

# AMNESTY NEWS

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April 2010



## Amnesty International AGM

Just over 500 activists and staff met at Warwick University for our 2010 AGM and National Conference on 9-11 April. We had an inspiring three days of debates, workshops and presentations. The AGM debated resolutions on prostitution, climate change, the papal visit to the UK later this year, Roma communities in Europe, Papua, strategic directions for Amnesty UK and many other issues.

### Conference highlights:

John Kampfner:

Keynote speaker John Kampfner, talked about his recent book *Freedom for Sale* - how we made money and lost our liberty.

\* Champa Patel, Head of Activism at Amnesty UK, chaired the discussion 'Engaging with Global Powers' with a panel of Amnesty experts.

\* Bikramjeet Batra from the South Asia team at Amnesty's International Secretariat

\* Noel Kututwa Special Advisor to Amnesty International on Africa

\* Sara Hall Amnesty UK Country Coordinator for the Federation of Russia.

Each expert outlined in a thoughtful way the challenges for human rights in India, South Africa and Russia respectively.

### Group Meeting

**Monday 10th May 2010**

**Focus on China  
Letter Writing**

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

**7.30 pm**

**ALL WELCOME**

Talks and panel discussions on the Friday evening included contributions from Amnesty's International Secretariat while the Security and Human Rights workshop welcomed ex-Guantanamo detainee Omar Deghayes. On the Saturday Amnesty UK staff and trainers ran creative workshops including 'meeting your new MP' and 'celebrating Amnesty @ 50'.

The Shell campaign action on Saturday evening involved drummers playing Nigerian rhythms, fire performers, flares and a giant banner.

A date for your diary...The 2011 National Conference & AGM takes place on the weekend of 6-8 May at Queen's University, Belfast.

**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.

# MEXICO

## Indigenous rights activist imprisoned for crime he didn't commit

Indigenous peoples' rights activist Raúl Hernández has been in prison since April 2008 when he was charged with murder - a crime he did not commit. The case against him is spurious, brought in reprisal for his legitimate activities promoting the rights of the community and exposing abuses by a local political figure and local authorities.

Raúl Hernández is a member of the Me'phaa Indigenous People's Organisation (OPIM) which defends and promotes the rights of the Me'phaa (Tlapanecas) people. Many of its members have been subjected to a campaign of harassment and intimidation. Raúl Hernández is a prisoner of conscience and he must be immediately and unconditionally released.

### UPDATE: 20 APRIL 2010:

In the lead-up to the second anniversary of Raúl's imprisonment



(17th April), AIUK youth groups, local groups and individual members contributed photos of themselves holding signs reading 'Alza tu Voz por su Libertad' - which means 'Raise your voice to demand his freedom', the slogan used by OPIM and local human rights organization Centro de Derechos Humanos de la Montaña Tlachinollan in their campaign for Raúl's release.

He was part of a global Amnesty action for which 1,000 photos were collected around

the world (from Spain, Chile, Paraguay, Ukraine, Japan, Russia, Turkey, Italy, Finland, Germany, Belgium, Holland and France, as well as the UK). These photos were used by Amnesty International Mexico on 17th April. In the evening, activists gathered in front of Guerrero state's offices in Mexico City holding candles and watching a projection of all the photos, demonstrating the strength of international support for the campaign.

**Please write** appeals to the Mexican authorities calling for Raúl Hernández to be released immediately and unconditionally.

### Write to:

Lic. Zeferino Torreblanca  
Galindo - Governor of Guerrero  
Gobernador del Estado de Guerrero  
Palacio de Gobierno  
Edificio Centro  
piso 2  
Ciudad de los Servicios CP 39075  
Chilpancingo  
Guerrero  
MÉXICO

### 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.

## April meeting:

### ◆ **Group Planning Pack 2010:**

Because of Amnesty's new campaigning calendar, which will run by calendar years starting in January 2011 instead of April – March, this year's choices of work cover the period April – December 2010,

**Global Campaign: Demand Dignity** – Rob Atkinson

**Global Campaign: Security & Human Rights**  
– Giampaolo D'Alessandro

**Individuals at Risk** – We decided to ask for a new case file for an individual at risk in Central America. Group contact will be Rapinder Kaur. She will do this in conjunction with her responsibilities as contact for the **Central America World Region**.

We will probably continue to work on the case of Hu Jia, detained in China. Our group contact will be Kulbir Singh Chahal, who is also taking over responsibility as contact for **China & East Asia World Region**.

**Death Penalty** – John Williams will continue to receive death penalty actions and circulate them round the group.

### **Programmes and Actions**

such as Women's Human Rights, Refugees, Arms Control, Burma, Israel & the Occupied Territories, will come to the group as Monthly Actions via the Secretary.

### ◆ **Monthly Action:**

Letters for candidates in the General Election, we covered 5 constituencies.

### ◆ **AGM**

Judith Webb reported back on AGM see page 1

### ◆ **Eling walk:**

Plans for the walk around Eling were confirmed. We can report that 20 people turned up and we raised £73, thanks to Mary.

### ◆ **Waitrose Tin Rattle**

The rota for the 8th May Tin rattle was finalised.

## UK ELECTION: KEEP HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE MIX

With the 2010 General Election taking place in less than a week, Amnesty needs your help to put human rights at the top of the political agenda. At the election parliament will undergo significant change - at least 151 MPs are standing down and many seats could change hands. With such a large number of new MPs coming into the House, it is vital that human rights remain in the picture.

Amnesty believes respect for human rights should be at the centre of government policy and practice and urges all parties to make the following commitments in their manifesto:

- \* The rights of women in the UK and overseas
- \* Security and human rights
- \* The human rights framework in the UK

