

AMNESTY NEWS

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July 2008



CHINA: Anne Parry Southampton Sub-Group

Anne Parry, spoke about the AIUK rally in London on 4th June in support of the Mothers of Tiananmen Square.

It was very well organised with speakers - introduced by Rosie Boycott - including:

- ◆ Kate Allen AIUK;
- ◆ the Chinese director of Mothers of Tiananmen Square;
- ◆ an exiled student leader of the Tiananmen Uprising;
- ◆ and a young woman, also in exile, whose cousin was killed in Tiananmen Square.

Clearly, because Rosie Boycott was involved, writers of PEN were mentioned.

A one minute silence was held for the victims of the earthquake and another 1 minute for the Mothers of Tiananmen Square.

The Falun Gong was well represented at the rally - practitioners are likely to be arrested

**Group Meeting
Monday July 14th 2008**

**Southampton Group
AGM**

**With reports on the year's action,
plus election of officers for 2008/9**

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

and even tortured (some who have died in prison have had their organs taken). There are 100 million practitioners in China - more than there are members of the Communist Party. Other religious groups are also suppressed but because of its size, the Falun Gong is fiercely oppressed.

Anne was particularly struck by the attitude of the British police who helped clear up at the end of the rally, gathered up the roses and collected placards - they were very helpful.

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.

Zimbabwe: fear for arrested Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA) activists

Activists from the organisation Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA), including WOZA leaders Jenni Williams and Magadonga Mahlangu were arrested on 28 May at a peaceful demonstration in the Zimbabwean capital, Harare. They are in grave danger of torture or other ill-treatment and are being held under harsh prison conditions. Amnesty International understands that the WOZA members were arrested and detained purely because they were attempting to exercise their universally guaranteed rights to freedom of association and assembly.

On 11 June 2008 the High Court of Zimbabwe granted bail to twelve of the fourteen Women/Men of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA & MOZA) activists arrested on 28 May 2008. However two WOZA leaders, Jenni Williams and Magadonga Mahlangu, were denied bail. The State opposed granting of bail to Jenni Williams and Magadonga Mahlangu arguing that the two were likely to commit similar offences as they had in the past committed and been charged



with the same offence they were presently being charged with.

Jenni Williams and Magadonga Mahlangu are detained at Chikurubi Maximum Security Prison – female section. Reports indicate that conditions at the prison are deplorable and fall well below international standards. Sufficient blankets and warm clothing have not been provided to the WOZA detainees, which is of particular concern as it is currently winter in Zimbabwe. They are being

remanded in custody until 20 June when they will appear in court again. Their lawyers are now appealing to the Supreme Court against the High Court decision.

Amnesty International considers Jenni Williams and Magadonga Mahlangu to be prisoners of conscience, detained solely for the peaceful exercise of their rights to freedom of association and assembly, and is calling for their immediate and unconditional release.

Please send appeals : calling for the immediate release of the WOZA activists and for their safety to be guaranteed.

Send appeals to:

The Hon. Patrick Chinamasa
Minister of Justice,
Legal & Parliamentary Affairs
New Government Complex Cnr
Samora Mache V 4th St
Private Bag 7751
Causeway
Harare
Zimbabwe

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.

June Group

Jenny (Chair): Welcomed all to meeting.

Recent Action: It was reported that we had held a day of postcard signing and petition signing at Borders in West Quay Retail Park on Saturday, 7th June. Public interest was sporadic but about 30 cards were signed and a lot of names were collected on the petitions for 7 different Prisoners of Conscience. . We collected £29.03 towards postage (pretty good, I think). There was no problem getting a rota - lots of members offered their help. We were there from 9.30 a.m.

until nearly 5 p.m. In everyone's opinion, Anne did a great job of organising it. Thanks to all those who helped.

Mary (Secretary): Gave out the actions for the month,

Giampaolo (treasurer): reported on our current finances.

Veronica (outreach): talked about UNA and a plan to involve AI and CAFOD to

AMNESTY WORKS!

"We want to thank everyone who worked toward this joyful day."

Rebiya Kadeer's daughter, upon her mother's release from Chinese prison.

"My family is indebted to the people who campaigned for Mirza's release, who wrote letters and stood out in the rain with placards...Every life is so precious - Mirza's release just proves how vital these campaigns really are."

"Mirza is like a kid again - he just wants to feel the fresh air on his face. He's been cycling with his nephew and getting a multitude of new gadgets out there like high-tech mobile phones. There's so much for him to rediscover"

Amjad Hussein, brother of Mirza Hussein who has been released after 18 years in Pakistani prisons

"Just to know that the 'outside' world had not forgotten me and was continuing to work for my release was an immense source of encouragement during those dark days. I know that Amnesty International played a leading role in these efforts...I owe you my freedom."

Thich Quang Do, Buddhist monk from Viet Nam

Southampton Group 2008/9 Group Officers

Chair:

Jenny has decided to retire as chair, and in addition, after a number of decades of active involvement in the Southampton Group, will take a well earned back seat.

We owe Jenny a great debt of gratitude for all her work over the years. She has chaired the Group with a light and sensitive touch, and always got things done!

We will make a decision at the July meeting about our next Chair.

At the time of writing all other officers and Sub-Group leads are happy to continue into 2008/9.

Should any one fancy taking on a role please do not hesitate to volunteer, shadowing is a good way of getting to know the ropes!

