

# Action

## THE BRIGHTON AND HOVE AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL GROUP NEWSLETTER



March 2017

### **Forthcoming Brighton & Hove Amnesty Group Meetings/Events**

*Group meetings take place on the first Thursday of each month from 8-10pm at Community Base, Queens Road, Brighton*

March 2nd  
Campaign Meeting

### **Monthly Collection**

18th March

Contact Madeline

01273 508620

[madeline@peasgood.plus.com](mailto:madeline@peasgood.plus.com)

17th December

### **Monthly Stall**

Saturday 11th March

Sydney Street

Contact Jill 01273 621697

11am to 1pm

### **Brighton Pride**

5th August

Stall and Parade

Details to follow

Write for Rights 2017

2nd December

10am to 4pm

Friends Meeting House

Ship St, Brighton

## **Peru: Indigenous community at risk due to threats**

More than 60 heavily armed individuals entered Asháninka Meantari Indigenous community territory in the Central Peruvian rainforest and forced out 21 families by subjecting them to death threats.

Please send the following letter or re write in your own words:

Carlos Basombrio Iglesias  
Minister of the Interior  
Plaza 30 de Agosto s/n Urb. Corpac – San Isidro  
Lima  
Perú

Email: [dm@mininter.gob.pe](mailto:dm@mininter.gob.pe) or [sg@mininter.gob.pe](mailto:sg@mininter.gob.pe) [both seemed to work]  
Twitter: @CarlosBasombrio / @MininterPeru

Dear Minister,

I ask you to ensure that the Asháninka Meantari people, in Pangoa district, Satipo province, can return to their land and remain there in safety.

They were driven out during the armed conflicts of 1980-2000, but they returned to resume their traditional life.

Now it is reported that, on February 3, about 60 armed men entered the forest, to retrieve lumber that had been illegally cut. They drove out 21 families, by threatening them with death.

As I am sure you know, the government of Peru is obliged to guarantee the rights of indigenous peoples to their land.

Yours respectfully and sincerely,

It's effective to send a copy to the ambassador:

HE Mr Claudio De La Puente  
Embassy of Peru  
52 Sloane Street  
London SW1X 9SP  
[postmaster@peruembassy-uk.com](mailto:postmaster@peruembassy-uk.com)

Fuller information, and another address to which you could send the same appeal, are in :Amnesty International's Urgent Action 44/17 of Feb. 15, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr46/5688/2017/en/>

## February Stall Report

### STOP REFUGEES FREEZING TO DEATH IN GREECE

Date Saturday 18th February

Time 11am - 1pm

Venue Outside Amnesty Bookshop, Sydney Street, Brighton

Weather Mild and dry

Activists Madeline, Celia and Jill

Campaign REFUGEES IN GREECE

Thousands of refugees are trapped on the Greek Islands due to the EU - Turkey deal. They have been at risk of freezing to death in sub - zero winter temperatures surviving under snow covered tents and in inhumane squalor.

We asked members of the public to sign our petition asking for the European Commission to act to urgently move refugees out of the Greek islands and into other European countries. Also they need to provide support for the Greek authorities to properly register and process asylum applications.

We collected 113 signatures which we will be sending to President Juncker of the European Commission.

Next Stall Saturday 11th March

If you would like to help with the stall contact Jill 01273 621697

### **RECOMMENDED READING**

#### **What is the What by Dave Eggers**

**Penguin Books 978-0-141-01574-3**

The subtitle of this remarkable book is "The Autobiography of Valentino Achak Deng :A Novel". It tells of what happened to a young boy from South Sudan as his life changes from happiness in a smallish town in Sudan to a hellish escape from war by way of a very long "walk" with the "Lost Boys of Sudan" through hostile and unforgiving territory and then to two periods in refugee camps in Ethiopia and Kenya before final settlement in the United States.

It describes itself as a novel because at the start Valentino is a young boy and cannot remember in accurate detail all that happened in those early days of his passage through horror. It is framed by his recent life in Atlanta as a survivor abroad in a strange land and describes in simple, effective and affecting prose the journey through a civil war, famine, survival and some form of escape.

As I write this, famine has been declared in South Sudan. This is entirely avoidable as the country is fertile. The civil war ran from 1983 to 2005 but despite independence from the North, continuing internal strife combined with incompetence from a corrupt government the lot of the citizens of Southern Sudan is dire.

I found the book well written, informative, harrowing, moving, revelatory and one of the best things I have read. One could read it alongside the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a case study of all the ways in which these rights can be denied. Buy it, borrow it from a friend or the library, but do read it.

*Peter Gwilliam*

## Human Rights Around the World

This is the first of a regular feature highlighting the Human Rights situation in countries round the world. They will be largely based on the reports of the Human Rights Watch organisation. There is no real prioritisation of countries in my planning. I start with Morocco. because supermarkets are getting some of our oranges and other market garden produce from there.

*Peter Gwilliam Chair*

### Morocco – and Human Rights

Morocco is still in illegal occupation of Western Sahara and shows no sign of doing anything about this. However, there have been some small improvements in the Human Rights situation there. It still remains far from perfect.

Human Rights Watch reports (<https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2017/country-chapters/morocco/western-sahara>):

“Morocco enacted laws in 2016 that advanced free expression and the rights of domestic workers, victims of human trafficking, and person with disabilities. However, authorities restricted the activities of local human rights associations and extended restrictions on international human rights groups. Many persons continued to serve long prison terms after unfair trials for politically motivated offenses. While authorities often tolerated protest demonstrations, in Western Sahara, they systematically prevented gatherings supporting self-determination for the contested territory.

Morocco granted temporary legal status to United Nations-recognized asylum-seekers and thousands of economic migrants, pending an overhaul of its laws on asylum and foreigners on Moroccan soil.

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On July 26 2016, parliament adopted a new Press and Publications Code. One advance over the 2002 press code was the elimination of prison time as punishment. But the new code still punishes many non-violent speech offenses with fines and court-ordered suspensions of publications or websites.

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An effective ban, imposed in 2015, remained in place on research missions by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch. This ban reversed relatively unimpeded access that the two organizations had enjoyed for nearly 25 years. On February 21, authorities expelled without explanation the lawyer directing the Morocco office of Lawyers Without Borders-Belgium, which led the group to reduce its activities in the country. In June, the International Institute of Nonviolent Action (NOVACT), announced it would close its Morocco office after authorities expelled one staff member in 2015 and refused entry to two others in 2016, and declined to grant the Spanish association legal recognition.

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Twenty-five Sahrawis won a retrial in civilian court after the Court of Cassation on July 27 quashed their 2013 conviction before a military court. That court had imposed on 23 of them prison sentences of between 20 years and life. The men, who include a few well-known activists, had been charged in connection with violence that erupted in 2010 when authorities dismantled the Gdeim Izik protest camp in Western Sahara and 11 security officers died. The military court failed to investigate defendants' allegations that police had tortured or coerced them into signing false statements, on which it relied almost exclusively for their convictions.

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Moroccan courts continued to jail persons for same-sex conduct under article 489 of the penal code, which prohibits “lewd or unnatural acts with an individual of the same sex.” A Beni Mellal court convicted two men of homosexuality after a group of youths on March 9 burst into the home of one and pushed the two men naked into the street, filming the assault and later posting the clip online.

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Morocco granted one-year renewable residency permits to thousands of sub-Saharan migrants who were not asylum-seekers but who met criteria set forth in the 2013 plan. Some Syrians also obtained one-year residency permits under this procedure.

Parliament adopted in May a law that defines and criminalizes human trafficking and provides measures to protect its victims.”

## Volunteers needed

Brighton and Hove group is currently looking for volunteers for the following roles:

Group Secretary—to check emails, receive mailing and liaise with Chair re running of meeting

Event organisers— to work in a group to organise an Amnestea tea party and a music evening for the group fundraising and awareness raising

Collectors— One Saturday of every month volunteers from the group have permission from the Friends Meeting House to stand by their back gate in the prime position in the middle of the Lanes and hold a collecting tin for Amnesty. This monthly collection has taken place over many years and has brought in a crucial regular income for the group. It has enabled us to hire a meeting room for our monthly meetings and print our monthly newsletter. The following is a message from Madeline who has recently taken over organising the collection:

***Most of our Lanes collecting has been done by five people during the last few months. We aim to cover the five hours 11.00am-4.00pm but we cannot all five of us be there every month. We do know that everyone is busy, but the occasional offer of help would be so welcome. Spring is coming, and it is not so cold now to stand with a collecting box.***

***If you cannot manage an hour, what about half an hour? Would an hour from 10-11am be easier for anyone? The cash is so useful for our branch! Please volunteer if you possibly can.***

**Madeline 01273 508620**

## **BRIGHTON & HOVE AMNESTY GROUP CONTACTS**

**Chair** – Peter brightonandhoveai@googlemail.com Tel: 01273 607110

**New Member Secretary:** Sue Tel: 07790 755921 brightonandhoveai@googlemail.com

**Treasurer:** Sue 07790 755921 sue@suewilliams44.fsnet.co.uk

**Newsletter editor:** - Emma: Tel: 01273 232397

Please email any contributions for the newsletter to brightonandhoveai@googlemail.com

**Lanes collection organiser:** - Madeline—01273 508620

**Individuals at Risk** – Fred Bauma and Yves Makwambala—Sue 07790 755921  
sue@suewilliams44.fsnet.co.uk

**Refugees welcome campaign co ordinator**—Jill 01273 621697

**Amnesty Websites:** international - [www.amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org) AI UK -  
[www.amnesty.org.uk](http://www.amnesty.org.uk) local group – [www.amnesty.org.uk/brighton](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/brighton)

Follow us on twitter @AmnestyBrighton

See our photos on Flickr— <http://www.flickr.com/groups/amnestybrighton/pool>

**Amnesty UK Human Rights Centre** - Tel: 0207 0331500

