AI Reading Meeting - Thursday 11th October 2012, 8pm, RISC

**Cuba Co-ordinator for AI:UK**, Sue Bingham gives the group an up-date on current situation in CUBA.

* March 2012 – new report from Amnesty, which Sue has used to create new actions
* Key issue - Freedom of movement very restricted which isn’t widely understood
* Many urgent actions for HR activists in Cuba
* Ladies in White – members of this group held in detention without charge
* Free as a bird? Campaign on freedom of expression and movement. Over 400 birds were created and will be sent to HR activists and their families in Cuba. Many groups got involved and used summer events to get the campaign out to a wider audience.
* Sue’s visit to Miami – Sue stayed with Pablo Pacheco Avila, a journalist and former PoC in Cuba, who the group campaigned for. Pablo accepted exile in Spain, along with 6 others who were also offered the same exile deal. Some prisoners decided not to take the exile deal and remained in prison. They have been released now, but are at constant risk of being re-arrested. Pablo moved to Miami, where he is able to work and is very happy to be free and be with his family. He is full of gratitude to Amnesty members who campaigned for his freedom.
* Sue read from her blog which you can find attached to our Autumn newsletter - a brilliant read.
* Sue attended a conference about HR in Cuba and was able to ask how should Amnesty adapt its campaigns to be as effective as possible?
* Pablo was keen for us to keep denouncing the methods used against opponents of the regime.
* Exiles who remain in Spain are suffering real problems, no longer receiving benefits or allowed to work. One man has recently committed suicide.
* Cubans who arrive in USA can claim legal immigration status.
* Action attached from Sue to Autumn newsletter

**Campaign updates**

* Demand dignity – update was received. A new community is being supported, a settlement in Nairobi, Kenya called Mukuru Kwa Njenga. Similar problems are being faced by this community to others we’ve supported in recent years, sudden unexpected evictions. A 7 year old boy was crushed to death by bulldozers, a women was electrocuted by a live electric cable. Petition was handed round asking the Prime Minister of Kenya to put a moratorium on forced evictions.
* FSU – *Action attached to newsletter* for 2 women from Pussy Riot who have been sentenced in Russia.
* Our group’s PoC, Filep Karma from West Papua – had received medical treatment now, which was paid for by donations from supporters. Wednesday 31st October 1-2.30pm a protest in Richmond Terrace, London during visit from President of Indonesia visits London. Petition was circulated asking for President to improve Human Rights in Indonesia. Sean asked us to email Champa Patel to ask what Amnesty can do to help us with our protest on 31/10/12. champa.patel@amnesty.org.uk
* North Africa – Egypt - an urgent action was passed around a man who was imprisoned and tortured, he was charged for contempt of religion. This was supposedly about the film which was criticising the prophet Mohammed. Link also on our facebook page.
* Death Penalty – mixed news from the US. Japan – longest serving man in the world Hakamada Iwao - case could go to re-trial as his lawyers have new DNA evidence
* South East Asia – updates from Thailand and Viet nam and an action from Laos

**Past and Future events**

* Sponsored Walk took place in September and funds are being collected – total to follow
* Alex reminded the group about the group’s big event next week – **Kate Allen, AI:UK’s director comes to Reading to speak about HR. Thursday 18TH OCTOBER at 8pm**. Friends Meeting House, Reading. Helen Ball to send out a reminder to all members via newsletter/facebook/twitter.
* Chantry House classical music concert, Henley on Thames – Friday 30th November
* Saturday 4th Jan 2013 - Waitrose Caversham street collection
* Anne’s Kilimanjaro climb starts on Saturday , so visit Anne’s just giving page – all donations to Amnesty and will go through the group’s accounts
* NEXT MEETING - Thursday 8th November 8pm, RISC

Minutes taken by Helen Ball