PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE
APPEAL FUND
Repression, persecution and torture are still a sad fact of life in so many countries. All over the world, brave men and women are harassed and detained for standing up to injustice. Throughout 2015, with the generous support from our donors, we were able to offer a vital lifeline to some of the world’s bravest people.

This year we have seen a marked increase in the number of persecuted journalists who have had to flee their countries in Africa and the Middle East, as well as an increase in calls for help from persecuted minorities in Pakistan.

Our grants typically meet urgent requirements for immediate living, medical or relocation expenses, as well as grants to help reunite families that may have suffered years of enforced separation. As ever, it has been a particular privilege to meet some of the courageous people who have benefited from a Prisoners of Conscience grant in the past year, some of whom are highlighted in this report.

We were delighted to welcome two new patrons to Prisoners of Conscience in 2015 – Sir Tom Stoppard and Neil Latchman. Both long-term supporters of our Fund, Sir Tom’s moving presentation of our Radio 4 appeal attracted many new donors when it was broadcast in June. International tenor, Neil Latchman, staged a glorious Persian-themed fundraising concert on our behalf as part of the new Just Festival Westminster in June, as well as generously performing for our guests at our annual Bursaries Reception in December.

I would like to finish by thanking my committed and engaged Board of Trustees, led by our expert Chair, Sir Henry Brooke, for giving so much of their time and expertise over the past year to help us fulfil our mission. Thanks too, to my tiny team of two long-serving staff and our loyal volunteers, for their hard work and commitment.

Lynn Carter, Director
2015 at a Glance

**PRACTICAL SUPPORT TO OVER 300 PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE AND THEIR FAMILIES**

**10 FAMILIES REUNITED**

**19 BURSARIES AWARDED TO REFUGEES IN EXILE**

**EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE TO 24 JOURNALISTS AT RISK**
Ahmed*a dentist from Syria

Ahmed was a dentist working in a Red Cross clinic in his home town, which was situated between Homs and Damascus. Already under surveillance due to his attendance at anti-government demonstrations, he narrowly missed death when his clinic was shelled. He escaped injury but the patient he had been treating was badly injured. Another missile attack on the same clinic killed a woman and her daughter in a neighbouring apartment.

Ahmed’s wife had been studying in the UK when the civil war began. It was too dangerous for her to return, especially following the persecution of her husband. She was granted asylum and Ahmed was then able to join her. However, he fears for the safety of his father and brothers who remain in Syria, and says ‘When I speak to them on the phone, I can hear the rockets. The town is cut off by roadblocks and surrounded by mountains. It is like a jail. They are besieged.’

We were able to give a grant of £500 to pay for Ahmed’s IELTS (International English Language Test System) course, which will help him obtain the level of English he needs to pass a professional English language exam. This will enable him to convert his medical qualifications gained in Syria to UK requirements so he can work as a dentist in this country. He is not only keen to be able to provide for himself and his wife and regain their independence, but also wants to be able put his years of skills and experience to good use in his new community.
Yasra*, a Human Rights Activist from Yemen

Yasra’s human rights work focused on the rights of women and children in Yemen and she was threatened in the course of her work assisting victims of human trafficking. The leader of the traffickers was an influential Yemeni man who had close links to the government. In an attempt to force Yasra to stop reporting trafficking cases, he kidnapped one of her sons. Yasra appealed to the government for help but they refused, mostly due to the influence of the trafficker, but also due to the fact she was a woman and from South Yemen. The authorities have historically treated people from South Yemen as inferior. After an agonising wait, her son was eventually returned to her. Subsequently, the family were forced to make the decision to flee Yemen for their safety.

They travelled to the UK to seek asylum and were granted refugee status. In many cases, once people are granted refugee status they are immediately evicted from the temporary accommodation they were given while their asylum claims were being considered. Yasra’s family moved to unfurnished accommodation which was not in a good state. We were able to offer a £500 relief grant which paid for essential furniture and repairs and helped the family navigate what was a difficult transition period as they settled in to their new home.
Jean*, a Radio Journalist from Rwanda

Requests for support for exiled journalists increased at an alarming rate in the past year. We assisted 24 journalists in 2015 (at a total cost of £17,179), compared to just five in the previous year. Many of these were in hiding and needed additional support until they reached sanctuary in other countries.

Jean was forced to flee his country after sustained threats and persecution made him fear for his and his wife’s lives. He hosted a radio show where he reported on stigmatised minority populations. His programme shared the name of one of the opposition parties. Opposition political parties in Rwanda are effectively, although not officially, banned. Police questioning led to him being put under government surveillance.

Eventually he and his wife fled to Uganda after having been informed by a friend working in the national security service of a plan to assassinate him. However, he continued to be targeted even in exile, and he and his wife were violently attacked by a group of Rwandans. They fled again, this time to Kenya, but still they were not safe. The Rwandan government routinely pursues those it considers dissidents across borders. In one rather worrying incident, Jean was accosted by a Rwandan official in the local market, but managed to get home safely.

As he and his wife were still in the process of acquiring third-country resettlement via the UNHCR and were unable to work legally in Kenya, we sent two grants of £500 to help them with rent and basic essentials. They were able to move to a secure compound thanks to our financial support.

*Pseudonyms have been used. The vast majority of people we help still live in fear of reprisals and are not in a position to share their stories publicly.
In 2015 our grants were given to beneficiaries from 26 different countries.

1. Afghanistan  
2. Burma  
3. Cameroon  
4. Colombia  
5. Cuba  
6. Democratic Republic of Congo  
7. Egypt  
8. Eritrea  
9. Ethiopia  
10. Gambia  
11. Iran  
12. Iraq  
13. Kenya  
14. Laos  
15. Libya  
16. Mauritania  
17. Oman  
18. Pakistan  
19. Rwanda  
20. Somalia  
21. Sri Lanka  
22. Sudan  
23. Syria  
24. Tibet  
25. Yemen  
26. Zimbabwe
“I would like to thank you for the grant you have given me for my reunion application. My hopes and dreams for a better life and career will now be easier to achieve.”
BBC Radio 4 Appeal

We were absolutely delighted to have been chosen from many hopeful applicants to record a BBC Radio 4 Appeal in 2015. Long-term PoC supporter and new patron, Sir Tom Stoppard, was the voice behind our appeal in June which raised over £15,000. This was an incredible opportunity for us to be able to attract new supporters and to raise vital funds. You can listen again any time online at www.prisonersofconscience.org/r4
**Just Festival Westminster**

As part of Just Festival Westminster’s annual arts and culture season, we welcomed guests to a magical fundraising concert at St Mary-le-Bow church on the Strand in London.

Our second new patron this year, the acclaimed International Tenor, Neil Latchman, was joined by a stellar cast including pianists, santur and daf players, singers and poets, as well as an exquisite dance performance from Neil’s young daughter. We were treated to a beautiful programme of Persian music and were so grateful to all our performers and to supporter, Melanie de Blank, who kindly sponsored this event.

**London 10K Run**

We had a fantastic day at the British London 10K Run in July. It was great to see so many people challenging themselves to do their best, and to see the encouragement from supporters. Our first ever ‘Team PoC’ (Shelley, Ellie, Ruth and Namo, pictured left) ran their socks off to raise £1,000 for prisoners of conscience and their families.
Bursaries Reception

Always a highlight of our year, we were delighted to welcome friends and supporters to this inspiring event, once again generously hosted by Clifford Chance LLP in their impressive head office in Canary Wharf.

We heard from three of our bursary holders on the night, who all illustrated so movingly how a bursary grant had transformed their lives and those of their families.

Mbouka* from Cameroon, described poignantly how he had had to flee his country with only his conscience, and that his grant from Prisoners of Conscience went far beyond helping him requalify in the UK, but that it had resuscitated his hope and preserved not only the dreams of one individual, but of a family and of a community.

Our second speaker, Aftab, from Pakistan, had literally just flown in from Faisalabad where he was our representative during a field visit to our partner agency in the region, HRFP (see page 12). He brought with him a wonderful letter of appreciation from a young woman to whom we had sent a grant. It really brought it all vividly to life for our guests.

Gullalaii spoke of her pride in her achievements during her MSc in Reproductive Medicine, Science and Ethics at the University of Kent, at Canterbury and told us that the bursary had really boosted her self-esteem and confidence. Like Mbouka, she explained how her hopes had been restored and that she felt so much more confident about her future.

*A pseudonym has been used
Our Partners

Our network of trusted referral agencies continues to grow, with 15 organisations newly registered and 47 referral agencies making successful applications to us this year. We are very grateful to all the caseworkers and advice workers, many of them volunteers, who helped us to get funds swiftly and securely to those who were eligible for our assistance.

- AAPPB (Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, Burma)
- Afghan Association Paiwand
- Arch (North Staffs) Ltd
- Article 19 Eastern Africa
- Bridges Programmes
- British Red Cross - Glasgow
- British Red Cross - Leeds
- British Red Cross - London
- British Red Cross - Portsmouth
- Canadian Journalists for Free Expression (CJFE)
- CARA (Council for At-Risk Academics)
- Christian Solidarity Worldwide
- Citizens Advice Bureau - Kentish Town
- Citizens Advice Bureau - Leeds
- Citizens Advice Bureau - Stoke on Trent
- City of Liverpool YMCA
- English Centre of International Pen
- Freedom from Torture - North East Centre
- Freedom From Torture - West Midlands
- Freedom Now
- GARAS
- Helen Bamber Foundation
- Homeplus
- Human Rights Focus Pakistan (HRFP)
- International PEN - Writers in Prison Committee
- NIACRO
- North of England Refugee Service
- Northern Ireland Community of Refugees and Asylum Seekers
- Northern Refugee Centre
- Peace Brigades International - UK Section (PBI UK)
- PEN Emergency Fund
- Prisoners of Conscience Holiday Fund Jersey
- RAGU (University of North London)
- Refugee Council - East London
- Reporters Without Borders
- REVIVE
- Room to Heal
- Sanctuary
- Scholars at Risk Network
- Solidarity Peace Trust
- Tameside African Refugee Association (TARA)
- The Rory Peck Trust
- The Tim Parry Johnathan Ball Foundation for Peace
- Traumatic Stress Clinic
- University of East London
- Waging Peace (Article 1)
- Welsh Refugee Council (Cardiff)
Read on for an insight into the work of just two of the excellent organisations that helped us fulfil our mission in 2015.

**Human Rights Focus Pakistan**

A growing commitment in the past year was in Pakistan, where we have been collaborating with Human Rights Focus Pakistan (HRFP). HRFP works for the fundamental rights of women, children and religious minorities to enable them to live a dignified life. The situation for religious minorities is dire in Pakistan and HRFP deals with increasing numbers of cases of discrimination, including forced conversions and false blasphemy charges, which can lead to very serious consequences, including abductions and assassinations. The law does not define the acts which constitute as blasphemous, so anyone can file a case alleging that their religious feelings were hurt.

In two separate incidents, a Christian couple and a Sikh father, Hardeep*, were killed, leaving their families in a precarious situation. Hardeep was running a local grocery shop and was shot by a passing gunman – purely due to his religion. The Sikh community has been continuously targeted by fundamentalist organisations that believe its practice to be against the teachings of Islam. Hardeep’s wife and four young children were struggling with basic survival costs, as well as the legal costs of pursuing their case in court.

Many families are in hiding while they try to seek justice through the courts. A grant of £500 can help a family with food, shelter and legal costs, if they are brave enough to take legal action against their perpetrators. At the end of 2015 we secured a grant to pay for the establishment of a Safe House for this project, which is proving to be a great asset to our partners at HRFP and those they serve.

*A pseudonym has been used.

For more information about HRFP, contact Naveed Walter on hrfp@yahoo.com or visit www.hrfp.com
The Prisoners of Conscience Holiday Fund Jersey

The Prisoners of Conscience Holiday Fund in Jersey was founded 26 years ago by local Islanders who had the wonderful idea of offering former prisoners of conscience week-long respite holidays.

Guests stay either in guest houses, hotels or private homes. All costs are covered by the generous members of the Holiday Fund and the warmth of their welcome is beyond compare. They all get involved in taking our guests on interesting day trips, with invitations to lunch and dinner, all set against the stunning and restorative backdrop of Jersey and all it has to offer.

Ali* and his family took part in this scheme in 2015. A lecturer and senior academic editor in Ethiopia, Ali was regularly harassed and detained for his academic research into Ethiopian academic and political affairs. While he was on a research trip to the UK, his home in Addis Ababa was raided by intelligence forces. His wife was physically attacked and his two young daughters were intimidated and terrified. All his books, computer and academic collections were removed. Fearing for his life, and theirs, Ali applied for political asylum, was quickly granted refugee status and his wife and children soon joined him. Ali is now undertaking his PhD at a prestigious university in London.

Ali* & family

On returning from their Jersey holiday Ali told us,

‘We are now safely home after our fabulous holiday in Jersey. I would like to thank all for arranging such a refreshing break that we could not have afforded, at least for now. Our kids, aged 8 and 5, have not had a holiday since they arrived and were unable to say a word in their class when all their classmates were talking about their holidays. It was great achievement for them. Given the tensions and pressures that people like us experience in our daily life we needed it very much. Also, as I’d begun writing chapters of my thesis this year I really needed some rest before embarking on the next academic year. REALLY, THANK YOU ALL.’

We are enormously grateful to our friends at the Holiday Fund for their generous hospitality.

For more information about the Prisoners of Conscience Holiday Fund contact Jurat Collette Crill on cozcrill@gmail.com or +44 (0)1534-852226.

*A pseudonym has been used.
Our People

The office team comprises of just one full-time and two part-time staff:

Lynn Carter, Director
Kirsty Bennett, Grants Officer
Rachael Tyndall, Administrator

We were helped in 2015 by a number of dedicated volunteers and interns:

Sophie Baker
Izzi David
Roger Harrison
Kathy Moss
Judith Mwiteneza
Natallia Paliakova
Jane Seal
Vikki Teasdale

We were supported by a highly skilled and committed group of Trustees, formally known as the Directors of our Corporate Trustee:

Ian Baker (Treasurer)
Victoria Brittain
Sir Henry Brooke CMG (Chair)
Dr Dorothy Connell
John Cooper QC
Katy Fattuhi
Stefanie Grant
David Ivy
Catriona Jarvis (Vice-Chair)
Maria Saro-Wiwa
Ansel Wong

And we are very grateful to have the backing of many distinguished Patrons:

International Patrons
Daw Aung San Suu Kyi
Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu

UK Patrons
Rt Rev Simon Barrington-Ward KCMG
Sir Louis Blom-Cooper QC
Lord Briggs
Lucy Chandler OBE
Rt Rev John Crowley
Lady Judi Dench DBE
Lady Antonia Fraser DBE
Roger Graef OBE
Prins Gunasekara
Rosamund Horwood-Smart QC
Baroness Helena Kennedy QC
Bruce Kent
Neil Latchman
Caroline Moorehead OBE
Sir Geoffrey Nice QC
Rabbi Julia Neuberger DBE
Jonathon Porritt CBE
Lord Puttnam CBE
Rev Dr Nicholas Sagovsky
Sir Tom Stoppard OM
Zoë Wanamaker CBE
We do not receive any statutory funding and rely completely on the generosity of individuals and charitable trusts. Heartfelt thanks go to everyone who supported us in 2015.

Our long-term support from the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture (UNVFVT) ceased in 2015 (after over two decades of continuous annual support), so a lot of our fundraising efforts in 2015 focused on researching new funders who might be able to fill that gap. We were successful in securing two one-off unrestricted grants, including £15,000 from a new funder, the Sigrid Rausing Trust, and £25,000 from the City of London Corporation Finance Grants Sub-Committee, a previous bursary funder.

Historically, we gave modest one-off grants to pay for items such as food and medical treatment for individuals who were imprisoned and/or to their families who were often left destitute. However, when people are released, or have had to flee their countries to avoid imprisonment, the needs of our beneficiaries can be more complex and far-ranging. When funds allow, we are now giving more substantial and long-term support to those who need it.

For our beneficiaries overseas or for those seeking refuge in this country, our grants can be transformative in providing essential support so that people can continue their lives in a dignified and fruitful way as members of their society, so that their talents and potential are not lost and wasted.

Our goal is never to turn away one single eligible person. We just need your donations to make it possible.

You can give securely online at www.prisonersofconscience.org/donate

Or send a cheque or CAF voucher, payable to Prisoners of Conscience to:
PO Box 61044 London SE1 1UP

You can leave a legacy to Prisoners of Conscience in your Will.

If you would like to be in touch, you can call us on + 44 (0)20 7407 6644 or email info@prisonersofconscience.org

“I wish to thank your organisation for the assistance in form of relief grant. It was really a relief to receive it just as the name suggests.”

Grant recipient

Thank you.
# Statement of Financial Activities
for the year ended 31 December 2015

Summary statement of financial activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Unrestricted Funds</th>
<th>Restricted Funds</th>
<th>Designated Funds</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>INCOME:</strong></td>
<td>£</td>
<td>£</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>£</td>
<td>£</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donations and legacies</td>
<td>252,612</td>
<td>50,088</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>302,700</td>
<td>261,280</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other trading activities</td>
<td>351</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>351</td>
<td>8,515</td>
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<tr>
<td>Income from investments</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL INCOME</strong></td>
<td>253,176</td>
<td>50,088</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>303,264</td>
<td>269,996</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Unrestricted Funds</th>
<th>Restricted Funds</th>
<th>Designated Funds</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>EXPENDITURE ON:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raising funds</td>
<td>67,183</td>
<td>4,480</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>71,663</td>
<td>61,645</td>
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<tr>
<td>Charitable activities</td>
<td>174,445</td>
<td>76,201</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>250,646</td>
<td>215,409</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</strong></td>
<td>241,628</td>
<td>80,681</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>322,309</td>
<td>277,054</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|                              |                    |                  |                  |        |        |
| **NET INCOME/ (EXPENDITURE)**| 11,548             | (30,593)         | -                | (19,045)| (7,058)|

| **RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS**  | 42,869             | 54,136           | 60,000           | 157,005| 164,063|
| Total funds brought forward  |                    |                  |                  |        |        |
| at 1 January 2015            |                    |                  |                  |        |        |

|                              |                    |                  |                  |        |        |
| **TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD** | £54,417     | £23,543          | £60,000         | £137,960| £157,005|
| AT 31 DECEMBER 2015          |                    |                  |                  |        |        |
## Balance sheet at 31 December 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FIXED ASSETS</strong></td>
<td>£</td>
<td>£</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tangible assets</td>
<td>639</td>
<td>958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CURRENT ASSETS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debtors</td>
<td>11,785</td>
<td>35,768</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cash at bank and in hand</td>
<td>156,542</td>
<td>142,126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>168,327</td>
<td>177,894</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CREDITORS:</strong> Amounts falling due within one year</td>
<td>(31,006)</td>
<td>(21,847)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NET CURRENT ASSETS</strong></td>
<td>137,321</td>
<td>156,047</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>NET ASSETS</strong></td>
<td>£137,960</td>
<td>£ 157,005</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>RESERVES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unrestricted funds</td>
<td>54,417</td>
<td>42,869</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designated funds</td>
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<td>60,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restricted funds</td>
<td>23,543</td>
<td>54,136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>£137,960</td>
<td>£ 157,005</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 27th April 2016 and submitted to the Charity Commission during May 2016. 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

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Catriona Jarvis  
Chair

Alison Ward FCCA  
Independent Examiner