



MANCHESTER AMNESTY GROUP NEWSLETTER

September 2014

<http://manchester.amnesty.org.uk/>

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Volunteers Needed!

Street Collection – Saturday 13th September



We hold our annual Street Collection on Saturday 13th September in Manchester City Centre. This is an important fundraiser for us so we can continue to campaign for human rights worldwide. Campaigns cost money to organise, so every pound we collect really helps.

We are short of collectors this year – **PLEASE spare an hour or two to shake a tin in the City Centre**

Either sign up at the September meeting, or contact the collection organiser, Sean Dunne, by email to sean.a.dunne@btinternet.com. Please let Sean know what times you can be available - we will be starting at 10 a.m. and finishing at 4 p.m.

**The more people we have on the streets, the more money we will collect.
Get volunteering now!**

Pride Parade 2014

We continued our support for Pride and the LGBTI community this year as our fantastic volunteers donned crazy wigs, tutus and feather boas to take part in the Manchester Pride Parade. The theme was 'love is love, no matter who you love' and we reinforced Amnesty's 'Love is a human right' message by highlighting the cases of **Ihar Tsikhanyuk** and **Noxolo Nogwaza**.

Whilst we may not have taken the prize for the most outrageous costumes, we had a fantastic day, the crowds were really supportive and the much maligned Manchester weather did us proud!



See all the pictures at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/manchesteramnesty/sets/72157647030871825/>, including a short video of Laura's twirling!

Campaigning

Stop Torture

At our August meeting, Alice Nicolay, Regional Fundraiser at Freedom From Torture, with two of her colleagues, Hazel Batchelor, Psychological Therapist/Trainer, and Jackson, Chair of the Experts by Experience group, gave us an insight into the plight of torture survivors and the essential help provided by Freedom from Torture.



A few of us will be going down to the Human Rights Action Centre in London at the beginning of October for a 'SkillShare', to give us ideas for our activism around this campaign. We will report back at our October meeting.

If you are keen to help plan activities for this campaign, drop our campaign lead Lianne Slavin, an email (lianne.slavin@gmail.com).

Women's Rights

Women's Rights in Afghanistan: make some noise about attacks on women

We are entering the final, crucial phase of our work in Afghanistan. The presidential elections – marking Afghanistan's first ever democratic transfer of power - took place in April. The forthcoming NATO and London Conferences in the autumn will now finalise if, and how, the International Community will remain involved after troops leave at the end of the year. AIUK have just issued a campaign update with actions for us to get involved in, from putting on a media stunt to writing to our MP. See: <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/resources/groups-activity-pack-september-2014-womens-rights-afghanistan>

If you want to be involved in the sub group working on Women's Rights email Marie-Louise (mlohanrahan@outlook.com)

Myanmar

Conference to define

“What constitutes a Political Prisoner?”

“The definition states that anyone arrested, charged or sentenced for directly or indirectly supporting movements for freedom, justice, equality, or human rights, or for participating in demonstrations or other forms of dissent against the government, would be considered a political prisoner.

“According to the definition that came from the workshop, a political prisoner is anyone who is arrested on political charges or other penal code-based violations, if they were protesting against the Constitution or the government's conduct, including the president and all government officials.”

This definition of a Political Prisoner is the result of a workshop convened in Rangoon by the Former Political Prisoners Society and the Thailand –based Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, and held in Dhamma Peya monastery August 17th – 18th this year.

Tun Kyi, one of the organizers said “ It is necessary to articulate a definition of Political Prisoners as the government of Myanmar is denying that any political prisoners remain behind bars. Aug

Thein the Presidents Office deputy minister maintains that all political prisoners were released by the end of 2013, to fulfil the promise President Thein Sein made in July that year.

But as Amnesty International knows, political motivated arrests are still being made, and prisoners are tried and convicted on alleged criminal charges. This allows the authorities to stifle dissent and to limit freedom. Activists have decried the intimidation, arrest and prosecution of dozens of people this year, ranging from activists and farmers to journalists and politicians. Often they are charged under laws still on the books but considered undemocratic, such as the Peaceful Assembly Law, which until recently required pre-approval from local authorities to stage a protest.

Aung Myo Kyaw, a spokesman for the AAPP, said workshop participants would submit the finalized definition of political prisoners to Parliament.

“The government no longer recognizes political prisoners [as still existing]. So now we have a definition, which was agreed upon by the various organizations and will be sent to Parliament to get recognition from the government,” he said.

We have just received an Urgent Action which clearly shows that people are still being arrested for political reasons. This concerns five media workers in Myanmar who are facing imprisonment over the publication of a news story. AI considers them prisoners of conscience, detained solely for peacefully exercising their right to freedom of expression. Our campaign lead, Jean, will bring along details to the group meeting and a letter for us all to sign.

Southern Africa

A new action on South Africa has been sent to us by the new South Africa country coordinator. It concerns the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) which is a leading civil society organisation advocating comprehensive health care services for people living with HIV in South Africa. TAC members are often subjected to intimidation and threats. They try to advocate access to treatment, care and support for people living with HIV. Since 1998, TAC has demanded accountability from the South African government for health care delivery, campaigned against “AIDS denialism” during the presidency of Thabo Mbeki, challenged the world's leading pharmaceutical companies to make treatment involving life-saving medicines more affordable and cultivated community leadership on HIV/AIDS.

Various members of TAC have been subject to harassment on an ongoing basis and we are asked to send messages of support and to write to the Premier of Free State Province. Anne will bring along a messages for us to sign at the group meeting, however if you aren't able to attend, details of the action are attached with this newsletter.

Take action to support the Treatment Action Campaign

Send a message of support
Write to the authorities

Group news

Kerry Moscogiuri

AIUK Director of Supporter Campaigning and Communications

Unfortunately, Kate Allen will not be able to make our September meeting as she has to go on an Amnesty delegation to Lebanon. However, Kerry has very kindly stepped in to take her place.



Kerry has worked for AIUK as part of the Senior Management Team for 14 years, having joined as Marketing Director in 2000 from NCH Action For Children. She is responsible for AIUK's Priority Campaigns, for support for AIUK's Activism, for AIUK's events and work with celebrities, for Media, Supporter Care and for Communications and is part of the Global Campaigns Management Team. Kerry was previously responsible for Fundraising and was part of the Global Fundraising Management Team.

Kerry is from Disley in Cheshire and her first job after leaving University was at Great Universal Stores in Ardwick, Manchester. She moved to London in 1994 to work at NCH Action For Children and now lives in Hertford, and is married with 2 children. She is a Manchester United supporter and loves coming back to Manchester to see her family, the city and the countryside around it.

Write for Rights



We will be holding our next informal letter writing session at the end of this month. Why not drop in and write some letters whilst enjoying the excellent catering at The Eighth Day Café.

Letter Writing

Saturday 27th September
The Eighth Day Café, Oxford Road
2-4pm
Pens, paper and case sheets provided

We need your annual donations!

The suggested amount is £20 if you are working, or what you can afford otherwise.

If you haven't yet made a contribution this year, our Treasurer Sean Dunne will be happy to take your money - see him at the Group meetings, or email sean.a.dunne@btinternet.com to find out how you can pay.

Manchester Literature Festival



We are proud to present an afternoon with Sri-Lankan born artist, writer and film-maker, Roma Tearne. Roma was a Fellow at Oxford Brookes University and has had many national and international exhibitions. It was while working as Leverhulme Artist in Residence at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, that she began to write.

Roma's writing is both informed and inspired by her, and her family's experience of fleeing Sri-Lanka. She has written five novels and will be reading from her book *Brixton Beach*, a TV Bookclub pick and winner of a French Reader's prize, and *The Swimmer*, which was longlisted for the Orange Fiction Prize. Both novels offer the reader 'a rare insight into the subtle and dramatic ways we are shaped by conflict' and draw on issues of civil war, persecution and torture, migration, self-identity and loss. Roma's talk will be followed by a Q&A and book signing and all proceeds will go to Amnesty International.

Come along and support this event. Please buy your tickets well in advance. Last year several members couldn't get tickets to our session at the Festival due to the popularity of the event. Make sure that you aren't caught out this year!

Roma Tearne

Saturday 18th October, 2pm
Cross Street Chapel
Tickets £7/£5 concessions
Book on 0843 208 0500 or
<http://www.manchesterliteraturefestival.co.uk/events/roma-tearne-34967>

September Group Meeting

Held 2nd Wednesday each month - Cross Street Chapel 7.30pm

10th September

Kerry Moscogiuri, AIUK Director of Supporter Campaigning and Communications, will be coming up to meet our group. Come along to hear how AIUK plans to support our campaigning. If possible, please send questions for Kerry to Laura (laura.barsby@yahoo.co.uk) in advance.

*Why not join a few of us for a pre-meeting meal just after 6. This month we will be at The Grinch on Chapel Walk.
It would be good to see you there.*

Other News

North West Conference

The excellent one day NW AI conference will be held in Chester this year on 8th November. Booking is now open – flyer attached with this newsletter!

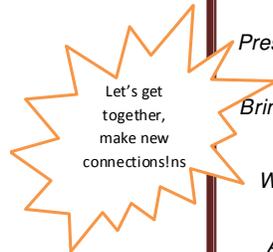
Getting Connected – Getting Stronger

Amnesty International North West Conference 2014

Queen's Park High School, Chester CH4 7AE

Sat 8th November 2014

10 am – 4.00 pm



PROGRAMME INCLUDES

Personal accounts from Human Rights Defenders

Presentations from Country Coordinators on the Stop Torture Campaign

Bringing campaigning and fund-raising together

Street Action- Stop Torture

Workshops on how to work more effectively together

An update from an Activist Board Member



The Conference is open to delegates of all groups (local, student, school, TU and other networks) in the Region. Individual AI members are also welcome to attend, as are non-members if they share Amnesty's concerns.

Stockport Group Social – 4th October

Stockport AI invite you to a social evening, including a team quiz and musical interlude, from 7pm to 10pm on Saturday 4th October at Ladybridge Primary School, Councilor Lane, Cheadle Hulme, Stockport. There will be light refreshments and you are welcome to bring your own drinks. The cost of the event is £3 per person; teams for the quiz to be no more than 6 (if you can't get together with others to form a team, you are very welcome to come along and join a team). There will also be a raffle and all proceeds will go to raise funds for Stockport AI's ongoing campaigns, such as Stop Torture (information about what we are involved in at the moment will be available on the night as well details about how you can get involved). See the poster attached to this newsletter.

Public Meeting: "Israel/Palestine - Democracy or Apartheid?"

Thursday October the 16th at 7 for 7:30pm at the Friends Meeting House in Kendal. Speakers: Baroness Jenny Tonge and Richard Barnes. Further information from Dave at amnestykendal@gmail.com

Benefit Gig - 31st October

Whalley Range Peace and Justice present an evening of music, mirth and mischief with Anthony John Clarke and Dave Pegg (Fairport Convention) in aid of Amnesty International and to raise funds for postage for the greeting card campaign.

Friday 31st October 7.30pm at St Margaret's Church, Rufford Road, Whalley Range, Manchester M16 8EJ

Tickets £8 advance (£10 on the door)

Available on eventbrite:

<http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/an-evening-with-anthony-john-clarke-and-dave-pegg-in-aid-of-amnesty-international-tickets-12920863651?aff=es2&rank=0> (booking fee applies)

Also available at our group meetings.

