

2020 ANNUAL REPORT OF VOICE FOR PRISONERS LIMITED

I have the pleasure of reporting the activities of Voice for Prisoners Limited in 2020

We support prisoners through advancement of education and prison visitation programmes. Through social media we raise awareness in overseas countries of the harsh penalties in Hong Kong for drug mules.

Our NGO has various pillars and I report as follows:

INTERNATIONAL ANTI-DRUG TRAFFICKING CAMPAIGN

No Mas Mulas / No More Mules – our campaign warning vulnerable people at risk of becoming drug mules

No Mas Mulas – our Spanish language campaign in Latin America

Hong Kong has extremely long and punitive prison sentences for drug trafficking. Our campaign warns vulnerable people at risk of becoming drug mules by sharing prisoners' stories online and campaigning at the source. We help to spread the message and increase awareness within the communities most targeted by drug traffickers in Latin America.

No More Mules is our campaign for the rest of the world in particular Africa.

The same as No Mas Mulas, our campaign's mission is to raise awareness of the risks of trafficking drugs to Hong Kong with its extremely long and punitive prison sentences.

We also share prisoners' stories and by campaigning at the source, we help to spread the message and inspire change within the communities most targeted by drug traffickers in Africa and Asia.

In early 2020, Father John Wotherspoon who created the campaign in 2013, visited various countries in Africa. He made many good contacts and received substantial media coverage.

Later in 2020, due to the significant reduction in air travel due to Covid 19, the number of people charged in Hong Kong with trafficking drugs from overseas was greatly reduced. However, those defendants who were caught mainly at Hong Kong International Airport before 2020, came before the Courts. These people required assistance with their defence, and many helped with the campaign by writing letters advising people not to traffic drugs to Hong Kong because of the harsh penalties.

By participating in our campaign, defendants may be considered eligible for small reductions to their sentences. Since the launch of our anti-drug trafficking campaign, the number of drug mules entering Hong Kong from Africa and South America has reduced significantly.

We also witnessed a new trend in 2020 where drugs were sent to Hong Kong by post. Many people, particularly foreign domestic helpers, were induced to collect these parcels from the Post Office and were caught by either the Police or Customs.

PRISON VISITATION ON AIR

Hong Kong prisoners are allowed only one ten-minute phone call every month. The weekly hour-and-a-half radio segment *Prison Visitation on Air* by-passes that strict regulation. The radio programme has become a critical lifeline for prisoners, especially foreigners, who have no local family support. Prisoners and their families can phone in requests to read letters, play special songs and exchange messages in many languages.

In 2020, Voice for Prisoners provided partial funding to keep this radio programme – the only English-language radio show catering to non-Chinese inmates – on air. It is hosted by Bruce Aitken and airs every Sunday night on AM 1044 Metro Plus from 8.30pm to 10pm.

In December 2020, Far East Masonic Benevolence Fund Corporation donated to us HK\$ 140,000 for the cost of the radio programme in 2021.

EDUCATION FUND

We believe that education is the key to success after a prisoner is released from prison. We provide financial aid for educational courses and procurement of educational materials in various languages.

During the course of the year, we received a donation from St. John's Cathedral Fund in the sum of HK\$ 170,000 for our Education Fund.

FUND RAISING

During 2020 we applied for funding from Operation Santa Claus and the Beat Drugs Fund. We were not successful with regard to our application to Operation Santa Claus and our application to the Beat Drugs Fund would not be known until the first quarter of 2021.

THANKS

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our volunteers who help our NGO and in particular our Prison Chaplains, Father John Wotherspoon, Dr. Tobias Brandner and the Rev. Will Newman.

John Budge SBS JP

Chairman