



Aylesbury Amnesty International Group

Meeting 30th October 2013 7.30pm

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

Present:

Carol Tarrant
Bob Corn
Frances Booth
Jim Edwards

Henry Mayer-Gross
Annelies Varsey
Katherine Danflous
Bridgitte Glanville

Apologies: Bronwen Lee, Gwyn Jenkins, Jim Cobley, David Barnard, Olly Palmer

Carol welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1.0 **Previous Minutes** – Agreed (prepared by Jim Edwards in Bob's absence); Annelies gave Jetty Sabander's email address to Carol – Jetty is a German activist with an interest in West Papua.

2.0 Monthly Action:

- 2.1 Carol introduced the Monthly Action – Zimbabwe Solidarity with Human Rights Defenders – and Campaign Action on Company Reporting and Transparency.
- 2.2 Zimbabwe – a poster is to be prepared by 10th December – Bob to send out the information electronically to all, although he handed out three 'hard' copies of the proposed action. Everyone to consider and send their views by email back to Carol, so that we can produce a 15minute poster at the end of the November Meeting.
- 2.3 Campaign Action on Company Reporting and Transparency – AIUK is asking us to write to MEP's by 29th November 2013 on the issue; again, Bob to send out the information electronically to the Group.

3.0 Zimbabwe:

- 3.1 This topic had been planned as a talk to the Group by the AIUK Country Coordinator, who unfortunately was unable to make this meeting. In the event, Bob had downloaded a half-hour Aljazeera News Video Report 'Zimbabwe: the Dawn of a New Era', which had been broadcast immediately before the recent General Election in Zimbabwe. A lively discussion took place at the end of the video showing.

4.0 Nelson Mandela:

- 4.1 Brigitte noted that her son Justin Chadwick has been instrumental (as Director) in the making of a new film on the life of Nelson Mandela – due to be shown at the Aylesbury Cinema on 3rd January 2014.

5.0 Johan Teterissa:

Bob gave a brief update on the current AIUK position on Johan Teterissa – whose case, contrary to the AIUK website currently showing 'Case Closed', is very much an on-going campaign. The AIUK Country Coordinator for Indonesia – Paul Hainsworth – has launched a new 'blog' to support the case – Bob to send information around. Rest assured – Johan's case is not closed – moreover, his is one of three cases being displayed by AIUK on the London Tube: we continue to campaign!

6.0 AIUK Update:

- 6.1 Bob reported that he had recently had a lengthy telephone conversation with Kate Allen, Director of AIUK, wherein he had spoken of the two cases (Filep Karma and Johan Teterissa) which were shown as 'Case Closed' on AIUK's web-site, when in fact they are both very much on-going, also Bob mentioned the type of campaigning

which we are being asked to pursue – was it always entirely appropriate? – Kate is to investigate and report back.

- 6.2 During the telephone call with Kate Allen (item 6.1), Bob was advised that the BBC Panorama programme is currently investigating the finances of various NGO's – AIUK is in the frame, with others such as Save the Children, Comic Relief, etc. Evidently the focus on Amnesty is specifically the payments made to Irene Kahn and her assistant (why that level of pay-off after unsatisfactory performance?), also the Secret Policeman's Ball – was it a 'loss making fundraiser' or was it a costly 'awareness event'? Not sure when (or even if) the programme will be aired, but anticipate negative publicity if it is broadcast.
- 6.3 Carol has been having lengthy correspondence with Peter Pack re-AIUK's lack of Indonesia campaign work, for which she will send a link around to the Group. Also she has had a report from Sarah O'Grady, AIUK Vice-Chair re-the ICM Meeting which had taken place during the summer.
- 6.4 South Midlands Regional Conference will be held on 18th January 2014 at a Community Centre in West Oxford – hosted by Oxford City Group; Bob is to visit Oxford on 15th November to visit the location with Oxford City Group members to establish facilities available, location, etc. He will report back to the next meeting.
- 6.5 Katherine reported a panel discussion she had attended in London which focused on the Human Rights position in Russia.

7.0 DRC:

Fran gave a brief update on matters in the DRC, and on her exchanges with AIUK on the issues of her work with the DRC Embassy and lack of (or even negative) support for her setting up of a meeting with the Embassy – also her relationship with the DRC Country Coordinator. Fran has started an on-line petition with Avaaz. Disturbingly, she has learnt that UN soldiers have been involved in sex trafficking in the DRC – she and Carol will circulate relevant links. Finally – and successfully – Samsung have confirmed that they are improving their Coltan sourcing policies.

8.0 West Papua:

Carol reported on the very well attended and interesting 'Evening without Filep Karma' hosted by Reading Group on 18th October – speakers were Benny Wenda, Peter Tatchell, Melinda Janki – and an audience member from the Indonesian Embassy! Video clips of Filep's daughter sending a message to the Reading event – and another of Benny Wenda being interviewed in a London Taxi – were shown. Bob had reference to a further video clip of Benny Wenda 'in conversation' with Human Rights Lawyer Jennifer Robinson at the Sydney Opera House – Bob will circulate this to the Group.

There was no other business.

- 9.0 **NEXT MEETING: 27th November 2013** at 7.30pm, Friends Meeting House, 9 Rickfords Hill, Aylesbury HP20 2RT – **Note** that the meeting will principally concentrate on the 'Write for Rights' Campaign – Carol and Annelies will discuss by telephone/email in preparation for the evening.