

Minutes of [Amnesty International Reading Group Meeting](#)

Thursday 11th April 2024

Chair: Anne McFarlane

This meeting was held via Zoom.

Welcome and introductions

10 people joined the meeting for some or all of it: Helen, Anne, Vicky, Michael B, Liz, Sue, Hilary, Kaga, Ruth, Michael M

- Apologies - Iona

1. Speaker - Paul Wong - Hong Kong country coordinator for AIUK

Unfortunately Paul did not attend the meeting - Helen will follow up with him regarding what was discussed.

Fortunately someone from our local Hong Kong community attended as did Michael M who had presented to our group about Hong Kong back in January 2022, so we were able to talk with and hear from them.



- a. We discussed the petition

- **To the Prime Minister of the UK**

We, the undersigned, urge you to use your power to implore the authorities in **Hong Kong** to release human rights lawyer and activist, **Chow Hang-tung** and **Jimmy Lai**, founder of the pro-democracy newspaper "Apple Daily" and all other political prisoners, immediately and unconditionally.

- both Kaga and Michael M thought Chow and Jimmy were good people to choose as both are iconic campaigners. Both are experiencing very harsh imprisonment conditions - solitary confinement with only 1 hr of fresh air a day. Letters are allowed but obviously have to be highly censored.
- we all agreed it would be good to do a formal hand in at 10 Downing Street, hence addressing it to our Prime Minister
 - Helen would complete notes with links to useful videos for volunteers to watch to deepen our understanding key issues

- Helen to contact Guantanamo Bay network for advice on a petition hand-in at 10 Downing Street.
- **The petition was agreed**
 - Helen would add a column for postcode and details of return date and place and circulate to Kaga, Michael and Paul.
- b. We discussed the issues arising in the new Article 23 which came into law on 23rd March 2024 - good summary of this on [Amnesty website](#)
- c. We discussed local activism and plans for upcoming events.
 - i. the local Hong Kongers are planning to do a showing of a new documentary about Chow Hang-tung - end of April TBC
 - ii. They are also planning to hold an event close to 4th June, probably 2nd June, time and venue TBC
 - iii. we are planning to add in an event for Reading's International Festival about Hong Kong - maybe a panel discussion

2. Cuba -



Sue gave us an update about a new digital book that Amnesty has published “Images of Rebellion”, a testament to civil resistance

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/04/cuba-amnesty-presents-book-images-of-rebellion/>

It is an extraordinary visual compilation that chronicles and celebrates the defiant spirit of civil resistance in Cuba. The book contains a poignant selection of the more than 21,000 letters and drawings sent to Luis Manuel Otero Alcántara, Cuban artist and prisoner of conscience, in a global outpouring of support.

Images of Rebellion is a call to action and a vibrant reminder of the ongoing struggle for human rights and freedom of expression in Cuba. Its 132 pages portray inspiring instances of mobilization between late 2020 and the historic protests of July 2021, as well as of the severe government repression in Cuba.

At the heart of this book are the stories of five people whom Amnesty International has named prisoners of conscience: Luis Manuel Otero Alcántara, Maykel “Osorbo” Castillo Pérez, José Daniel Ferrer García, Loreto Hernández García and Donaida Pérez Paseiro. Their personal accounts are a powerful testament to the struggle for justice and freedom in an increasingly repressive environment.

This book is part of Amnesty International’s #CubaWithoutRepression campaign to call attention to the plight of these five individuals, mobilize global solidarity to put meaningful pressure on Cuban authorities to cease their repressive practices, and secure the release of all who have been unjustly imprisoned for exercising their human rights and demanding that those rights be respected and safeguarded.

3. **Quiz** - quiz group discussed arrangements and agreed to chat more on whatsapp.

4. **Amnesty Futures** - a brief discussion about the papers circulated to local groups regarding

Confirmed Future Events:

- Quiz – April 19th. Booked
- Chance2Dance4Charity – Friday 17th May - BOOKED
- Waterfest – Saturday 8th June - AGREED
- WOMAD - 26th to 28th July, Malmesbury - booked
- Reading Pride – Saturday 31st August - AGREED
- Mulled Wine & Music – Saturday 7th December - BOOKED

AoB & monthly meeting schedule

Next meeting: Thursday 9th May - UAE & prisoners of conscience, Ahmed Mansoor & Dr
Mohammed al-Roken