

Amnesty International Southend Group

amnestysouthend.googlemail.com
www.amnesty.org.uk/southend



OCTOBER 2015 NEWSLETTER

NEXT GROUP MEETING

Thursday
12th November 7:30pm
The Balmoral Centre
Salisbury Avenue
Westcliff-on-Sea SS0 7AU

WRITE, WRITE, WRITE - or e-mail

Muawiya al-Rawahi is an Omani blogger put on trial in the UAE in September, on charges that include "ridiculing the State and its leaders". He suffers from bipolar disorder and has attempted suicide six times. Further details [HERE](#) – please write before 14th Nov.

Matsumoto Kenji has been under sentence of death in Japan since 1993 and could be executed at any time.

More details [HERE](#).

We had a twitter message from Moscow AI Group telling us that *Yevgeny Vitishko*, a Prisoner of Conscience in Russia, is kept going by the Amnesty cards he receives. Please send him a card – details [HERE](#)



Write for Rights

Make a difference!

Annual Greeting Cards and Letter-writing Campaign

Saturday 12th December 10:00am – 1:00pm

The Balmoral Centre Salisbury Avenue Westcliff-on-Sea SS0 7AU

It only takes a few minutes to write a card or letter – please come along for as much time as you can spare to give support and encouragement to someone whose rights are being abused or write to the authorities on their behalf – it could change somebody's life. Cards, stamps & details of who to write to all provided along with tea/coffee and mince pies – just bring a pen!

If you can't come we'd appreciate a donation to help cover postage costs – last year we sent around 200 cards and letters and airmail is now £1 minimum. Cheques payable to Southend Amnesty Group please, to 36 Orchard Avenue, Hockley SS5 5BE.

Meeting on 8th October 2015 at The Balmoral Centre

*There were 8 of us at the meeting. We wrote appeal letters on behalf of Japanese death penalty case **Matsumoto Kenji** and Oman blogger **Muawiya al-Rawahi** and again sent cards of support to **Yevgeny Vitishko**. If you want to write on any of these you can find details attached or by clicking on the links on the front page.*

Present: Andrew, Richard, Audrey, Doug Claire, Heidrun, Muriel & Mike. Andrew took the chair.

Apologies: Tricia, Martin.

From Last meeting – nothing

Stop Torture Campaign – Andrew has written to two more local schools to arrange exhibitions. Of the people who were featured in the post card campaign:

- Claudia Medina has been cleared and released
- Moses Akatugba has also been released.
- Ali Arrass is on hunger strike.

Amnesty was banned from the London Arms Fair at the Excel Centre in September apparently after a spoof advertising campaign highlighting the illegal torture equipment and other illegal weapons being advertised, including leg irons, gang chains, electric-shock batons and cluster bombs. You can see details of the spoof campaign **HERE**.

Burma – Doug: nothing to report.

Prageeth Eknaligoda (Sri Lanka) – Doug: we are asked to write on anniversaries and the first anniversary event is not till April.

Treasurer – Heidrun: we have £759.16 in the bank - the UK affiliation fee has been paid but we now have to pay for the hire of the meeting room at the Balmoral Centre and have the expense of the Write for Rights Campaign coming up. Thanks to everybody who supported our AmnesTea and Sponsored Walk.

Fundraising – nothing planned for the time being.

Secretary

- We were invited to the local meeting about refugees on the same night as our meeting but have asked to be kept in touch with what results. CAST's "2015 World Film Festival" is showing "Paddington" at St George's URC Crowstone Road, Westcliff-on-Sea SS0 8LH on 26th October at 2:00pm
- Regional Conference 31st October Cambridge – more details promised shortly
- Chelmsford AI Group "Big Brother and Human Rights" this Saturday 24th October, Friends' Meeting House, 82 Rainsford Road CM1 2QL – talk by Dr Guaragh Murray Director of Essex University's Human Rights Centre. Followed by AmnesTea.
- AI and others have reported that Shaker Aamer's release from Guantanamo Bay is now imminent
- AI UK is holding a **FREE on-line** Human Rights Course on Freedom of Expression 17th November to 8th December. You can register and take part at <https://www.edx.org/course/human-rights-right-freedom-expression-amnesty-internationalx-rights1x>.

AOB – Write for Rights: Mike will order material for this event, which is on 12th December, and will arrange publicity via AI UK to individual members in the Southend area. Please get the attached poster stuck up somewhere!

Next Meeting: 12th November, 7:30pm at The Balmoral Centre, Salisbury Avenue, Westcliff-on-Sea SS0 7AU.

Mike Pregnall

01702 204748