



Aylesbury Amnesty International Group

Group Meeting 31st October 2012 7.30pm

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

Present Carol Tarrant
Bob Corn
Jim Cobley
David Barnard

Jim Edwards
Annelies Varsey
Frances Booth
Gwyn Jenkins

Apologies: Bronwen Lee, Hugh Cousins, Katherine Danflous, Grace Perrett

Carol welcomed everyone to the meeting – she spoke briefly of the impressive demonstration in Whitehall, London earlier in the day – which she, David, Katherine, Grace, Bob and Jean Wyatt had attended with the almost 100 strong contingent; Amnesty International had joined with other NGO's (Tapol, Survival International, Down to Earth, etc.) in forming a protest against the Human Rights record of Indonesia, as the Indonesian President was visiting Downing Street during his three day state visit to the UK.

1.0 Previous Minutes – Approved.

2.0 Johan Teterissa:

Jim Cobley reported that he previously written two letters before taking up the case, and was now in discussion with Indonesia Country Coordinator Paul Hainsworth, and had written to David Lidington MP, asking him to ask the Foreign Secretary to take the case up with the Indonesian President during his visit. Jim is unclear as to which gaol Johan is currently incarcerated in (as he has been moved recently), the meeting suggesting that he write to Champa Patel, Head of Activism, AIUK, to Laura Haigh, officer at the International Secretariat, AI who is part of the team dealing with Indonesia, to Grace Perrett who is currently volunteering at AIUK, and to Andy Gray – a campaigner for Maluku.

3.0 Death Penalty:

David reported that he had written a letter of behalf of two individuals on Death Row in Nigeria – in EDO State – asking for the abolition of the Death Penalty; the Group signed David's letter. Also, David had heard of the last minute reprieve for Anthony Haynes in the USA State of Texas.

4.0 Filep Karma

Annelies reported that she had received an interim reply from David Lidington MP re-her letter to him, in support of Filep Karma's release, and referring to the Indonesian President's visit; David Lidington had himself written to Hugo Swire, MP, at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office seeking clarification.

5.0 Rwanda and the DRC:

Fran reported that she had received a phone call from John Bercow, Speaker of the House, and had been in touch with Theo Bruttruche of AIUK, re-military aid in Rwanda; she gave an outline of her activism re-Rwanda and the DRC, and tabled several letters to Companies and Governments who deal in the areas – the Group signed them, Bob to post.

6.0 Write for Rights Campaign:

The group discussed the letter writing issue and decided it was the activity that most held dear to their Amnesty campaigning. Annelies said she had not yet received any materials for this coming activity. Carol opened an envelope which had arrived that morning before the demo and found one poster and one catalogue of selected recipients for letters, which she passed to Annelies. Bob to send the same to Bronwen when he receives them himself. Carol to arrange an Order Form link for materials for Annelies and Bronwen to head up the Greetings Card Campaign which seems now to form part of this 'Write for Rights' Campaign – it will run through November and December – link <http://www.amnesty.org.uk/content.asp?CategoryID=10673> for information. This links infers

that many will write online, and that those who need hard copy campaigning materials may download and print them themselves at home or order them in through this link. The meeting discussed how we would like to action this all important letter writing aspect of our activism. We saw no reason why Bronwen should not continue to have her Greetings Card stall in January, as a further action to complement the November meeting during which we plan to write letters to whichever prisoners we have to hand, or especially bring to the meeting.

7.0 Indonesian President visit demo:

The Group discussed the protest demonstration which had been held during the day in Whitehall, London – Carol voicing outrage at the British Government providing support for this President and his Government who perpetrate such severe Human Rights abuses upon the people of West Papua, Aceh and Maluku – and indeed had so seriously abused the people of East Timor before they finally achieved independence from Indonesia. Amnesty had taken part in the demonstration from 1.00pm until 2.30pm with other NGO's as noted above – a good number of individuals carrying on later in the day and on following days outside Westminster Abbey, the Guildhall banquet.

Photographs and some video footage had been taken of the demonstration – which were shown briefly to the Group – and it was noted that little UK publicity and news coverage had been given to the Indonesian President's visit, despite the fact that he apparently is to be given an honorary knighthood, he is staying at Buckingham Palace during his visit, and he is to be feted at Westminster Abbey, at the Guildhall, and generally celebrated as a 'friend' of the British Government.

(After the meeting Carol discovered a lot of international coverage of the visit, and of the protest demonstration – she has circulated links to this media coverage to the Group.)

8.0 Open discussion on groups' amnesty actions. Members were encouraged to describe what the core Amnesty activism they most valued was, and members described the direction they hope to be most active in pursuing. Some members after discussing the latest restructuring news from HQ, articulated a 'disconnect' with head-office and their disappointment in some of the aspects of their membership that have been affected by this 'disconnection'. Jim Edwards offered to draft a letter to Head Office for us all to sign, to articulate this situation for the whole group.

Next Meeting: 28th November 2012, 7.30pm – Friends Meeting House, 9 Rickfords Hill, Aylesbury HP20 2RT.

Bob Corn, Minutes Secretary, 6th November 2012