



## MANCHESTER AMNESTY GROUP NEWSLETTER

June 2013

<http://manchester.amnesty.org.uk/>

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### Manchester Amnesty at the Didsbury Festival



A great sunny day promoting women's rights in Afghanistan at the Didsbury festival. 286 signatures collected for the petition and visits from MP John Leech and the mayor. AIUK came up to video it all!

Thanks to all who helped.



### Campaign news

#### Burma

Whilst Burma appears to be in the news recently more than ever, sadly there continues to be very little positive news about our PoC Dr Tun Aung. We have however recently been advised by AI UK that we are able to write in solidarity to several members of Dr Aung's family who live outside of Burma. However, in order to ensure there are no repercussions for Dr Aung or his family, AI are asking that any messages are sent to them first so they may forward safely. For more details about how to get involved, please speak to Laura Barsby ([barsbylaura@gmail.com](mailto:barsbylaura@gmail.com))

Just a reminder that we are still hoping to hear from a former political prisoner of the Burmese government, Min Min, who has agreed to come and talk at our July meeting (for more information please see his bio:

<http://www.york.ac.uk/cahr/defenders/past/min-min/>.

We will be screening 'They call it Myanmar' (<http://www.theycallitmyanmar.com/trailer/>) at the Manchester Buddhist Centre on the 19<sup>th</sup> July at 6.30pm. There will be tea, cake and biscuits, with the chance to learn more about this little known country and its people.

Please come along, and tell your friends!



#### Control Arms at the Foreign Office

To mark the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty by the United Nations on 2nd April 2013, volunteers from Amnesty International and other organisations part of the Control Arms coalition were invited to a reception in Whitehall, at the Foreign and

Commonwealth Office on 15th May. One of our group members, Sameena Matthiessen, managed to get a ticket to the reception and reports as follows:

"I have been involved with the control arms campaign since I joined the Manchester group in 2005 and like the rest of the group felt a great sense of achievement following the adoption in April. A lot of people, not only in Amnesty, but across the world and across the UK have worked hard for this and this was evident at the reception - there were representatives from other charities, schools, dignitaries from UK and other countries, MPs and general Whitehall workers, all having contributed over the last 20 years. The reception was presided by Alistair Burt (MP), Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, who together with William Hague, our Foreign Secretary, Kate Allen, AIUK Director and Oxfam's Head of Arms Control Anna McDonald, all gave very moving (and funny at times) speeches.

See the video here: <http://vimeo.com/66308319>.

William Hague acknowledged the work of the charities, including Amnesty, and promised an early ratification by the UK government. This was a reception to celebrate what had been achieved by charities and government together and to remind us that we still have work to do to ensure the countries ratify the treaty. I had a great time - spoke to several other Amnesty volunteers who were again invigorated by the work of Amnesty International and the passion of its volunteers. I was also interviewed together with a few other volunteers about my involvement in the campaign and made sure I mentioned Manchester a few times!

If any of you happen to get invited to one of these things in the future, here are some tips: Dress code: lounge suit (wear what you would wear to interview - nice suit or dress), eat before you go (only nibbles served and I didn't seem to get to them early

## Group News

### Event for Syria

British Syrians and Syria Relief are planning a charity family fun day on 6th July (note change of date) at Burnage High. The money raised goes to buy baby food to send to Syria.

More details can be found at: <http://britishsyriancentre.com/node/1961>.

We will have a stall and our focus will be writing to Syria with a mix of urgent and long term cases. We are also going to have a projector & screen showing AIUK film and info clips on Syria to get people's attention and we will have clips / photos about the journalists in the recent AI report on the dangers of reporting in Syria and actions for missing journalists and bloggers. If anyone has anything they would like included on the stall contact Michelle Eddisford.

enough), wear comfortable footwear (tube is 5min away and no chairs at reception)."

For more information, go to:

<http://www.amnesty.org.uk/content.asp?CategoryID=12430>

### Women's Rights in Afghanistan

As well as featuring this campaign at the Didsbury Festival, Becky is organising letter writing to MPs. If you want to take part and haven't already got the details (emailed round 3 weeks ago) contact her directly - [beckycarr1990@hotmail.com](mailto:beckycarr1990@hotmail.com).

### Zimbabwe elections

On Saturday 29 June 2013 the Colwyn Bay Group is hosting an event to encourage local people to 'cast their votes' for elections free from violence in Zimbabwe. Fantastic music from the Zimbabwe Association Choir and refreshments from the Llandudno Fair Trade Coalition will make this a fun afternoon with a serious message! Where - St John's Church, Mostyn Street, Llandudno between 12.30 and 4.30pm

If you're enjoying a weekend in North Wales why not call in?

### AI Annual Report

The 2013 Amnesty International annual report is now available. An invaluable reference on human rights across the world - country by country.

Read it at <http://www.amnesty.org/>

### Group Meetings

2nd Wednesday each month  
Cross Street Chapel - 7.30pm

#### 12<sup>th</sup> June

An evening of catching up and planning future activities.

#### 10<sup>th</sup> July

Speaker - Min Min, a former political prisoner of the Burmese government.

*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.*



Anne is planning a tea party in her garden in Heaton Moor for friends and family of the Manchester Amnesty Group on Sunday 21st July, 3pm onwards, weather permitting. Alice French has promised to bring her harp to serenade us. We will need lots of cakes so please get baking!

## Acoustic Amnesty

Thursday 5th September 2013 - 7.30pm doors for 8pm start

We are delighted that a number of great musicians and poets are joining us for an evening of totally acoustic entertainment - at Venue 2022NQ. The event is seated and there will be no mikes or amps so we will ask for total quiet during the acts to give them the respect they deserve! This will be a special night – see the leaflet at the end for more details. **Please advertise to all your friends / family / colleagues etc etc**

## Literature Festival

Don't forget that we have a fantastic speaker for our Literature Festival event on 19th October - London-based writer, critic and broadcaster, Bidisha. - see more of her writing, blogs, information about the many awards she has won at: <http://bidisha-online.blogspot.co.uk/p/biog.html>

SAVE THE DATE! Mary McBride and Lianne Slavin are taking the lead in coordinating this event. No doubt they will need help beforehand and on the day.

## Regional Conference

The next North West Regional Conference will be in Manchester. We have now booked St Peter's Chaplaincy at the University for Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> November. Planning is being led by the NW Regional rep, Jennifer Jaynes, with a small group from around the NW. Anne and Laura are representing the Manchester Group. We will need your support to provide local know-how and manpower. If you would like to be in a Manchester Group sub-group inputting into the planning and organisation of the conference, email [anne.walker9@ntlworld.com](mailto:anne.walker9@ntlworld.com).

## Group Calendar

Month	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	November
Group Meeting	Speaker on street children	Speaker on Burma				
Event	Didsbury Festival (8 <sup>th</sup> ) Syrian event (29 <sup>th</sup> ) Burma solidarity (22 <sup>nd</sup> )	Syrian event stall (6 <sup>th</sup> ) Burma Film (19 <sup>th</sup> ) Amnestea (21 <sup>st</sup> )	Pride Parade (24 <sup>th</sup> )	Acoustic Amnesty (5 <sup>th</sup> ) Street Collection (28 <sup>th</sup> ) Letter writing (21 <sup>st</sup> )	Manchester Lit Festival (19 <sup>th</sup> )	Letter writing (tbc)

## Subscriptions please.

Annual donations from members are vital to keep the Group going. The suggested sum is £20pa 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!**

# **ACOUSTIC AMNESTY (MUSIC & POETRY**



## **FUNDRAISING NIGHT)**

**Music - Quiet Loner, TG Elias, Chris Flynn, Hawker Reunion, Little Sparrow, Leonie Kate Higgins, James Carson.**

**Poetry - Kieren King, Louise Fazackerley, Ben Mellor.**

**Thursday 5TH September 2013 - 7.30pm doors for 8pm start**

Venue 2022NQ, Basement, 20 Dale Street, Manchester, M1 1EZ

Amnesty Manchester are delighted that a number of great musicians and poets are joining us for an evening of totally acoustic entertainment - there will be no mikes or amps. The event is seated and will be totally quiet during the acts to give them the respect they deserve! A great bar is in another room. This will be a special night - as you'll know if you've even seen just one of the listed acts before.

Quiet Loner <http://quietloneruk.wordpress.com/>

TG Elias <http://tgelias.com/>

Chris Flynn <http://www.soundcloud.com/flynn280>

Hawker Reunion <http://hawkerreunion.bandcamp.com/>

Little Sparrow <http://www.soundcloud.com/uklittlesparrow>

Leonie Kate Higgins <http://www.leoniekate.com/>

James Carson <http://www.myspace.com/jmcarson>

Kieren King <http://kierenking.com/>

Louise Fazackerley <http://www.writeoutloud.net/profiles/louisefazackerley>

Ben Mellor <http://www.benmellor.net/>

£7.50 - <http://www.wegotickets.com/event/224209>

