

Amnesty International Southend Group

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



February 2016 Newsletter

Next Meeting

Our next meeting is
Thursday 10th March
at 7:30pm
at The Balmoral Centre,
Salisbury Avenue,
Westcliff-on-Sea SS0 7AU

AI UK

Annual Conference & AGM
9th – 10th April 2016
The East Midlands
Conference Centre,
Nottingham
More details [HERE](#). Early
booking recommended –
this is a popular event.

Actions

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. Please:

- write to the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary about arms sales (we're supplying the Saudis)
- write to the Saudi Ambassador about Raif Badawi, who is still at risk of flogging,
- sign the on-line petition and write to King Abdullah 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 about [Raif](#), [Ashraf](#) and about [Saudi Arabia](#)

The Unity Five – Journalists in Burma

Lu Maw Naing, Yarzar Oo, Paing Thet Kyaw, Sithu Soe – reporters for the Unity newspaper – and Tint San, its chief executive officer have been sentenced to seven years imprisonment for 'disclosing state secrets'. They are prisoners of conscience, held for their legitimate work as journalists. Please call for their immediate and unconditional release and urge the authorities to ensure that they are not tortured or otherwise ill-treated and that prison conditions and their treatment meet international standards. More details, addresses, etc [HERE](#)

Amnesty International Southend Group

Notes of meeting on 11th February, 2016

Present: Andrew (Chair), Steve, Rachel, David, Muriel and Mike.

Apologies: Tricia, Heidrun and Maureen.

Anything from the last meeting: Nothing

Letters and Petitions:-

Stop Torture Campaign -

Andrew reported on the latest position on this campaign – as a Group we've had about 400 postcards signed and arranged exhibitions at both Southend High School for Boys, and Deanes School (99 cards in total from the latter two events). Andrew's current report on the Campaign, national and International, is on the Group website and attached to this Newsletter. Thanks to Andrew for all his work on this Campaign.

Burma - Nothing to report.

Sri- Lanka - Nothing to report.

AI UK Monthly Action – the principal action was a letter to the press about the sale of arms to Saudi Arabia and particularly the impact those sales were having in the Yemen. Tricia has already written to The Echo; Mike will ask her to also write to The Leigh Times and the Yellow Advertiser. We also wrote to David Cameron and Philip Hammond on this issue.

Saudi Arabia – we wrote to the Saudi Ambassador on behalf of Raif Badawi and to King Abdullah on behalf of Ashraf, a poet under sentence of death – details of these actions are on the front page of the Newsletter and on the website, along with a link to an on-line petition on behalf of Ashfar.

Secretary

- With holidays and other problems we still haven't completed the change of signatories on the Group's bank account but that is in progress! We are also struggling to get on-line access to the account but that will continue to be pursued. David Wiggins has received a letter from Santander concerning our former Alliance & Leicester account that Mike will follow this up.
- AI UK AGM and National Conference 10th April 2016 at The East Midlands Conference Centre, Nottingham. More details [HERE](#). **If you're interested in going please let me know.**
- We've had a request for speakers to present five, fifteen minute assemblies at Cornelius Vermuyden School on Canvey, 7th -11th March. Andrew and Audrey are helping but **anybody else who can spare the time please contact me.**
- We discussed the 2016 Planning Pack and decided we didn't want any change to our current commitments except that we would like to have another IaR as our current case is inactive.

Treasurer - Group funds stood at £572.20 at the day of the meeting and we have also received a donation of £50. Steve has the accounts for auditing but is unable to make progress because we can't access statements on line! £120 has been sent to AI UK as agreed.

Fundraising – No further discussion

Any Other Business – Richard Wiggins' Human Rights Books. Richard's brother David has a wide range of books and brochures on politics and human rights for which he'd like to find a good home. Two lists are attached – if there is anything on either or both of them that you're interested in, please contact David at davidjwiggins2@hotmail.co.uk.

Next Meeting: - at the Balmoral Centre on the 10th March at 7:30pm. We are going to focus on the individuals featured in the Stop Torture Campaign who have not yet been released.

Mike Pregnall

Group Secretary
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