

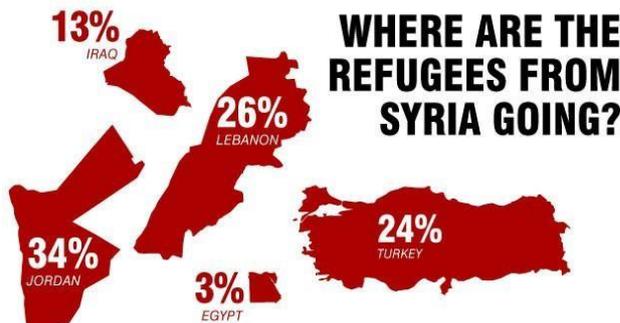
# Watford Amnesty Group

July/August 2015 newsletter

## What next for Syria's refugees?

To mark Refugee Week, Hannah Slater, the Amnesty Country Coordinator for Syria, spoke at June's public meeting. She explained the background to the crisis, showed powerful images of the bombing and film of the situation facing refugees.

She explained how Amnesty is supporting human rights defenders and citizen journalists within the country who, despite terrible conflict all around them, are speaking out for a peaceful future.



SOURCE: UNHCR, the United Nations' refugee agency.

Millions of children, women and men have fled the violence, persecution and hardships in Syria, hoping for safety outside the country. The UK has so far committed to only taking in a few hundred of the most vulnerable refugees. Later in the autumn, there will an opportunity to encourage local councils to welcome those refugees in greatest need.



## Summer (and beyond) of campaigning

You are welcome to just turn up to any of these events, but if you want to know more or to let us know you're coming, use the contacts below.

**Saturday 11 July, 10am-2pm – Rickmansworth street collection.** A good opportunity to raise some extra funds and be a public Amnesty presence. If you have an hour to spare, do come and join us. Contact

Monique: [jowerscroxley@gmail.com](mailto:jowerscroxley@gmail.com)

**Saturday 8 August, time TBC – Campaigning at Café Cha Cha Cha in Cassiobury Park, Watford.** Enjoy the sunshine (we hope!) and a coffee and chat to café-goers about the latest Amnesty action. Contact Mick: [michael.htr@googlemail.com](mailto:michael.htr@googlemail.com)

**Saturday 22 August, 11am-5pm – Herts Pride.** Back to Cassiobury Park for an Amnesty stall in the Wellbeing marquee, encouraging people to take action to support LGBT human rights defenders. Contact Sarah: [sarah\\_eve@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:sarah_eve@tiscali.co.uk)

**Next public meeting: Monday 7 September, 8pm – Showing of 'Watford's Quiet Heroes' with director Chris Pettit.** This documentary tells the stories of some of those who defied the call to arms in World War One. We will also discuss how Amnesty supports conscientious objectors today. Venue: St Mary's

**Autumn – meet local MPs about the Human Rights Act.** The Human Rights Act is under threat and this is a major campaign focus for Amnesty in the coming year. We are hoping to arrange a meeting with local MPs to explain Amnesty's case for defence of the Act, and secure their commitment to human rights at home and abroad. Contact Sarah: [sarah\\_eve@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:sarah_eve@tiscali.co.uk)

**Saturday 10 October, 10am-2pm – Rickmansworth street collection.** Contact Monique: [jowerscroxley@gmail.com](mailto:jowerscroxley@gmail.com)

**Monday 12 October – Group AGM.** With Geoff Corre to speak on human trafficking and modern slavery. Contact Sarah: [sarah\\_eve@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:sarah_eve@tiscali.co.uk) Venue: St Mary's

**27 November – Greeting card campaign at Rickmansworth Starlight Evening** TBC

**December – Write for Rights campaign meeting or event.** Date TBC

Any further ideas for campaigning, meetings or activities are welcome!

### **New long-term case: Ali Mahmoud Othman, Syria**

Ali Mahmoud Othman is a citizen journalist from Homs – who took up reporting on the situation in Syria in the absence of professional domestic and foreign journalists being able to operate in Syria. He was arrested in March 2012 in Aleppo province.



Some weeks later, Syrian state TV aired footage of him being questioned about his involvement in the protest movement in Homs and his media activities. The footage makes it clear that he had been arrested by government forces. Amnesty International believes that Ali Mahmoud Othman is a prisoner of conscience held solely for his peaceful media-related activities and for his role as a fixer for foreign journalists. No one has heard from Ali Mahmoud Othman since the televised interview in May 2012 and his family remains without any information about his fate.

As a group, we will be focusing on this case in our campaigning for as long as is needed. This could involve sending solidarity messages, appeal letters, petitions or other actions. More information to come soon. Contact Charlie: [charlietunmore@gmail.com](mailto:charlietunmore@gmail.com)



### **Croxley Revels: Thank you!**

The Croxley Revels, held in June, are always friendly, fun and very wet. This year was no exception. But the rain only came at the end of the day, and we sold plenty of marmalade and chutney, collected petition signatures for protection of refugees and had many conversations about human rights. We raised nearly £70 and collected over 30 signatures. Thanks especially to Monique, Iain,

John G, John J, Sarah, Charlie, Mary and Jarka.

## **Contact details**

Visit our website: [www.amnesty.org.uk/groups/watford](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/groups/watford)

**Would you like to join the group or pay subs (£6 per individual, £10 per family)?**

Contact membership secretary Monique Jowers on 01923 774 621 or [jowerscroxley@gmail.com](mailto:jowerscroxley@gmail.com)

**Do you have an enquiry about the group website, publicity ideas or an enthusiasm for social media?**

Contact Mark Nicholas on [marknicholas999@hotmail.com](mailto:marknicholas999@hotmail.com)

**Do you have items for the newsletter, ideas for future meetings or activities, or other enquiries?**

Contact Sarah Hagger-Holt on [sarah\\_eve@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:sarah_eve@tiscali.co.uk) or 07761 660 370