



# Southampton Group

## AMNESTY NEWS

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

September 2010

## LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

**JOHN WILLIAMS**

I hope you had a restful summer break and that you are ready for a new year of human rights action.

Included with this Newsletter is our 2010-11 calendar, I hope you agree that we have some very interesting meetings and activities coming up. We have tried to ensure there is a mixture of familiar themes, ie areas where the Southampton Group has traditionally worked over the years, and a few new themes.

The familiar themes include our first meeting in September when Bernard O'Hear the AIUK China will speak about Human Rights in China. Sadly, this is an area which continues to figure highly on the human rights agenda. You will also see that we highlight Hu Jia and his family. I want to draw your attention in particular to March, which marks the 3rd anniversary of Hu Jia's arrest. It is important that we use that anniversary to make a big push to try to get him out of prison.

Some of the new themes include a number of speakers on children's rights. This is an area where we haven't done much work in the past. So I am particularly looking forward to the October, November and March meetings.

We also have speakers on Palestine, Action for Refugees, East Africa, the Care of Victims of Torture and Workers' Rights.

As well as the speaker meetings, we have a number of social events, so sharpen your brains for our Pub Quiz in October, and get your walking boots ready for April!

May is a big month as it is the 50th Anniversary of the founding of Amnesty. We hope to arrange a public lecture in conjunction with the University along with some other exciting events.

As always money will remain an important issue for us this year. Any ideas people have for fundraising events will be most welcome, and of course don't forget to fill in your "subs form".

I look forward to seeing all the regulars on Monday 13th and hopefully a few new faces too, why not bring a friend!

**Best wishes, John Williams, Chair  
Southampton Amnesty Group.**

### 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

# ACTION OF THE MONTH

## Iran: Women's activist sentenced to five years

In April 2009 Ronak Safarzadeh was sentenced to five years in prison for membership of the Free Life Party of Kurdistan (PJAK - an armed Kurdish opposition group) and to one year for 'propaganda against the state'. According to her lawyer, Ronak's activities were limited to work with an NGO affiliated to the Campaign for Equality, an initiative committed to ending legal discrimination against Iranian women.

The authorities have impeded the work of the Campaign and arrested dozens of women's rights defenders. Ronak's lawyer says that the evidence presented in court did not substantiate claims that Ronak has ever used or advocated violence. Her involvement with the PJAK was reportedly limited to researching women's participation in the party.

**Call on the Iranian authorities to overturn Ronak's sentence**

*I would like to register my dismay about the sentencing of women's rights activist Ronak Safarzadeh.*

*According to reports, Ronak Safarzadeh was sentenced to five years in prison for membership of the Free Life Party of Kurdistan and to one year for propaganda against the state. I understand that members of the Campaign for Equality, such as Ronak Safarzadeh, are careful to conduct their activities in full compliance with the law, and that the Iranian Constitution permits peaceful gatherings and petitions calling for legislative change.*

*I believe Ronak Safarzadeh to be a prisoner of conscience, held solely for exercising her human right to freedom of expression and assembly. I therefore call on you to release her immediately and unconditionally.*

*I further call on you to drop all charges against other Campaign for Equality activists who have been arrested or imprisoned for their peaceful campaigning for equal rights for women in Iran.*

### **Ali Larijani**

Speaker of Majles

Speaker of Parliament

Islamic Consultative Assembly (Majles-e Shoura-ye Eslami)

Baharestan Square

Tehran

Islamic Republic of Iran

# GROUP NEWS

## *Pub Quiz*

The Duke of Wellington  
Bugle St Southampton

Tuesday October 14th  
7.30pm

£12 including dinner

Contact John for tickets  
023 8055 3868

## GREETINGS CARD CAMPAIGN

Following the closure of Borders, we still require a venue for the greetings card campaign. If anyone has any ideas for a replacement venue, please let John know.

## FUND RAISING

Many ideas for fund raising in the coming year have been discussed including a number of options for the 50th Anniversary of Amnesty International in May.

We discussed the possibility of doing more local, individual tin rattles. If anyone would be prepared to organise something locally, please let us know.

Any other ideas for fund raising are always gratefully received.

## NEXT GROUP MEETING

Monday 13th September  
7.30pm

## Human Rights in China

**Speaker: Bernard O'Hear,  
AIUK China Coordinator.**

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

**ALL WELCOME**

## DIARY

### September

**Monday 13th** : Group Meeting

### October

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

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

**Monday 11th** : Group Meeting

**Thursday 14th** : Pub Quiz

**Sunday 17th** : International Day for Eradication of Poverty

# GROUP WEBSITE



Don't forget, the newly updated group website has lots of useful information about the group, upcoming events, campaigns and actions

<http://www.amnesty-volunteer.org/uk/southampton-city>

## 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