

# PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE APPEAL FUND

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The Prisoners of Conscience Appeal Fund (PoC) was established by Amnesty International in 1962 as a separate charity dedicated to relieving the hardship of prisoners of conscience; people who have been persecuted (often detained and tortured) for the non-violent expression of their conscientiously-held beliefs. We also extend help to their family members where needed.

Through our network of approved referral agencies we receive applications for assistance with immediate and urgent needs of prisoners of conscience and their families, such as medical treatment, food and clothing, travel and accommodation costs, study materials, family reunion and counselling. We also have a separate Bursaries Fund in the UK, which enables prisoners of conscience in exile to convert their existing qualifications, allowing them to resume interrupted careers and rebuild shattered lives.

To further our aim of relieving the poverty of prisoners of conscience, we made 104 grants in 2014 to individuals and families totalling £105,436. An additional 169 dependants were logged in 2014, which gives a total of 273 people helped.

**Dedication** The majority of the images in this report have been donated to us by one of our beneficiaries, Bayram\*, a photojournalist and radio presenter from Turkey, who spent four years in prison for his peaceful activism.

This report is dedicated to Bayram and the countless other prisoners of conscience and their families around the world whose courageous, selfless acts make the world a kinder, better place. We salute them all.

To read more about Bayram, see page 12

\*Name has been changed for reasons of confidentiality

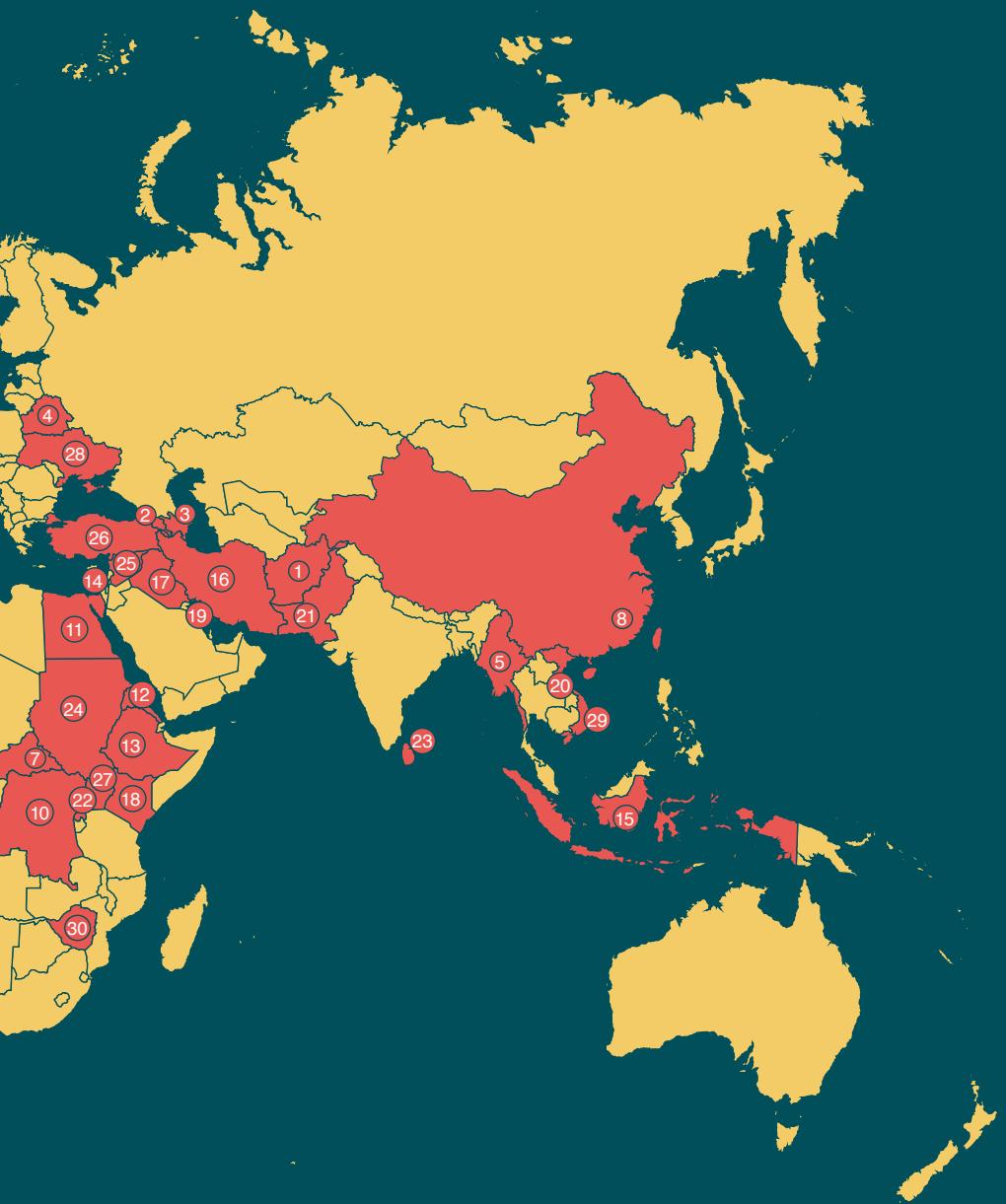


Beneficiaries of  
our grants came  
from 30 different  
countries in 2014.

- Afghanistan 1
- Armenia 2
- Azerbaijan 3
- Belarus 4
- Burma 5
- Cameroon 6
- Central African Republic 7
- China 8
- Côte d'Ivoire 9
- Democratic Republic of Congo 10

- Egypt 11
- Eritrea 12
- Ethiopia 13
- Gaza/Palestine 14
- Indonesia 15
- Iran 16
- Iraq 17
- Kenya 18
- Kuwait 19
- Laos 20
- Pakistan 21
- Rwanda 22
- Sri Lanka 23
- Sudan 24
- Syria 25
- Turkey 26
- Uganda 27
- Ukraine 28
- Vietnam 29
- Zimbabwe 30

## Countries of Origin



## Alex's story

One of our overseas grants in 2014 went to Alexander Aan, formerly a civil servant in Indonesia, who was released from prison after serving two years for exercising his human right to freedom of expression.

Legally, all Indonesians must belong to one of the six state approved religions. It is illegal to be an atheist, or a member of any unapproved religion. Recently, reported cases of religious intolerance across Indonesia have increased. These range from personal harassment to mob violence and arson attacks against groups such as Christians, Baha'is, Shia and Ahmadiyah Muslims. Atheism is also unaccepted, both socially and legally.

An atheist, Alex posted a message saying 'God does not exist' on the Facebook page of Atheist Minang, an informal network of internet bloggers. These posts enraged local Muslims and fellow civil servants, who formed an angry mob, storming his office and attacking him. Badly injured, he was arrested, and charged for 'disseminating information aimed at inciting religious hatred or hostility', 'religious blasphemy', and 'calling for others to embrace atheism'. He was later sentenced to two and a half years imprisonment and a fine of 100 million rupiah (the equivalent of £5,000). A tough sentence, this was seen as mild by The Islamic Society Forum, an umbrella group for several

hard-line factions of Muslim extremists, who called for Alex to be beheaded.

Held in a local prison, Alex was beaten by fellow inmates for his lack of religious belief. Consequently, he was moved to a very remote prison, which meant that his lawyers, all working pro bono, had to travel for four hours along treacherous mountain roads to reach him. His lawyers told The Jakarta Post that Alex was restricted from reading in prison for fear that 'he would remain an atheist'. Alongside his brilliant team of lawyers, Alex was supported by Amnesty International, who adopted him as a prisoner of conscience, and Christian Solidarity Worldwide, who advocated for his release, and have since urged the Indonesian government to seriously consider reviewing the Blasphemy Law and other pieces of legislation that violate freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief.

Finally released from prison, Alex plans to further his education in physics, with a view to working on the development of new technologies. Although still in Indonesia, he dare not go back to his home region, as he is still in serious danger from the extremist Islamists who called for his execution. Having lost his job in the civil service, as a result of his 'crime', a PoC grant helped Alex pay for basic food and accommodation costs and some initial re-training for employment.

Heartfelt thanks goes to the following 47 agencies that referred successful applicants to us in 2014, 24 of which were newly-registered organisations.

- AAPP Burma
- African Social Health Agency (ASHA)
- Bradford & Airedale Citizens Advice Bureau
- Bridges Programmes
- British Red Cross - Leeds
- British Red Cross - London
- British Red Cross - Manchester
- British Red Cross – Preston
- Camden Community Law Centre
- Council for At-Risk Academics (CARA)
- Christian Solidarity Worldwide
- Citizens Advice Bureau Gateshead
- City of Liverpool YMCA
- Democratic Voice of Burma
- DNA Networks
- Domestic Abuse - Housing and Wellbeing Outreach Team, Gateshead Council
- Free Belarus Now
- Freedom from Torture - London
- Freedom From Torture - Manchester
- Freedom from Torture - North East Centre
- Gloucestershire Action for Refugees and Asylum Seekers (GARAS)
- Helen Bamber Foundation
- Homeplus
- Human Rights Focus Pakistan (HRFP)
- Jesuit Refugee Service UK
- Manchester Refugee Support Network - Phoenix Mill
- Migrants Resource Centre
- Northern Ireland Community of Refugees and Asylum Seekers
- North of England Refugee Service (Newcastle)
- Notre Dame Refugee Centre
- Open Minds Counselling Service Ltd.
- PEN Emergency Fund
- PENHA
- Refugee Assessment and Guidance Unit (RAGU)
- Refugee Council
- Reporters Without Borders
- REVIVE
- Sahara Communities Abroad (SACOMA)
- Solidarity Peace Trust (SPT)
- Southampton and Winchester Visitors Group
- Southwark Day Centre
- Terrence Higgins Trust - Scotland
- Transitions London
- Waging Peace (Article 1)
- Welsh Refugee Council - Cardiff
- YMCA North Staff
- York City of Sanctuary



## Family Reunions

We continued to support family reunion cases in 2014 as we have done in larger numbers since 2010, when we experienced a notable increase in the number of family reunion enquiries from prisoners of conscience with refugee status in the UK. This was due to the Red Cross/UNHCR family reunion programme ceasing due to funding issues. The Red Cross has since begun funding some cases again, albeit on a smaller scale. This, added to the

recent changes in legal aid provision for family reunion applications, has made it increasingly difficult for many prisoners of conscience to be reunited with their partners and children after the trauma of persecution and enforced separation.

In 2014 we helped 10 families to reunite from Afghanistan, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea and Gaza.

## Anne-Marie's story

Anne-Marie\* was a university student from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) who became involved with a group that promoted human rights, cared for homeless street children and provided assistance for female rape victims. Anne-Marie helped arrange conferences and meetings and, as a result of these activities, she was arrested on numerous occasions over four years by the authorities. During her last arrest Anne-Marie was beaten and detained for 15 days. She was raped every day, stripped naked and threatened with having her picture taken and published on the internet. She was also made to hold rocks for three or four hours at a time and had boiling hot water poured over her.

Eventually Anne-Marie was thought to be so weak and badly injured that

her captors took her to the banks of a nearby river and dumped her body, leaving her to die. However, she was found by a passer-by and taken to a hospital for treatment. She then went into hiding until she was able to flee the country, but in doing so she was forced to leave her husband and her three children behind in the DRC.

On arrival in the UK, Anne-Marie received treatment for her physical injuries. As a result of what happened to her, she has scarring and suffers from side-effects such as headaches and insomnia. She is also very wary of being around young men on her own.

When Anne-Marie gained refugee status, she was eligible to bring her husband to the UK. A PoC grant paid for his flight.

\*Name has been changed for reasons of confidentiality





Photo: Ayar with PoC staff, Lynn and Rachael

## British London 10k

One of our beneficiaries, Ayar Ata, raised an amazing £2,500 for our annual Bursaries Fund by taking part in the British London 10k in July. He also managed a personal best time too! Ayar is currently undertaking a PhD with the support of a PoC bursary grant. His research title is 'a study of Kurdish diaspora in London'.

Ayar is now in the final year of his PhD and is in the process of writing up his 80,000 word thesis. Ayar said. 'You have enabled me to run an extra mile to achieve my dream project'. We are extremely grateful to Ayar for his support. He is an inspiration to all of us.

## Mongolia trek

We receive funds from a variety of sources but none so unique as those raised by Polly de Blank's family. Polly's sisters, Martha Sitwell and Clementine de Blank Chappell and Polly's nephew, Conor de Blank, rode across Mongolia in August 2014 to celebrate Polly's life. They raised an incredible £30,000, which was shared between Mind, the mental health charity, and PoC.

Polly died in July 2013 following a long struggle with mental health problems. She was passionate about telling important stories in her role as a BBC producer, researching and producing documentaries including 'Slavery Today', 'The Musical Legacy

of Slavery' and the award winning youth programme 'The Edge'. She had also become more involved with PoC as a volunteer in the year before she died.

We are so grateful to Martha, Clementine and Conor for spending so many days in the saddle, raising funds in Polly's memory.



Martha & Clementine in Mongolia



## Power of People's Tribunals Seminar Empowering Civil Society - International Seminar

Instigated by our Iranian colleagues at the Iran Tribunal, we co-hosted this weekend seminar at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in October, focusing on how civil society in its various forms could be empowered by establishing informal but public and judicial processes to deal with atrocities committed by states, drawing on experiences from the People's Tribunals so far established for Vietnam, Iran, Palestine and Japan.

There was a tremendous line-up of expert speakers who took part, including Professor Payam Akhavan, Sir Henry

Brooke CMG, Professor Andrew Byrnes, Professor John Cooper QC, Professor Tina Dolgopol, Professor Pierre Galand, Ms Mersedeh Ghaedi, Professor Michael Mansfield QC, Ms Alicia Lira Matus, Professor Sir Geoffrey Nice QC, Ms Regina Paulose, Mother Esmat Vatan Parast, Mr Hamid Sabi, Dr Shokoufeh Sakhi and Dr Gianni Tognoni.

The premiere of Nima Sarvestani's film, 'Those Who Said No', which documented the Iran Tribunal, was a poignant end to the first day.



Photo: PoC Bursary holder, Bayram, with PoC Patron, Zoë Wanamaker CBE

## Bursaries Reception

We were lucky again to be invited to hold our Bursaries Reception in November 2014 at the Canary Wharf office of Clifford Chance LLP, who generously hosted the evening in one of their 30th floor reception rooms, with spectacular views. The occasion was an opportunity to celebrate the exceptional achievements of our Bursaries Fund candidates who were awarded bursaries in 2014. Zoë Wanamaker CBE, one of our generous and committed patrons, presented the awards to the successful candidates.

In 2014, 11 new bursaries were awarded totalling £38,096. A typical PoC bursary is £3,500 and recipients include human rights defenders, lawyers, teachers and academics, amongst others.

Our bursary holders face overwhelming odds to rebuild their lives during and after their ordeals. Before they can even think about restarting their careers, they often face prolonged separation from

their loved ones and the ongoing effects of persecution. Those in a position to take up a bursary have already shown great resolve and courage. With the help of a bursary grant, they are able to resume their careers in exile, supporting themselves and their families.

As our Chair, Sir Henry Brooke CMG, said on the night:

*'Prisoners of Conscience is a very happy family, and I regard this as a very happy family event, made possible by the wonderful generosity of Clifford Chance. We are phenomenally proud to be able to provide the bursaries that contributed to this.'*



Photo: PoC Chair, Sir Henry Brooke CMG with PoC Patron, Prins Gunasekara

‘Such great news, thank you ever so much for your kindness and support. I will never forget.’

**Grant recipient**



## Bayram's story

Bayram\* received a PoC bursary grant in 2014. A photojournalist and radio presenter from Turkey, he contributed to newspapers that were known for their political comment. He openly protested against the government by capturing images of inequality and discrimination and he took part in peaceful demonstrations.

Bayram was imprisoned twice – the first time when he was only 15 years old. He was tortured for several days before being taken to court, where he was tried as an adult. He was then sent to prison for two months, where he was kept with adults convicted of murder and other violent crimes.

When he was 20 years old, Bayram was imprisoned again for four years and was subjected to torture and inhumane treatment again. As a result,

he joined a rotating hunger strike with other friends to protest against the dreadful conditions in the prison. Bayram was on hunger strike for a total of 250 days, in a protest which lasted six years and in which 124 lives were lost. Thankfully, Bayram survived, but the experience left him with migraine attacks, stomach pains and a poor memory. Despite this, on his release, he managed to earn two full scholarships and completed two BA degrees.

A PoC bursary grant has enabled Bayram to undertake an MA in Photography & History of Art at the University of London. He is determined to do well, despite the many challenges he faces. Bayram has kindly allowed us to use his powerful images throughout this year's report.

\*Name has been changed for reasons of confidentiality

## Our Funders

We are so grateful to all of our generous donors for their invaluable support in 2014. During the year 55% of our income came from individual donors, 38% from charitable trusts and 7% from the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture (UNVFVT). Our database of active individual supporters stands at around 4,000 and we receive funds from approximately 70 different charitable trusts each year. We do not receive statutory funding and are completely independent of any government agencies.

Our funding from the UNVFVT sadly came to an end in 2014, after 22

consecutive years of support since 1992. Due to their own funding restraints, they have now introduced a ten-year limit on consecutive funding, which puts us outside their remit.

The UNVFVT record of donations since 1992 totals just under £1m. We are immensely grateful to them for their generous and committed support over more than two decades. Their funding has made a tangible, practical difference to the lives of thousands of our beneficiaries, and their families, who have had to endure imprisonment and torture and who continue to live with the after-effects of such abuse.

# Our People

## International Patrons

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi  
Desmond Tutu, Archbishop Emeritus

## UK Patrons

Rt Rev Simon Barrington-Ward KCMG  
Sir Louis Blom-Cooper QC

Lord Briggs

Lucy Chandler OBE

Rt Rev John Crowley

Dame Judi Dench DBE

Lady Antonia Fraser DBE

Roger Graef OBE

Prins Gunasekara

Rosamund Horwood-Smart QC

Baroness Helena Kennedy QC

Bruce Kent

Caroline Moorehead OBE

Sir Geoffrey Nice QC

Rabbi Julia Neuberger DBE

Jonathon Porritt CBE

Lord Puttnam CBE

Rev Dr Nicholas Sagovsky

Rt Hon Jeremy Thorpe PC

(*died 4/12/2014*)

Zoë Wanamaker CBE



Photo: Patron, Lucy Chandler OBE,  
with Trustee, Maria Saro-Wiwa

## Trustee

Prisoners of Conscience Appeal Fund  
(Trustee) Limited

## Directors of Corporate Trustee

Ian Baker

Victoria Brittain

Sir Henry Brooke CMG

Dorothy Connell

John Cooper QC

Katy Fattuh

Stefanie Grant (*appointed 29/10/2014*)

David Ivy

Catriona Jarvis

Maria Saro-Wiwa

Ansel Wong

## Staff

Lynn Carter, Director  
(*full-time*)

Kirsty Bennett, Grants  
Officer (*part-time*)

Rachael Tyndall,  
Administrator  
(*part-time*)

## Volunteers/Interns

Sophie Baker  
Marina Camilletti  
Matthew Gibbons  
Brigitte Istim  
Judith Mwiteneza  
Natallia Paliakova  
Rosie Quirke  
Jane Seal  
Vikki Teasdale



Photo: Intern Vikki Teasdale,  
with volunteer and PoC bursary  
holder Natallia Paliakova



“Thank you for opening this door of opportunity and for giving me strength to persist and succeed. I am away from my family and home for years but I do not feel alone.”

**Grant recipient**

# Statement of Financial Activities

## for the year ended 31 December 2014

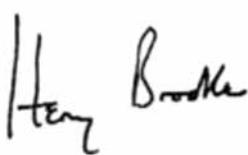
Summary statement of financial activities

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Designated Funds	2014	2013
<b>INCOMING RESOURCES</b>	£	£	-	£	£
Voluntary income	171,190	90,090	-	261,280	276,516
Activities for generating funds	-	8,515	-	8,515	5,344
Investment income	201	-	-	201	181
<b>TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES</b>	<b>171,391</b>	<b>98,605</b>	-	<b>269,996</b>	<b>282,041</b>
<b>RESOURCES EXPENDED</b>					
Costs of generating funds	57,315	4,330	-	61,645	85,235
Relief payments	137,324	74,236	-	211,560	199,404
Governance costs	3,849	-	-	3,849	5,263
<b>TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED</b>	<b>198,488</b>	<b>78,566</b>	-	<b>277,054</b>	<b>289,902</b>
<b>NET INCOMING / (OUTGOING)RESOURCES FOR THE YEAR</b>	(27,097)	20,039	-	(7,058)	(7,861)
<b>RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS</b> Total funds brought forward at 1 January 2014	69,966	34,097	60,000	164,063	171,924
<b>TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD AT 31 DECEMBER 2014</b>	<b>£ 42,869</b>	<b>£54,136</b>	<b>£60,000</b>	<b>£157,005</b>	<b>£164,063</b>

## Balance sheet at 31 December 2014

	2014	2013
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Tangible assets	958	1,099
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Debtors	35,768	32,620
Cash at bank and in hand	142,126	142,492
	177,894	175,112
<b>CREDITORS:</b> Amounts falling due within one year	(21,847)	(12,148)
<b>NET CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>156,047</b>	<b>162,964</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>£ 157,005</b>	<b>£ 164,063</b>
<b>RESERVES</b>		
Unrestricted funds	42,869	69,966
Designated funds	60,000	60,000
Restricted funds	54,136	34,097
	<b>£ 157,005</b>	<b>£ 164,063</b>

The summary financial statements are extracted from the independently examined financial statements. The opinion on the full financial statements was not qualified and they were approved by the trustees on 13th May 2015 and submitted to the Charity Commission during June 2015. Copies of the full financial statements, including the independent examiner's report, can be obtained by written request from the charity's registered office: PO Box 61044, London SE1 1UP



**Sir Henry Brooke CMG**  
Chair



**Alison Ward FCCA**  
**Independent Examiner**



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