

AMNESTY NEWS

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

October 2005



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.

Human rights in the MALDIVES

The Maldives consist of 1000 islands/atolls, 200 of which are inhabited and 90 are holiday resorts. Local people do not benefit greatly from tourism-workers are exploited and government sends money out of the country.

Whilst the capital is well developed, some islands have no hospital or schools. The population is young and becoming more politically aware, but there is a big drug problem. The government has imposed Islamic law, with no freedom of expression and heavy censorship.

The Islands are strategically interesting to India and China, and India has largely turned a blind eye to HR abuses because of Maldivian support for India to get a seat on the Security Council.

Two years ago a teenager, in prison for drugs offences, died from a beating, a number of his friends also died. Whilst the Maldives are seen as a paradise Island, life is tough for Maldivians. Coco Island resort is next to the prison island where the above deaths took place.

The Friends of Maldives have lobbied MPs, MEPs and distributed leaflets at Tourism Fairs to raise

**Group Meeting
Monday October 10th 2005**

**Letter Writing
focusing on**

CHINA

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

awareness of the human rights abuses. The British and US Government have observed activities in the Maldives, but have not acted, although MPs etc are supportive as is the Commonwealth (which is considering the expulsion of Maldives). Amnesty has been monitoring the situation for 27years.

Jail, banishment and torture are employed against anyone publicly criticising the regime. The President has control of the executive and the judiciary.

The rich send their children to be educated abroad as Maldivian standards are so poor. They bring back democratic ideas which may ultimately lead to the downfall of the regime.

Worldwide Appeal: Maldives: Life imprisonment for publishing internet articles

Businessmen Mohamed Zaki, Ibrahim Moosa Luthfee, Ahmed Ibrahim Didi and a young woman who worked as a personal secretary to Ibrahim Luthfee, Fathimath Nisreen, were arrested in January and February 2002, because of alleged involvement with an Internet publication called Sandhaanu. While Sandhaanu publishes articles which are severely critical of the government, it does not advocate political opposition.

Mohamed Zaki, Ibrahim Moosa Luthfee, Ahmed Ibrahim Didi and Fathimath Nisreen were taken to the Male Police Headquarters where they were held in solitary confinement for two weeks. They were then transferred to a detention centre on the island of Dhoonidhoo where they were held until May.

On 29th May they were charged with offences including "defamation" and "committing acts hostile to the government". A second hearing took place in June.



Throughout the proceedings they were denied access to a lawyer. After the hearing all four were transferred to the prison on the island of Mafushi where they were reportedly kept in solitary confinement in small cells. They had to sleep on a piece of plywood and were denied visits from their families.

In July Mohamed Zaki, Ibrahim Moosa Luthfee and Ahmed Ibrahim Didi were sentenced to life imprisonment. Fathimath Nisreen

was sentenced to 10yrs in prison. They are all currently held in Mafushi island prison and no longer in solitary confinement but conditions in the prison are said to be very harsh. Prisoners are at times kept in handcuffs for days and access to health care is severely limited. Visits from relatives are allowed only once a month.

Please write: calling for the immediate and unconditional release of prisoners of conscience Mohamed Zaki, Ibrahim Moosa Luthfee, Ahmed Ibrahim Didi and Fathimath Nisreen. Raise concerns that their trial was not fair and they were denied legal representation throughout.

Send appeals to:

President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom,
The President's Palace,
Maafannu Theemuge,
Male 2002,
Republic of Maldives.

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: September

Business meeting:

Becky John, Chair, welcomed all to the meeting.

“Re-branding” of Amnesty, Becky reported on the new colours, slogans and materials.

Monthly action: Letter to Colombian Government expressing Amnesty’s concern that moves towards demobilisation of military forces might lead to impunity, and thus the loss of the rights of victims to justice.

ARCORDA Concert: Publicity handed out for distribution; arrangements for stalls, refreshments etc discussed.

Jazz event: Becky reported that all was in hand, most of the publicity being done by the bands. Jenny hopes to stage “Voices from Beyond the Dark” in conjunction with the music.

Kitchen Sale: 26th November: Urgent appeal for items suitable for sale as Christmas gifts. Thanks to all for the jars, no more needed at present.

Peter Benenson Memorial Fund: letter of thanks received for donation.

KITCHEN SALE

SATURDAY 26th NOVEMBER

“GOODIES FOR CHRISTMAS”

**CHURCH GATE HOUSE
ELING NR TOTTON**

**10.00am to 4.00pm
All welcome**

SOUTHERN REGIONAL CONFERENCE

Bristol University, Arts Faculty,
21 Woodland Road, Bristol BS8 1UQ

10am-4.30pm

Saturday 29th October 2005

Draft agenda

- 10.00 am Coffee
- 10.30 am Introduction
- 10.35 am “Where are we now”
(report on International
Council Decisions)
Kate Allen (Director
AIUK)
or
A workshop for new/non-
members-About Amnesty
- 11.35 am Workshop “War on
Terror”
- 1.00 pm Lunch
- 1.45 pm Talk on Refugee
Detention-
Nadine Finch, Lawyer
- 3.00 pm Talk on India Country
Action Programme-
Paul Snowdon
- 4.00 pm General Question Time

Cost £5.00 for lunch (sandwiches
strictly not allowed)

An excellent way to learn more about
Amnesty.

Contact Mary Brown (see back page)
who will liaise for shared transport.

Southampton Group Who's Who:

Group Officers:

Chair:

Becky John

Vice-Chair:

Jenny McConnell

Secretary & Press:

Mary Brown

Treasurer:

Giampaolo D'Alessandro

Membership Secretary:

Jenny McConnell

Outreach:

Veronica Tippets

Parliamentary Officer:

Frank Capocci

News Letter Editor:

John Williams

Subgroups:

CASA/Victor Pineda Henestrosa:

Frank Capocci

CHINA:

Judy Horton

Administration of Justice (Death Penalty):

Giampaolo D'Alessandro

John Williams

Refugees:

Jilly Cooke

Stop Violence Against Women:

Becky John

Business and Human Rights:

Becky John)

Control Arms Campaign:

Barbara Lupton

Korea:

Avenue St Andrew's Church Group

Winchester Visitors Group

The WVG works mainly to support refugees and asylum seekers. The WVG is now considering ways of extending the support it offers, beyond financial and befriending, with assistance in dealing with practical issues of daily life.

Contact: Brenda Morris, 023 8076 8176 or
E-mail: cm5@soton.ac.uk

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Diary:

- ◆ **Monday 10th October:** Group Meeting: "Letter Writing-focusing on China". 7.30pm Avenue St Andrew's. All Welcome.
- ◆ **Saturday 15th October:** Music for Strings by ARCORDA. 7.30pm at Avenue St Andrew's.
- ◆ **Thursday 20th October:** Live Jazz at Talking Heads, featuring "Dinner Jazz Revolutionaries". Doors open 7.00pm for 8.00pm.
- ◆ **Saturday 29th October:** Southern Regional Conference. Bristol
- ◆ **Thursday 10th November:** Tenth anniversary of execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa. Event tba.
- ◆ **Monday 14th November:** Group Meeting: "Workshop on Business and Human Rights" with AI trainer Peter Hammond-Seaman. 7.30pm at Avenue St Andrew's. All welcome.

Highlights from Amnesty's web page

If you are interested in any of these topics and have access to the internet, dial up to:
www.amnesty.org.uk/news/

UK Sex Trafficking: Amnesty welcomes Birmingham police crackdown, but UK must do more to protect victims.

Russian Federation: No end to gross human rights violations in Russia's north Caucasus.

UK: Tasers, Amnesty International briefing as Kent police introduce new electro-shock weapons.

USA: Guantanamo hunger strikers critically ill. Several detainees on hunger strike at Guantanamo Bay are critically ill, according to lawyers who have recently visited the detention camp.

Ukraine: Decisive action against torture yet to be taken, says new report.