will tell you how to get the money to him.

**Thanks!**