



Aylesbury Amnesty International Group

Monthly Group Meeting, 27th January 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

Johnny Heartbreaker

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

Carol welcomed everyone to the meeting – particularly new member Johnny, hoping that everyone had had an enjoyable Christmas Break! For Johnny's benefit, Carol explained a little about Amnesty International and our Group's background, what we are about, supporting prisoners of conscience, etc.

1.0 **Previous Minutes** – Agreed

2.0 **Write for Rights Campaign:**

2.1 Carol thanked Annelies and Bronwen for their work in running the midwinter November, December through January Write for Rights and Messages of Hope Greetings Card Campaigns – from Annelies' Church, and Bronwen in Hale Leys Shopping Centre – helped by members. £80 had been collected which can go towards postage and stall booking costs of £200. Fund-raising for next year was mentioned to be planned in - the Campaign had been very successful – Johnny having visited the stall!

2.2 After the meeting, Bob had emailed a photograph of our Hale Leys stall to AIUK for their record.

3.0 **Urgent Actions:**

3.1 Letters had been prepared in support of Mohammad Faisal Abu Sakha (Israel); asking that Guantanamo be closed (USA); in support of Yekaterino Vologzheninova and Sergei Nikiforov (Russian Federation); in support of Kostyantyn Beskorovaynyi (Ukraine); and in support of three indigenous West Papuans – Elieser Awom, Yafeth Awom and Soleman Yom (Indonesia).

3.2 Everyone present signed the letters – Bob to post.

4.0 **What is Amnesty?:**

A 5 minute video clip – 'What is Amnesty?' – was shown, sparking off a lively discussion.

5.0 **Recent Successes:**

5.1 Carol gave a short narrative on recent successes achieved by Amnesty International: a successful objection to the sentencing by an Indian Court that two sisters should be raped as punishment for a misdemeanour perpetrated by their brother; two Al Jazeera journalists (among other prisoners) had been reprieved and released in Egypt; Shakir Amar had been released from Guantanamo (and encouragement given to an enquiry as to why 100 folk are still imprisoned in Guantanamo without charge); the European Parliament voted '630 – 30' to close loopholes in Torture Equipment Trade; a Vietnamese Blogger had been released (although now exiled); Thailand had released two journalists, imprisoned after they had reported on trafficking; in the USA, in Oklahoma a 37 day stay of execution had been obtained, in Texas and in Missouri a removal of sentences of death penalty had been achieved for two prisoners; three Ethiopian bloggers had been acquitted of terrorism; in Kenya, 3,000 residents of the 'Deep Sea Settlement' had been given a 'stay of eviction'; in West Papua, Filep Karma had been released from prison after serving ten years of a fifteen year sentence for raising his indigenous flag.

6.0 Campaigns likely in 2016:

Carol had asked Emma Hart, AIUK South Midlands Regional Rep, for guidance as to AIUK's main thrusts for the year – these seem to be 'People on the Move' (re-refugees), 'My Body, My Rights', and Anti-Death Penalty. (Note - More campaigning info has now arrived, and has been circulated via a link to the group 'Year Planning Pack'.)

7.0 Stop Torture:

A 5 minute Amnesty International video clip 'Stop Torture' was shown, and discussed.

8.0 Future Events:

- 8.1 South Midlands Regional Conference – this next Saturday, 30th January at the Royal Latin School, Buckingham, the theme being LGBTI Rights; Bob, Carol and David will attend – Bob will send the link around again if anyone else would like to book.
- 8.2 AIUK National Conference and AGM – 9th and 10th April, at Nottingham University; attendance is free, although accommodation will be charged for; booking is now open on line, through the AIUK website.
- 8.3 Elections for the AIUK Board to be held shortly – again, through the AIUK website.
- 8.4 Johnny mentioned the possibility of setting up a stall in Aylesbury – the meeting offered full support.
- 8.5 Johnny suggested that he might be able to form a link with an Israeli Amnesty Group – so that we could exchange support and information; again, the meeting offered full support.

9.0 Any Other Business:

There was no other business.

10.0 **NEXT MEETING: 24th February 2016** at 7.30pm, Friends Meeting House, 9 Rickfords Hill, Aylesbury, HP20 2RT – Note that Graham Minter, the AIUK Country Coordinator for South America, will be delivering a presentation.

Bob Corn, Minutes Secretary,
16th February 2016