

Amnesty International in China protest

Human rights youth group holds rally in Belfast calling for better justical system in run up to Olympics

China has been the centre of much negative media attention, particularly in the last year because of the militant crackdown on its people.

The Chinese government gave assurances that if the country was allowed to hold the 2008 Olympics, efforts would be made to improve the quality of life for its citizens by embracing more basic human rights.

On 26th June, Amnesty International called a protest in Belfast's city centre to raise awareness of China's continued injustices.

One of the central issues was capital punishment because the Chinese judicial system is said to prosecute and execute more so-called criminals per year than any other country.

William from Amnesty International Youth said: "If we spread awareness even to the smallest of countries then its relevance will hopefully spread to the rest of the world.

"Although after today there is nothing specific on the agenda, we will be watching China closely to see if the Chinese government will fulfil its promises and change its laws.

"We will hold an evaluation day and I'm sure there will be another protest in the coming months."

Protesters gathered outside Belfast city hall with placards and called on the public to sign a banner.

Postcards which listed journalists who have been locked up in prisons and mental institutions were also handed out and are to be sent to senior members of the Chinese Ministry including Foreign Affairs Minister Yang Jiechi.

Amnesty held the event because it believes there is a responsibility and opportunity to strengthen its relationship with the Chinese community in Northern Ireland.

According to the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development there are currently around 8000 Chinese residents in Northern Ireland, representing 51 per cent of the entire ethnic minority population.

The protest was initially planned for May but was postponed due to the earthquake in the Sichuan Province.

About this article

This story was written by Ruth Smyth, 19, from Headliners in Belfast.

0 comments

- [Add a comment to this page](#)