



Update

Amnesty International Edmonton Group 12/26

February 2014

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Have a Heart Campaign

Our February Meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 25th at 7.30p.m. in the Knox Metropolitan Hall on 83rd Avenue just east of 109 Street. Please ring the bell for entry.

Everyone is welcome to join us.

If you are unable to attend our meeting please sign and mail the attached letter to the Prime Minister.

Have a Heart for First Nations Children Campaign

Our meeting will be focused on continuing attention in support of **First Nations Children** growing up at home, getting a good education, being healthy and being proud of their cultures.

Come join us to write "valentines" to our Prime Minister and members of parliament and watch the short film by **Alanis Obomsawin "HI-HO Mistahey" (NFB of Canada Presentation)**. This film takes us into the heart of Shannen's Dream, a national campaign to provide fair access to education for First Nations youth.

Internationally acclaimed filmmaker and activist Alanis Obomsawin (Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance) chronicles the Attawapiskat First Nations campaign to draw global attention to the Canadian government's neglect of Aboriginal youth education.

For more than forty years, internationally acclaimed filmmaker and activist Alanis Obomsawin has given voice to Canada's Aboriginal Peoples. A member of the Abenaki Nation, Obomsawin makes documentaries that are vital chronicles of the dismantling of indigenous culture and battles with dominant society. Hi-Ho Mistahey!, her latest film, explores a shocking and saddening disparity: First Nations communities receive significantly lower levels of school funding and education than the rest of the country.

The Attawapiskat First Nation closed their elementary school in 2000 due to toxic land contamination. Since then, students have been learning in chilly rundown portables infested with rodents. This has led to high teacher turnover (one year twelve teachers left) and a list of other problems. Frustrated by unfulfilled promises of a new school by the government, the late Shannen Koostachin began one of the largest-ever youth-driven movements, now called "Shannen's Dream," which pressed for safe, comfortable schools and culturally based, equitable education for aboriginal students. Hi-Ho Mistahey! chronicles this campaign, culminating in a delegation of six First Nations youth ambassadors presenting in Geneva to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.

Update Appeals

Please sign and send the appeal letter that is attached or write a letter in your own words making the same requests as outlined in the sample letter. If you receive a reply please forward a copy to the National Office, at 312 Laurier Avenue East, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 1H9 or fax it to 613-746-2411.

The first letter is on behalf of many thousands of indigenous Peruvian women who were forcibly sterilized in the late 1990s. The people in charge of the program will not face charges according to a recent ruling.

Women's rights advocates in Peru are condemning the ruling that drops charges against the officials implicated in the forced sterilization of thousands of indigenous women as part of the National Reproductive Health and Family Planning Program of 1996-2000.

On January 22, 2014 the Ministry of Justice issued a resolution stating that the government "would not lodge criminal complaints" against former President Alberto Fujimori, the former Ministers of Health Salud Costa, Alejandro Aguinaga, and Eduardo Yong as well as the consultants and directors of the program. The resolution asserted that there was no proof that the named officials knew about the abuses or intended for the program to be implemented in that illegal manner.

The initial case brought against former President Fujimori—who was convicted of murder, kidnapping and crimes against humanity in 2009 –included charges that he knew of the forced sterilization programs during his administration that lead to at least 18 deaths and involved deception and threats against hundreds of thousands of mainly indigenous women.

For Demus, a women's rights defense organization in Peru, the resolution "extends a cloak of impunity over one of the gravest violations of human rights committed by this country."

The second letter is on behalf Embera Chamí Indigenous leader Flaminio Onogama Gutiérrez is at risk following the killing of his two nephews, who were also Indigenous leaders, in south-western Colombia.

On 1 January 2014 Berlain Saigama Gutiérrez and Jhon Braulio Saigama, Embera Chamí leaders who were living in the Indigenous community of La Esperanza in the municipality of El Dovio, department of Valle del Cauca, were stabbed to death. The bodies were found with signs of torture in different places from where they had been killed. They had been stabbed repeatedly.

On 30 and 31 December unidentified armed gunmen belonging to paramilitary forces operating in the area entered La Esperanza looking for Flaminio Onogama Gutiérrez and approached his two nephews, Berlain Saigama Gutiérrez and Jhon Braulio Saigama. The gunmen demanded to know whether Flaminio Onogama would be in the community in the subsequent days. Flaminio Onogama and the Indigenous community of La Esperanza have opposed the arrival of paramilitaries wishing to develop drug cultivation on their lands and the arrival of powerful coal, copper and gold mining interests in the area.

Thank you for taking these actions on these cases.

Minutes of the 2014 Annual General Meeting

Amnesty international AGM January 28 2014

14 in attendance

Activism Guide

Charlene showed the group the activism guide, which is out now with new campaigns and contact info for each team.

National AGM 2014

This year's Canada wide Annual General Meeting is to be held on May 24 in Ottawa. There is talk within the National group of some changes to the Fieldworker program; it is possible that it may be merged with another division, or even cut altogether. There is a new program of e-courses being launched called "Learn With Amnesty".

International Women's Day

On February 19 there will be a webinar on International Women's Day, and there will be others on topics including Aboriginal rights, LGBTI, and torture.

U of A International Week

Nhu mentioned an event to be held on Friday Jan 31 by the U of A group as part of International Week "the friend I never met" speakers will include Omar Khadr's lawyer, the head of an activism team in his name, as well as Hamid Ghassemi, an Iranian prison survivor. This event is about seeing activism from a direct perspective and feeling a connection. The event is at 5pm in the Telus building on the U of A campus.

Metro Cinema

On Saturday February 1, there will be a screening at the Metro Cinema of "The Square", a documentary about the Arab Spring. Amnesty members will be tabling, and there will be a few speakers.

Sochi Winter Olympics

One of our new campaigns relates to Sochi Olympics: «Go for the Gold in Human Rights» campaign. Gary emailed the head of external relations of a prominent orthodox church in Russia to ask him to use their influence to prevent violence.

Omar Khadr

Muna shared an update on Omar Khadr. He may be moved to a medium security prison. We can write directly to Omar. Muna visits him regularly and will give him our letters/cards. Our group has been approached by Global TV to speak about Ukraine. Charlene has volunteered to respond to any media inquiry.

Letters

Rosemarie shared letter and donation tallies. 731 letters have been signed this year.

Budget

Current account balance is \$420. Funds can be taken from our emergency fund. We will need to fundraise and maybe forgo Global Visions Festival in favour of having our own events at Metro. Charlene can get us a good deal on printing brochures etc.

Instead of buying new merchandise, we could design and print our own cards etc. The budget was passed unanimously, with possible changes to come.

There was some confusion regarding certain donations from corporate foundations and matching schemes, and whether our group can accept these funds. Charlene will look into it.

Minutes of the 2014 Annual General Meeting continued

Meeting Location

We may need to find another location for meetings. Ilona suggested forming a committee in charge of finding a new location. Concerns include mobility, parking, and safety. Reverend Sue from St George has been helpful and generous with the university group; Muna will contact them to see if we can arrange to meet there.

Elections:

Co-chairperson: Sophie

Co-chairperson: Ilona

Treasurer: Katrin will continue as treasurer but a helper is needed.

Fieldworker: Charlene fieldworker can't hold an Executive position so she can do more outreach work

Secretary: Isabelle, though not present, nominated to continue as secretary, with Cathy taking on her duties when she is away.

Events coordinator and media liaison: Jonn

International Women's Day March 8

How will you be celebrating International Women's Day this year? On March 8th, women, men, girls and boys will gather at events around the world to celebrate achievements made in the fight for women's rights, to show solidarity with our sisters worldwide, and to tackle the challenges that remain head on.

This year on International Women's Day Amnesty International is focusing on one challenge in particular—the fact that many women and girls around the world do not have access to the full range of sexual and reproductive health services that they need to live a safe and healthy life.

We want all women around the world to have what we have here in Canada—the freedom to make in-formed choices about our bodies and our lives and access to a full range of sexual and reproductive health services.

This International Women's Day join us and call on Canada to champion gender equality and women's health.

View the kit and lots of ideas for International Women's Day at

http://www.amnesty.ca/sites/default/files/iwd_2014_toolkit.pdf

Edmonton Group 12/26

Edmonton Groups 12/26, Box 52060, Garneau Post Office, Edmonton, Alberta T6G 2T5
Meetings are held at 7.30 p.m. in the Knox Metropolitan Church Hall on 83 Ave at 109 Str the fourth Tuesday of each month except July, August and December.

Amnesty International is a worldwide voluntary, activist movement that works impartially to prevent violations of people's fundamental civil and political human rights by governments and opposition groups. We campaign to free all prisoners of conscience: people detained anywhere for their beliefs or because of their ethnic origin, sex, colour, language, national or social origin, economic status, birth, or other status, provided they have not used or advocated violence; ensure fair and prompt trials for political prisoners; abolish the death penalty, torture, and other cruel treatment of prisoners; end political killings and "disappearances".

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