

September 2020 Minutes



Glasgow West Amnesty International

Attendees: JG, JG, CL, MDS, FL, CC

Apologies: CA, MR

Church meeting venue

MDS attended a meeting at our usual meeting venue, Woodlands Methodist Church to discuss returning to face to face meetings. The church is back up and running for meetings. Chairs and tables have been arranged for social distancing, there is a one way system in place, attendees are expected to disinfect their chairs and wear face masks, etc. However, it is unclear whether local Amnesty groups are allowed to meet inside yet. MDS is going to get some advice from the Scottish Government as to whether groups such as Amnesty International are allowed to meet inside.

CC raised the point that it would be useful to have internet access so people could continue to join the meetings virtually if they preferred/ were self-isolating, etc. We are going to look into ways of having internet access. There is no wifi in the church.

For the time being we will continue our meetings online.

AGM Resolutions

[AGM 2020 resolutions can be read online here.](#)

After a group discussion, we decided on the following:

- S1 – Yes
- O1 – Yes
- O2 – Yes to first request. AIUK wouldn't be able to commit resources itself until it had the go-ahead from the International Secretariat.
- O3 – Yes to parts 2-4
- O4 – Yes. Other NGOs may be better placed to work on this in the UK but we could add our support/ backing.
- O5 – Yes, continue working on this please.

Write for Rights 2020

We discussed ideas for socially distanced campaigning for Write for Rights:

- Weekend Club – possible online workshop
- Schools /further education colleges?
- Brownies / other youth groups
- Other adult groups? Church groups?
- MILK cafe – Write for Rights postcards in their takeaway Supper Club
- Forwarding digital Write for Rights materials to interested people
- Facebook live event – speaker followed by letter-writing, perhaps with all Scotland groups?

We will continue to discuss these ideas at October's meeting. We welcome any ideas from all members. For those of you unfamiliar with Write for Rights, here is some more information about Amnesty's annual global campaign:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/get-involved/write-for-rights/>

Israel/OPT update: opportunity to be involved in local procurement campaign

Amnesty is currently campaigning to bring about a prohibition of trade with Israel's settlements in Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) on grounds of their illegality under international law. Amnesty would like us to approach our local authority (i.e. Glasgow City Council) on this issue.

According to the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, which is the applicable law in this case, any company that is culpable of Grave Professional Misconduct may be barred from tendering for public contracts.

The Scottish Government has already taken the view that breaches of human rights can amount to Grave Professional Misconduct and the Scottish Procurement Office has issued guidance to public bodies in Scotland advising as to when it might be appropriate not to procure from companies that conduct business with Israeli settlements.

Amnesty is asking local groups to contact the person responsible for public procurement in their local authority to ask them to revise their procurement policies. FL volunteered to do this this month and then feedback to the group.

Secretary's Report (FL)

Local Group Update

Please follow the link to read the latest Local Groups Update:

[Local Groups Update](#)

Individual at Risk Case: Rubén González (MR + CA)

Great news! Ruben has been pardoned!

President Maduro has issued a decree pardoning 110 people who were the subject of criminal proceedings or convictions.

Amongst these 110 people are Ruben Gonzalez, Maury Carrero, Nicmer Evans and Gilber Caro, on all of whom we have been campaigning.

Among the 110 are people arbitrarily detained in the intelligence service headquarters, people who had already been released with measures restricting their freedom and people in exile with outstanding arrest warrants.

Amnesty has welcomed the news, while making clear that the pardon must not in any way be considered as an acknowledgement of responsibility by those receiving it. They called for this step to serve as a turning point to stop the practice of arbitrary detentions and unfair trials, including the use of military courts, against those with differing opinions in Venezuela. Amnesty noted that there were still many cases of people arbitrarily detained who should also be released and undertook to continue to report on the situation of other people, such as Leopoldo Lopez, Vilca Fernandez, Rosmit Mantilla, Geraldine Chacon, Gregory Hinds, Luis Carlos Diaz and Juan Requesens, who have been released under conditions that severely limit their right to freedom.

Amnesty has received messages from Ruben and Maury’s families, recognising the enormous support they felt from Amnesty and thanking the movement for its solidarity and action.

Many thanks to all of you who took action on these cases. Thank you to Graham Minter, Campaign Coordinator, for this update.

We will now look to start working on a new long-term case. More information to follow.

Urgent Actions (MR)

COVID-19 THREATENS INDIGENOUS PEOPLES LIVES

In August, the Ecuador government published a national protocol to respond to COVID-19 among Indigenous Peoples. Indigenous and human rights organizations in the Amazon said this protocol was not adequately consulted and does not reflect their demands. They also said they have been excluded from the Emergency Operations Committees in charge of implementing it. We call on the President to ensure that the Indigenous peoples of the Amazon participate in the decision-making structure in charge of the COVID-19 response in the Amazon, and guarantee that this response is sufficiently funded and respects their rights and needs.

[Read more online](#)

MOROCCO – STOP HARASSING JOURNALIST OMAR RADI

The Moroccan authorities had been harassing journalist Omar Radi since the publication in June 2020 of an Amnesty International report revealing they had unlawfully spied on him through his phone.

He has been charged with “harming national security” and “rape”.

Moroccan authorities are subjecting him to legal harassment. On 25 June 2020 and six subsequent occasions in July 2020, he was summoned by the Central Bureau for Judicial Investigations and questioned about phone calls and text messages dating back to 2011 and transfers of funds to his bank account. On 29 July, he was charged and detained and is due to stand trial before the First Instance Court of Casablanca on 22 September 2020.

Omar Radi is an investigative journalist and activist from Morocco. His investigations have focused on political affairs, including the relations between political powers and business elites in Morocco and suspected corruption by the authorities.

Omar Radi is a vocal critic of the government's human rights record and has investigated corruption by the authorities.

Demand the Moroccan authorities stop the harassment.

[Read more online](#)

Keep checking the Urgent Actions sites for actions you can take from your home:

[Urgent Actions](#)

AOB

6pm, Tue 29 Sept - AIUK online event on police brutality in the US: A discussion with staff from Amnesty International USA. Details and register at [the AIUK website](#).

7.30pm, Wed 30 Sept – Amnesty Media Awards 2020: Celebrate some of the best human rights journalism of the last year. Watch it at [the Amnesty media awards website](#).

Next meeting

Thursday 8th October – we will send out joining instructions via our mailing list and social media nearer the time.