



PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE

Annual Report 2018/19

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/>

Snapshot of our grants in 2018/19

Number of grants **129**

Number of additional family members helped - **186**

Total number of people assisted **315**

Number of families reunited involving **30** people; **9**

Our grants supported prisoners of conscience from **26** countries

Number of bursaries awarded to refugees in exile **12** across the engineering, legal, technology, medical, bio-sciences and pharmaceutical sectors

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.*

Theory of Change

Prisoners of Conscience (PoC) exists to positively transform the lives of prisoners of conscience – human rights activists and people around the world who are persecuted daily for standing up to human rights abuses. Our beneficiaries are often left in danger of their lives, tortured, in hiding or exile, unable to meet basic accommodation and living needs and dealing with the emotional and psychological aftermath of their brave actions.

How we do it

Financial grants:

Hardship relief, Family reunion, Bursaries

Practical assistance:

Signposting to other grant making organisations, referral to partner agencies for counselling support, legal/process advice and other assistance

Employability panel:

Employability skills training, opportunities for meaningful, skills-related employment

Change enablers

- Governance and leadership by trustee board and director
- Skilled staff working in an enthusiastic, committed and transparent environment
- Funding and external support sufficient to achieve our mission
- Processes and internal systems to deliver excellence in financial grants, practical assistance and the employability panel

Evidence of change

- Impact measurement by feedback from beneficiaries and referral agencies on financial grants, practical assistance and employability panel
- External evaluation

Change achieved

Transforming the lives of prisoners of conscience to enable them to live safe, free and self-sufficient lives.

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 category

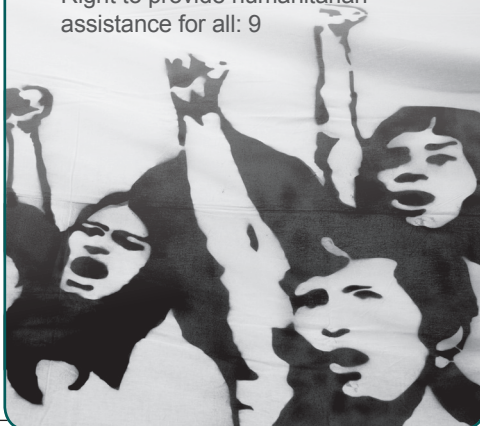
84 hardship relief
13 family reunion
12 bursaries
20 Burma block grant

Grants by country of origin

Afghanistan: 1	Morocco: 1
Azerbaijan: 2	Nepal: 1
Bangladesh: 2	Nigeria: 1
Burma: 20	Pakistan: 16
Cameroon: 2	Rwanda: 3
DRC: 3	Sudan: 23
Eritrea: 4	Syria: 2
Ethiopia: 12	Turkey: 3
Georgia: 1	Uganda: 1
Iran: 10	Uzbekistan: 2
Kenya: 2	Western Sahara: 1
Liberia: 1	Yemen: 1
Malta: 1	Zimbabwe: 13

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



Kirsty Bennett, Shahidul Alam

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* and his family have lived their entire lives in Pakistan fearing for their safety. Being members of a minority sect within Shia Islam, they have been routinely harassed, threatened and, both physically and psychologically, abused.

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.

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

"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



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

Stefanie Grant

Dr Roger Harrison

Catriona Jarvis

Tabitha Nice

Maria Saro-Wiwa

Ansel Wong (Chair)

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



Kathy Moss, Joanna Pitta, Arabella Kyprianides, Kirsty Bennett



Zoë Wanamaker, Rachael Tyndall

Accounts

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

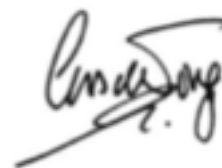
Summary statement of financial activities

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Designated Funds	Total 01/01/18-31/03/19	Total Year Ended 31/12/17
Income:	£	£	£	£	£
Donations And Legacies	196,664	145,729	-	342,393	284,195
Income From Investments	126	-	-	126	54
Total Income	196,790	145,729	-	342,519	284,249
Expenditure On:					
Raising Funds	78,904	9,893	-	88,797	60,148
Charitable Activities	175,027	101,281	-	276,308	229,696
Total Expenditure	253,931	111,174	-	365,105	289,844
Net (Expenditure)/Income	(57,141)	34,555	-	(22,586)	(5,595)
Reconciliation Of Funds					
Total Funds Brought Forward	66,262	12,418	60,000	138,680	144,275
Total Funds Carried Forward	£9,121	£46,973	£60,000	£116,094	£138,680

Balance Sheet at 31 March 2019

	15 Months 01/01/18-31/03/19	12 Months 31/12/2017
Fixed Assets	£	£
Tangible Assets	-	-
Current Assets		
Debtors	13,167	16,273
Cash At Bank And In Hand	125,994	153,130
	139,161	169,403
Creditors: Amounts Failing Due Within One Year	(23,067)	(30,723)
Net Current Assets/ (Liabilities)	116,094	138,680
Net Assets	116,094	138,680
Funds		
Restricted Income Funds	46,973	12,418
Designated Income Funds	60,000	60,000
Unrestricted Income Funds		
General Reserve	9,121	66,262
Total Charity Funds	116,094	138,680

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.



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 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 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.



Ansel Wong



Gary Allison, Roger Harrison





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Conscience**