



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

Feb 2022

THE INVASION OF UKRAINE IS A HUMAN RIGHTS CATASTROPHE

Agnès Callamard, Secretary-General of Amnesty International, said “Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has triggered a massive human rights, humanitarian and displacement crisis that has the makings of the worst such catastrophe in recent European history”.

There are at least 10 sights of **suspected war crimes in Ukraine**. Including strikes on kindergartens, hospital, residential blocks, civilian vehicles and general urban areas.

Amnesty is calling for:

Humanity first:

1. We call on neighbouring countries to put humanity first, ensuring anyone fleeing Ukraine is given protection without discrimination.
2. Humanitarian agencies must be allowed to access and facilitate assistance to civilians affected by the hostilities.

Accountability:

1. All involved in crimes under international law to be held accountable.
2. The international community must support the investigation led by the International Criminal Court.
3. Accountability around the invasion of Ukraine requires concerted and innovative efforts from the UN and nations.

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

URGENT ACTION

Imprisoned bookseller at risk of ill-treatment China

Bookseller Gui Minhai was sentenced on 24 February 2020 to 10 years imprisonment and deprivation of political rights for five years, on the charge of “illegally providing intelligence to foreign entities”. Since then, he has been denied access to his family and, having obtained Swedish citizenship in 1996, to Swedish consular assistance. There are grave concerns over Gui Minhai’s poor health, and that he is at risk of torture and other ill-treatment. The Chinese government must release him immediately; pending his release, he must be granted access to his family, lawyers of his choice, consular support and adequate medical care.

Write an appeal in your own words or use the model letter below.

Write to: President of the People’s Republic of China, Xi Jinping, Zhongnanhai, Xichangan’jie, Xichengqu, Beijing Shi 100017, People Republic of China.

Email: english@mail.gov.cn

Dear President Xi,

I am writing to express my concern for **Gui Minhai**, who was sentenced on 24.02.2020 to 10 years’ imprisonment and deprivation of political rights for five years, on the charge of “illegally providing intelligence to foreign entities”.

Since his imprisonment, the authorities have rejected the Swedish consulate’s request to read the verdict and meet Gui Minhai, who obtained Swedish citizenship in 1996. It is distressing to learn that he has been able to see his family members and consular officials, or even speak to a lawyer of his own choice since 2018. there is no way to verify his wishes or conditions. Given his poor health, which requires regular and urgent medical care, his family is particularly concerned about his wellbeing. Gui Minhai was tried and convicted in secret. Despite the authorities’ claim that he was prosecuted for handing over ‘intelligence’ to overseas parties, it appears that his conviction is primarily based on his attempted trip with two Swedish diplomats in January 2018. Gui Minhai was suddenly taken away by approximately ten plainclothes officers whilst travelling on a train with two Swedish diplomats to Beijing for urgent diagnosis of what is believed to be ALS (also known as Lou Gehrig’s disease).

Without any further information provided, a court notice announcing Gui Minhai’s conviction and sentence in 2020 stated that he had reapplied for Chinese citizenship in 2018, which would nullify his Swedish citizenship under Chinese law. As he has been held in custody since 2018 without access to his family or lawyers, the veracity of this information is highly questionable.

I therefore call on you to”

- ***Release Gui Minhai and drop the charges against him, unless there is sufficient credible and admissible evidence that he has committed on internationally recognized offence and is granted a fair trial in line with international standards;***
- ***Grant Gui Minhai prompt, regular and unrestricted access to lawyers of his choice and to his family;***
- ***Grant Gui Minhai access to medical care on request or as necessary; and***
- ***Grant the Swedish consulate access to Gui Minhai.***

Yours sincerely, etc

Funding our Group's work

As Covid continues to affect our activities, we will again not request annual subscriptions. But as most of our fundraising events have not been possible, do please donate!

We funded our work in 2021 from your kind donations. The Group kept up work on our case files, hosted online talks, met (virtually) with a local MP, produced a video for Amnesty's 60th birthday, and had our photo mosaic of Marielle Franco exhibited in Southampton SeaCity Museum. We also featured as AIUK's first case study on 60 years of successful Groups.

Any size donation is welcome. We understand that some may not be able to contribute financially at the moment.

You can donate:

By Bank Transfer to "Amnesty International Southampton", Sort code 08 92 99
Account Number 65125823

By cheque payable to "Amnesty International Southampton City Group", send to
Amnesty Treasurer, 3 Firwood Close, Eastleigh, SO53 1HN

Thank you for your continued support.

Business Meeting February 14th 2022

1. Chair: need to ensure we have an agreed chair especially when we have an external speaker. Giampaolo agreed to chair the next meeting.
2. HR Lecture: agreed we would go for the Nov/Dec slot. Still discussing possible speakers.
3. New campaigns: "End Israel's Apartheid regards Palestine"; Afghanistan, John agreed to monitor this campaign; Football welcomes refugees, Gareth to contact Saints.
4. Human Rights Act Consultation: see web site, Peter will follow up.
5. Group report on Individual's at Risk; ask Val to follow up.
6. Treasurer's report: So far only 3 donations. Our "books" have been examined.
7. Eritrea: Mary to approach local councillors; possibly look at activities such as planting a tree possibly with a school. Invite Lord Chidgey (member of the Eritrean parliamentary group.) Sadly, Lord Chidgey died. We will look at alternatives.
8. Next meeting: Claire Lougarre, Law Lecturer Southampton will speak on: "The Importance of the Human Rights Act, and the governments proposal to replace it with a Bill of Rights"

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 information 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

March:

Monday 14th at 7.30 On zoom:
The importance of the Human Rights Act
Speaker: Claire Lougarre Lecturer in Law
Dept
All welcome.

Please note joining instructions for both meetings above.

SOUTHAMPTON GROUP WHO'S WHO

Group Officers:

Secretary: Valerie Oswald

Treasurer: Gareth Davies

Additional Roles Include:

Chair: Rotating:

**Outreach and Parliamentary Officer:
Veronica Tippetts**

Newsletter: John Williams

**Campaigning Activity:
Eritrea; Individuals at Risk: Aster Fissehatsion, Dawit Isaak and Ciham Ali Ahmed**

**People on the move
Protecting the space for human rights defenders
Death Penalty
HR Act**

Case file: Marielle Franco, Brazil

Issues on the Web amnesty.org.uk Include:

UK: Urge your MP to speak up against the Policing Bill.

Afghanistan: Stand with Afghan women & Girls.

LGBTI: learn more

Russia: Navalny is prisoner of conscience after "politically-motivated" sentencing.

Iran: Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe's latest furlough extension given cautious welcome.

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