



Southampton Group

AMNESTY NEWS

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

If you would like more information about the Group or would like to take part in any activities please get in touch by e-mailing:

AmnestySouthampton@yahoo.co.uk

February 2021

UPDATE on DEATH PENALTY

At the January meeting John Williams updated the Group on key aspects of the DP. NB this refers to official state positions and does not cover extrajudicial killings.

Abolition Chronology: The first country to abolish the DP was Venezuela in 1863, and the most recent Kazakhstan in January 2021. Since 1985 there have only been 8 years when no country has abolished the DP.

Africa: Egypt is the biggest executor. Other countries using the DP are Botswana, Equatorial Guinea, Libya, South Sudan and Nigeria.

Caribbean: Dominican Republic and Haiti have abolished the DP; the rest have it *de jure* (i.e., in law but not in action). The last executions were in Saint Kitts and Nevis in 2008.

Central & South America: The DP exists in Belize & Guyana although it has not been used for years. In Brazil, Chile, El Salvador, Guatemala and Peru the DP is only legal in exceptional/special circumstances.

Asia: Most executions worldwide take place in Asia. China executes more people for more reasons than the rest of the world combined. Iran & Saudi Arabia, also have high levels of executions. North Korea uses the DP against high-level criminals and those suspected of committing “grave offences”. Bangladesh, Iraq, Pakistan, Syria, Vietnam and Yemen all use the DP. India executes in extreme cases.

Of the 12 countries with a “very high” Human Development Index” which practice the DP, 10 are in Asia: Japan, Taiwan, Singapore, Oman, Qatar, and United Arab Emirates.

Europe: The European Union holds a strong position on the DP, abolition is a pre-condition for entry. Belarus is the only European country using the DP. Russia has a moratorium and last used the DP in 1999.

Oceania: Nearly all countries have abolished the DP. Papua New Guinea and Tonga still have it in law, but not used it in decades. The last known executions took place in 1982.

USA: Colorado became the 22nd state to abolish the DP. 2020 saw the fewest new DP sentences in the modern era with state executions the lowest in 37 years.

Race continues to play a significant role in the use of the DP.

Trump agreed more federal executions than all the states combined.

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

DETERIORATING HUMAN RIGHTS IN CHINA

In a sign that the human rights situation in China is extremely severe, between 8th and 22nd January Amnesty International issued no fewer than 5 Urgent Actions. These highlighted the range of means whereby the Chinese authorities are seeking to suppress all dissent.

- The National Security Law of June 2020 being used in Hong Kong is so broadly worded that it undermines the human rights protection of detainees. UN Human Rights sources say that national security cannot be used to suppress the right to express political views.
- Criticism of China by family members overseas is leading to the arrest of individuals such as Gulshan Abbas, a retired doctor whose sister spoke out in the United States about the Uyghurs. Gulshan was accused of being a “separatist”, taking part in terrorism and sentenced to 20 years in prison after a secret trial.
- Sensitivity about COVID-19 is extreme, and journalists who report on it risk jail sentences of 4 years.
- Thousands of Uyghurs and other minorities are detained in centres which the Chinese authorities claim are for education and training, but in reality aim to destroy minority ways and culture through brainwashing, forced labour and torture.
- Families of detainees are not kept informed about charges, trials, welfare or access to legal support of their choosing. One U.A tells of a Kazakh family who were taken to an “education centre”, and only heard unofficially that the father had died in custody.
- Torture is widespread. A journalist gave up her hunger strike to avoid having her legs shackled and her hands restrained, and there is grave concern for her ongoing welfare. Deprivation of health care is used as a punishment.

AIUK has a new China Country Coordinator who is enthusiastic and imaginative, and is organising campaign meetings through Microsoft Teams which anyone can join. Some of the actions she sends out will be forwarded to Southampton Group members, so please support Amnesty's China campaigning. There is so much to do!

DONATIONS PLEASE

The Group is not requesting subscriptions for 2021, but we do need donations!

Nearly all fundraising events were cancelled for last year and for the foreseeable future-while campaigning, printing & postage and donations to AIUK still need paying for.

Any donation is welcome, and is easiest by:

Bank Transfer to the Group's bank account:

“Amnesty International Southampton”, Sort Code: 08 92 99; Account Number: 65125823.

Many thanks, Gareth Davies, Group Treasurer.

ACTION

Please use the letter below to send or email to the Minister of Health in Brazil

Minister of Health Eduardo Pazuello

Esplanada dos Ministerios, Bloco G
Brasilia,, Distrito Federal, - Brazil
CEP:70:058-900

chefia.gm@saude.gov.br

Dear Minister Pazuello,

I am writing to express my concern regarding the current situation in the hospitals of Manaus. I understand that there are more than 1500 people hospitalised with COVID-19 in the city and thousands more infected. With this spike in infections, the hospitals are at maximum capacity but there is a critical lack of oxygen to treat patients currently hospitalised. I understand that the federal government has now sent oxygen tanks to the city. But this supply is insufficient to meet current demand. Other cities and states in nearby regions could also be at risk of facing a similar situation.

I call upon you to take all the necessary steps to guarantee the right to health of patients in the city of Manaus and other cities in nearby regions that could face similar risks, by ensuring that they are equipped with an adequate supply of oxygen and other urgent medical supplies, and by using maximum available resources to ensure that proper treatment is provided based on international scientific standards.

Yours sincerely,

SOUTHAMPTON AMNESTY FEATURED FROM AUSTRALIA

One of our Group's old friends, Jay Turner, has mentioned us (and Fran in particular) in concerts streamed from his home in Australia. Jay was one of the headline acts in "Folk for Freedom", which we ran in Southampton from 1991 to 2000. A heady mix of music, campaigning, curry and chilli. They developed from a one-off concert into the centrepiece of a weekend human rights arts festival-only stopping when our main venue, The Gantry, was demolished!

Jay and his wife Cath also performed their last concert before moving to Australia in 2005 in aid of our Group. They should have been touring in the UK recently, but due to COVID restrictions instead performed a "Not the UK tour" virtually from their own home. In addition to describing involvement with Southampton Amnesty, they perform "Writing for Freedom", a song inspired by Amnesty's Write for Rights Campaign and which Jay released in aid of Amnesty at the time.

You can find the concert on You Tube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-y3ZdIOvBbY>
Mention of Amnesty starts at 49.00 minutes and ends by 58.00 although a number of other songs have human rights themes.

CORONA VIRUS

For the foreseeable future the Southampton Group will not be holding face-to-face meetings. However, we will be arranging virtual meetings see DIARY box. And if possible some external fundraising events

We plan to continue to produce a monthly News Letter.

Each month we will include at least one letter or action, which you will either be able to copy or email, any update we may receive about cases we are working on and news from the web.

DIARY

For details of how to join any of the events/meetings outlined below please contact our secretary, Valerie at our email address:
AmnestySouthampton@yahoo.co.uk

FEBRUARY 2021

Monday 8th: Mike Brown, CLEAR Project Manager. Will talk on the issue of REFUGEES. This will be a virtual meeting, please see details above on how to join this meeting.

MARCH 2021

Monday 8th: meeting details to be confirmed

SOUTHAMPTON GROUP WHO'S WHO

Group Officers:

Chair: Giampaolo D'Alessandro

Secretary: Valerie Oswald

Treasurer: Gareth Davies

Outreach and Parliamentary Officer:
Veronica Tippetts

Newsletter: John Williams

Campaigning Activity:
People on the move
Protecting the space for human rights defenders
Death Penalty
HR Act
Snoopers Charter
South Asia

Case file: Marielle Franco, Brazil

Individual at Risk: Aster Fissehatsion and Dawit Isaak, Eritea

Issues on the Web amnesty.org.uk

Includes:

UK: UK Government don't decriminalise torture

Northern Ireland: Women and girls must be allowed home abortions during coronavirus pandemic.

UK: Prime Minister, reunite child refugees with their families.

Bahrain: don't execute Hussain Ali and Mohamed Ramadhan.

Turkey: Demand justice for Turkish students defending LGBTQ+ rights.

Poland: Drop the charges against Elżbieta, Anna and Joanna.

NB the views expressed in this News Letter may not necessarily be those of Amnesty International. John Williams editor