

# Amnesty International Southend Group

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[www.amnesty.org.uk/southend](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/southend)



## January 2016 Newsletter

### **A Belated “Happy New Year”**

Thanks for your support over the past year and hope to see you at one of our meetings in 2016.

Our next meeting is Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> February at 7:30pm  
at The Balmoral Centre, Salisbury Avenue,  
Westcliff-on-Sea SS0 7AU

### **Letters and Petitions**

Phyoe Phyoe Aung, Burma (Myanmar) is a young student activist imprisoned following a peaceful protest. Please write to her and to the president of Myanmar on her behalf. More details and addresses on the [Group website](#)

Burkina Faso has one of the lowest rates of contraceptive use among women in the world. It also has one of the highest maternal mortality rates. By the age of 19, most girls are married and nearly half of them are mothers. Women are discriminated against and denied their rights. They are too often prevented from making decisions about their bodies, and their sexual and reproductive lives. More details and a sample letter on the Group website - write to the President on behalf of women's right in Burkina Faso or sign the [on-line petition](#).

Saudi Arabia – Saudi Arabia has one of the worst human rights records in the world - torture, public execution, discrimination, intolerance for free speech, possible war crimes in Yemen. Dozens of activists remain behind bars in the Gulf Kingdom, simply for exercising their right to freedom of expression and assembly. In particular, this month please write to the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary about arms sales (we're supplying the Saudis), e-mail or write to the Saudi Ambassador about Raif Badawi, who is still at risk of flogging, and sign the on-line petition on behalf of Ashraf, a 35-year-old poet and artist, who is sentenced to be executed by Saudi Arabian authorities for his art. Details of these actions with address and links can be found on the [Group website](#) and there's more on the [AI UK website](#)

# Amnesty International Southend Group

## Notes of meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2016

**Present:** Heidrun, Andrew, Doug, Steve, Mike and Muriel(Chair).

**Apologies:** Tricia, Audrey and Maureen.

**Richard Wiggins** – we had all been shocked and saddened at the news of Richard's death following an illness. He had been a loyal supporter of Amnesty and this Group for many years and we will miss his contributions. It was good to see his brother David at the WfR event in December and share our memories of him. Richard's funeral is on 22nd January at 2.40pm in the west chapel, Southend Crematorium. David would welcome representatives from the Group.

**Anything from the last meeting:** The last meeting had been the Write for Rights event on 12<sup>th</sup> December which was felt to have been a success – there were 22 people there; 161 cards and letters were written and 14 e-mails were sent off as well as 5 printed cards on behalf of Waleed Abu al-Khair. Every case in Amnesty's Write for Rights leaflet got a card or letter sent to them and on their behalf. Thank you to everybody who came or who made a donation toward our postage costs. This year, thanks to donations, we covered our costs

### **Letters and Petitions:-**

#### **Stop Torture Campaign -**

Andrew had set up another school exhibition, this one at The Deans School in Thundersley. With cards from the schools exhibitions and other events we have accumulated about 400 signed "Stop Torture" cards. Cards are now only available for signing on behalf of the highlighted cases – Moses Akatugba has been pardoned and released and Claudia Tamariz has been cleared and released; work on Diloram has been suspended. We are still asked to write on behalf of Raif Badawi, Ali Aarrass and Mahdi Abu Deeb.

**Burma** - Nothing to report.

**Sri-Lanka** - Nothing to report. We wrote on behalf of Phyo Phyo Aung and sent her cards (see front page of Newsletter).

**AI UK Monthly Action** – we wrote letters on behalf of women's' rights in Burkina Faso (see front page of Newsletter)

**Saudi Arabia** – we had hoped to write to the Prime Minister about arms sales to Saudi Arabia, write to the Embassy about Raif Badawi and sign an on-line petition on behalf of Ashraf, a poet under sentence of death, but ran out of time – details are on the front page of the Newsletter

**Secretary** – Nothing from AI UK. Following Richard Wiggins' death we need to change the signatories on the Group's bank account; Heidrun and Andrew agreed to be signatories. We passed a resolution for the purposes of Section 2 of the Co-op "Change of Account Signatories" mandate. Mike will complete the mandate and obtain the necessary signatures.

**Treasurer** - Group funds stand at £834.16 although we have the Secretary's 2015 expenses and the hire of the Centre till May to pay. Heidrun has completed the accounts and passed them to Steve for auditing; Mike will get copies of the bank statements off the Co-op website. We agreed to send £120 to AI UK.

**Radio Essex** – Tricia made an appearance on Radio Essex on Wednesday afternoon and gave the Group and Amnesty a good plu. Thanks Tricia

**Fundraising** - Various suggestions discussed. Andrew will follow up the idea of a "Jamnesty" open mic night in a local pub. Mike and Mu will try to organise some performers later in the year and if that fails we'll look at a restaurant meal at e.g. East or The Shagor on hamlet Court Road. They will also look at the possibility of a sponsored bike ride

**Any Other Business** - None

**Next Meeting:** - at the Balmoral Centre on the 11<sup>th</sup> February at 7:30pm.

*Mike Pregnall*

Group Secretary  
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