

Thursday 8th March 2018 – International Women’s Day Minutes

Apologies: JG, JGi

Attendees: FL, AL, RH, A, RB, MR, CC, KW, CA, JC, SD, MDC, DP, AH, DM

Guest speakers: Roza Salih and Pauline Kelly

Roza Salih is one of the Glasgow Girls. Click [here](#) for a short article about the Glasgow Girls.

She gave a really passionate talk covering following topics:

- The story of the Glasgow Girls – how it all started, the actions they took and their achievements
- Other campaigns Roza has been involved with including campaigning for the right to education for asylum seekers in the UK. In particular, the barriers to going to university. Her campaigning led to the University of Strathclyde becoming the first Scottish university to offer scholarships for asylum seekers
- Kurdistan – Roza originally came from the Iraqi part of Kurdistan. She explained to the group about the current situation in Kurdistan, including the human rights abuses against the Kurdish people. Roza’s activities focus on building solidarity between Scottish trade unions and the Kurdish people. ‘Scottish Solidarity with Kurdistan’ has a [Facebook page](#) and [website](#) where you can go for more information about their activities, including their initiative to build a ‘Scottish school’ in Kubane.
- Roza recommended ‘Revolution in Rojava: Democratic Autonomy and Women's Liberation in Syrian Kurdistan’ as interesting reading for people who are interested in this area.
- Roza’s priorities for continued campaigning on the asylum system in the UK include – devolution of migration matters to Scotland, personalizing and humanizing the system and raising public awareness about the asylum process here.
- Roza is currently working for Chris Stevens MP doing casework. She also continues to talk to young people, especially girls, about the Glasgow Girls, inspiring them to campaign on the issues which are important to them.
- In the Q&A, we discussed what it was like being involved with the Glasgow Girls Musical, what the other Glasgow Girls are up to now, and the reasons why the Glasgow Girls were so successful.

Pauline Kelly is the Media, Campaigns and Human Rights Education Officer at the Amnesty Scotland office. Pauline gave us a short update on the following upcoming activities and events of Amnesty Scotland:

- [The Family Reunion Bill](#) – it’s not too late to get in touch with your MP, particularly if they are not an SNP MP (the SNP fully support the bill and have committed their attendance). It is very important that at least 100 MPs turn up on the 16th March to support the bill.
- 28th April – Scotland Welcomes Refugees! More details to follow.
- Mid-June – Refugee Festival, potential collaboration with the Scottish Refugee Council. More details to follow.

- Scottish Amnesty e-newsletter – should be ready in the next few weeks! Send Pauline or Malcolm any content. The Scottish office also welcomes feedback on the layout/ content.
- [Wee Write](#) – Amnesty at the Aye Write! Festival talking to children about human rights through literature took place this week and was very well attended.

Treasurer's report

£563.71 in the bank.

Secretary's report

Update from FL.

Amnesty International Annual Report

'The State of the World's Human Rights 2017/18' is now available to download as a PDF at the [website](#).

It covers 159 countries and delivers the most comprehensive analysis of the state of human rights in the world today. While the findings remain shocking, it is the events such as those highlighted in the report that galvanised people across the world to stand up in the face of adversity and make their voices heard.

Chile: Solidarity with Rodrigo Mundaca

This World Water Day (22nd March), [take action](#) in support of Rodrigo Mundaca and the Defence Movement of Earth, Environmental Protection and the Access to Water (MODATIMA) in Petorca Province, Chile and tell Rodrigo and other members of MODATIMA that you stand in solidarity with them in their fight to defend their community's access to water.

Selfie frames

Following winning the Marsh Award in 2017, Bournemouth, Poole & Christchurch Group have produced a range of A1 size selfie frames such as 'Love is a Human Right', and 'We Welcome Refugees'. The group have used them at their local Pride and other events. The group has offered to create frames (using existing designs) for other groups.

We decided as a group to order a couple of frames for our refugee campaigning and Pride.

Updated guidance on data protection and fundraising for local groups

Download fundraising update [here](#).

More info on data protection [here](#).

Past events

Activist Political Effectiveness Training- Feedback

AL and FL

We attended day one of this free training, provided by Amnesty, on 17th February. We both found it really informative and useful (even if it was quite a lot of work for a Saturday!) The training covered:

- Who is your MP and MSP(s) and what they do

- What to campaign on for human rights
- What you can achieve for human rights with your MP
- How to write to your MP
- How to have an effective meeting with your MP

The second training day is in April/ May. The training is currently in the pilot stages. When it is rolled out more widely, we will let the group know. In the meantime, if you would like a copy of the notes, ask FL.

Another News Story, CCA

CC

This documentary talked about the media coverage of the refugee crisis and was shown as part of the Glasgow Film Festival. We had a stall at the screening. Although not many people stopped at the stall, most took away a bag which included action cards and information on AIUK's I Welcome campaign.

Letter Writing

CC

Thanks to AL for hosting another enjoyable letter writing evening at his at the end of February.

Upcoming Events/ Speakers

Aye Write Festival

<https://www.ayewrite.com/Pages/default.aspx> Glasgow's annual book festival running from the 15th - 25th March

We are hoping to have a stall. If a stall is not possible, we will try to organize a social instead. TBC.

Prisoners of Conscience

Ali Aarrass

J brought round a card for the group to sign as it was Ali Aarrass' birthday on the 4th March. If you would like to send a message to Ali, the address is:

Ali Aarrass
Numero D'Ecrou 930
Prison Locale de Tifelt
Tifelt
Morocco

New POC – Volunteer needed to be contact person

In the last meeting, we voted to request a new POC to campaign for as well as Ali. We are looking for a volunteer to be the contact person for the group. This involves giving your contact details to the Amnesty office. They then send you any updates and campaign ideas for you to relay to the group.

Actions

Azza Soliman

FL

The group signed action cards for Egyptian women's rights defender: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/get-involved/take-action/speak-out-for-egypt-womens-rights-defender-azza-soliman/>

Norway stop Taibeh's deportation

Message from friends of JG:

You will remember that we mentioned to you last November that we joined a demonstration against the Norwegian government's eagerness to return Afghan refugees to Kabul, which for some unfathomable reason the government thinks is safe. The demonstration was fronted by 18-year old Taibeh Abbasi, a student at the Trondheim Cathedral School (the same sixth-form college that Kristina attended). Now the Norwegian high court has found that the government is not acting illegally in returning Afghan refugees to Afghanistan, and the Norwegian Parliament has rejected a motion that young Afghan refugees with temporary refugee status should be allowed to stay on in Norway after they reach the age of 18. Well, it may not be illegal to throw them out, but it is morally despicable in my view.

Last Wednesday the Norwegian Immigration Appeals Board (Utlendingsnemnda) has ordered that the Abbasi family must leave Norway by 11 March – in less than three weeks' time. The family consists of the mother, her 20-year old son Yasin, her daughter Taibeh and her younger son Ehsan, aged 15. The family is well integrated after six years in Norway. Taibeh and her brothers speak good Norwegian. Yasin has been working in a restaurant here in Trondheim and paying taxes, but the Immigration Appeals Board have rescinded his work permit and last week he was forced to give up his job. For Taibeh it will mean having to leave in the middle of the school year without being able to take her final school exams. An Ehsan is at school and only a year older than Aurora.

Taibeh and her younger brother have never been in Afghanistan. They were born in a refugee camp in Iran before coming to Norway. The Immigration Appeals Board admits that the children have a strong attachment to Norway, which is normally a strong case for children being allowed to stay, but then it goes on to say that because they have adapted well to Norway they will have no problems adapting to life in Afghanistan!. The Immigration Board claims that they have their father in Afghanistan, yet the family say they have no knowledge of his whereabouts. The Board also says that because Yasin is of age he can also function as a male supporter and protector for his mother and two younger siblings. The Board concludes that although there are strong humanitarian grounds for granting the family permanent residency in Norway, they have decided not to because of "immigration regulation considerations".

Amnesty International has mounted an international campaign against Norway in this matter. During the last week in January, 18,000 people signed it, including 3500 from abroad, and sent an appeal to the

Immigration Appeals Board to rescind its decision. Here are the links to this action as well as other information from Amnesty:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/get-involved/take-action/save-taibeh-from-deportation/>

<https://www.amnesty.org.uk/press-releases/norway-devastating-blow-afghans-parliament-rejects-asylum-proposal>

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/i-welcome-community-2/stories-of-welcome/activists-in-kenya-tell-norway/>

Other urgent actions

Thanks to MR for supplying the urgent actions.

[Detainee missing in Venezuela](#)

[Indigenous peoples advocate arrested in India for 'sedition'](#)

[Withheld evidence at issue as execution nears in USA](#)

[20 relatives of Uighur journalist detained in China](#)

Amnesty AGM Resolutions

CC

7-8th April, Swansea University.

As a group, we discussed and voted on the resolutions for the AGM. Those attending will then vote on behalf of the group in Swansea.

Resolution	Notes	Group's decision
F1 Financial Statements 2017	Routine resolution to receive financial reports	Yes
F2 Appointment of Auditors AIUK Board	Routine resolution to appoint auditors BDO	Yes
A1 Removal of the requirement to AIUK Board reappoint co-opted Directors annually	Making this amendment will avoid the need for the Board to make an annual reappointment of each Co-opted Director and will make initial terms of office consistent for all Co-opted Directors, without binding the hands of the Board should there be a need to make a shorter-term appointment.	Yes
Board A2 Extending the maximum term of	Extend term for co-opted members from 3 to 6	No

AIUK Board office of Co-Opted Directors		
A3 Correction of Article which implies that AIUK Board the Chair and Vice Chair can be a Co-opted Director	Correct the error in Article 38.3 which implies that the Chair and Vice Chair can be a co-opted Director	Yes
A4 Clarification of the requirement to select AIUK Board 4 elected Directors for retirement each year	The current requirement to pick four Elected Directors to retire does not allow for any existing unfilled places for Elected Directors on the Board.	Yes
A5 Clarification of the maximum length AIUK Board of term where a Board Member joins the Board between declaration dates	Clarifies that an Elected Director that joined the Board mid-term to fill a vacancy may remain on the Board until the next declaration date, rather than having to retire mid-term due to the maximum term rules.	Yes
A6 Remote participation at AGM AIUK Board	Proposes amendments to the Articles to facilitate remote participation in general meetings.	Yes

Resolution	Notes	Group's decision
B1 Homelessness Amnesty QUB	<p>Resolution: This AGM calls on Amnesty UK to work with the International Board and International Secretariat to develop a set of policies to combat homelessness and to start to engage in the work of campaigning against the epidemic of homelessness in the United Kingdom</p> <p>Board position: The Board opposes this resolution as currently worded. Whilst the Board agrees that homelessness is a human rights issue, any attempt to persuade the International Board and Secretariat to take time to develop a set of policies on homelessness in the UK is highly unlikely to be successful.</p>	Yes
B2 Right of self-determination for the people of West Papua Sean O'Leary	<p>Resolution Text: This AGM calls upon the AIUK Board to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Raise the issue of West Papuan self-determination with the International Secretariat. 2. Lobby the Secretariat to petition the UN to support an internationally supervised referendum on self-determination in West Papua. <p>Board Position: Board Background Note: The Board opposes this resolution as it falls outside Amnesty International's policy of remaining neutral on self-determination claims. The International Secretariat would not be able to carry out the activities envisaged.</p>	No
B3 Human Rights and International Trade Wirksworth and District Local Group	<p>Resolution Text: This AGM instructs AIUK to increase UK-focussed campaigning by research, lobbying, publicity and member actions in order to pressurise the government to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enact a new corporate criminal offence of failure to execute due diligence regarding human rights abuses in supply chains. • Advise all UK government sponsored trade delegations of their responsibilities to adhere to human rights obligations in international trade and investment. • Ensure that all victims of human rights abuses by UK companies or their subsidiaries have access to just compensation. <p>The board supports this resolution</p>	Yes

Resolution	Notes	Group's decision
C1 Freedom of religious expression Glasgow daytime	<p>This AGM instructs AIUK to propose to the International Secretariat of Amnesty International that advocating for Article 18 should be included in the next Strategic Plan. Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states: 'Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.'</p> <p>The board has not taken a stance on this.</p>	Yes
C2 The right to live with your spouse or civil partner Glasgow daytime	<p>AIUK to campaign for the UK Parliament and Government to permit all UK citizens the right to live in the UK with their legally recognised spouse or civil partner</p> <p>The Board opposes this resolution as currently worded. AIUK does not have spare funding available for another campaign and should this be approved by the AGM, work that has already been planned would have to be dropped.</p>	Yes
C3 Discrimination based upon caste using the Equality Act 2010 Lancaster University	<p>There is currently an amendment in place which adds caste as an aspect of race in the characteristics protected from discrimination by the Equality Act of 2010. However, a Minister of the Crown must formally bring this into UK law and this has not occurred. This AGM calls upon Amnesty International UK to pursue the implementation of this amendment into UK law by lobbying The UK Government</p> <p>The board supports this resolution. However, there are resource implications.</p>	Yes

Remember that if you are a member of Amnesty you also have an individual vote. Click [here](#) for information.

Next meeting – Thursday 12th April

Guest speaker - Ulrika Schmidt. She is the Amnesty Co-ordinator for Europe. She works on the human rights issues faced by Roma communities. We are also hoping that Ulrika will be joined by a representative of Friends of Romana Lav – an organisation for the Roma community in Glasgow. TBC.