

AMNESTY NEWS

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

June 2009



China and Human Rights

Giampaolo D'Alessandro, the Southampton Group's new Sub-group leader for China and East Asia, provided an update on key issues:

Background:

- ◆ China demonstrates a strong connection between ancient and modern; far more perhaps than we in the western world.
- ◆ It has a fractured history with war lords fighting each other for land.
- ◆ Technologically advanced, but in other ways a relatively introspective country without a background of good relations with the West, or its neighbouring countries.
- ◆ Maintenance of centralised State seen as very important to prevent internal wars and to exercise strong presence/control in the region, therefore dissent is not tolerated in the country.
- ◆ Particular military build up over recent years; especially to develop a fleet and maintain claim to ownership of the South China Sea.
- ◆ Big expansion of education in more recent years.

HR Issues:

- ◆ Death penalty.
- ◆ Practice of "re-education" through consignment to labour, enforced disappearance, illegal detention.
- ◆ Use of torture and other ill treatment, including forced abortions.
- ◆ Repression of HR Defenders, freedom of expression (including reli-

Group Meeting

Monday 8th June 2009

**Refugee Work
&
Letter Writing from all Sub-Groups**

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

gious expression).

- ◆ Particular repression of ethnic Uighurs, and North Korean refugees.

AIUK Focus:

- ◆ 20th anniversary of Tiananmen Square June 3-4th.
- ◆ NB Vigil in Romsey Market Square at 8.00 pm on June 4th.

Group Focus:

- ◆ Adopted Chinese family Hu Jia Zeng Jinyan as our case.
- ◆ Cheryl to place article in Echo about Group adopting the family.
- ◆ Mary & Rob to investigate possibility of printing a 2-part postcard to Chinese Embassy.
- ◆ Group to buy birthday card for Hu Jia (25th July) & Zeng Jinyan (9th Oct).
- ◆ Group members to send postcards from holidays to the family.

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.

INDONESIA: Peaceful activists imprisoned

Former civil servant Filep Karma and student Yusak Pakage were arrested and charged with treason in 2005, after taking part in a peaceful political ceremony at which a Papuan independence flag was raised. They were sentenced to 15 and 10 years in prison respectively.

Background information

On 1 December 2004, Filep Karma and Yusak Pakage attended an annual ceremony in Abepura advocating Papuan independence from Indonesia. During the event, the Morning Star flag - a banned symbol of independence - was raised. The police responded by advancing on the crowd and attacking people with batons.

Filep Karma was arrested at the site of the ceremony and reportedly beaten as he was transported to the police station. Yusak Pakage was arrested when he went to protest Filep Karma's detention. During their trial on 10 May 2005 a large crowd gathered outside the courthouse to protest. Police responded with extreme force injuring many people. A senior police officer was dismissed as a result



but did not face criminal charges and there has been no formal inquiry into events. On 28 April 2008 Filep Karma was beaten up by prison guards. He had been allowed to leave the prison for the day, but returned late, at 8 pm instead of 5 pm. On his return two prison guards, who had been drinking, hit him about the head. Filep Karma reported the beating to the police, but it is unclear whether an investigation has been launched.

In August 2008 both men's sentences were reduced by three months to mark Indone-

sia's Independence Day (17 August).

The only stage of judicial review remaining open to Filep Karma and Yusak Pakage is to appeal to the President of Indonesia for clemency, which they are reportedly unwilling to do. They believe that they should never have been imprisoned solely for the peaceful exercise of their right to freedom of expression and that to appeal for clemency would compromise that principle.

26th May 2009 marks the 4th anniversary of Filep and Yusak's conviction. Please take this opportunity to call for their immediate release.

Send an appeal calling for their immediate and unconditional release to:

Mr. Andi Mattalata - Minister of Justice and Human Rights
 Jl. H.R. Rasuna Said Kav No. 4-5
 Kuningan
 Jakarta Selatan 12950
 Indonesia

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 Meeting

Group Business:

- ◆ Feedback from Probation Officers' Conference on 1st May. Not a lot of opportunity for publicity for AI– but gained signatures on the “Stop Violence Against Women” petition, and made contact with a local solicitor who may be a possible future speaker.
- ◆ Southampton University Group: Speaker's evening Thursday 14th May “60 years of Human Rights-What next?”. All welcome-in Building 58, starts at 7.00 pm.
- ◆ Monthly action: letters to MP's about destitution of refused asylum seekers.
- ◆ National Refugee Week: 15th to 21st June. Jilly to do short presentation on Refugee work at next meeting.
- ◆ Any more volunteers to sign up for receiving Urgent Actions? Email name to John .
- ◆ Car Boot sale– date set for 7th June, at Bursledon site, opposite Tesco. Potential helpers: Rob, Chris, Trish and Kulbir-other offers welcome! Contact Rob if you want to volunteer or have any

- more items to donate to car boot sale.
- ◆ Finance: Group account stands at £704. Agreed to send further donation to AI UK after car boot sale.
- ◆ AI Southampton Group AGM is 13th July. If anyone is interested in standing for the Group Officer positions please let Kulbir or Madeleine know. (Go on its more fun than you think!).
- ◆ Core Group meeting 27th May (Cowherds at 7.30 pm) to plan next years programme. Please let Kulbir or Madeleine know if you have any particular ideas for speakers/ topics etc for future Group Meetings.
- ◆ Next meeting– 8th June. Jilly will do a short talk on her refugee work. Plus letter writing on cases linked to any Sub-Groups. (Sub-Group leaders please bring at least a case each for us to work on.

CAR BOOT SALE

7th June
At Bursledon
Opposite Teso

Contact Rob

If you have any items for the SALE or if you are interested in helping.

We need the funds!!!

Southampton Group AGM

13th July
Avenue St Andrew's
United Reformed Church

Any one interested in standing for any of the Group Officer positions please contact:
Kulbir
or
Madeleine

