



Aylesbury Amnesty International Group

Monthly Group Meeting, 24th February 2016, 7.30pm

Friends Meeting House, 9 Rickfords Hill, Aylesbury, HP20 2RT

Present:

Carol Tarrant

Bob Corn

Katherine Danflous

Sallyann Thilthorpe

David Barnard

Annelies Varsey

Henry Mayer-Gross

Graham Minter (AIUK South America Country Coordinator)

Apologies: Bronwen Lee, Gwyn Jenkins, Jim Edwards, Frances Booth

Carol welcomed everyone to the meeting – particularly Graham Minter, Amnesty International UK (AIUK) Country Coordinator for South America, who is present to give an introduction to the Human Rights Position generally in South America. Carol tabled the AIUK Local Groups Planning Pack, which she had previously issued by email to Group Members who could receive it!

1.0 **Previous Minutes** – Agreed

2.0 **Urgent Actions:**

- 2.1 Letters had been prepared in support of Maxima Acuna and her family (Peru); Tran Thj Thuy (Viet Nam); and Aramais Avakian (Uzbekistan).
- 2.2 Everyone present signed the letters – Bob to post.

3.0 **Human Rights in South America:**

- 3.1 Graham Minter gave a very interesting presentation surrounding Human Rights in South America – his having been a diplomat in the region for several years allowing a deeper insight than perhaps otherwise would have been possible. He was able to highlight matters in Brazil and Chile, and a lively discussion developed surrounding various members' activism in the region over the years. Graham suggested that we join the specialist Facebook Page, also he would include our Group in the Regional Newsletter which is distributed quarterly.
- 3.2 A discussion developed surrounding the Paraguay Human Rights Organisation 'CLADEM' – who had been supporting the family of a 10 year-old rape survivor, who in requesting an abortion, had been subject to malicious intimidation, harassment and surveillance. This of course has relevance to the 'My Body My Rights' Campaign, and to the safety surrounding Human Rights Defenders.

4.0 **AIUK Campaigns in the coming Year:**

- 4.1 Carol referenced the Local Groups Planning Pack for 2016, and the attached 'Campaigner Checklist' – and a discussion developed in putting together the following broad programme for our Group Year:

March Meeting – Urgent Actions; AIUK AGM Resolutions Debate.

April Meeting – Urgent Actions; AIUK AGM Report – and our own AGM.

May Meeting – Urgent Actions; AIUK 'Stop Torture' Campaign draws to a close, 'My Body My Rights' Campaign is active – Group Letters to M.P.'s suggested.

June Meeting – Urgent Actions; Activism on current Campaigns – our own Group Activism.

July Meeting – Urgent Actions; Group Summer Picnic.

August – No Meeting.

September Meeting – Urgent Actions; AIUK 'People on the Move' Campaign.

October Meeting – Urgent Actions; our own Group Activism.

November Meeting – Urgent Actions; 'Write for Rights' Campaign.

December – No Meeting – Social Gathering?

January 2017 Meeting – Urgent Actions; AIUK Action for Human Rights Defenders.

February 2017 Meeting – Urgent Actions; Activism surrounding 'space for Human Rights Defenders'.

5.0 Current Position in Iraq:

5.1 A 5 minute Amnesty International video clip concerned with the current position in Northern Iraq was shown and discussed.

6.0 Future Events:

6.1 AIUK National Conference and AGM – 9th and 10th April, at Nottingham University; Carol and Bob will attend and give a report at the April Group Meeting.

7.0 Any Other Business:

Carol referred to the Stop Arms Trade letter in the current AIUK Magazine, also to the 'Good News' item in the Magazine – Good News is often in short supply in Human Rights Activism, and the list given is very welcome!

8.0 NEXT MEETING: 30th March 2016 at 7.30pm, Friends Meeting House, 9 Rickfords Hill, Aylesbury, HP20 2RT – Note that we will be discussing the Resolutions which are to be discussed at the forthcoming AIUK AGM in Nottingham.

Bob Corn, Minutes Secretary,
24th March 2016



Campaigner Checklist

Key campaigns

STOP TORTURE

We're calling on governments to eradicate torture. Right now, we're asking to know the truth about the UK's involvement in torture and rendition after the 9/11 attacks in the USA.

■ amnesty.org.uk/torture

SAVE THE HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

The Act means that we enjoy rights that people round the world are still fighting for. We are working to ensure politicians don't take these away. Right now we're preparing to respond to the government's consultation and planning for May's elections to the Scottish Parliament and Northern Ireland and Welsh Assemblies.

■ amnesty.org.uk/savetheact

MY BODY MY RIGHTS

We're campaigning for the rights of everyone, wherever they live, to make their own decisions about their sexual and reproductive lives. Right now we're urging the governments of Ireland and Northern Ireland to change their restrictive abortion laws.

■ amnesty.org.uk/mbmr

ANNIVERSARY OF A FLOGGING

Amnesty activists outside the Saudi Arabian embassy in London on 9 January marked one year since jailed blogger Raif Badawi endured 50 lashes in a public flogging. We delivered a 250,000-strong petition urging the Saudi authorities to free Raif, who is sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment and 1,000 lashes. Our representatives made it only as far as the porch, but it was the first time that the embassy opened the door to us and accepted a petition.



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NI ABORTION LAW 'BREACHES HUMAN RIGHTS'

Belfast's High Court has ruled that Northern Ireland's abortion law breaches the human rights of women and girls. The historic ruling could end the ban on abortion in cases of sexual crime and serious malformation of the foetus.

Amnesty and local woman Sarah Ewart joined the Judicial Review, taken by the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission. Sarah, whose first pregnancy was given a fatal foetal diagnosis, was forced to travel to England for a termination in 2013 as legally no one could treat her in Northern Ireland. She said: 'I, and many women like me, have been failed by our politicians. First they left me with no option but to go to England for medical care. Then, by their refusal to change the law, they left me with no option but to go to the courts on my and other women's behalf. I am an ordinary woman who suffered a very personal family tragedy, which the law in Northern Ireland turned into a living nightmare.'

Northern Ireland's Justice Minister and Attorney General are appealing the ruling, but we will resist all attempts to overturn it.

Top left: Outside the Saudi embassy
Left: Sarah Ewart speaks to the press after the court ruling in Belfast



Quick actions

What you can do in...

5 minutes

Call on the UK government to establish an independent, judge-led inquiry into our country's role in the CIA's torture and rendition programme.

■ amnesty.org.uk/torture

15 minutes

Make an appointment with a solicitor to talk about your will. Our annual Make a Will Fortnight in March gives supporters like you the opportunity to write a will for free through a local solicitor.

■ amnesty.org.uk/makeawill