

# AMNESTY NEWS

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

April 2007



## 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.

## Group Planning Pack 2007-2008

The main focus of the meeting was to complete the "Group Planning Pack 2007-2008". This identifies the focus of the Group's activity over the next 12 months.

### GLOBAL CAMPAIGNS

#### High priority-All groups encouraged to participate

#### 1. **Stop Violence Against Women:**

##### This campaign will focus on:

Sexual violence in Jamaica; Domestic violence in Europe; Murder of women in Guatemala & Mexico; Safer schools and workplaces and in the UK: lack of justice and protection for black, ethnic minorities, asylum seekers & refugee women.

Strategies: Challenging attitudes; spotlighting local authorities; pressure to sign up to the European Convention against Trafficking; Slave Trade 200; action on individuals at risk.

**Southampton Sub-Group:** Jo Dixon, Jilly Cooke, Diana Farmer

#### 2. **Terrorism, Security & Human Rights:**

Aims: To end violations in "War on Terror"; to strengthen respect for international treaties on torture etc.

Objectives: To close Guantanamo Bay; to disclose similar detention centres; to end renditions, abductions & secret detentions; to end circumvention of prohibition of torture through diplomatic assurances.

Casework: Individuals at risk; UK

### Group Meeting Monday April 16th 2007

#### Up Date on Current Campaigns Feedback from AIUK National Conference & AGM

Avenue St Andrew's  
United Reformed Church  
The Avenue, Southampton  
7.30pm  
ALL WELCOME

Guantanamo detainees; Urgent Actions.

**Southampton Sub-Group:** John Williams, Giampaolo D'Alessandro, Liam Holloway.

#### 3. **Campaigning for Individuals at Risk:**

i) Long-Term Action File:

**Southampton Sub-Group:** Mary Brown, Jenny McConnell, Gemma Davies.

ii) Greeting Cards Campaign:

**Southampton response:** We will continue to participate in Greetings Card Campaign, and individuals will access web site etc.

iii) Urgent Actions:

**Southampton response:** we will continue to provide financial support, not applicable to Group format. (cont page 3)

## Amnesty International-Worldwide Appeals BELARUS: Imprisoned for being an activist

Zmitser Dashkevich, a leader of the youth opposition movement Young Front, was summoned to the Prosecutor's office on 15 September and charged with "organizing or participating in an activity of an unregistered non-governmental organization."

Following a trial, held behind closed doors, Zmitser Dashkevich was sentenced on 1 November to one and a half years' imprisonment in a minimum security prison.

Hundreds of people, including opposition politicians, writers, diplomats and civil society activists demonstrated outside the court in Minsk, calling for his immediate release.

AI believes he is a prisoner of conscience imprisoned solely for exercising his rights to freedom of assembly, association and expression.

He was charged under an Ar-



ticle which was added to the Belarus Criminal Code in December 2005 as part of a series of amendments that introduced penalties for civil society organiza-

tions and other outspoken critics of the government, in the lead-up to the presidential elections in March 2006.

Zmitser Dashkevich was previously arrested with four others in April 2006 during a peaceful demonstration to mark the 20th anniversary of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster. All five men were released in May.

**Please write**, calling for the immediate and unconditional release of prisoner of conscience Zmitser Dashkevich.

### Send appeals to:

President Alyaksandr G.  
Lukashenka  
ul. Karla Marxa 38  
220016 Minsk  
Belarus

Fax +375 172 26 06 10 or  
172 22 38 72

**Salutation:** Dear President  
Lukashenka

### 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.

# March Group Meeting

“Group Planning Pack 2007-2008” discussion continued:

## AIUK CAMPAIGNS

### Groups can opt in or out

#### 1. Business and Human Rights:

Aims: Develop legally binding standards; ensuring access to justice for victims.

Focus: Blood diamonds; internet companies and freedom of expression; individuals at risk eg Shi Tao.

There will be two actions during the year.

**Southampton response:** We will respond to monthly actions as and when.

#### 2. Death Penalty:

Focus: China; Pakistan; Iran and execution of juveniles & other individuals.

**Southampton Sub-Group:** Giampaolo D’Alessandro and John Williams

#### 3. Control Arms:

Focus: Ongoing pressure on UN; review of UK Export Control Act (brokering, trafficking, overseas production of arms); tasers-resisting widespread deployment; individuals at risk eg Sapopemba Community in Brazil.

**Southampton Sub-Group:** Barbara Lupton & Eileen Sharpe

#### 4. Refugees (all groups):

Focus: Destitution; refugee week; individuals at risk (Laos/Thailand).

**Southampton Sub-Group:** Jilly Cooke

## COUNTRY CAMPAIGNING

### Groups opt in one (or more) regions

Work will be issued by Regional Teams of Coordinators. Each Team has its own web pages. Agreed we will continue to work on the Americas world region, focusing on Central America and the Asia world region, focussing on China and East Asia.

Central America: this will include-Guatemala, Mexico, Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua & Panama.

Likely issues: Guatemala-killings of women & land disputes; Mexico-Post election issues; El Salvador & Honduras-Violence against women;

Cross-region-HRDs, gay issues, impunity & military.

**Southampton Sub-Group:** Paul Humphreys, Gemma Davies, Eleanor & Madeleine Cato.

China & East Asia: this will include China/XUAR/Tibet, North & South Korea, Taiwan & Japan.

Likely issues: China-Human rights violations & the Olympics & “War on terror”; Japan-Justice for sexual slaves of Japanese in World War II; Cross-region-Asia Pacific death penalty regional project, HRDs, unfair trials, freedom of expression & torture.

NB The Avenue St Andrew’s Church Group will no longer focus on North Korea and will become a general letter writing group.

**Jenny, Group Chair** introduced the rest of the business:

**Finances:** Giampaolo reported on the recent Tin Rattle at Waitrose, Portswood: raised £348.42. Our current balance is £1245.11; £400 has been sent to AIUK, £1700 in total for the financial year.

**Book Sale:** John explained that he was going to have a box of books available for sale at his work.

**Action of the month:** Student in Chechnya

**AGM resolutions:** To be discussed at Jenny’s on 20th March.

**Refugees:** AI organising an action on destitution for failed asylum seekers, passed to Jilly.

**Future events:** Paul is organising a concert “Show Stoppers”, to be organised at the University in early May.

### Group Activity:

A number of letters had been prepared and various members stayed on to right letters or took them home.

**Southampton Group Who's Who:**

**Group Officers:**

Chair & Membership Secretary:

*Jenny McConnell*

Vice-Chair :

*Becky John*

Secretary & Press:

*Mary Brown*

Treasurer:

*Giampaolo D'Alessandro*

Outreach:

*Veronica Tippets*

Parliamentary Officer:

*Frank Capocci*

News Letter Editor:

*John Williams*

**Subgroups:**

Stop Violence Against Women:

*Jo Dixon*

Terrorism, Security and Human Rights

*John Williams*

Long-term Action File

*Mary Brown*

Death Penalty:

*Giampaolo D'Alessandro*

Control Arms Campaign:

*Barbara Lupton*

Refugees:

*Jilly Cooke*

Central America:

*Paul Humphrey*

China & East Asia:

*Judy Horton*

- Diary:
- ◆ **Monday 16th April:** 7.30 pm Group Meeting: Update on Campaigns. Avenue St Andrew's. All welcome.
  - ◆ **Monday 14th May:** 7.30 pm Group Meeting: Letter writing on China and South America. Avenue St Andrew's. All welcome
  - ◆ **Monday 11th June:** 7.30 pm Group Meeting: Refugees at Hasler. Speaker: Michael Woolley. Avenue St Andrew's. All welcome.
  - ◆ **17th-24th:** Refugee Week (tbc)
  - ◆ **Monday 9th:** 7.30 pm Group Meeting: Southampton Group AGM. Avenue St Andrew's. All welcome.

**Issues from AI Web Page**

Check "[www.amnesty.org.uk](http://www.amnesty.org.uk)" for more details

- ◆ Darfur: Check the web site to see how you can help
- ◆ Guantanamo Bay: Sign the petition on the web site; send an appeal letter to your MP
- ◆ Righting the wrongs of slavery.
- ◆ Making a noise for human rights, download the rock band REM
- ◆ Stop the trade in torture: AI's *Tools of Torture* report.
- ◆ Write for stage: Iceandfire theatre, in conjunction with AI are running the Protect the Human play-writing competition.
- ◆ Belarus: Film screening with Tom Stoppard for Belarusian human rights defenders.
- ◆ UK Government signs up to Convention offering protection to victims of trafficking.
- ◆ Act for special procedures: sign the global petition.
- ◆ Zimbabwe: New call to end torture and intimidation of opposition activists.

**APRIL MEETING**

**Please note the April meeting will be on the 3rd Monday (due to Easter Bank holiday)**

**16th April**

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