



# MANCHESTER AMNESTY GROUP NEWSLETTER

March 2015

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

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## Campaigning

### General Election

At our February meeting Anne led a workshop looking at how we can get involved in lobbying prospective parliamentary candidates (PPCs) to make sure that human rights are on their agenda should they get elected. This led to the formation of a subgroup which has already met and started to plan.

#### Take the Pledge

AIUK has launched activists' pledge cards



which we are asking **all** our group members to sign. We will be taking these to our newly elected MPs after the election to show the level of support for human rights in their constituencies.

We will have pledge cards at the March and April group meetings. However, if you won't be coming, can you print out and sign the attached pledge and send it to 24 Gladstone Grove, Stockport, SK4 4DA. Do it now before you forget!

### Take the Pledge Now!

Get your family, friends, colleagues . . . . .  
to take the pledge as well.

#### Future work

Once all the PPCs have been announced, we will be asking you to write/email your constituency PPCs to make them aware of your views and to ask theirs, especially about the UK Human Rights Act and the Stop Torture campaign. We also hope that group members will attend local hustings to ask human rights linked questions and we are inviting PPCs from each of the main parties to our April meetings so that we can ask their views on these issues.

### Stop Torture

#### Stop Torture One Step at a Time

This major international campaign was launched in May last year. To mark the one year anniversary, we plan to hold a walk around Manchester City centre following the Manchester Peace and Social Justice Trail (see <http://www.discoverpeace.eu>). This will be lead by Steve Roman who helped put the Trail together and will be in aid of Amnesty. It will take about 3 hours to complete and passes by many important landmarks in Manchester with human rights links.

The subgroup are planning to hold a planning meeting at 6pm 19 March at the Caffee Nero near Piccadilly station (Station Approach). If you are interested in coming along, please contact Lianne Slavin ([lianne.slavin@gmail.com](mailto:lianne.slavin@gmail.com)) for further details.

#### EU Torture Tools Petition.

The EU are currently reviewing the arms control legislation. AI feels that this is the ideal opportunity to close some loopholes in EU laws, which allow trade in an array of gruesome torture equipment right here in Europe. We sent off the 89 signatures collected by the group on the paper petition forms last month, however if you didn't sign you can still find it at <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/actions/eu-torture-tools-trade-uk>.

#### International Day in Support of Victims of Torture

We are hoping to hold another Acoustic Amnesty to mark this day on June 26<sup>th</sup>. Put it in your diary – more details to follow.

### Individuals at Risk

We are holding another of our regular letter writing sessions at the Eighth Day Café at the end of this month. Come along and get motivated to put pen to paper whilst enjoying the excellent refreshment provided by this super café. Amongst other cases, we will be writing on behalf of the cases in the attached Real Lives leaflet, including Shaker Aamer still in Guantanamo, the Saudi Arabian blogger, Raif Badawi and Ali Özdemir, a 14 year old Syrian blinded whilst seeking a safe haven in Turkey.

If you aren't able to come along but would like to write, please find the Real Lives leaflet attached with this newsletter along with a roundup of the 2014 Write for Rights Campaign..

### Next Letter Writing Session

**Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2-4pm**

The Eighth Day Café, Oxford Road  
Case sheets, pen and paper provided.

Buy your own cakes!

All Welcome.

## South America

We have received an Urgent Action concerning the Cabula shooting, when 12 young black community members were killed by the Military Police in Brazil. According to residents, all adolescents were deliberately assassinated. Local government made a statement saying that there is no evidence this operation was outside the law.

Please find the Urgent Action attached. Letters should be sent urging authorities to undertake a complete investigation and ensure resident's safety. Appeals must be sent before March 30th.

*Send an Urgent Action appeal now!*

## Women's Rights

The group's Women's Rights Subgroup recently met and talked about bringing together different women's rights groups in Manchester as a way of networking, and as a way to spread the word to the Amnesty group and others about the 'Our Body Our Rights' Amnesty campaign. They are hoping to hold a workshop followed by a debate attended by different representatives from local groups at our June meeting and are attending a young women's event on 14<sup>th</sup> March in Manchester

## Children's Human Rights

Those of you who heard David Maidment speak at our January meeting may remember he said there were changes afoot with the Network.

The latest news is that they have updated the blog <http://www.amnesty.org.uk/blogs/childrens-human-rights-network> and set up a mailing list of "active members" that Mary has signed up to. This will give us regular updates, urgent actions and details of planned events. Mary will bring these along to meetings but it would also be good to have an e-subgroup that she can circulate urgent actions to promptly. Depending on what the Network sends us during and the rest of the Group's commitments, we could also think about a campaign action at some time during the year.

*If you're interested, please get in touch with Mary:*  
[mary.mcbride@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:mary.mcbride@blueyonder.co.uk)

## Southern Africa,

Simona will bring an action on WOZA (Women of Zimbabwe Arize) for us all to sign at the monthly meeting.

## Myanmar

Jean Mary will update us at the meeting.

## Group News

### AIUK General Meeting

The National Conference and AGM will be held over the weekend of 18/19 April at Warwick University. If you have booked (deadline was 2<sup>nd</sup> March) can you let Anne (anne.walker9@ntlworld.com) know, if you haven't already, so that we can coordinate travel and plan how best to use our time at the conference.

### Pride Parade

We will be taking part in the Manchester Pride Parade this again year. This is a marvellous way to get our message seen by thousands of people. It is real fun as well – so make sure that you are around on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> August (the bank holiday weekend).

AIUK are beginning to plan their support for all the Prides and Anne will be going down to a meeting at the HRAC in London this month to find out more.

### 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. Please bring your cash or cheque to the next meeting or contact Treasurer Sean Dunne ([Sean.a.dunne@btinternet.com](mailto:Sean.a.dunne@btinternet.com)) and he will tell you how to get the money to him.

**Thanks!**

## Next Group Meeting

Normally held 2nd Wednesday each month - Cross Street Chapel 7.30pm

**11<sup>th</sup> March**

### What have we done/what are we doing/what are we going to do?

Now that we have reviewed this year's planning pack, it is a good time to take stock, look back at achievements in 2014 and look forward to the coming year.

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### Light Action to mark 4<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Syrian Uprising

If your phone hasn't got a torch app, please bring a torch to the meeting

*Why not join a few of us for a pre-meeting drink/meal just after 6pm, we will be at The Pizza Express on the top end of King Street.*

## Acoustic Amnesty for the Big Issue

**ACOUSTIC AMNESTY**  
IN AID OF **north**  
**FRIDAY 13<sup>TH</sup> MARCH**

ROBBIE CAVANAGH  
IAN TILL  
THE YOUNG VANISH  
JOHN MACKIE  
a circle of songwriters \*  
JAMES HOLT  
KIERAN KING  
ROSE CONDO  
a metre of performance poets  
BEN MELLOR

DOORS 7PM  
STRICT 7:30 START  
**SACRED TRINITY CHURCH**  
CHAPEL STREET, SALFORD

\* as heard on The Radio People with John Mackie on Top Radio International

Steve is holding another Acoustic Amnesty event at Sacred Trinity on 13th March. This time it is solely for The Big Issue in the North. Steve is already planning a further one on 26th June (International Day for the Victims of Torture) in aid of Amnesty International.

He promises that it will be seated and totally silent for performances with the (well stocked!) bar in a separate room and that they will be returning to their roots with no sound system whatsoever - totally acoustic using the natural acoustics of the venue.

The acts are:

- Circle of songwriters - John Mackie, Ian Till, The Young Vanish, Robbie Cavanagh & James Holt.
- Metre of performance poets - Kieran King, Ben Mellor & Rose Condo.

Free on-street car parking is available and the venue is a stone's throw from Deansgate/Market Street in Manchester city centre. Tickets are only £8 in advance for all of this entertainment -

<http://www.wegotickets.com/event/303264>

It will be a great night so please support. I hope you can make it.

## Concert in aid of Amnesty

The Stockport Group have organised a concert by the Amaretti Chamber Orchestra (see [www.amaretti.org.uk](http://www.amaretti.org.uk)) as a major fundraiser this spring. They would welcome our support.

Tickets (£8.50 includes tea/coffee/biscuits) can be ordered directly from the Stockport Group (Amnesty will then receive the whole amount - Tickets bought on the door will not all go to AI.)

Contact Liz Nott on [ejnott@gmail.com](mailto:ejnott@gmail.com) 0161-486-1690.

N.B. There is parking behind the church and on certain roads nearby.

**Amaretti Chamber Orchestra**  
Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> May, 2015  
St. Andrew's Church  
Cheadle Road, Cheadle Hulme SK8 5ET

**Concert**  
Proceeds to support  
Amnesty International

Conductor: **Sinead Hayes**  
Leaders: **John Phillips, Adrienne Spisbury**

**7.30 pm**

Mozart: Jupiter Symphony  
Berlioz: Les Nuits d'été  
Soprano: Rosy Williams  
Mahler: Adagietto (Symphony No.5)  
Handel: Water Music Suite No.2

Tickets available on the door or  
Contact: Peter Aggett: peter@amaretti.org.uk  
@ 01663 719400

Tickets £8.50  
Supported by Cheadle Hulme School  
www.amaretti.org.uk  
Accompanied  
Children free