



ANTI-TRAFFICKING MEASURES 'NOT FIT FOR PURPOSE' NEW CALL FOR INQUIRY INTO FINUCANE KILLING CHILD ABUSE VICTIMS DEMAND JUSTICE

AMNESTY NORTHERN IRELAND NEWS

SPRING 2011

2011 – A VOTE FOR JUSTICE

IN THE run-up to the 2011 Northern Ireland Assembly election on 5 May, Amnesty International is asking candidates to pledge their support for victims of injustice at home and abroad.

Political candidates are being asked to have their photograph taken with an Amnesty 'I Vote for Justice' placard to demonstrate their support for justice on four key issues during the next Assembly – institutional child abuse, trafficking, developing countries and international relations – and ensure that:

- An effective, independent inquiry into allegations of child abuse, carried out over decades in children's homes and other institutions in Northern Ireland, takes place.
- The NI Executive fully meets its obligations under the European Convention Against Trafficking. While the current Assembly has voted to make Northern Ireland a 'hostile place' for people traffickers, there are still

inadequate arrangements in place for victims of trafficking in Northern Ireland and no successful prosecutions for offences.

- The Millennium Development Goals are met, to reduce poverty and improve healthcare around the world, and the international development strategy drawn up by the All Party Group is implemented.
- A strategy governing international relations which incorporates a commitment to human rights is put in place. Maintaining contact with representatives from overseas governments attracts inward investment but it should also improve human rights abroad.

■ GET INVOLVED

Ask your parliamentary candidates to have their photo taken to be used on our campaign website and in local media work. To find out how to contact your candidates and for more information on the campaign, go to www.amnesty.org.uk/ni



UN EXPERT URGES LOCAL ACTION ON INTERNATIONAL POVERTY

AT AN EVENT focusing on Amnesty's poverty and human rights campaign, the UN's top expert on health has told politicians in Stormont that Northern Ireland can be part of the solution to global poverty.

Anand Grover, UN Special

Rapporteur on Health, was at Parliament Buildings in September to talk to Ministers, MLAs and campaigners in the run-up to the crucial UN summit reviewing progress on the goals in New York.

Speaking at a meeting with the First and Deputy First Ministers, he addressed the links between global poverty and poor health. He explained that through a combination of political support and action by local international development charities, Northern Ireland can help achieve the Millennium Development Goals to

slash poverty, hunger, disease and maternal and child deaths by 2015.

The All Party Group on International development has since adopted a strategy, partly developed by Amnesty International and local aid agencies, which would see the Assembly and Executive play an active role in meeting the MDGs. It is hoped that the NI Executive will take forward the recommendations in 2011 and beyond.

■ **FIND OUT MORE**
www.amnesty.org.uk/dignity



L to R: Anand Grover, Karen Gallagher, Coalition of Aid and Development Agencies, Shirley Stronge, midwifery teaching fellow Queen's University Belfast, Shona Hamilton, Royal College of Midwives, Conall McDevitt, All Party Group on International Development, Grainne Teggart, Amnesty International

Wrong kind of victim – report



Mary Robinson will address Amnesty's AGM on 6 May in Belfast

MARY ROBINSON MARKS 50 YEARS OF CAMPAIGNING

Mary Robinson, former president of the Republic of Ireland and former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, will help Amnesty International mark 50 years of campaigning for human rights.

She will be a guest speaker at the Amnesty International UK National Conference and AGM, to be held on 6-8 May at Queen's University, Belfast.

Also addressing the event, which is expected to attract some 500 delegates from across the UK, will be the new Secretary General of Amnesty International, Salil Shetty, who will be laying out his vision for the future of the movement.

All local members of Amnesty are entitled to attend and are encouraged to do so.

FIND OUT MORE
www.amnesty.org.uk/agm



**CELEBRATING
AMNESTY
AT 50**



AMNESTY in conjunction with the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) has launched a new report by the Anti-Trafficking Monitoring Group on the extent of human trafficking in Northern Ireland.

The report, *Wrong Kind of Victim? One Year On*, is the first major study of the government's anti-trafficking measures since they were launched 14 months ago. It found measures are generally 'not fit for purpose' and breach international law. It also made specific recommendations as to how Northern Ireland politicians can improve protection of and services for victims of trafficking.

The Northern Ireland section of this report was launched at a well-

attended event in Belfast featuring contributions from MLAs, Dr Tom Obakata of Queen's University Belfast, trade unionists, Women's Aid, which provides dedicated services to women identified as victims of trafficking, and Amnesty.

The Anti-Trafficking Monitoring Group, a coalition of nine human rights organisations, compiled the report using information from public sources, conducting 90 interviews with professionals engaged in anti-trafficking work, including 11 in Northern Ireland, and by reviewing 390 individual cases. The information was obtained between September 2009 and April 2010.

Amnesty is calling for more action

to support the victims of trafficking by the UK and NI governments.

Amnesty's Patricia Campbell will chair a panel discussion on *Human Trafficking in NI: is the Assembly doing enough?* in St Mary's University College, Falls Road, Belfast at 4.30pm on Thursday 3 February. MLAs Anna Lo and Sue Ramsay will join a Women's Aid representative to try to answer the question. This special Amnesty event is held in partnership with Féile an Earraigh.

READ THE FULL REPORT AND TAKE ACTION
www.amnesty.org.uk/traffickingni

UPDATE **FINUCANE INQUIRY**

NEW CALL FOR PATRICK FINUCANE INQUIRY

AMNESTY has repeated its call for an independent public inquiry into the 1989 killing of Belfast solicitor Patrick Finucane.

US diplomatic cables, obtained by the WikiLeaks website, strengthen the case. They revealed that UK security agency MI5 may hold secret files on the killing and that US diplomats feared that 'elements of the security-legal establishments' in Britain may have been attempting to block an inquiry.

Finucane, a prominent civil rights

and defence lawyer, was shot dead in front of his wife and three children by loyalist gunmen working with the security forces.

Amnesty's UK director, Kate Allen, said: 'The UK government's failure to hold a properly independent inquiry into the killing of a prominent lawyer in this country is outrageous and with each day that passes and each new revelation that comes to light, that failure becomes yet more outrageous.'

'These new revelations show concerns that elements within the UK

security establishment have sought to avoid an inquiry and, further, that MI5 holds important files on the killing that have yet to be disclosed.'

She added: 'Over 20 years on from the murder of Patrick Finucane, the truth about his killing is still being kept from his family and from the public. The UK government should establish an independent public inquiry without any further delay.'

Secretary of State Owen Paterson has said that he will make a decision on an inquiry early in 2011.

AMNESTY WELCOMES STEP FORWARD FOR INQUIRY



Survivors and campaigners take their campaign to Stormont

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL has welcomed the announcement by the Northern Ireland Executive that it will hold an inquiry into historical institutional child abuse in the region.

Patrick Corrigan, Amnesty International's Northern Ireland programme director, said:

'Amnesty International welcomes the announcement from Ministers that the Executive will institute an inquiry into such abuse in Northern Ireland. This is exactly what we have been calling for and comes as welcome news to victims.'

'The many children – now adults – who suffered abuse in institutions here, deserve justice. This is now long overdue. The Executive has an urgent and overriding obligation to conduct a thorough investigation.'

'Amnesty International will now seek to ensure that the inquiry fully meets the needs of victims and the human rights obligations of government.'

The government announcement came in the wake of the largest gathering yet of Northern Ireland victims of institutional child abuse, which took place in Belfast at a conference organised by Amnesty International to press for an independent inquiry.

Present at the gathering were scores of people who report suffering abuse as children in institutions such as Nazareth House in Belfast and Termonbacca children's home in Derry/Londonderry – including a woman now in her eighties. Some spoke movingly about their childhood experiences.

The conference also brought together victims, campaigners, and commissioners from the inquiry and redress processes in the Republic of Ireland and Scotland to share lessons that could be learned in Northern Ireland. Among the speakers were Andrew Madden,

who, in 1995 became the first clerical abuse victim to go public in Ireland, and Bernadette Fahy, who experienced abuse at Goldenbridge orphanage in Dublin and went on to found the Aislinn Centre for survivors of institutional abuse.

Margaret McGuckin, of the Survivors and Victims of Institutional Abuse group, welcomed the conference:

'Justice should be done for the hundreds of victims across Northern Ireland. This means that a proper inquiry must be established and we are grateful to Amnesty International for their support in our campaign. In the past we were ignored and forgotten about – that will not happen again and we will keep the pressure on government until they deliver.'

READ THE CONFERENCE REPORT

www.amnesty.org.uk/childabuse

ACTIVISTS' CONFERENCE CELEBRATES SUU KYI RELEASE



Local Amnesty members attending November's annual Northern Ireland conference in Belfast celebrated the release of Burmese pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

Activists had just finished a panel discussion on human rights in Burma and South East Asia, featuring Caoimhe Hughes of Burma Action Ireland, when news came through of Aung San Suu Kyi's release. She has spent 15 of the last 21 years under house arrest.

While members reflected on the many human rights challenges that still await Burma, programme director Patrick Corrigan hit the phones to local radio stations, recording interviews reacting to the news.

The event, organised by Amnesty regional representative Philip Nye of the Mid-Down group, saw a healthy turnout of members. Amnesty's campaigns against the death penalty and human rights violations linked to poverty were also discussed.

TAKE ACTION

for more than 2,200 political prisoners who remain incarcerated in Burma
www.amnesty.org.uk/burma

Amnesty calls on UK government to lead process to deliver Bill of Rights

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL has called on the UK government to lead a political process to secure agreement on a Northern Ireland Bill of Rights.

The call came in December as the government published the responses received to a public consultation on the Bill of Rights held earlier this year.

Tens of thousands of people responded to the consultation by calling for the government to legislate for a strong Northern Ireland Bill of Rights, which was

first envisioned in the 1998 Belfast / Good Friday Agreement and advanced in the 2006 St Andrew's Agreement. The government has remained non-committal on the Bill and has suggested that the process might be subsumed within the work of a UK Commission, which may be instituted in late 2011.

Patrick Corrigan, Amnesty International's Northern Ireland programme director, said:

'Amnesty International welcomes today's publication of the responses to the government consultation on

the Bill of Rights. The huge response shows an overwhelming call from ordinary people and community groups in favour of new, strong legislation to improve human rights protection in Northern Ireland.

'In terms of the party-political responses, it should be no surprise that there is disagreement among parties in Northern Ireland on this issue, as there has been on many other issues over recent years. The appropriate response from government to such political challenges is not to attempt to

shirk responsibility, but rather it is to show leadership.'

'The UK government should demonstrate its commitment to delivering in full the human rights protections, which were offered by the Belfast / Good Friday Agreement, by developing a political process with the Northern Ireland parties which can deliver on those promises. We also call on the Irish government to play their role in this process in their capacity as co-guarantors of the Belfast / Good Friday Agreement.'

GROUPS NEWS

greetings cards to prisoners of conscience in the town's St Patrick's Centre followed. Local MP Margaret Ritchie launched the group's Greetings Card Campaign by signing a card when she met with representatives of the group at Ballydugan Mill.

'We hope that the release of Aung San Suu Kyi might be the start of better things for the country and its people,' said Philip Nye, chair of the Mid-Down group. 'However, there remain 2,200 other prisoners of conscience in Burma, mainly in degrading conditions.'



Queen's University Belfast student group takes action for the Generation 88 students

ACTION FOR BURMA

The **Queen's University Belfast group** held Raise A Hand for Burma in November, which saw students gather in the university quadrangle for a photo-stunt. They arranged themselves in the shape of 88, to symbolise the campaign for the release of Htay Kywe, Mie Mie and Zaw Htet Ko Ko, members of Burma's 88 Generation Students group.

Sara El Solh, co-president of the group, said: 'The feat was a bit of a coordination challenge, but with the help of our dedicated members and some cooperative passers-by, the results were well worth it.'

Meanwhile, the **Mid-Down Amnesty group** stepped up the pressure for Burma's political prisoners by holding a candle-lit vigil in Downpatrick in November, with a performance by folk choir Voices of Lecale. A session signing

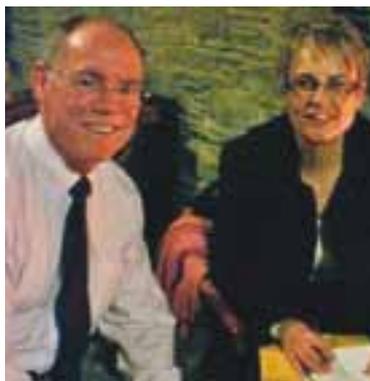
INTRODUCING... MOYLE AMNESTY GROUP

The Moyle Amnesty group has been formed, after a meeting in Ballycastle in September to discuss the matter with other supporters.

The group held their first public event in November with a screening of Oscar-nominated *Burma VJ*, the secretly shot story of Burma's 2007 Saffron Revolution.

If you live in the area and are interested in getting involved, contact David Quinney Mee (see below).

The new Group is planning public screenings of six human rights films over the first three months of 2011. Look for them on Facebook for details.



Greetings Card Campaign gets going in Mid-Down with help of local MP Margaret Ritchie



■ If you would like your group's activities included in the next edition of the Northern Ireland Newsletter, email grainne.teggart@amnesty.org.uk

■ If you would like to join a local group see below

■ If you would like to set up a new group, contact Grainne Teggart at the Belfast Amnesty office.

AMNESTY GROUP CONTACTS

Amnesty International
397 Ormeau Road, Belfast BT7 3GP
Tel 028 9064 3000

REGION	CONTACT PERSON	TELEPHONE	WHEN	WHERE
Belfast	Beatrice Mahoney	028 9045 9553	7.45pm 2nd Monday of the month	Amnesty office, 397 Ormeau Rd
Foyle	Kevin Abbott	07516 070224	1st Wednesday monthly	Wetherspoon Bar, Diamond, upstairs
Mid Down	Pat Ryan	028 4377 0684	8pm, 1st Thursday monthly	Ballydugan Mill
Moyle	David Quinney Mee	028 2076 2959 / 077451 62682	7pm Possibly 3rd Tuesday	Trinity Cottage, the Diamond, Ballycastle
Newry & Mourne	Gerard Bourn	028 3086 0293	8pm, 1st Tuesday monthly	Newry Arts Centre
North Down	Maria Cunningham	028 9127 2648	7.30pm, 1st Thursday of the month	Resource Centre, Bangor
Queen's University	Sara El Solh	07770 357987	3pm every Wednesday term time	Club Room 2 Students Union
University of Ulster Jordanstown	Thomas Redmond	02890 643000	Phone for details	Phone for details
Ulster University Magee	Emma Taylor	07541 644659	Phone for details	Varies – email for details mageeamnesty@hotmail.co.uk