

# Amnesty International Southend Group

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



## March 2016 Newsletter

### AI UK

#### Annual Conference & AGM

9<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> April 2016

The East Midlands  
Conference Centre,  
Nottingham

More details [HERE](#). You  
need to book soon if you  
want to go!

### Next Meeting

Our next meeting is  
Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> April  
at 7:30pm

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

Martin and Andrew (and Mike and David?) are going to the Preview Club on  
Friday 18<sup>th</sup> March at 8:30pm – join us if you can.

Preview is at the rear of the Royal Naval Association Club 73-79 East Street,  
Prittlewell, SS2 6LQ, half way between Victoria Ave & Prittlewell Station

## Actions

### STOP TORTURE CAMPAIGN

**Alfreda Disbarro** - On 3 October 2013 police in the Philippines accused this 32-year-old mother of two of being a drug dealer. At police HQ she was pinned against a wall, repeatedly punched in the face and stomach, hit with a club, poked with fingers in her eyes, slapped, had a mop forced into her mouth, her head banged against a wall and then beaten with a wooden stick and a metal bar. [Please write to the authorities on her behalf and send her a card](#)

**Ali Aarrass** - It has been five years since Spain forcibly returned Ali Aarrass, a Belgian-Moroccan national, to Morocco, breaching its international human rights obligations. Upon his arrival in Morocco, Ali Aarrass said he was held incommunicado and tortured for 12 days in a secret detention centre in Témara. He is now serving a 12-year prison term for participating in and procuring arms for a criminal group after an unfair trial, based on a 'confession' obtained under torture. Please [write to the authorities on his behalf and send him a card](#)

### SYRIA

Please write to your MP to get him or her to press the Foreign Secretary to ensure that human rights are kept to the fore at the talks about the future of Syria. [More details here.](#)

# Amnesty International Southend Group

## Notes of meeting on 10th March, 2016

**Present:** Andrew, Steve, Doug, Martin, David and Mike (Chair).

**Apologies:** Tricia, Heidrun, Muriel and Maureen.

**Anything from the last meeting:** Nothing

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

**Stop Torture Campaign** – Nothing new. This campaign formally ends in May.

Andrew described the display and assemblies we'd given this week at Cornelius Vermuyden School on Canvey – 5 assemblies in front of 180 pupils each day, told them about Human Rights, Amnesty, Free Speech and Stop Torture. As the Campaign is drawing to a close we spent most of the evening writing card and letters to or on behalf of Ali AArrass and Alfreda Disbarro.

**Burma** - Nothing to report.

**Prageeth Eknaligoda, Sri- Lanka** - Nothing to report – Doug pointed out that one of Prageeth's "significant anniversaries" occurs next month so we may actually have some writing to do on his behalf.

**AI UK Monthly Action** – AI UK want us to write to our MPs to get them to press the Foreign Secretary to ensure that human rights are kept to the fore at the talks about the future of Syria.

[Details here.](#)

### **Secretary**

- Still haven't completed the change of signatories on the Group's bank account but nearly there! Also, still not managed to get on-line access to the account (*subsequently that has been achieved and Steve now has all the statements he needs to complete the audit of the Group's accounts*)
- AI UK AGM and National Conference 10<sup>th</sup> April 2016 at The East Midlands Conference Centre, Nottingham. More details [HERE](#). **If you're interested in going please let me know.**
- We've received voting papers for the AGM – we can vote on line or at the AGM, though it seems unlikely that anybody from the Group will be going this year. There has been some confusion over on-line voting with some Groups getting multiple e-mails and lack of clarity as to whether votes are individual's or Group's.

**Treasurer** - Group funds currently stand at £572.20

**Fundraising** – Martin and Andrew are following up the idea of a "Jammnesty" by going to the Preview Club Friday 18<sup>th</sup> March.

### **Any Other Business**

- Steve and Muriel had received replies from the Foreign Office in response to the letters about sales of arms to Syrian and their use in Yemen. Indecipherable signature, anodyne content!
- *I forgot to mention that we'd had our first booking for a talk in 2017! Hockley Townswomen's Guild wants to hear about Amnesty at its meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2017.*

**Next Meeting:** - at the Balmoral Centre on the 14<sup>th</sup> April at 7:30pm. We are going to focus again on the individuals featured in the Stop Torture Campaign who have not yet been released.

*Mike Pregnall*

Group Secretary  
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