



MANCHESTER AMNESTY GROUP NEWSLETTER

March 2013

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Zimbabwe Actions

At the last Group meeting we marked the 10th anniversary of the formation of the Zimbabwean Human rights Organisation – Women and Men of Zimbabwe Arise. We signed a card which was sent along with some pictures to WOZA. A letter and a picture were also sent to the Embassy asking the Zimbabwean authorities to ensure human rights defenders are not subject to harassment during the run up to the elections in the summer.



Anne also represented Manchester at a demo outside the Zimbabwean embassy in London – we placed roses and our banner at the embassy entrance.

Last month we also sent letters to leaders of the Southern African Development Community and police chiefs in Zimbabwe. A further series of letter will be signed at the March meeting. If you want to take part in these actions, but won't make the meeting, contact [Anne](#)

Campaign news

Campaigning plans

Due to the difficulties at AIUK, the Group planning pack has yet to appear; however, we expect the forthcoming campaign work.

- Burma (Laura)
- Women's rights in Afghanistan (Katie)
- Zimbabwe (Anne)
- Arms Trade Treaty (Katie)
- Death Penalty (Jennifer)
- AI Growth in India (Mike)
- Individuals at Risk (Hazel)

We will have short synopses of each campaign at the March group meeting. Come along and find out how to get involved!

Arms Trade Treaty

In July 2012 we came very close to securing a global Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). A draft treaty was drawn up, which could be effective, providing key loopholes are closed. This month, from 18 to 28 March the final UN conference will be held in New York. Amnesty believes that the ATT must have human rights at its core with a categorical rule that arms will not be supplied if they are likely to commit or facilitate a serious violation of international human rights law or international humanitarian law.

The UK Government has a crucial role to play in these negotiations. As a key global player it must continue to fight hard to strengthen the treaty, close the loopholes and make sure the treaty is not watered down by other governments. From now until the end of March we need to send a powerful message to MPs to ensure we get a treaty that will uphold human rights.

Please carry out one of the quick actions below (following the links) to get your MP to act!

- [Email](#) your MP
- [Tweet](#) your MP
- Join Control Arm's "[Thunderclap](#)" on Facebook or Twitter
- Write a letter or try to visit your MP in person

If you would like anymore information or help, please contact Katie - ktkatjena@hotmail.com

Burma – Dr Tun Aung

As outlined in the February Newsletter, our current case for Myanmar is that of Dr Tun Aung who has been held largely incommunicado in Sittwe Prison since his arrest on 11 June 2012 following increasing unrest in Rakhine State.



Unfortunately, the latest reports from AI UK are that there is no further news about Dr Tun Aung's case. However, in the 3rd phase of this campaign (7 February 2013 to 7 April 2013) we are now being encouraged to write to U

Aung Min of the Ministry of President Office, with copies to the Burma Human Rights Commission, as before.

Please ensure all letters are signed, as there have been reports of unsigned letters being sent to the authorities in Burma, which creates a poor impression and raises suspicions that a number of individuals are sending multiple letters.

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

Group News

Group AGM

We held our annual general meeting in February and elected the following officers:

Chair: Helen Underhill amnestymanc@yahoo.co.uk / helenunder@gmail.com (urgent)

Secretary: Michelle Eddisford sheddie@live.co.uk

Treasurer: Sean Dunne sean.a.dunne@btinternet.com

New members: Mary McBride mary.mcbride@blueyonder.co.uk

Website/Newsletter: Anne Walker anne.walker9@ntlworld.com

A big thanks to Sameena who has been our chair for the last few years. We are short of someone to act as our media officer, if you are interested, Helen would love to hear from you.

Sean gave a short report on our financial position. Our last year's income was £1600, expenditure £1300 and we donated £900 to AIUK. We used our healthy balance to fund the donation to AIUK but we won't be able to do that again. We need to organise a fundraising event this year! Also, please be generous with your subscriptions – these really help pay for the routine running costs of the group.

Letter Writing session

Come along to an informal letter writing session on the afternoon of Saturday 23rd March at 'On the Eight Day' café on Oxford road. Case sheets and paper will be provided. Get motivated!

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 | | | Campaign and event planning | AIUK AGM resolutions | Workshop on Afghan Women | |
| Event | | | Rhythm N'Rights (9) Letter writing (23) | 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 |

Group Meetings

2nd Wednesday each month
Cross Street Chapel - 7.30pm

13th March

Review of forthcoming campaigns and events – hear synopses of the campaigns that we expect to undertake in the coming few months and discuss fundraising events (see summary of ideas mailed with this newsletter).

10th April

AIUK AGM resolutions discussion – prepare our delegates for the expected fireworks at the forthcoming national meeting.

8th 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.

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) 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!**