



# Southampton Group

## AMNESTY NEWS

[www.amnesty-volunteer.org/uk/southampton-city](http://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](mailto:AmnestySouthampton@yahoo.co.uk)

February 2018

### HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY GENOCIDE & REFUGEES

At our January meeting Giampaolo D'Alessandro (Group Chair), explored the key themes of Holocaust Memorial Day and the broader issues of Genocide & Refugees.

**Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) (27<sup>th</sup> January):** Is a national commemoration day in the UK dedicated to the remembrance of those who suffered in The Holocaust, under Nazi Persecution, and in subsequent genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur. Since 2005, HMD has been supported by the HMD Trust, a charity set up and funded by the UK Govt. 27<sup>th</sup> January marks the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, the largest Nazi death camp.

**Purpose of HMD?:** *On HMD we honour the survivors of these regimes of hatred and challenge ourselves to use the lessons of their experience to inform our lives today.*

**This year's theme of HMD** is *the power of words*. Words have power for good or evil.

- **Power for Good:** Kind words can take on disproportionate power in times of intimidation and insecurity
- Words can challenge prevailing views and can state solidarity.
- **Power for evil:** Words that are used to ill-effect, when seen or heard, can normalise what might otherwise have been considered too extreme.
- Harsh words, or words that feed negative stereotypes, can fuel tensions, increase vulnerability and even incite violence.

**Words have many purposes:**

**They can be used by perpetrators:**

- e.g. Nazis deliberately used words and images in newspapers, school textbooks etc to build and reinforce negative stereotypes
- In the years leading up to the Genocide in Rwanda, broadcasters referred to Tutsis as "cockroaches". Cont page 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

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**They are used by “Human Rights Defenders”:**

- Criticising a prevailing culture and perpetrator ideology in printed or broadcast form can be very dangerous e.g. the “White Rose” young people who spoke out against the Nazis and were persecuted.

**They are used to survive:**

- Imprisoned in the Warsaw Ghetto the historian Emanuel Ringelblum organised the Oneg Shabbat archive to record life in the ghetto.
- “When I write I can shake off my cares; my sorrow disappears; my spirits are revived.” Anne Frank, written in her diary, 5 April 1944.

**They are used to teach:**

- Some survivors, e.g. Primo Levi, have responded to their experiences through writing
- For some it is a way of coming to terms with their past, for others it is a way to provide evidence and for others a way of honouring the past and memorialising their murdered relatives.

**Today:** We cannot be complacent today:

- We see media headlines, listen to politicians talk and have a responsibility to read and listen critically.
- The words we read and hear have power and shape our views.

**What are we going to do?:**

- Today we have access to enormous amount of information, but we also filter out what we do not want to hear and are in danger of listening only to what we want to hear.
- Are we able to respond adequately to propaganda?
- Will our words be backed up by action?
- *“There is always a difference between saying you will do something and actually doing it”.* Witold Pilecki, a Polish opponent of the Nazis.

**Free speech and censorship:**

- In recent times some institutions have initiated policies of “no platform” to prevent extremist and offensive speakers from airing views publicly.
- This sends a strong message that such views are not tolerated by the institutions, and limits the influence these views may have.
- However, this policy can be counter-productive in serving to draw attention to the proscribed speakers.
- Moreover, it can be used to render unheard a wide range of perspectives, and can entrench views when those in power “no platform” people with whom they disagree.

**Words and Genocides in the last 100 years:** include the

- Holocaust (1941-1945): *“Will I ever be able to write something great, will I ever become a journalist or a writer”* Anne Frank
- Genocide in Cambodia (1975-1979): *“I cannot forget the past. I still bear the scars. I suffer from anxiety and nightmares when reminded of what I went through”* Sophari Ashley.
- Genocide in Rwanda (1994): *“Writing is really important to me. My family’s story had only been told through a government’s genocidal propaganda. Now we are reclaiming our narrative”* Jo Ingabire
- Genocide in Bosnia (1995): *“Forgive as much as you can. But don’t forget. If you have hate, it’s only going to destroy you. We need to teach young people to not hate and appreciate what they have:.”* Sedin Mustafić

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- Genocide in Darfur (2003-present): *"I lost a lot of my family back home. Everyone now is in camps in Darfur, other people are displaced to Khartoum and Chad they are suffering"*. Hawa.

**"Words can strengthen the thin shield of civilisation or shatter it"**

Martin Stern survivor of the Holocaust.

**Genocide and Refugees: "The Kindertransport"** an organised rescue effort which meant the UK took nearly 10,000 predominantly Jewish children. Often they were the only members of their families who survived. see also:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XqP0uVSj3bQ> and

<https://www.yputube.com/watch?v=IWTxmWeQSW8>

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### **JANUARY BUSINESS MEETING**

**Actions:** We signed letters on behalf of Liu Xia who is in very poor physical health, and Li Yuhua who has suffered ill-treatment at the hands of the police and prison staff.

**Regards Eskinder:** There is some news that political prisoners may be released.

**Data Protection Act:** Giampaolo has sent draft letter to AI

**Treasurers Report:** Subscription letter will go out for February

**Past Events:** Eling pub quiz raised £75

**Future Events:** HR Lecture : 25<sup>th</sup> Jan. 5.30 Highfield Campus: Prof Penny Green: View of the end: Myanmar, genocide and Rohingya.



present

**"Time to Pass with Goodly Sport"**

A concert of vocal and instrumental music from Tudor and Elizabethan times

**Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

**At 7.30 pm**

**Christchurch, Waterloo Road, Freemantle, Southampton SO15 3BT**

**Tickets £8 at the door disabled access**

## NEXT GROUP MEETING

Monday 12<sup>th</sup> February

ERITREA

Alex Jackson,  
Eritrea Country Coordinator  
7.30 pm

St Andrew's United Reformed  
Church  
The Avenue Southampton

**ALL WELCOME**

## DIARY

**January 2018:**

**Thursday 25<sup>th</sup>:** Annual Human Rights  
Lecture

**February 2018:**

**Monday 12<sup>th</sup>:** Group Meeting: Eritrea, Alex  
Jackson Eritrea country coordinator.

**March 2018**

**Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup>:** International Woman's Day

**Saturday 10<sup>th</sup>:** Concert: Courtlye Musick  
(see page 3)

**Monday 12<sup>th</sup>:** China, James Lovatt

## 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**

**India and South Asia**

**China**

**Individual at Risk: Eskinder NEGA &**  
**Jorge Lázaro NUNES**

## Issues on the Web

[amnesty.org.uk](http://amnesty.org.uk)

**Includes:**

**SYRIA:** Evacuated patient's urgently  
needing care. 529 patients needing  
urgent medical care are trapped in  
Eastern Ghouta.

**What's Henry VIII got to do with  
Brexit?** As the Brexit process  
continues, we're worried our hard won  
rights could be at risk because of Henry  
VIII clauses. Want to know exactly  
what that means? See AI web site

**Israel: Release Ahed Tamimi.** 16 yr  
old Palestinian activist Ahed Tamimi is  
due in court, and she's facing 10 yrs in  
prison. Nothing she has done can  
justify her continued detention. Israel  
must release her now.

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