**Minutes of Solihull AI group on 16th September 2013**

**Present:** Bernard, Pauline, David, Janet, Phil, Cathy, Ruth, Celia, Maurice, Andrew, Aisha

Welcome to Aysha who joined us for the first time and to Jenny Dixon’s mother.

**Speaker:** Jenny Dixon ,country coordinator for Syria.

Jenny showed us a video re Syria which gave us a vivid picture of the human cost of the conflict. She explained that the current situation began as a peaceful uprising 2 years ago. Amnesty stood behind this uprising and had communication with the non-violence movement.

The current situation is that out of a population of 20 million : 100,000 have been killed; 2 million are refugees; 5 million are internally displaced. There is now a sectarian civil war with possibly 1000 different factions in opposition. There is impact on neighbouring countries eg a destabilisation of Jordan who is unable to manage the amount of refugees coming into the country.

AI does not take sides but continues to challenge the human rights abuses at every level.

Jenny suggested a YouTube video: “Syria through a lens”

AI’s next campaign at the end of the month will be aimed at the Government via Theresa May ,requesting that we take more refugees.

AI UK are training the non-violent movement members in Human Rights Law etc.

**10 min talk:** David talked about the Times Leader: “Lessons of defeat” which was pro taking action in response to the use of chemical weapons in Syria .

**Business:**

* Greeting card campaign – the stall is booked outside Sainsbury’s for 10 Dec 2013

10am- 4pm. Discussion re including Syria and maybe a petition type letter that people could be asked to sign.

* Fundraising – Amnesty coffee morning at Paulines on 26th November 2013 am.
* Street collection – Bernard to make application for period 24th Feb – 11th April.
* Amnesty catalogue – group order to get reduction – orders to Pauline by November.
* **Monthly Action** – Azerbaijan

**ACTION:** Members to follow up and download outline of action **or** Pauline will provide printed version if required.

* **Prisoners of conscience**

Johan Teterissa – Celia reported that online says the case is closed. This a sudden posting with no explanation as to why. Celia to follow up with Paul Hainsworth.

Syria – Phil to gain further info from Jenny Dixon, check the Twitter site and report back to next meeting.

* Asylum seekers action. Will has resigned as regional rep but remaining involved with asylum seekers group **ACTION:** Pauline to follow up.

**Next Month’s meeting** – 21st October 2013 - Activity re Syria. David suggested working on a letter re Syria that could be used for the campaign on 10th Dec.

Cathy Harris 20-09-13