



News from the Minehead Group

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Actions you can take this month:

- ✓ **Take action** to stop police brutality in **Brazil**. With the Olympic Games starting shortly, Brazil is experiencing an epidemic of police brutality. In Rio last year, one in five homicides were committed by the police. Go to www.amnesty.org.uk to sign the petition to the Justice Minister asking him to stop letting the police get away with murder.
- ✓ **Join us** for our **social event** and bring and share supper on 23 August at Susan's home. This is an opportunity for all our Amnesty friends and supporters to get together – it is not just for the small group who attend meetings! Please come along. See 'Diary Dates' for more information or phone Susan on 01643 821209.
- ✓ **Come and light a candle** at a **Silent Vigil** for peace in the world and reconciliation amongst all peoples, arranged by Simon Robinson, Vicar of Minehead, for peoples of all faiths and none. Join at any point between 1600 and 1730 on Saturday 6 August, St Andrew's Church, Wellington Square, Minehead.
- ✓ **Make a diary date** to come along to our **fund-raising meal** at the Spice Merchant on Monday 28 November. We went there a few years ago and had a really good evening. Numbers are limited so you will need to book.

Round up of July group news

AmnesTEA: *Cherry Bird writes* - The weather smiled on us for the AmnesTEA on 9 July, and we enjoyed a very relaxed afternoon with delicious cakes in Karen and Graham Mills' beautiful garden in Porlock. People were able to try out a virtual headset supplied by Amnesty as part of the Syria 360 project, which gives a 3-D view of images from war-torn Syria, enabling a real sense of how it feels to be amongst such destruction. We raised £175, topped it up to £250 from the group account and sent the cheque to AIUK as part of the UK Aid Match Project in Burkina Faso and Sierra Leone supporting the campaign against early/ forced marriage and FGM. This means our £250 was actually worth £500 to the women in these two countries. Many thanks to Karen and Graham for their generous hospitality.



Amnesty stall at the Roadwater Fete: *Chris Lawson reports* - We enjoy having a stall at this fete. The sun came out and many people were around. A good many were willing to stop and talk to us. Once again, we were able to use the 3D viewers with a scene from bombed out Aleppo. This was an easy lead into why people become refugees and onto an appeal to our government to play its part in an international

conference about refugees in September. 90 signatures were obtained on a poster which Alison hopes to take to a demonstration in London on 17 September. Our sideshows provided challenges for children and adults alike and information boards checked what one knew about the world refugee situation. There were only a few negative comments to what is often an emotive topic. We were particularly pleased to meet a visitor to our stall who is currently teaching English to a refugee family in Taunton.

Diary Dates

Monthly meetings:

We meet on the fourth Tuesday of the month (except August and December) at 1930, at the Quaker Meeting House on Bancks Street, Minehead. The first part of the meeting is open to all and features a speaker, film or workshop. After a tea break, AI members are invited to stay for a short business meeting which will end by 2130.

Saturday 6 August

Silent Vigil between 1600 & 1730 at St Andrew's Church, Minehead, for peace and reconciliation.

Tuesday 23 August

Summer Social starting at 1800 at Susan's home: Mayhill, Woodland Close, Carhampton TA24 6PE. Bring & share supper in the garden (hopefully!) This is for all our AI supporters.

Tuesday 27 Sept

Group meeting: Holocaust Memorial Day planning for 2017, with representatives from local churches.

Tuesday 25 October

Group meeting: training workshop on the new campaign 'People on the Move'.

Monday 28 Nov

Fund-raising meal at the Spice Merchant, Watchet. Book to arrive between 1830 & 1930. Tel. 01984 634500.

Minehead is People Friendly: our members were actively involved in an event in Minehead on 8 July, responding to the rise in hate crime and racist verbal and physical attacks, following the EU referendum. Even here in West Somerset there have been reports of racial intimidation. The planning of the event grew from ideas circulated by Emily Feldberg and also from Jenny Lennon Wood, who was responding to a 'Hope Not Hate' campaign call for action. The gathering in Wellington Square was organised by the West Somerset Inter-Cultural Friendship Group and others, and was well attended. Leaflets were handed out and people were able to sign two petitions: one to the District Council asking it to condemn racial intolerance and abuse, and the other was AIUK's petition Against Hate.



At our **July group meeting**, we watched a film **'This is Exile'**, an hour-long portrait of child refugees forced to flee from Syria to Lebanon.

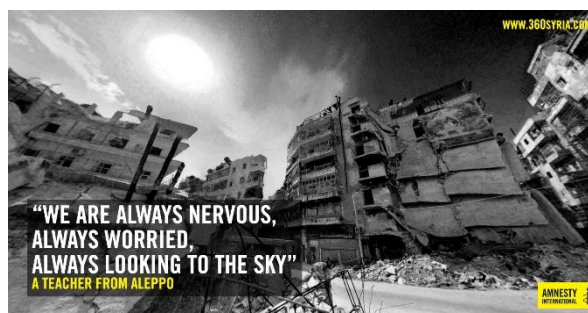


Alison Dietz writes:

In the film, child refugees described their experiences, their thoughts and their wishes for the future. This was particularly touching – in fact everyone was so moved that it was a while before we were able to discuss the film afterwards. It wasn't a film showing violence. There were shots of stunning scenery over the four seasons. What was so moving was the way the children spoke about what they had run away from, and why.

A teenager wanted to exact revenge on those who had killed his uncles. But some months later he was asked whether he still felt that way, and he didn't. Another teenager looked forward to resuming the studies he so enjoyed. But a few months later, still working on a building site, he had given up hope. A small boy had developed a stutter after his house in Homs was destroyed by a bomb and he had to flee with his family. They were bombed again, in a different town, and fled to Lebanon. We saw girls playing a game together on wasteland; one of them explained that she didn't join in with the chat in case one was an informer. Most children and their families wanted above all to return to Syria. All remained dignified in spite of the difficult conditions in which they lived.

This film made one feel huge compassion for everyone caught up in this terrible predicament, and one can only hope that our country will do a bit more to ease the suffering. If anyone unable to come to the meeting would like to watch the film, please let me know by email and I will post you the DVD.



Campaign News

Stop Torture and My Body My Rights: these world-wide campaigns have now ended. Reports on these campaigns are available. Contact Alison Dietz if you would like to see them or search the AIUK website.

People on the Move: This important new campaign is being launched in September. Susan Mew is attended a 'training the trainers' event at AIUK's HQ in London in August, and will lead a workshop for the group at our October meeting.

How to contact the Minehead Amnesty International Local Group:

Website: www.amnesty.org.uk/minehead

Facebook: www.facebook.com/amnestyminehead

Chair & group contact: Alison Dietz: Tel. 01984 641603 Email: dietz@btinternet.com

Vice Chair: Jenny Lennon Wood Tel. 01643 706900 Email: rodent.major@btopenworld.com

Treasurer: Cherry Bird Tel. 01984 641052 Email: cherryebird@gmail.com

Press officer: Jill Walmsley Tel. 01643 705061 Email: jillwalmsley09@btinternet.com

Meeting notes, newsletter & website: Susan Mew Tel. 01643 821209 Email: brightmanmew@btinternet.com