



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

July 2021

There was no speaker at the June meeting, below is a summary of a recent message from **Nabila KHAN, AIUK Country Coordinator for China and Taiwan**. (The original message was in the monthly mailing from Amnesty).

She starts by noting that since taking on the role of Country Coordinator for China and Taiwan in October 2020 the Human Rights issues in China had really intensified and sadly worsened. She highlights three areas in particular:

Firstly, the most prominent and ongoing issue has been the plight of the **Uyghur ethnic group** located in the Xinjiang Autonomous Region in China's North West. Currently, it is estimated that over 1 million Uyghurs have been sent to "re-education" camps, whilst other groups may term this a cultural genocide, Amnesty has found the burden of proof has not been met and have decided to term this as a crime against humanity.

Secondly, the **Belt and Road initiative (BRI)**. The BRI is the signature foreign policy initiative of China and Xi Jin Ping (President of China). It aims to rework global trade routes in a way that is favourable to China, with the aim of increasing Chinese hegemony and making China the dominant superpower. There are two roads, the overland "belt" that goes from China (through Xinjiang) to Eurasia (through countries such as Pakistan and Kazakhstan) out towards Europe. There is also a maritime "road" that goes through maritime sea routes but is less significant in terms of foreign policy. The BRI is the main reason for the current situation in Xinjiang, as Xinjiang is key to the success of the BRI and holds tremendous geopolitical importance to China. Nabila Khan is of the opinion that the Chinese state is incredibly fearful of balkanization and separatism, hence the presence of an ethnic group who are not Han Chinese, do not speak Chinese and practise a different religion and culture is very threatening to the Chinese state. As such, the Chinese state has chosen the most extreme and frankly unnecessary way of keeping control over Xinjiang.

Cont p 2

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

Cont from p 1

Thirdly the situation in **Hong Kong** which has been deteriorating rapidly. Last year the Chinese government introduced a National Security Law. This means the criminalisation of any act of:

- Secession-breaking away from the country
- Subversion-undermining the power or authority of the central government
- Terrorism-using violence or intimidation against people
- Collusion with foreign or external forces.

Last week the police arrested senior executives of the Apple Daily newspaper in Hong Kong, for breaking national security law.

Amnesty's International Secretariat based in Hong Kong has done a lot of work on the national security law. Khan is hoping to work with higher/further educational institutions to speak out against this law.

Khan is also working on getting the government of Pakistan to speak out against the human rights abuses of the Uyghurs. In an attempt to allow UN investigators into Xinjiang Autonomous Region to conduct their own independent investigation into the situation.

BUSINESS MEETING

1. We agreed that we would meet in person from September.
 - a. If it is legally possible
 - b. If Avenue St Andrews is available
2. We will offer speakers the possibility to join us online.
 - a. If the network at the church will allow us to do so
 - b. We will explore the possibility of using online technology at our meetings.
3. It is unlikely that we will be able to run a Human Rights Lecture certainly for the first term. This will be reviewed in January.
4. There were various links in the Monthly Mailing which Valerie will check out.
5. No change in our financial position.
6. Valerie will contact local NGOs involved with refugees.
7. There have been over 226 views of our You Tube video.
8. Peter's radio interview went well.

Campaign for **REAL LIVES**

EREN KESKIN
TURKEY

Leading lawyer given six-year jail term

In February, prominent human rights lawyer Eren Keskin was sentenced to six years in prison on the absurd charge of “membership of an armed terrorist organisation”. She was convicted under Article 301 of the Penal Code, which makes “denigrating” the Turkish nation a criminal offence.

Eren, co-chair of the Human Rights Association, has dedicated her life to defending the rights of women, prisoners, and families of the “disappeared”. She has been repeatedly prosecuted, and sometimes convicted, under articles of the Penal Code that curtail the right to freedom of expression. The volume of cases brought against Eren amounts to judicial harassment, and she has also been physically attacked and subjected to death threats.

Eren’s case is part of the Ozgür Gündem trial, which concerns a daily newspaper that was closed in 2016. She currently remains at liberty pending her appeal. After being sentenced, Eren tweeted: “I have been prosecuted many times and jailed for my thoughts, I’m still here. I’m not going anywhere”.

APPEAL

Urge the minister of justice to overturn Eren Keskin’s conviction. Call for the outstanding cases brought against her for her role as editor-in-chief of Ozgür Gündem to be dropped. State that she must be allowed to exercise her right to freedom of expression and carry out her human rights work free from reprisals and judicial harassment.

Send to: Minister of Justice Abdulhamit Gül
Ministry of Justice
Adalet Bakanligi
06659 Ankara
Turkey
Email: ozelkalem@adalet.gov.tr

Salutation: Dear Minister

Send to: His Excellency Umit Yalçın
Embassy of the Republic of Turkey
43 Belgrave Square
London SW1X 8PA

Salutation: Your Excellency

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

JULY 2021

Monday 12th July:

1. Community Organising Training
2. Police Bill
3. Report from AGM
4. Planning for next year

This meeting will be held on zoom, see details above of how to join this meeting

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

Include:

UK: Defend your right to protest.

Saudi: Help quash Loujain's sentence

Iran: Help save Swedish Iranian doctor from imminent execution

China: Help end the brutal repression of Uyghur communities in China

Iran: Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe: What's Happening?

Lebanon: The Lebanese state is attacking its own population

Twitter: Everyday women on Twitter face a barrage of violence and abuse.

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