

# Amnesty International

## Salisbury group

### Who we are

The Salisbury group of Amnesty was founded in 1976 and has been campaigning on human rights issues for 40 years.

Over the years we have taken part in a number of campaigns for individual **prisoners of conscience** who have been imprisoned for their beliefs or for criticising their government.

We have also campaigned for better human rights in particular countries, for example, Burma, East Timor and Peru.

**Stop Torture** was our major campaign in 2015 as, despite numerous pledges that torture would be banned, it is still widely practised around the world. Amnesty estimates that 141 countries still engage in torture.

Currently, our major national campaign is on the plight of **refugees**. Members took part in the recent march in London (see picture).

Locally, we campaign against the use of the **death penalty** around the world. China leads the world in the number it executes but the exact number — running into thousands — is a state secret. Second is Iran, followed by Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. We have also campaigned against particularly barbaric forms of execution such as stoning women for adultery in Iran.

We are currently focusing our efforts on the sentencing to death of juveniles in Saudi Arabia and Iran.



We are also highlighting the role of the British arms trade in supporting Saudi Arabia in its bombing of Yemen.

For a number of years, we have been campaigning for human rights in **North Korea**. The people in this country suffer terribly. We have campaigned to have the prison camps closed and also to try to persuade China not to send home those who manage to escape.



Amnesty international was founded in 1961 by Peter Benenson, a British lawyer.

It was originally his intention to launch an appeal in Britain with the aim of obtaining an amnesty for prisoners of conscience around the world but it is now a world wide movement working for the protection of human rights.

It is independent of governments and is neutral in its relations to political groups, ideologies and religious dividing lines.

It has more than 7 million members world-wide campaigning for a world where human rights are enjoyed by all.

[www.salisburyai.com](http://www.salisburyai.com)

@salisbury ai

**Better to light a candle than  
curse the darkness**

# What we do



We carry out a wide range of campaigning actions.

- \* Writing letters. This has been, and remains a fundamental part of what we do. We are part of an international movement so that letters arrive from all over the world. Most are calls for the release of individual prisoners of conscience or those on death row
- \* We hold stalls in Salisbury and invite people to sign cards or petitions
- \* We made a short video of our street action on closing the camps in North Korea which has attracted over 1000 views on YouTube and more on Flickr. We hope to produce more of these videos in the future
- \* We were particularly active during the Magna Carta celebrations during 2015. We hosted a speaker at the Cathedral, mounted a display in the cloisters, and held an event at the Playhouse
- \* We have held vigils for individuals or groups of prisoners
- \* We have taken part in Citizenship days at local sixth forms
- \* For several years now we have shown films with a human rights angle in partnership with Salisbury Arts Centre
- \* We have participated in the international *Write for Rights* campaign which has involved sending cards and writing letters to prisoners at Christmas

Those who today still feel a sense of impotence can do something: they can support Amnesty International. They can help it to stand up for freedom and justice.

## Some successes

Amnesty has had a number of successes:

- ⇒ Several executions in the USA have been stayed. Support for the death penalty in the USA is at its lowest for 40 years. The Democrat Party supports its abolition
- ⇒ Phyo Phye Aung in Burma was released after a year in prison for supporting a peaceful protest
- ⇒ Yecenia Armenta in Mexico was tortured into a confession to murder and has now been released
- ⇒ Fred Bauma and Yves Makwambala of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, who were imprisoned for more than 17 months for trying to strengthen civic education for young people, have been released
- ⇒ Albert Woodfox in the USA was held in solitary confinement for 43 years. His conviction was finally overturned and he has been released
- ⇒ Moses Akatugba in Nigeria, who was tortured and sentenced to death as a juvenile for alleged theft of mobile phones, has been released. Hundreds of Salisbury people signed his petition.

## Come and join us ...

You can join Amnesty in London and get involved in campaigning e.g. letter writing. Go to [Amnesty.org.uk](http://Amnesty.org.uk) for details

Join our local group which is free. Details of when we meet and what we are doing are on Twitter, Facebook and on our Website.

You are welcome to come along to one of our stalls and sign a card or petition—or stay to help.

Join our Death Penalty Letter Writing Group and send letters or emails on behalf of people on death row around the world.

Web: [salisburyai.com](http://salisburyai.com)

Twitter: @salisburyai

Facebook: [salisburyai](https://www.facebook.com/salisburyai)