

Amnesty International Salisbury Group

Minutes of Monthly Meeting on Thursday 8th September 2016
7.30 pm at 4, Victoria Road.

1	<p>Chairman's Welcome Present: Andrew, Fiona, Tony, Peter, Lesley Apologies: Eddie, Jonathan</p>	AH
2	<p>AGM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chairman's, Death Penalty and Social Media Reports had been circulated with the Agenda for the September meeting. • The current office holders were confirmed: Chair – AH Secretary – FD Treasurer - MP Minutes Secretary – LC DP Campaign Coordinator – LC NK Campaign Coordinator – TM (KB) Social Media – PC 	
3	<p>Minutes of previous meeting – these were agreed</p>	LC
4	<p>Treasurer's Report</p> <p>Bank Balance: £1,012.76 Cash: £30.06</p> <p>This would be sufficient to pay for a speaker and/or book a room for an event.</p>	
5	<p>Campaign Reports</p> <p><i>Death Penalty</i></p> <p><i>Please see the Salisbury Group Website www.salisburyai.com for the full international update, covering the USA, Bangladesh, Iraq, Iran, Mauritania, Turkey and Cyprus.</i></p>	LC

Of particular note:

- **A report by *Death Penalty News* was issued on 1.9.16 on the current status worldwide of the death penalty.)** This lists the 58 countries that have retained the death penalty, the 4 industrialist countries which still carry out executions and the most recent countries to abolish capital punishment. It also includes details of the 25 countries that carried out executions in 2015. According to Amnesty, these executions totalled at least 1,630. (Source: Telegraph.co.uk)
- The Deputy Head of the Judiciary in **Iran** has been quoted as saying that the death penalty has failed to reduce drug trafficking in Iran, and that long prison sentences with hard labour would be more appropriate.
- **The National Alliance of Mental Illness (Virginia)** and the **American Bar Associate** have launched a mental illness initiative to educate legislators, legal professionals and the public on the relationship between mental illness and capital punishment, with the aim of supporting policy reforms to exempt those with significant impaired capacity from execution.
- **The Harvard School Fair Punishment Project** has identified 16 counties in the USA driving the use of the death penalty, with 'over-zealous prosecutors', 'inadequate defence lawyers', 'racial bias' and 'exclusion'.
- 36 men, found guilty of killing Shia military recruits in 2014, were hanged in **Iraq**.
- The Turkish Minister for EU Affairs has said **Turkey** has no immediate plans to reintroduce capital punishment.

Urgent Actions

- UA 160/16 – **Texas** – an UA was received from Amnesty, London, for Jeffrey Wood, scheduled to be executed on 24th August. Jeffrey Wood did not kill anyone and was outside the building when the murder took place. He has a history of intellectual and emotional impairments. No mitigating evidence was produced in Court and false or misleading testimony was provided by an expert. (Circulated to DPLWG – 16.8.16). 20.8.16 – ***The Court stayed the execution and ordered a review of the testimony of Dr James Grigson who had stated Wood would be violent in the future without examining him*** (Source: Mail On Line).
- **Monthly Action September 2016** – *Matsumoto Kenji*, aged 65, was sentenced to death in 1993 for 2 robberies and murders. His

brother, who was also charged, committed suicide. Matsumoto Kenji had a dependent relationship with his brother and was unable to stand up to him. He has an intellectual disability, allegedly due to mercury poisoning and a learning disability. His lawyer alleges he was coerced into a confession. He now uses a wheelchair and suffers from a delusional disorder following his prolonged detention. Despite the prohibition of executions of individuals with a mental illness, the Court has deemed him competent to face the death penalty. Since 2004 several unsuccessful requests for pardon and for retrial have been filed, most recently in July 2015. His case is still under review. Letters are to be sent to the Authorities requesting the commutation of his death sentence, regular medical assessment and improvements in the treatment of prisoners on death row (*Circulated to DPLWG 2.9.16.*)

- UA 203/16 – **Bangladesh** – Mir Quasem Ali, key financier of the Bangladeshi Opposition Part Jamaat-e-Islami, has lost his final appeal against his sentence of death following his conviction for offences during the 1971 War of Independence. He faces imminent execution unless presidential clemency is sought and granted. Serious concerns regarding the fairness of trials conducted by the International Crimes Tribunal have been raised by AI and other Human Rights organisations. (*Circulated to DPLWG 6.9.16. Note: we learned on 7.9.16 that Mir Quasem Ali did not seek a presidential pardon and was executed on 3rd September.*)

Campaigning

- A card signed by members of the Group, together with a letter of good wishes, was sent to **Reggie Clemens** for his birthday on 30th August. Concern was expressed that he continues to await news of his retrial, together with messages of hope for his future.
- **World Day Against the Death Penalty** – Members of the Group will man an Amnesty exhibition stand at the NWR Conference, to be held at Sarum College on 8th October. Materials will include Action Cards to be signed on behalf of **Matsumoto Kenji**. (*Note: While recognising the importance of this case, it is disappointing that Amnesty UK have not responded to our request for a nationally co-ordinated action for juveniles sentenced to death in Iran and Saudi Arabia. WADP would have been a very appropriate time to have highlighted the case of Ali al Nimr. It is, however, felt that it would be more productive for the Group to participate in a national action.*)

North Korea

- TM recommended the book 'The Girl with Seven Names' by Hyeonseo Lee, a North Korean escapee and activist who lives in South Korea where she is a student

**TM
PC**

- An article had appeared on 27th August in the Guardian magazine describing the lives of some activists who had escaped to South Korea and sent pamphlets and memory sticks containing books and articles into the North.
- North Korean escapees are refused asylum by Europe because the North and South are considered to be one country. They must have 'a reasonable fear of persecution' in both countries to be accepted. The UK rejected 30-40 in 2013.
- PC reported on progress with the video. All the components have now been completed but it is too long, with sufficient material for up to 3 videos. A meeting will be held at Great Durnford at 2.00 pm on 21st September to view it in its current form and decide how best it should be divided.
- TM is to investigate the possibility of a speaker, an escapee from North Korea currently living in Manchester

6 Social Media Report

PC

Web and other media statistics, July and August 2016
 A relatively quiet month reflected in a decline in the figures for the last 2 months

Web site

Slight improvement in activity. The figures are:

Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug
288	244	205	314	286	152	171	184	167

Views

All time: **5, 986**

Country views, top 5 (2016)

	UK	USA	Croatia	Germany/Canada	Russia	France
April	129	88	8	7		
May	58	39		4	10	6
June	64	77		4		3
July	57	84				
August	42	78				4

Other countries include: Italy, Indonesia, Malaysia and Switzerland. Saudi Arabia and Yemen featured during this period

Top posts – July:

1. Death penalty report
2. Death penalty review
3. Maldives and the use of the death penalty
4. FCO retracts statements

Top posts – August:

1. Liam Fox and his relationship with Azerbaijan
2. The war in Yemen
3. Violence against women in North Korea
4. Execution of Kenneth Fults (USA)

Followers: a big increase of over 20 and we now have **121**

Twitter

Impressions:

Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug
2680	5161	3732	4462	1727	3431	4510	2111	1784

Top tweets:

- Rethinking China friendship (retweet) 353
- Arms trade and its effects 250
- Human rights diminished if we leave the EU 240
- What happens now to the HRA? 239
- Councils urged to act against hate crimes (retweet) 226

We now have **88 followers**, an increase of 10, and 151 following, an increase of 20.

Facebook

After last month's sudden increase in Facebook rise in activity, this month has been quieter but no less encouraging. This has largely been by increasing the number of followers and partly this has been Jonathan's help. It emphasises that followers clicking on 'like' or spreading the word can make an enormous difference. The other surprising fact is that nearly all the followers are in the Salisbury area with only a few from further afield.

The most viewed posts were for July/August:

Trials of human rights activists in China	25
Urgent action Kuwait	46
Rethinking relationships with China	61
Theresa May and the exit from the ECHR	39
BBQ	47

	<p><i>North Korea</i></p> <p>The demonstration outside the Guildhall still bears fruit. On Flickr, the still image has had 2,731 views and the video, 516 – both good increases. On YouTube it has 1,298 views giving a viewing total of 4,029.</p> <p><i>Tapestry</i></p> <p>The tapestry video is up to 516 views on Flickr and an unchanged 61 on YouTube taking it to 577.</p> <p>www.flickr.com www.YouTube.com</p> <p><i>Group actions</i></p> <p>There was one group action during this period on the problems in Cameroon</p> <p>Web site: www.salisburyai.com</p> <p>Twitter: www.twitter.com/salisburyai</p> <p>Facebook: www.facebook.com/salisburyai</p> <p><i>If you can manage to go onto any or all of these sites it will help. Contributions to the Web site or Facebook are welcome. You can engage with the Facebook page if you wish. You can also retweet on Twitter or click 'Like'.</i></p>	
7	<p>Refugee Campaign</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new 2-year campaign has been launched – <i>I Welcome</i>. ‘The aim of this campaign is that refugees are protected, welcomed and enjoy their human rights, including through strengthened global responsibility-sharing and international co-operation’ • AH will act as Coordinator and will call a meeting mid-October to discuss possible events. The possibility of linking with other organisations will be explored. • The National Refugees Welcome March takes place in London on 17th September – AH, LC and PC will attend with the Group’s Pledge poster. AH will write to the Salisbury Journal. • FH will order 100 Q&A leaflets for the NWR Conference on 8th October • A Skillshare day has been organised at Amnesty in London on 22nd October. • FH will pursue the possibility of a showing of the documentary ‘Fire At Sea’ at the Arts Centre in January/February 2017 <p>Note: The <u>Art Installation</u> at Chichester Cathedral – Shadows of the Wanderer – has a refugee theme.</p>	All

8	<p>Human Rights Act</p> <p>The Group will await a move by Government before making any plans for this campaign. Resources currently available from Amnesty are out of date.</p>	All
9	<p>Cathedral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Evensong</i> – AH has been in touch with Tom Clammer and will now confirm a Monday or Tuesday in November with him. A non-religious reading is needed – ‘Refugee Blues’ by WH Auden has been suggested. AH will contact John Proctor of Alabare as a possible speaker. • Magna Carta 2017 – PC has met Sarah Ricketts. He will call a Group meeting to discuss possibilities for an Amnesty event 	AH PC JP
10	<p>Monthly Action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refugee March – 17th September • Don’t Execute Matsumoto Kenji • Write for Rights – Initial information has been received. A card signing event will be held prior to Christmas. 	FD AH
11	<p>Arts Centre Film</p> <p>The film Mustang will be shown on 15th December. Dr Eylem Akatav will be unable to fulfil the role of speaker as the date clashes with a Conference. Professor Lucy Mazdon, who has a Chair in Film Studies at Southampton University, has now been confirmed as the speaker.</p>	FD
12	<p>Citizenship Day</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JP has joined the Group and is reviewing the slides • No responses have been received from the 6th Form College, Wiltshire College (for Freshers’ Week) or St Mary’s. AH will follow up. • Contact will be made with the UTC 	AH FD EB JP
12	<p>AOB: None was raised.</p>	
13	<p>Forthcoming Events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refugee March – 17th September • NWR Conference – 8th October • Citizenship Day – 21st October • Evensong – TBC • Arts Centre Film – 15th December • Write for Rights Card Signing - TBC • Carol Singing – TBC 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 'Fire At Sea' – TBC• Magna Carta Event – June 15th 2017	
	<p>Next Meeting: Thursday 13th October Time: 7.30 pm Venue: 4 Victoria Road</p> <p>Group website; www.salisburyai.com AIUK website: www.amnesty.org.uk Twitter: www.twitter.com/salisburyai Facebook: www.facebook.com/salisburyai Campaign box and banner:</p>	