

AMNESTY NEWS

www.amnesty-volunteer.org/uk/southampton-city

January 2003



REFUGEES in SOUTHAMPTON

Julia Maddock of CLEAR spoke about the issues of Refugees in Southampton at the January meeting.

Some Definitions:

CLEAR stands for City Life Education & Action for Refugees.

A Refugee is a person with a well founded case of persecution, a person displaced from their home.

Asylum Seekers are people looking for asylum, awaiting a decision. A Refugee is someone who has been given a positive decision to stay.

Myths and Truths:

The Refugee situation is not new, but has never received such media interest.

An opinion pole in 2002 of the UK public said that they thought that we hosted 23% of the refugee population, the truth is 1.8%.

UK is 8th in Europe for asylum applications, Austria is number 1; the majority go to neighbouring countries e.g. the majority of Refugees from Somalia go to Ethiopia.

The belief is that immigrants receive in excess of £113 per week; the reality is they receive £36 per week.

The news media is very sympathetic to people in crisis in their own country but become negative once they come here.

**Group Meeting
Monday February 9th 2004**

Update on
Southampton University
Link
Current Concerns

**Avenue St Andrew's
United Reformed Church
The Avenue, Southampton
(Use main Church entrance)
7.30pm
ALL WELCOME**

The situation in Southampton:

No one knows the total number in Southampton, probably around 3000.

CLEAR is mainly involved with those who have been given a positive decision to stay. Their work includes:

1:1 specific work: with people with exceptional needs e.g. a 6 month pregnant woman with twin 6 year olds.

Bicycle project: where they involve refugees in repairing donated bicycles, also provides a practical form of transport.

Music workshop: therapeutic leisure activity.

(continued on page 3)

**AI's
VISION**
is of a world in which every person enjoys all of the human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international standards.

**AI's
MISSION**
is to undertake research and action focused on preventing and ending grave abuses of the rights to physical and mental integrity, freedom of conscience and expression, and freedom from discrimination, within the context of its work to promote all human rights.

**AI's
CORE VALUES**
remain those of :
international solidarity,
effective action for the individual victim, global coverage, the universality and indivisibility of human rights, impartiality and independence, and democracy and mutual respect.

Amnesty International-Worldwide Appeals: for January 2004

CHINA: Uighur refugee executed after forcible return

Uighur Chinese nationals Shaheer Ali, Kheyum Whashim Ali and Abdu Allah Sattar were forcibly returned to China from Nepal in 2002. Shaheer Ali has reportedly been executed after being sentenced to death in March 2003 and there are fears that the other two are at risk of torture and execution.

All three men were recognized as refugees by the UNHCR after they fled to Nepal in 2000. While in Nepal, Shaheer Ali gave an interview to Radio Free Asia in which he described eight months of torture in 1994 in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (XUAR), China. He said he was beaten, given electric shocks and repeatedly kicked unconscious. According to a report on the Chinese website www.tianshan.net on 21 October, Shaheer Ali was accused of leading a number of "terrorist" organizations including the East Turkistan Islamic Party of Allah also known as the East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM). The Chinese authorities claim the ETIM was linked to a demonstration on 5 February 1997



*Write for justice
in Uighur*

in Gulja (Yining) which they described as an incident of "beating, smashing and cutting". Independent eyewitness reports said that this was a peaceful demonstration by local people calling for equal treatment for Uighurs. It degenerated into violence after security forces fired into the crowd to disperse the protesters. Hundreds were arrested in the aftermath and many tortured.

Following the 11 September

2001 attacks in the USA, China has intensified its political crackdown against the mainly Muslim ethnic Uighur community in the XUAR, branding those in favour of independence as "ethnic separatists" or "terrorists". The authorities make little distinction between acts of violence and acts of peaceful dissent. There are fears that a current 100-day security crackdown due to last until the Chinese New Year, in January 2004, will lead to increased repression of peaceful political dissent in the region.

Please write, condemning the recent execution of Shaheer Ali after a secret trial. Express concern for the safety of Kheyum Whashim Ali and Abdu Allah Sattar and call on the authorities to guarantee that if they are being held in detention they will not be tortured, ill-treated or executed.

Send appeals to: Chairman of XUAR Regional People's Government, Ismail Tiliwaldi Zhuxi, Xinjiang Weiwuer Zizhiqu Renmin Zhengfu, 2 Zhongshanlu, Wulumuqishi 830041, Xinjiang Weiwuer Zizhiqu, China.

Letter writing guide

- *Always be polite. This rule is essential and invariable. Your aim is to help, not to relieve your own feelings. Governments don't respond to abusive or condemnatory letters (however well deserved!)
- *Always write your letters on the basis that the Government concerned is open to reason and discussion.
- *It is important where possible to stress a country's reputation for moderation and justice, to show respect for its constitution and judicial procedures, and to demonstrate an understanding of current difficulties. This will give you more scope to point out ways in which the human rights situation can be improved.
- *Follow strictly the instructions given by AI.
- *Never use political jargon. Don't give the impression that you are writing because you are ideologically or politically opposed to the government in question. It is far more effective to stress that your concern for human rights is not politically based in any way, but in keeping with basic principles of international law.
- *If appropriate, explain who you are and what you do. It shows your letter is genuine, and that people from varying walks of life are following events in the country concerned.

Group News: January 2004

1) Veronica, Chair, welcomed all to the Group Meeting.

2) Frank, sought volunteers for a Tin Collection at Safeways, Portswood on Friday 6th & Sat 7th February. Please contact Frank.

3) Mary, informed the Group that the Monthly Action was a letter to MPs

re an Early Day Motion concerning arms control treaty.

Southern Region Conference 14th February (see Diary page 4).

AIUK AGM, (see Diary page 4) please contact Mary if interested.

Christmas Cards, so far raised £380.

4) Fran discussed possible follow up from speaker on North Korea.

5) Veronica reminded Group of Segalula Concert, see flyer enclosed.

6) Giampaolo reported that our current balance was £480

7) Jilly's home letter write on 22nd at 2.00pm

Refugees in Southampton (cont)

Social drop in: held every Monday afternoon in Kingsland Community Centre.

English classes: an English Language Worker coordinating an English Literacy Programme. The Programme is designed to boost self-motivation and confidence.

Employment project: refugees need a lots of 1:1 support to help them through the system.

Some examples:

An Ugandan young man who is still an Asylum Seeker. He was tortured in Uganda and was eventually helped to escape. He has been in the UK for 2 years and is still awaiting a decision. Initially he was very withdrawn, he contacted CLEAR who spent time talking and listening to him. He is fluent in English and now helps out on the English course, he has also done a TEFL course, and an access course at City College.

A gentleman from Iraq, who was forced to flee his country following imprisonment and torture. He made his way to England and was granted 4 years leave to remain in the UK. Since arriving in England he has suffered from depression as well as physical

problems. CLEAR have been able to help him with a number of issues e.g. to find accommodation, an application for income support, liased with his solicitor on his behalf and found him some furniture. Most importantly CLEAR have been able to spend time with him when he just needed someone to talk to or just wanted to practice his English.

What could YOU do:

In 2002 CLEAR gave assistance to at least 200 of those who have given permission to stay in Southampton. Support has included help in completing forms, advice on access to housing, personal advocacy and help in the various schemes mentioned in this report.

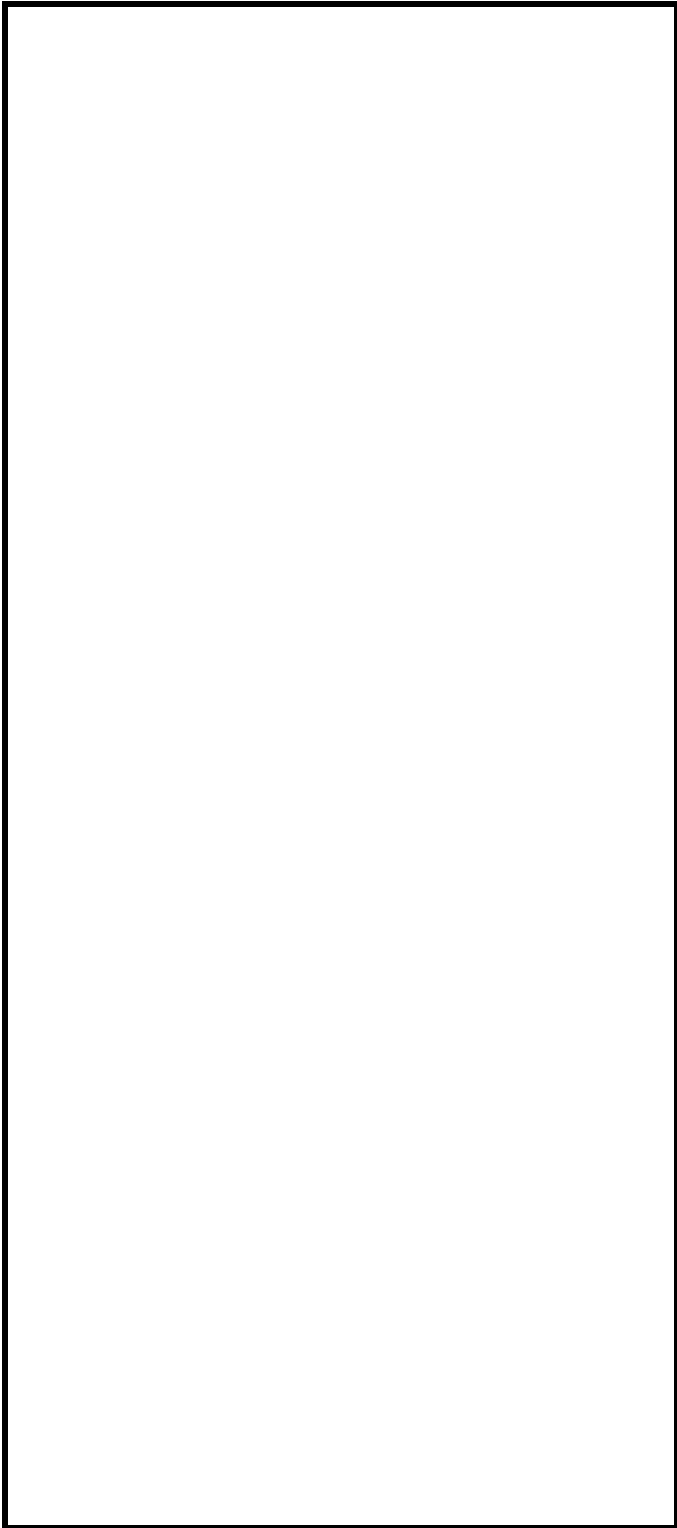
If you think you could help these most vulnerable human beings you could contact CLEAR by post:

PO Box 237, Southampton, SO14 3XA

or by e-mail: admin@clearproject.org.uk

or find out more about them on their web site: www.clearproject.org.uk

A refuge is created every 21 seconds.



- Diary:
- ◆ **February Friday 6th from 2.00pm and Saturday 7th all day. Tin collection-** Safeway, Portswood. Contact Frank
 - ◆ **Monday 9th February:** Group Meeting: Update on Southampton Uni Link. 7.30 pm, Avenue St Andrew's United Reformed Church, The Avenue. All Welcome.
 - ◆ **Saturday 14th February:** Southern Region Conference, Salisbury: Agenda includes: European Parliamentary Elections; Violence Against Women. Let Mary know
 - ◆ **Monday 8th March:** SEGALULA, a celebration in song for International Women's Day. 7.30 pm, Avenue St Andrew's United Reformed Church, The Avenue. All Welcome NB this replaces our monthly meeting. (see flyer)
 - ◆ **April 2-4 2004, Amnesty UK, National Conference and AGM.** (Please note the date is incorrect on Events Calendar.
 - ◆ **Monday 19th April:** Group Meeting: Iraq-one year on, update on human rights issues. Speaker to be arranged. 7.30 pm, Avenue St Andrew's United Reformed Church, The Avenue. All Welcome

"STOP CHILD EXECUTIONS"

Details in February meeting

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**Respect refugees
 Amnesty International's Principles for
 Refugee Protection:**

It is vital to restore the human rights perspective to UK asylum policy and practice. To that end, Amnesty International has drawn up five key principles for a fair, efficient and humane asylum system.

- ◆ Every asylum claim should be considered fully on its individual merits, and not prejudged on the basis of nationality.
- ◆ All asylum seekers should have access to legal advice.
- ◆ Asylum seekers should not be detained without just cause.
- ◆ Immigration controls should not prevent asylum seekers from escaping persecution.
- ◆ The 1951 Refugee Convention should be upheld, and properly implemented.