We seek to transform the lives of people who have been persecuted for their acts of conscience to protect and advance human rights around the world

Practical support for prisoners of conscience across the world since 1962

https://www.prisonersofconscience.org/
The short-term change achieved
Immediate assistance at a time of acute need – relief grants, facilitating family reunions, funding for travel arrangements, subsistence while in hiding, in exile or fleeing danger.

“Thank you, I have received the money and I really appreciate it, going to pay rent, where to sleep and buy food. God bless you so much.”* Jeanette*, Rwandan journalist in exile in Uganda

The longer-term change achieved
It is our experience that many of those beneficiaries who have been brave enough to make a positive stand to uphold human rights are likely to devote all or part of their future lives to changing the world for the better. By supporting prisoners of conscience during their time of need we enable them to re-establish their careers and make a positive difference to our world.

“I left Kenya almost 3 years ago and am now in US. Thank you so much for all your assistance and support. I would not get out of that situation without the help of you and many others like you who are committed to help people running away from authoritarian governments. I currently live with my wife and my 2 children here in US and both works. I am still writing. The pain needs sometime to heal but we are trying to leave the past behind and move on. You was there when I needed your help the most and I will never forget it.” Yonas*, Ethiopian journalist in exile in the USA

Impact measurement
We are currently implementing a programme to better capture, measure, analyse and learn from the impact which our work makes for the lives of prisoners of conscience. In so doing we shall enhance our ability to report to funders, supporters, beneficiaries and all other stakeholders on outcomes and impact.

Note: * denotes a pseudonym. Prisoners of Conscience takes extreme care to protect its beneficiaries, and their families, many of whom are vulnerable to continued persecution if their identities or locations are made public.
Message from our Director

In 2018/19 we were once again humbled by the courage and fortitude of prisoners of conscience – ordinary people and families exercising extraordinary acts of conscience to uphold their and others’ human rights. Our thanks go once again to our donors for their generous and committed support.

We hope that you find this annual report informative. It has been a period of change for PoC, with the following initiatives:

- we have begun to more formally capture the impact of our work to improve and refine our theory of change – initial results are encouraging as 83% of our UK bursary recipient responders are in paid employment and, of those, 62% are employed in sectors related to their qualifications
- an Employability Panel has been established to improve the potential for our beneficiaries to find meaningful, skills-related employment
- our new website provides more information for beneficiaries, referral agencies and supporters
- extensive feedback to improve our work is being sought from referral agencies, supporters and beneficiaries
- we were fortunate to take part in the BBC Radio 4 appeal with John Simpson, BBC Foreign Affairs Editor, delivering our appeal which ran concurrently with a social media digital human rights quiz
- our financial year end has been changed from 31st December to 31st March for cash flow and operational reasons
- PoC is now registered with the Fundraising Regulator.

Overall, it has been a year of listening – to beneficiaries, referral agencies and supporters – with the aim of increasing the transformation of the lives of prisoners of conscience. Terrible human rights abuses continue in all parts of the world in which PoC is active and there is so much more that we shall strive to achieve for our human rights defender beneficiaries.

A final thank you to Lynn Carter who retired as Director of PoC in June 2018 following nearly 22 years of dedicated service for prisoners of conscience. Lynn has left a lasting legacy for PoC to build on and we are fortunate that Lynn remains active as one of our patrons. This will also be the last annual report featuring our Chair of the trustee board, Ansel Wong, who comes to the end of his 9-year tenure as a trustee – our thanks to Ansel for his leadership of and commitment for PoC.

Gary Allison, Director

Raising public awareness and extent of need

Understandably, charity annual reports often focus on the positives and the impact achieved. While we hear time and again from our beneficiaries that our grants have a profound impact on their lives, it is perhaps more relevant in this report to focus on what PoC is failing to achieve and how only a small fraction of human rights defenders across the world are being supported at their time of greatest need.

Our research through agencies, NGOs and government organisations indicates that at any one time there are tens of thousands of human rights defenders who would qualify for and require the support of PoC – we are therefore determined to reach more beneficiaries with larger grants and more support by increasing our average annual income from around £300,000 many times over.

If we were to support only 2,000 prisoners of conscience at an average grant of £2,000, we would require £4,000,000 in funds to achieve a real, lasting impact.

The case of Eric, which featured in the April 2019 BBC Radio 4 appeal, is instructive:

Eric was a Rwandan journalist who had to flee his country following his reporting of government suppression of free speech and his subsequent persecution. PoC funded his living costs while he was in hiding for a year and his subsequent travel costs until he reached safe refuge in Australia through UNHCR. Our total funding was over £5,000, in contrast to a standard grant of £500, and this additional funding enabled him and his family to re-establish their lives in safety.

Eric’s personal account of his persecution and transformation appeared in a recent article in the Independent newspaper: https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/rwanda-genocide-massacre-prisoner-of-conscience-refugee-australia-a8921676.html

As part of our attempt to raise public awareness of and support for prisoners of conscience we

- took part in a BBC Radio 4 appeal
- published a social media human rights quiz
- took part in a panel discussion on the persecution of journalists at the Byline Festival
- had articles published on and by PoC in the Independent newspaper, Byline Times and journalism.co.uk.

PoC holds a somewhat unique position in the human rights NGO sector – while other organisations campaign, lobby, provide legal assistance and monitor human rights, PoC provides financial and practical assistance to keep the voices of human rights defenders alive and to help transform their lives.

An annual income of around £4,000,000 would enable PoC to begin to achieve the same impact as comparable human rights NGOs.

Eric and his family in Australia
Grants made

In 2018/19 our beneficiaries were from different parts of the world and advocated for a wide array of human rights. These prisoners of conscience challenged corruption by reporting on oppressive regimes, participated in protests, called for political/legal/social reforms, provided humanitarian aid to those in need and stood up against perpetrators of religious persecution.

Grants by country of origin

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Grant(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azerbaijan</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burma</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cameroon</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DR Congo</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eritrea</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberia</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malta</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uzbekistan</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Sahara</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yemen</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grants by human rights upheld

- Freedom of expression: 39
- Freedom of political association and democracy: 46
- Freedom of peaceful assembly and protest: 15
- Freedom of religion: 19
- Freedom of sexual orientation: 1
- Right to provide humanitarian assistance for all: 9

Grants by category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hardship relief</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family reunion</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bursaries</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burma block grant</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Shahidul Alam, an award-winning photographer, writer and activist from Bangladesh, was being held indefinitely and without bail and access to medical treatment after openly criticising the government's violent handling of student led demonstrations. Shahidul's imprisonment triggered an outburst from the international community, and after spending over 100 days in jail he was eventually granted permanent bail. However, the charges still stand against him and, if convicted, he faces a minimum of seven years and a maximum of 14 years in prison under a controversial Bangladeshi law.

Thanks to our loyal supporters, PoC awarded a grant to Shahidul to help pay his medical bills, buy warm clothing and blankets and enable his family to make the four-hour journey to visit him in prison.

Adeeb* was refused a government teaching position at a local school on religious grounds. Persecution continued, with a particularly frightening incident occurring, where Adeeb was attacked by a mob under the leadership of the local Mudarassah administration. He was locked up, beaten and threatened with death if he did not convert to mainstream Islam. He was eventually left in a landfill, terrorized and unable to walk. Soon after that, Adeeb and his family were rendered homeless, after a local group of people forcibly removed them from their home, with the police doing nothing to try and resolve the issue.

The persecution and torture has left Adeeb severely depressed and traumatised. He decided to flee to the UK with his wife and 3-year-old daughter, where they received refugee status and have been living ever since. PoC awarded a grant to Adeeb to help him reunite with his other four children left behind in Pakistan.
I’m absolutely delighted to say that the Home Office have finally granted a family reunion entry clearance visa to Tesfay’s nephew and hopefully he will be in the UK in a couple of weeks. As you can imagine, the family are incredibly happy and so grateful to Prisoners of Conscience for all your support throughout this torturous process. We literally could not have done it without your help and we so much appreciate, not only the fact that the grants have all been made, but how quickly you have been able to respond to our repeated requests.”

Sohini Tanna, Family Reunion Co-Ordinator, British Red Cross

Partners

We are very grateful to the following agencies, which submitted successful grant applications in 2018:

- Article 19 Eastern Africa
- Article 26 - Helena Kennedy Foundation
- Breaking Barriers
- British Red Cross
- Citizens Advice Sheffield
- Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre
- Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition
- Edmonton Baptist Church
- English Centre of International Pen
- Freedom From Torture - Manchester
- Freedom Now
- Haringey Adult Learning Service, Economic Regeneration, London Borough of Haringey
- Hivos
- Homeplus
- Human Rights Focus Pakistan (HRFP)
- Human Rights Watch - East Asia Division
- Iran Human Rights Documentation Center
- Jesuit Refugee Service UK
- Migrant Voice
- NIACRO
- North of England Refugee Service (Newcastle)
- Northern Ireland Community of Refugees and Asylum Seekers
- Notre Dame Refugee Centre
- Peace Brigades International - UK Section (PBI UK)
- PEN - America
- Refugee Council - East London
- Refugee Radio
- Reporters Without Borders
- Rights Realization Centre
- Sanctuary
- The Authors League Fund
- The Rory Peck Trust
- The Welcoming Association
- Waverley Care
- Welsh Refugee Council (Cardiff)
- York City of Sanctuary
- Zimbabwe Exiles Forum
Our Funders

We fundraise throughout each year to raise the income to support prisoners of conscience. Our principal sources of income are charitable trusts, individual donors and legacies.

With special thanks to Allan & Nesta Ferguson Charitable Trust, Allchurches, City of London Corporation, Clifford Chance, The Joffe Charitable Trust, The Law Society Charity, Reed Foundation, The Sigrid Rausing Trust, Sue Rouse Charitable Trust and Thornton Foundation for their immense generosity which has enabled us to lift the scale of our activities to support prisoners of conscience.

Our People

We employ a small team of one full-time and three part-time staff members in our London office, a freelance accountant and several dedicated and enthusiastic volunteers.

Staff

Gary Allison, Director
Kirsty Bennett, Grants Manager
Rachael Tyndall, Communications & Administration Manager
Joanna Pitta, Communications & Transformation Officer
Kathy Moss, External Accountant

Volunteers

Sean Brazier, Louise Brown, Arabella Kyprianides, Jane Seal

Trustees and Patrons

We are fortunate to be supported by a group of highly skilled and committed trustees:

Ian Baker
Dr Lynn Bindman
Victoria Brittain (Vice Chair)
Dr Dorothy Connell
John Cooper QC
Justin Glenister

In addition, we continue to benefit from the support of many eminent patrons:

Rt Rev Simon Barrington-Ward KCMG
Lady Brooke
Lynn Carter
Lucy Chandler OBE
Dame Judi Dench DBE
Lady Antonia Fraser DBE
Roger Graef OBE
Rosamund Horwood-Smart QC
Kurt and Caroline Jackson
Baroness Helena Kennedy QC
Bruce Kent
Neil Latchman
Caroline Moorehead OBE
Rabbi Julia Neuberger DBE
Sir Geoffrey Nice QC
The Hon Jonathon Porritt
Lord Puttnam CBE
Rev Dr Nicholas Sagovsky
Sir Tom Stoppard OM
Desmond Tutu Archbishop Emeritus
Zoë Wanamaker CBE
## Accounts

### Statement of Financial Activities for the 15 month period ended 31 March 2019

#### Summary statement of financial activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Unrestricted Funds</th>
<th>Restricted Funds</th>
<th>Designated Funds</th>
<th>Total 01/01/18-31/03/19</th>
<th>Total Year Ended 31/12/17</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>£196,664</td>
<td>£145,729</td>
<td></td>
<td>£342,393</td>
<td>£284,195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income From Investments</td>
<td>£126</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>£126</td>
<td>£54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Income</strong></td>
<td>£196,790</td>
<td>£145,729</td>
<td></td>
<td>£342,519</td>
<td>£284,249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expenditure On:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raising Funds</td>
<td>£78,904</td>
<td>£9,893</td>
<td></td>
<td>£88,797</td>
<td>£60,148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charitable Activities</td>
<td>£175,027</td>
<td>£101,281</td>
<td></td>
<td>£276,308</td>
<td>£229,696</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenditure</strong></td>
<td>£253,931</td>
<td>£111,174</td>
<td></td>
<td>£365,105</td>
<td>£289,844</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net (Expenditure)/Income</strong></td>
<td>£(57,141)</td>
<td>£34,555</td>
<td></td>
<td>£(22,586)</td>
<td>£(5,595)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reconciliation Of Funds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Funds Brought Forward</td>
<td>£66,262</td>
<td>£12,418</td>
<td>£60,000</td>
<td>£138,680</td>
<td>£144,275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Funds Carried Forward</strong></td>
<td>£9,121</td>
<td>£46,973</td>
<td>£60,000</td>
<td>£116,094</td>
<td>£138,680</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 12th June 2019 and submitted to Charity Commission during August 2019. 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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### Balance Sheet at 31 March 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>15 Months 01/01/18-31/03/19</th>
<th>12 Months 31/12/2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fixed Assets</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tangible Assets</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Current Assets</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debtor and Loan</td>
<td>£13,167</td>
<td>£16,273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash At Bank And In Hand</td>
<td>£125,994</td>
<td>£153,130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Creditors: Amounts Failing Due Within One Year</strong></td>
<td>£139,161</td>
<td>£169,403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net Current Assets/ (Liabilities)</strong></td>
<td>£116,094</td>
<td>£138,680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net Assets</strong></td>
<td>£116,094</td>
<td>£138,680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Funds</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restricted Income Funds</td>
<td>£46,973</td>
<td>£12,418</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designated Income Funds</td>
<td>£60,000</td>
<td>£60,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unrestricted Income Funds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Reserve</td>
<td>£9,121</td>
<td>£66,262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Charity Funds</strong></td>
<td>£116,094</td>
<td>£138,680</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Ansel Wong
Chair

Alison Ward FCCA
Independent Examiner
Bursaries Reception

PoC hosted its annual reception bringing together students who have received bursary grants, along with staff, volunteers, trustees, patrons and donors in November 2018, hosted by the Chair of our trustee board, Ansel Wong. This was our 17th annual bursary event, with total bursaries awarded at £860,000.

In 2018, PoC allocated 12 bursaries and this reception was an opportunity for everyone to hear the personal stories of some of those who had received grants in the past.

One bursary holder, Alia* is a healthcare professional from Sudan who was part of a small group of medical practitioners offering a mobile clinic in areas of civil unrest, where there were no medical services. They were accused by security forces of being supporters of the violent organisation JEM, because on some occasions they treated members from the organisation. Alia* believed that everyone should be entitled to health care and for that she was detained and tortured. She now lives in the UK with her 4 year old daughter and continues to study to work in the pharmaceutical industry.

“When I turned up to Prisoners of Conscience they immediately agreed and offered help to me. The grant that I received helped me to lighten in my financial burden and helped me focus more in my study and made things easier for me. Your generosity helped me to inspire people to give back to communities. I hope one to day to help students to achieve their goals, as you helped me. I am currently achieving a degree of Master of Science with a degree of distinction. My future plan is to finish my post-graduate studies in pharmacy by doing a PhD in the crystallisation field. This will help me to work in a professional setting, for example in the innovation sector in pharmaceutical industries or in the healthcare sectors.”

Another bursary holder is Abdo*, a humanitarian aid worker also from Sudan. He has worked extensively for various NGO’s and was targeted by the authorities for criticising the government’s approach to the international humanitarian presence in Sudan.

“I had described the camp conditions as being akin to a war crime due to overcrowding and disease. The Sudanese authority was very angry with this critical report… I was arrested and tortured, my movements were restricted and my life was threatened. I felt that there was no hope to resume my life, to resume my career as a medical doctor and as a human aid worker. That is why I fled to the UK. I was granted refugee status but I was desperate to return to my career again. I received a grant from Prisoners of Conscience to study tropical medicine. Undoubtedly this grant and the Masters Degree that I obtained with the grade of merit helped me greatly towards my plan to pursue my career again and to practise medicine in the UK, where I am currently working to fulfil all the GMC registrations. Thanks again to all the donors and volunteers in Prisoners of Conscience. Without your support, without your encouragement, my success wouldn’t have been possible, so thank you, thank you, thank you again.”

As ever, the evening was very generously sponsored by Clifford Chance LLP at their head office in Canary Wharf.