



# Southampton Group **AMNESTY NEWS**

[www.amnesty-volunteer.org/uk/southampton-city](http://www.amnesty-volunteer.org/uk/southampton-city)

**October 2009**



## **SEPTEMBER MEETING SPEAKER** **WILF MBANGA**, Exiled Editor, "The Zimbabwean"

Wilf Mbanga lives in Britain in self-imposed exile having been declared an enemy of the people of Zimbabwe. He is the founder, editor and publisher of The Zimbabwean – a weekly compact newspaper published in Britain with a simultaneous edition for southern Africa (especially Zimbabwe), printed in Johannesburg.

He spent a period working and travelling alongside Robert Mugabe before becoming disillusioned with the regime and leaving to become an independent newspaper publisher.

The first paper he set up was the 'Daily News'. Everyone working on the paper was arrested and the office was eventually bombed using anti-tank mines. No-one was ever held responsible.

After leaving the country, he founded The Zimbabwean and began sending copies back into Zimbabwe. Initially 5,000 copies were distributed, then when there was no response, the number was increased.

The MoD blamed the 2008 election defeat on The Zimbabwean. A distribution truck was hijacked and a 70% duty placed on the newspaper.

Since the election, there is supposed to be a power sharing agreement between the ZANU-PF and the MDC but power has not been split equally. ZANU-PF have held onto the powerful ministries such as defense and information while handing the MDC problem ministries such as housing and telecommunications.

Members of the MDC still suffer from political oppression. 3 MDC MPs have lost their seats after being falsely imprisoned and activists continue to be arrested.

Human rights violations continue across the country. Miners are being forced to hand over a 51% share of their businesses and farmers are finding that courts judgements allowing them to stay on their land are being ignored.

4 million Zimbabweans are currently living outside the country with many heading to South Africa where they often encounter severe racism.

Mugabe is currently trying to convince the EU to lift sanctions against the country and recently held a meeting with EU ministers but the EU has said it will not act until significant steps are taken on democracy and human rights.

### **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 and 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

# ACTION OF THE MONTH

## Ferhat Gerçek and Engin Çeber

In October 2007 Ferhat Gerçek was left permanently paralysed after being shot in the back by police, following a dispute over the sale of a magazine. Seven police officers face trial, but flaws in the investigation mean that the officer who shot Ferhat Gerçek may evade justice.

Meanwhile, Ferhat Gerçek is being prosecuted in connection with the dispute and if found guilty, could be sentenced to more than 15 years in prison.

Engin Çeber was arrested one year later in September 2008 for protesting at the lack of justice in Ferhat's case. He was beaten in custody and died in hospital of his injuries 12 days later.



The third hearing of Ferhat's trial has been scheduled for the 2 October 2009.

### Help us demand justice for Ferhat and Engin Çeber

**We need your help during September to give a big push to our campaign for Ferhat and Engin to show the Turkish government that the international community is watching.**

The police have "lost" the t-shirt that Ferhat was wearing at the time he was shot (a key piece of evidence).

Write a message on a piece of card (t-shirt shaped if possible) eg. "I demand justice for Ferhat and Engin Çeber"; "Where is Ferhat's missing t-shirt?"

Take a photo and email it to [iar@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:iar@amnesty.org.uk)

You can find more information at [www.amnesty.org.uk/iar](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/iar)



Members of the Southampton Group at the September meeting

# GROUP NEWS

## *Pub Quiz*

The Duke of Wellington  
Bugle St Southampton

Tuesday October 20th  
7.30pm

£5 per ticket / £10 with curry

Contact John for tickets  
023 8055 3868

## FUND RAISING

The recent Car Boot Sale at Bursledon raised **£99.55**

The Tin Rattle at Sainsbury's raised **£149.03**

**Many thanks to all who took part**

## DAILY ECHO

The group have had two mentions in the Southampton daily Echo recently.

Cheryll's letter about the Day of the Disappeared was printed in August and Mary wrote the 'In My View' column in September.

Anything which raises the profile of the group is invaluable so a big thank you to Cheryll and Mary.

## NEXT GROUP MEETING

Monday 12th October  
7.30pm

**Demand Dignity Campaign:  
Introduction and discussion on  
poverty and human rights.**

**Speaker: Ros Topley, Amnesty Trainer**

Avenue St Andrew's  
United Reformed Church  
The Avenue, Southampton

**ALL WELCOME**

## DIARY

**Friday 9th** : Zeng Jinyan's birthday

**Saturday 10th** : World day Against the Death Penalty

**Monday 12th** : Group Meeting

**Saturday 17th** : International Day for the Eradication of Poverty

**17th - 23rd** : Protect the human week

**Saturday 31st** : Southern Regional Conference, Bath

# SEPTEMBER GROUP

## CHAIR

New chair John Williams welcomed all to the meeting. Special welcome to new members finding the group from the library posters.

## ACTION OF THE MONTH

Mary gave us background information on Ferhat Gerçek and Engin Çeber and we took photos as part of the current Amnesty campaign. More on page 2.

## SPEAKER

Wilf Mbanga gave a fascinating insight into the current state of Zimbabwe. More on page 1.

## OTHER BUSINESS

The current bank balance is £571.09

Tickets now on sale for the pub quiz on 20th October.

Card signed for Zeng Jinyan.

Group campaigns for 09-10 introduced and members encouraged to get involved in the subgroups.

Date set for stall at Borders on the 5th/6th December

Christmas cards need to be ordered for group and individuals at the October meeting to receive group discount.

The South Region Conference will take place in Bath on Saturday 31st October.

# 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.

# SOUTHAMPTON GROUP - WHO'S WHO

Group Officers		Subgroups
<b>Chair</b> John Williams	<b>Outreach and Parliamentary Officer</b> Veronica Tippetts	<b>Stop Violence Against Women</b> Trish McPherson
<b>Deputy Chair</b> Rob Atkinson	<b>Press</b> Cheryll Pitt	<b>China &amp; East Asia</b> Giampaolo D'Alessandro
<b>Secretary</b> Mary Brown	<b>Newsletter</b> Rob Atkinson	<b>Death Penalty</b> John Williams
<b>Membership Secretary</b> Kulbir Chahal		<b>Central America</b> Rapinder Kaur
<b>Treasurer</b> Giampaolo D'Alessandro		<b>Demand Dignity</b> Rob Atkinson