

Next public meeting: I stand for human rights – general election action

Monday 16 March, 8pm

St Mary's church, High Street, Watford WD18 0EG



The general election is on 7 May 2015. We want to ensure the next UK government and parliament are supportive of human rights and work to protect them in the UK and internationally.

In the run up to the election, politicians will be engaging with their constituents (us) a lot more than normally. We can use this opportunity to show our prospective parliamentary candidates that Amnesty is a movement of passionate and committed members who care about how the next government acts on human rights.

At this meeting, we'll be learning about the issues that Amnesty is focusing on during the general election campaign; writing to our candidates in Watford, South West, Dacorum (and anywhere else the group membership covers); and taking our own 'I stand for human rights' pledges.

All welcome – please join us.

Dates for your diary in 2015

In early February, a planning meeting of eight members, came up with the following calendar of activity for 2015. More details will develop as the year goes on.

But any further ideas for campaigning, meetings or activities are still welcome – please share these ideas at meetings or contact [Sarah](#).



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For details see above.

Saturday/Sunday 18/19 April – Amnesty International Conference and AGM, Warwick University.

If are interested in going, find out more [here](#) or from Sarah or Monique.

Monday 18 May – Letter-writing and planning meeting.

Venue TBC

Saturday 20 June – Stall at Croxley Revels.

Monday 29 June – Speaker meeting, with a focus on human rights in the Middle East.

Venue: St Mary's, details TBC

July – Rickmansworth street collection.

Date TBC

Monday 7 September – 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.

Venue: St Mary's

Saturday 10 October – Rickmansworth street collection.

12 or 19 October – Group AGM, with Geoff Bate to speak on human trafficking.

Venue: St Mary's, date TBC

27 November – Greeting card campaign at Rickmansworth Starlight Evening TBC

December – Write for Rights campaign meeting or event

Date TBC



What is life like in Myanmar/Burma?

Our last public meeting in January focused on the situation in Myanmar/Burma. In previous years the group has campaigned for the release of prisoners of conscience from Burma.

The speaker was Mark Chamberlain from international development agency CAFOD, who shared reflections on the country and experiences from visiting remote communities devastated by extreme weather. This was followed by questions and discussion. To find out more about CAFOD's work in Myanmar visit: www.cafod.org.uk/News/International-News/Lent-Martin-s-story

Feedback and highlights from Amnesty UK

Over **85,000 actions** were sent as part of the **Write for Rights campaign** last year (including our group's 100 or so). Many of the individuals featured have expressed their thanks, including Ensaf Haidar, Raif Badawi's wife. Raif has been sentenced to imprisonment and a thousand lashes for setting up the website 'Free Saudi Liberals' in Saudi Arabia. Ensaf says: "At times when Raif called me I conveyed to him the activities of Amnesty International's campaign. I even remember that suddenly he started to cry out of joy, and he said to me: 'Ensaf, how can I thank all those people who supported me; I want to thank them one by one.'"

To write letters on behalf of Raif and other individuals at risk, you can download a sheet of eight cases here: www.amnesty.org.uk/resources/real-lives-spring-2015



If you enjoyed the recent '**Paddington**' film, you might be interested in this article by an immigration lawyer, explaining what would happen to Paddington under UK immigration laws, if he really did try to make a new life in Britain: www.freemovement.org.uk/an-immigration-lawyer-reviews-paddington/

15 March marks the **4th anniversary of the Syrian uprising**. The refugee crisis and conflict continues, often away from the media spotlight. Watch out for the 'Help Turn the Light Back On' campaign around the anniversary, backed by Amnesty, Oxfam and many other organisations worldwide.

Contact details

Visit our website: 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

Do you have an enquiry about the group website or publicity ideas?

Contact Mark Nicholas on 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 or 07761 660 370