



# Southampton Group

## AMNESTY NEWS

[www.amnesty-volunteer.org/uk/southampton-city](http://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](mailto:AmnestySouthampton@yahoo.co.uk)

May 2021

### SIXTY YEARS DEFENDING HUMAN RIGHTS

“In October 1960 a young barrister got on the London Underground, opened his paper and read a short article about a couple of students in Portugal who had been imprisoned for seven years after raising their glasses to freedom.

Sounds uneventful, but this was to become one of the most significant moments in the global movement for human rights. That barrister was called Peter Benenson, and his outrage at the imprisonment of two men led to the birth of Amnesty International.” (taken from the [amnesty.org.uk](http://amnesty.org.uk) web site).

Southampton Amnesty Group was formed in 1964 and is one of the longest standing groups in the UK Section of Amnesty International. We have worked on a variety of tasks organised around three main themes:

***Campaign for the respect of human rights-*** This is done by writing letters to UK and non UK government officials, to prisoners and human rights defenders.

***Raise awareness of human rights in the local community-*** we do this by organising social events, public lectures, concerts etc.

***Raise funds for Amnesty International-*** via fee paying social events, tin rattles etc.

#### 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

Just a few pictorial examples of our activities over the years, including taking part in National Marches, Guests at our Monthly Group meetings, raising money by a sponsored walk for Amnesty and letter writing “Write for Rights.”



I hope these four photos may whet your appetite as shortly we will have a short video with many more photos, and a commentary

**TURKEY**

**METU PRIDE DEFENDERS  
Prosecuted for celebrating LGBTI rights**

**Biology students Melike Balkan and Özgür Gür are among 19 people facing trial over a peaceful protest at the Middle East Technical University (METU) in Ankara.**

Melike and Özgür defend lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI+) rights. As prominent members of the LGBTI+ Solidarity Group at METU, they have organised numerous marches, meetings and other events amid an upsurge in homophobia and increasing restrictions on freedom of expression in Turkey.

METU LGBTI+ Solidarity Group has organised an annual Pride march on campus since 2011. In 2019, the university managers told students the Pride march planned for 10<sup>th</sup> May could not go ahead. Undeterred, the Solidarity Group staged a Pride sit-in. The university called the police, who used excessive force, including tear gas, against the peaceful protesters. They arrested at least 23 students-including Melike and Özgür. Eighteen students and one academic face trial.

**APPEAL**

Ask the Minister of Justice to ensure the acquittal of 19 people unfairly prosecuted for alleged participation in Pride Parade at METU 2019

**Send appeal to:**

Mr Abdülhamit Gül, Minister of Justice, Adalet Bakanlığı, 06659 Ankara, Turkey.

E mail at: [info@adet.gov.tr](mailto:info@adet.gov.tr)

Salutation: Dear Minister of Justice

**In your letter ask him:**

- Ensure the acquittal of the 18 METU students and the academic for alleged participation in the Pride Parade on 10<sup>th</sup> May 2019
- Ensure a prompt, independent and impartial investigation into police conduct on METU campus on 10<sup>th</sup> May 2019, and bring to justice any police officers who acted unlawfully.

## **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](mailto:AmnestySouthampton@yahoo.co.uk)**

### **MAY 2021**

**Monday 10<sup>th</sup> May: 7.30 via zoom: Simon John, Modern slavery**

**Simon's aim is to raise awareness of modern slavery in the UK and everywhere in the world, and how we can end it.**

**This has been a horrid year for every one, but the pandemic has cruelly exposed the vulnerability of the world's downtrodden, Modern Slavery is thriving.**

## **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**

**China**

**Case file: Marielle Franco, Brazil**

**Individual at Risk: Aster Fissehatsion  
and Dawit Isaak, Eritea**

## **Issues on the Web**

**[amnesty.org.uk](https://www.amnesty.org.uk)**

**Include:**

**Saudi Arabia:** Help quash Loujain" sentence

**Iran:** Help get retired father home to his family

**Turkey:** Release detained Bogaziçi protestors. .

**Iran/UK Govt:** Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe, what is happening? Nazanin sentenced to more time prison

**China:** Young dad torn apart from family. Yiliyasijiang went missing in 2017 and is believed to have been taken to a Chinese "re-education camp"

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