

**LIBERTY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
2009  
5 June 2009 at Methodist Central Hall Westminster**

**Resolutions passed**

**1. Torture and Extraordinary Rendition**

This AGM believes that torture in all its forms is abhorrent and illegal and that the absolute prohibition on torture must be upheld and maintained at all times.

This AGM expresses its deep concern over admissions that UK territory has been used in extraordinary rendition flights and that UK forces have handed over prisoners to the US who were subsequently illegally rendered to Afghanistan.

This AGM expresses its deep concern over allegations that UK security service personnel have provided information that directly led to UK nationals and residents being subjected to torture and were involved in questioning people held in inhuman and degrading conditions.

This AGM notes, in particular, the allegations made by Mr Binyam Mohamed that UK officials were complicit in his extraordinary rendition and torture.

This AGM therefore calls for a fully independent, public inquiry to determine the role of the UK in extraordinary rendition and torture.

**2. Counter-Terror**

This AGM notes with grave concern the prevalent abuse of counter-terrorism legislation across the UK, increasingly used to interfere with and in some cases manipulate the right of the press to freely report without pressure or threat of arrest and/or violence.

This AGM notes the case of local journalist and NUJ member Sally Murrer, who was illegally tapped by police to obtain information on her sources. At the trial, in which the case against her was thrown out, the judge said: "The placing of the device was in pursuit of discovering Sally Murrer's sources and in breach of her right to receive information in the course of her work as a journalist" under the European Convention on Human Rights.

This AGM welcomes the response, to concerns raised by the NUJ in written and oral evidence, of Parliament's Joint Committee on Human Rights, which condemned the overbearing policing and unlawful targeting of journalists. It heard complaints including obstruction from gaining appropriate access, the seizure of equipment and inappropriate stop and searches under counter-terrorism legislation. The NUJ has also received many reports of police going beyond their lawful powers by demanding that photographs are deleted.

The committee, in its report on policing and protest in March, called for better training of front line police officers and stated: "Journalists have the right to carry out their lawful business and

report the way in which demonstrations are handled by the police without state interference, unless such interference is necessary and proportionate, and journalists need to be confident that they can carry out their role. "The public in turn have the right to impart and receive information: the media are the eyes and ears of the public, helping to ensure that the police are accountable to the people they serve."

This AGM condemns the intimidation of photographers and reporters going about their lawful work and calls on Liberty to support and strengthen the campaign to uphold the rights of journalists to work free from threat, harassment and intimidation and to protect media freedom in the UK.

### **3. Political Belief**

This AGM notes that unnecessary interference in employment and proposed employment by factors which are not related to qualifications and performance of the job concerned cannot be justified.

This AGM notes the fundamental importance of the right to freedom of thought conscience and religion and the right to freedom of expression as protected under Articles 9 and 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

This AGM believes however that some sensitive roles encompass obligations that may justify a decision not to allow a person with a particular belief to be appointed. This AGM therefore believes that opinion or personal consensual behaviour should not be a bar to any job except in circumstances where it can be shown to be necessary and proportionate and which must be clearly defined. This AGM notes the importance of the right to freedom of assembly and association which includes the right of peaceful assembly and freedom of association with others including the right to form and to join trade unions as protected under Article 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

This AGM believes that the right to freedom of association necessarily includes the right of association for those who share principles or political views and therefore the right to disassociate from those who do not share common views and values.

This AGM therefore resolves that Liberty will continue to defend the principles of freedom of expression and freedom of association.

### **4. Slavery**

This AGM, noting with concern that the practice of slavery and trafficking of persons is still widespread throughout the world, including many instances in the UK, over 200 years after the UK Parliament voted to abolish the slave trade, calls upon HM Government to give priority to the suppression of slavery and to the protection of victims of trafficking in the UK and elsewhere.

### **5. Human Rights Act**

This AGM notes that human rights are universal and inalienable and belong to all people regardless of nationality, race, religion, gender, disability or other status and are not contingent on citizenship or the exercise of responsibilities.

This AGM notes the Government's recent Green Paper "Rights and Responsibilities" and expresses concern at the undue weight it gives to concepts of responsibilities and citizenship.

This AGM therefore calls for the fundamental human rights and common values contained in the HRA to be championed and upheld and this AGM resolves that Liberty:

- Continue, through its "Common Values" campaign, to broaden understanding and respect for human rights values and raise public awareness of the protection available under the HRA;
- Continue to defend and support the HRA and work with the Government, opposition parties, the media and other partners to increase knowledge and awareness of the very real benefits of the HRA;
- Respond to the "Rights and Responsibilities" Green Paper by defending the HRA and highlighting the common values that it represents

## **Liberty's Council**

**The following 15 members were elected to the Liberty Council to serve a two year period from 2009 – 2011:**

Lucy Armstrong, Frances Butler (Chair), Louise Christian, Emma Dring, Shaheed Fatima, Alex Gask, Fiona Horlick, Julian Huppert, Michael McColgan, Terry McGuinness, Sonali Naik, Nick O'Shea, Deok Joo Rhee, Joanna Shaw, Stephen Ward

**They join the 15 members who were elected in 2008 to serve until 2010:**

Azad Ali, Camila Batmanghelidjh, Caspar Bowden, Bill Bowring, Madeleine Colvin, Michael Ellman, Peter Kosminsky, Nicola Lacey, Jean Lambert, Doreen Lawrence, Ian Loader, Sarah Ludford, Rod Robertson, Lee Solomons, Mazin Zeki

**And Liberty's Treasurer**

Tish Andrewartha

## **Liberty's Conference and Appeals Committee**

Owen Davies was elected unopposed to serve for three years on the Conference and Appeals Committee. He joins Maya Lester, who becomes Chair of the CAC and is now in the second year of her three year term and Chris Marshall, who is now in her final year on the committee.

## **Liberty's Auditors**

Gotham Erskine were re-appointed as Liberty's auditors for 2009 – 2010.