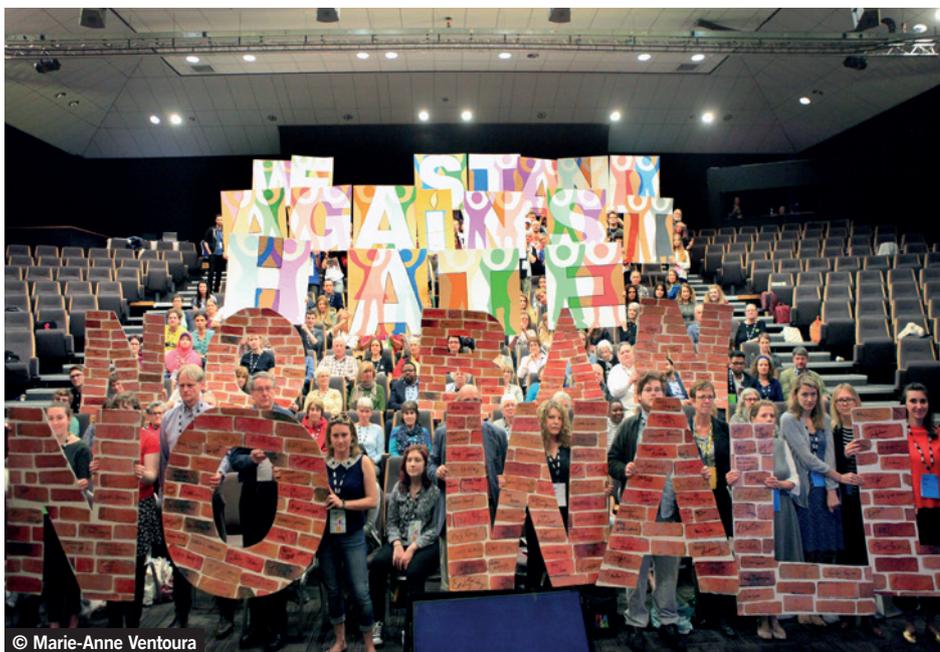


GROUPS NEWS



THE NEWSLETTER FOR AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL UK
LOCAL, STUDENT AND YOUTH GROUPS

SPRING 2017



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GETTING TO GRIPS WITH THE NEW WORLD ORDER

It has been a momentous year for human rights, in the UK and abroad, so our 2017 National Conference and AGM was a time to take stock of a changing world.

The event started with Brendan Cox, widower of murdered MP Jo Cox, lighting the Amnesty candle and reminding all present of the importance of activism and mutual solidarity in local communities.

The keynote discussion focused on hate crime in the UK and the discriminatory policies of the Trump administration in the USA. The audience learned that hate crime is hugely under-reported, and that even supposedly minor abuse such as name-calling can have catastrophic results if people experience it every day without let-up. Naureen Shah, from Amnesty USA, stressed the importance of putting international pressure on President Trump.

Discussion of AGM resolutions included a thorough and passionate debate on the human rights of sex workers. A proposal for Amnesty International UK to review its policy on the subject was defeated overwhelmingly.

There were also opportunities for Amnesty activists to show off their campaign props. A giant effigy of Mary Murdoch – Hull's first female GP and a women's suffrage campaigner – roamed the conference centre, while a pair of six-foot long, furry, bright yellow arms reached out to welcome refugees.

Amnesty's creative coordinator, Dan Jones, hosted an Activism Showcase with prizes for the **Queen's University Belfast** group for their contribution to the My Body My Rights campaign, and for the **Newcastle** and **Cambridge** groups for their speedy organisation of rallies against President Trump's discriminatory travel ban (see page 3). The **Bingley Grammar** and **Freman College** youth groups also received prizes for their campaigning and fundraising activities.

More than 500 Amnesty members attended the AGM at the East Midlands Conference Centre in Nottingham on 8-9 April. The resolutions and voting figures are on the website.

■ www.amnesty.org.uk/agm

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It is strange how coincidence sometimes connects us up with disturbing incidents.

When Peter Benenson, the splendid founder of our movement, died in 2005, a deeply moving memorial meeting was organised in St Martins in the Fields. A large congregation of Amnesty supporters and human rights activists assembled on the church's hard wooden pews where Peter had first dreamed up the idea of Amnesty International back in 1961.

It was the fateful morning of 7 July 2005. At that moment four men were exploding bombs on the London Underground between Aldgate and Liverpool Street, Russell Square and King's Cross, Edgware Road and Paddington and on a double decker bus in Tavistock Square, killing over 50 people and injuring 700. The city was in total lockdown.

On 16 June last year I was giving an Amnesty talk to the pupils of Wapping High School near my home in the East End of London. At that very moment, as I was talking about rights and justice, a neo Nazi was attacking, stabbing and shooting dead Jo Cox, the Labour MP and dauntless campaigner for a better world, in her constituency in West Yorkshire. Jo lived in Wapping. Her children go to the same school as my grandson.

Yesterday, on 22 March, it was freezing cold. In the driving rain Amnesty activists organised a protest and commemoration in Parliament Square, a few yards from the House of Commons. We dressed in funeral black, held wreaths of white roses and gathered round a giant memorial 'gravestone' in memory of the thousands of Yemeni men, women and children killed in the past two years by British-made cluster bombs, carried in British-made jet planes and dropped on Yemeni schools, hospitals and other targets by the Saudi Airforce. Kate Allen made a powerful speech to a crowd of journalists and film crews.

Precisely one hour later, 100 yards from the spot where we had gathered, 'Khalid Masood' drove a car into a crowd of tourists on Westminster bridge and stabbed to death a police officer on duty outside Parliament.

A sinister pattern of gloom and doom foretold? No, just coincidence. A jarring shock close to home. But in Amnesty we know that in the darkest times the best of humanity shines through. We know which side we're on, and what to do next. Spring is in the air. Everything's coming up roses.

Dan Jones, 23 March 2017



NEW: I WELCOME EXHIBITION PACK

Passers-by were stopped in their tracks by Amnesty and Magnum's compelling photo exhibition *I Welcome* when it was first displayed outside on London's Southbank in December. The powerful images tell the story of refugees, past and present. We have now produced a portable and smaller scale exhibition for supporters to show in local venues.

■ For more info and additional materials, see page 14.

THE MARSH AWARDS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISM 2017

Three enterprising Amnesty groups have each won £500 to help them implement their ideas to inspire activism and raise awareness of human rights in their communities. The winners, announced at our AGM in April, are:

- **Bournemouth, Poole and Christchurch group**, who plan to use a Love is a Human Right selfie frame to involve members of the public in spreading a human rights message on social media. 'As well as taking our own photos, the main aim would be to get people within the frame and then photographed on their own phones or cameras,' the group said.
- **Clyst Vale youth group**, who want to expand their human rights education programme with local primary schools. After last year's successful education activities with Year 7 primary school pupils, they now plan to invite Year 5 and 6 pupils to Clyst Vale college for a day of creative activities on human rights themes. This will be followed up in the primary schools with more learning about human rights and a competition.
- **Royal Holloway University student group**, who plan to raise funds for Amnesty and promote the *I Welcome* campaign by offering a post-exam relaxation activity to their fellow students. After the exams and before the end of term, the group will sell picnic boxes packed with edible goodies and information about the refugee crisis.



Guide booklet missing?

Owing to an error at the printing firm, some copies of the *I Welcome* exhibition pack were sent out without the 12-page guide to putting on an exhibition.

If the guide is missing from your pack, please contact us and we'll send you a copy. Call **020 7033 1777** or email activism@amnesty.org.uk

LISTEN HEAR

A new series of our In Their Own Words podcast is out now. It features released prisoner Albert Woodfox; Khadija Ismayilova, a journalist in Azerbaijan; Steve Kelly, who became a human rights activist after his brother was tragically killed in the Hillsborough disaster; and Atena Farghadani, women's rights activist in Iran.

■ Listen to and share their stories at www.amnesty.org.uk/in-their-own-words-podcast



RALLIES AGAINST THE TRAVEL BAN

Thousands of people joined protests across the UK against the US President's travel ban – and Amnesty groups were there in force



London, January 2017 © Marie-Anne Ventura

On 30 January President Donald Trump signed an order banning nationals from seven predominantly Muslim countries from entering the USA and suspended the country's refugee resettlement programme. The response was immediate. Thousands of people, including Amnesty groups and supporters, joined protests around the globe.

The organisers of the London rally estimated that more than 30,000 people demonstrated at Westminster with signs saying 'No to racism, No to Trump', 'No Hate, No Fear, Refugees Welcome Here', and 'Dump Trump'. Ahead of the protest, Amnesty's Kate Allen blasted the ban as 'appalling' and said: 'Theresa May has shown an appalling lack of leadership by failing to condemn the move.'

Liesbeth ten Ham from the **Cambridge City** group told over 1,000 protesters it was time to 'campaign hard' against the ban at a rally in Cambridge. 'We're here to make our voices heard – our government and elected MPs should stand up for human rights for all.'

Richard Kotter from the **Newcastle** group addressed around 2,000 protestors in the city alongside two city councillors. Katie Condon, from **Durham University's** group, was there: 'It made me feel good to vent my anger and to see that there are a lot of people who felt the same way.'

Members of the **Manchester** group joined around 3,000 people gathered in the city

centre to oppose Trump's ban. And the **York City** group joined a rally carrying banners and placards.

There were also protests in Glasgow, Dundee, St Andrews, Edinburgh, Cardiff, Belfast, Aberystwyth, Sheffield, Oxford, Brighton, Gloucester, Leeds, Liverpool, Leicester, among others. Many received extensive media coverage.



Manchester



Liesbeth ten Ham, Cambridge City

WRITE FOR RIGHTS

For the 14th year, Write for Rights has grown again, with over 4 million messages and appeals sent to support individuals and communities at risk – 126,114 of those were from the UK

Helping to launch the campaign were activists from universities across the country at the annual **Student Conference** in November. A photo action was taken for students Bayram and Giyas in Azerbaijan. From then on, more student groups than ever ordered Write for Rights packs, and action cards had to be reprinted multiple times.

On 19 November, the **Blackburn and Darwen** group's regular stall at Trinity United Reformed Church was a success, despite the cold weather. It was part of the Christmas market with Santa's grotto. The group gained signatures of support and raised awareness of Write for Rights.

On 10 December, the **Blackheath and Greenwich** group hosted a Human Rights Day event. Members Guy Ottewell and Tilly Lavenas opened their home near the Cutty Sark for tea and cake. Over 100 action cards were signed and £200 raised. Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe, imprisoned

in Iran, was the focus with messages of support written for her husband Richard Ratcliffe. These will be compiled into a book and sent to him.

The **Brighton and Hove** group's annual letter-writing day saw 400 messages of hope written and £180 raised. Supporters, including many children, made beautiful origami and drawings while enjoying live music, tea and cake. Caroline Lucas MP, Peter Kyle MP and the Mayor, Councillor Pete West, took part.

The **Haslemere** group celebrated turning 40 at their annual Write for Rights lunch. Guests included Mayor Sahran Abeyundara and friends from the **Guildford** group. Nearly 250 cards and appeal letters were signed. The Mayor gave a passionate speech focusing on the important work done by the group and how Amnesty had come to the support of his own Sri Lankan charity Equal Ground when it found itself in difficulties. He presented a commemoration

plate, cake and letter from Kate Allen to Gunnel Ingham, who has worked for the group for 35 years. The event was covered by the local media.

The **Glossop** group spent an 'enjoyable and inspiring four hours' at their annual Write for Rights craft fair on 26 November. Over £500 was raised from soup and cake sales.

The **Chelmsford** group marked Human Rights Day by taking over the Ideas Hub café. Delighted with the response, the group collected 60 cards, along with postcards giving a warm welcome to newly-arrived refugees here in the UK. Nearly 50 letters were added to the pile at the group's monthly meeting in December.

The **Belfast** group held their annual letter-writing event at the Human Rights Festival on 10 December. Sarah Newton MP visited the **Truro and Falmouth** group's stall on 26 November. And the **Wolverhampton** group wrote letters and cards.

'The letter-writing events are helpful



Student conference © Marie-Anne Ventura



Blackheath and Greenwich



Brighton and Hove



Haslemere



Glossop



Chelmsford



Chelmsford



Belfast



Truro and Falmouth

for awareness-raising locally,' said the **Minehead** group. On 9 December, the Mayor Jean Parbrook and members of the public signed 60 letters and cards. A separate letter-writing afternoon produced another 65 letters. A lovely Amnesty Christmas tree highlighted six cases.

A party was held in Crouch End by the **Hornsey and Wood Green** group: 154 cards and letters were written by participants aged from nine to 90.

For the third year running, **Benfield School** youth group in Newcastle got behind the campaign with usual vigour: assemblies focused on human rights and Amnesty. Members of the **Newcastle** group spoke about what they do in their meetings and their long-term involvement in the Peace Community of San José, Colombia. Students sent in creative messages of support, including beautiful coloured-in doves.

Local MP Margaret Richie, Councillor

Patrick Brown and Colin McGrath MLA joined the **Mid-Down** group letter-writing session where 150 cards and letters were signed. A short film showed the plight of the indigenous peoples of the Peace River Valley, Canada, whose lives and land are illegally threatened by flooding for the Site C dam.

The **York City** group ran a busy stall in the city centre on 10 December generating 96 cards. Rachael Maskell MP took part as did Mayor Dave Taylor. Showing his support for Máxima Acuña – a subsistence farmer attacked for standing up to intimidation and threats of forced eviction by a copper mining company – he wrote: 'People all over the world are aware of your story and are angry that mining companies threaten the people.'

Members of the public signed cards for three cases at the Brighstone Christmas Tree Festival. The **Isle of Wight** group focused on Cameroon student Fomusoh Ivo Feh, locked

away for sending a joke text message, and British-Iranian mother and charity worker Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe. A petition was also signed for photo journalist Shawkan, detained in Egypt because of his work.

The **Manchester** group held Write for Rights stalls in Chorlton city centre, Birchfields Community Centre, and St Andrews, Dearnley. Overall 160 cards and 35 appeal letters were written. In addition, members wrote cards at the November regular letter-writing session and December group meeting. The **Whalley Range Peace and Justice** group held their 14th Write for Rights event, where a 'mind-boggling' 759 solidarity cards and 101 appeal letters were sent.

The **Gloucestershire** group's Amnesty tree drew attention to all 12 campaign cases. Made from willow by member Norah Kennedy, the tree was on display at St Laurence Church Christmas tree festival, Stroud.



Hornsey and Wood Green



Minehead



Benfield School



Mid-Down



York City



Isle of Wight



Manchester



Gloucestershire

WRITE FOR RIGHTS

The **North Norfolk** group decorated an Amnesty tree at the Sheringham Christmas tree festival in St Andrew's Methodist church. The tree was strewn with images of all campaign cases, and action cards were left next to it.

The **Bristol** group decorated a tree for TreeFest at St Mary Redcliffe Church, one of the city's oldest churches, and sent a total of 65 cards. Also on display was a tapestry assembled by members of the South Region. Each panel represents one of the articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

On 3 December, the **Perth** group invited people to visit Birnam Institute to sign cards for six of the 12 cases – over 100 messages offering hope and support were signed.

The **Colwyn Bay** group held a letter-writing session in St Asaph Cathedral at the Winter Fayre.

Hundreds of letters and cards were sent in from universities all over the country. And

more than 100 schools held mass letter-writing marathons.

Leyton 6th Form printed their own London postcards for Nazanin who misses London.

The **Maidstone** group events saw 90 cards signed. Helen Grant MP supported their work. The **Invicta School** youth group held their own activities, encouraged by the local group, and 319 cards and letters were signed.

NEW SOLIDARITY WEBSITE

In November, we launched a new Write for Rights website with a message from Richard Ratcliffe, husband of imprisoned charity worker Nazanin. Overnight, more than 13,000 people sent messages using this platform. Overall, 80,000 messages were sent. We printed them all out and sent them to the relevant people.

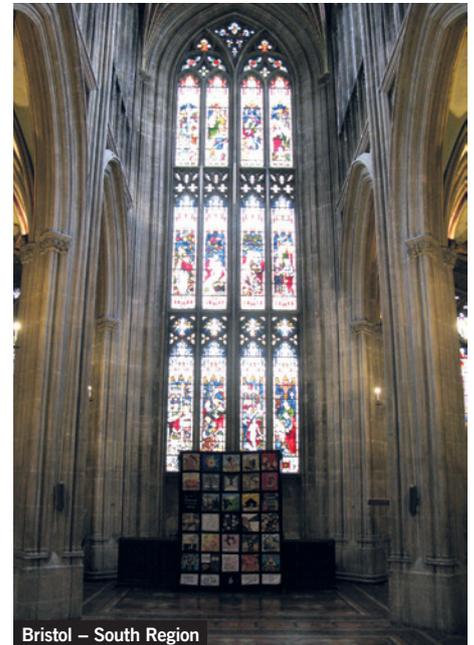
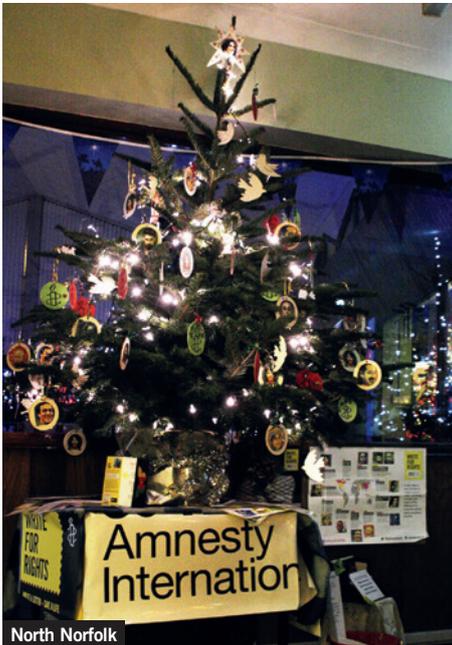
THANK YOU

Amnesty campaigners visited the prison in

Cameroon where Fomusoh Ivo Feh and his friends are locked up for sending a joke text: all the young men stated that Write for Rights has given them courage.

More than 150,000 cards were hand-delivered to land rights defender Máxima Acuña. At the emotional meeting, the Peruvian Minister of Justice and Human Rights gave a commitment to protect Máxima and her family. Máxima said: 'I want to thank you with all my heart for the number of letters you have sent me, and give me courage to continue fighting... I ask you to continue helping me seek justice so that I can live in peace and tranquillity.' Watch on YouTube (search 'Máxima receives letters').

In Egypt, Shawkan's brother, said the solidarity letters written for Shawkan were incredibly meaningful and impactful for both Shawkan and his family. Their priority remains his freedom – so the campaign continues.



I WELCOME

Responding to the refugee crisis

On 30 March, a 240-metre paper chain made by activists lined the road between the Department for Education and the Home Office to support reuniting child refugees with their families in the UK. The chain featured cut out figures of adults and children. A 31,000-strong petition was delivered to both government departments with the help of Juliet Stevenson, Thangam Debonnaire MP (chair of the parliamentary group on refugees), 'Peanut' from the Kaiser Chiefs and Student Action for Refugees. The UK is one of only two European countries (along with Denmark) who deny refugee children the right to apply for their family members to join them. 'I hope the government will listen and overturn this cruel policy,' wrote Juliet Stevenson in *i-News*. The stunt was also covered by the *Guardian* and *Time Out*.

In Kendal, the newly-formed More in Common group marked the United Nations Day against racism and xenophobia with a touching display in the town centre. The public were encouraged to write welcoming messages to string along the Birdcage and

the **Kendal** group ran a stall providing info on I Welcome and #againsthate campaigns.

The **Guildford** group also focused on the refugee crisis and the local response to it. Diane Peters, the Diocesan refugee support adviser for Guildford, gave a talk *Refugees – how much do we care?* at the group's October meeting. She spoke movingly of her visits to the camps in Calais and her work with local councils to find housing for Syrian refugees.

Matthew Pennycook MP joined the **Blackheath and Greenwich** group meeting to discuss refugees and show support to free Nazanin, the British-Iranian charity worker and prisoner of conscience.

On 18 February, the **Brighton and Hove** group supported the thousands of refugees freezing to death in Greece. Over 113 petition signatures collected called on the European Union to urgently move them into other European countries.

During Enhancement Week at the **London Metropolitan University** in March, two Amnesty speakers spoke to students in

the School of Sciences about the refugee crisis. Amnesty trainer Richard Kotter and Krisztina Saroy, country coordinator for West and Central Africa, outlined the I Welcome campaign, and why the UK must offer a lifeline to more Syrian refugees.

In November, the **Mid-Down** group and **Shimna Integrated College** youth group joined forces at the Newcastle Supports Syria fundraising event. At a stall, visitors used the 360-degree virtual reality goggles which capture scenes after barrel bombing attacks in civilian areas. Information was handed out and 'Stand with Refugees' petition signatures collected.

On 25 October, the **Shoreham and Worthing** group's evening about refugees included a talk by Kate Allen and a screening of *This is Exile*, a documentary produced by Save the Children about Syrian child refugees. Around 40 people signed a pledge saying 'Adur and Worthing stands with refugees.' Tim Loughton MP signed the pledge the week before. It was covered by local press.



After contacting Marcus Fysh MP about the Syrian refugee crisis and family reunification, the **Taunton** group received a reply. In it, the MP said he had been assured that the government is working with French, Greek and Italian authorities to speed up existing family reunification process or implement new processes for unaccompanied children.



NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

STANDING AGAINST HATE

In September, the **Bristol** group held a stall at the St James Priory Fair. Signatures were collected for the Against Hate campaign and information on standing up to hate crimes was handed out to passers-by.

The **Diss** group helped highlight the issue by raising a petition to ensure it became an item for discussion at a South Norfolk council meeting. Group secretary Jackie Gooch presented the petition, outlining its purpose: 'The council need to be proactive in ensuring that all of our diverse population are treated with respect and understanding. How does the council plan to do this?'

HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

In September, the **Horsham** group walked for human rights through the town highlighting places relating to the Human Rights Act. Stops included the Peace Tree, the spot where hangings used to take place and the Friends Meeting House. The walk ended at the offices of the *West Sussex County Times*, whose staff support the group's campaign to free journalist Eskinder Nega, imprisoned in Ethiopia for calling for

freedom of expression. The walk's success in engaging the public has encouraged the group to make it an annual event. Continuing this work, the group invited barrister Martha Walsh to their October meeting to talk about why the UK should keep the Human Rights Act.

Human rights lawyer Johana Rocha Gomez from Colombia spoke at **York City** group's December monthly meeting. She co-founded Tierra Digna, a Colombian NGO, and explained how and why they defend the rights of communities adversely affected by extractive industries including mining and fracking.

On 10 January, the **Southampton City** group and the University of Southampton presented the sixth annual Human Rights Lecture. More than 400 people listened to Philippe Sands QC's thoughtful and personal journey into the legal and philosophical background to the Nuremberg trial and the origin of the terms 'crimes against humanity' and 'genocide'. It was particularly poignant to see those words in the handwriting of two lawyers who first proposed them. Nearly £185 was raised.

WHERE ARE OUR RIGHTS?

To reflect on Human Rights Day and what more needs to be done, Mayor Sahran Abeyesundara challenged the **Haslemere** group to hold a meeting outside the town hall. There, he made an impassioned speech about the need for people to work for the rights of the vulnerable. The group planted banners welcoming refugees on the grass for passing motorists to see.

The **Taunton** group donated books on human rights to the local library to make a 'Human Rights Day' display. It included Amnesty's latest children's book *Dreams of Freedom*. Meanwhile, 40 people, including Rebecca Long Bailey MP and Salford Councillor Lisa Stone, attended a candlelight vigil organised by the **Manchester** group and Salford Council. It featured songs, readings and poems by local refugees.

AFRAID OF THE DARK

In October, the **Abbey School** in Reading, turned off their lights for a day to highlight the plight of civilians in Syria. The youth group held an assembly in the dark to explain that 83 per cent of lights have gone



Bristol



Human rights lawyer Johana Rocha Gomez in York



Taunton



Horsham



Philippe Sands QC – Southampton



Abbey School, Reading

out in Syria since the conflict began due to damage of the electricity grid and the vast numbers of people who have fled the country or been killed.

TRUTH ABOUT GIULIO

Anne Marcus, country coordinator for Egypt, talked to the **Ipswich** group about human rights and case work. Action was taken for Giulio Regeni, the Cambridge University student abducted and tortured to death while studying in Cairo. In February, a joint meeting with Amnesty, Cambridge University and Egypt Solidarity Initiative discussed how Giulio's murder is part of a much wider picture of human rights abuses by the Egyptian security forces. Speaker Liesbeth ten Ham, of the **Cambridge City** group, said hundreds of other cases of enforced disappearance and torture have been recorded in Egypt in the last year alone.

FAR FROM BEING SILENT

In October, the **York City** group hosted Jihyun Park, a defector from North Korea resettled in Manchester. An audience of over 75 people listened wide-eyed as she recounted her harrowing escape story. A

petition was signed calling on the North Korean government to allow people internet access and more freedom to communicate with the outside world.

Jihyun spoke passionately to the **Colwyn Bay** group in November. Her determination to improve human rights in her country and her work with fellow North Korean refugees in the UK left the group inspired and committed to their campaigning cause.

On 16 March, 50 people were similarly moved by Jihyun's story at a talk organised by the **Salisbury** group. The group made their first video to raise concerns about the gross abuse of human rights in North Korea with the help of **Romsey** and **Mid Gloucestershire** group members. It featured Fiona Bruce MP, co-chair of the All-Party Parliamentary group, who believes the human rights situation in North Korea is by far the worst in the world. Watch at salisburyai.com/2016/11/11/north-korean-video/

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

On 8 March, the **York City** group held an AmnesTea to celebrate brave and courageous women in International Women's Week. Meanwhile the **Minehead**

group's stall celebrated the day by supporting young women in Burkina Faso. More than 90 pieces of bunting were completed for the women who live as refugees after fleeing forced marriages. It will be sent to them to lift their spirits. About 80 petition signatures were also collected for three imprisoned human rights defenders: Narges Mohammadi from Iran, Eren Keskin from Turkey and British-Iranian Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe.

SYMBOLS OF SOLIDARITY

A 10-foot high community quilt created by the **York City** group is on display at the Peace Museum, Bradford, as part of its textile exhibition *Challenging the Fabric of Society*. The quilt was made in 2011 to mark the 50th anniversary of Amnesty. Thirty local groups and societies designed a square based around the Chinese proverb used by Amnesty founder Peter Benenson: 'It is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness.'

On 30 November, at a public event hosted by the Mayor of Suchitoto, El Salvador, Amnesty donated a three-metre sculpture *Global Solidarity for the liberty of*



NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

Las 17. It represents global solidarity with women who are imprisoned due to obstetric complications. Thousands of colourful ribbons sent by activists were placed in the sculpture. This was the final action of the My Body My Rights campaign. At the event, local NGOs and the municipality of Suchitoto thanked Amnesty for its support to decriminalise abortion and to free imprisoned women.

HERE WE RUN

The **Manchester** group continued work for lawyer Mohammed al-Roken, jailed for 10 years in 2013 in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). A stall at the Darwin Day organised by Greater Manchester Humanists publicised his plight. In collaboration with the International Campaign for Freedom in the UAE, three runners, including group member Henrike Greuel, tackled the Manchester half marathon on his behalf,

and for the other activists imprisoned after the unfair 'UAE 94' mass trial. Group members carried banners and collected petition signatures calling for their release.

SPREADING KNOWLEDGE

The **Colwyn Bay** group resumed their school work. Two members addressed 120 local junior school children at a human rights assembly and workshop. Secondary school talks are planned. A group member put Amnesty's education team in contact with the Welsh Education department to enable Amnesty to be included as an option in the new Welsh Baccalaureate. This will come into force this year.

In December, the **Salisbury** group continued its successful liaison with Salisbury Arts Centre by showing award-winning film *Mustang*, exploring women's rights in Turkey. Action cards were signed.

CREATIVE CHRISTMAS

The **Fylde Coast** group entered Blackpool's Winter Gardens' Christmas Tree Festival with an unusual but stand-out tree. It was cleverly constructed by member Bobby Black out of cardboard boxes, loo rolls and Amnesty literature. Winter Gardens TV filmed construction and interviewed exhibitors. Watch the film for Amnesty's contribution amnesty.org.uk/groups/fylde-coast

GOOD NEWS

Thank you to David Chesters who published *Embracing Change*, a book of short stories, with all royalties donated to Amnesty. It earned a photo and interview in the local paper. A passionate member of the **Shoreham and Worthing** group, David also volunteers in the Brighton Amnesty bookshop. And in November Albert Woodfox met members of the **Southampton** group – among the many who campaigned for his release.



Fylde Coast



Albert Woodfox and the Southampton group



Manchester

A CAMPAIGNING YEAR FOR BUXTON GROUP

From lobbying the Lao authorities to standing up for refugees, Janet Miller of the Buxton group looks back at an eventful year

I joined the Buxton group around 1990, but I've been an Amnesty member for longer. We meet every month. February is our AGM and planning meeting, and we come up with actions and events. We try to have plenty of variety.

Our focus last year was refugees. For the Buxton Spring Fair campaign stall we wanted something bright to involve children. Our then secretary produced a wonderful, big drawing of a sea of mud with lots of toys lying around. It was inspired by the demolitions at the Calais camp and the hundreds of children that had gone missing. At the fair, and at our stalls throughout the summer, we asked people to colour the drawing in. At the end we had a gorgeous 'Find the lost children' poster, which we sent to President Hollande, and a petition to Greece against returning refugees to Turkey.

We adopted five Lao students, all prisoners of conscience, in 2001, and have sent a card to each of them every month and held a poignant anniversary event every October to mark their arrest. Last year we made origami

peace doves, asked people to put personal messages on them, and sent them to the Lao embassy. We've just heard that the last of the students has been released, although there's been no independent corroboration... watch this space.

The rise in hate crime after the EU referendum was something we reacted to. We – and other Derbyshire groups – wrote to our local councils, calling their attention to this huge spike in hate crimes and asking what they were going to do about it. Derbyshire County Council responded, and passed a resolution in December deploring hate crimes. That was a lovely success.

Our Write for Rights stall in December was also great. We made origami butterflies for Fomusoh Ivo Feh in Cameroon and sent a photo petition to Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe in Iran.

I keep a diary of everything we do as a group. At the end of the year we sit down to look over it. It's always a feeling of: 'Look how much we've done!' It's motivational as much as anything else.



NEW AMNESTY GROUP

A new group has re-formed in Huddersfield. Group secretary Paul Cooney told us: 'There was an active group in the past but key members relocated. In November, two people approached me about setting it up again. We contacted our regional rep, and advertised a public meeting on Facebook to establish interest. Eighteen people attended, and within a week we had 49 supporters who wanted to make the group work.'

The group used their first meeting to focus on the Write for Rights campaign – covered in the local paper. Now work begins on the refugee crisis, human rights in Turkey and dispelling efforts to discredit the Human Rights Act (HRA). 'We are fortunate to have an Amnesty trainer in our group who facilitated a workshop about the HRA at our January meeting. We also have a member from Turkey who has already led a discussion on what we can do to help there too.'



Buxton



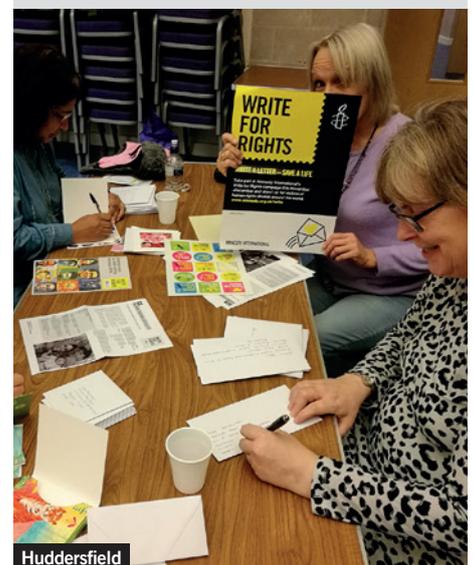
'Lost children' poster



Write for Rights stall



I Welcome



Huddersfield

FUNDRAISING

£152,000 Local groups

£38,000 Youth groups and schools

£15,000 Student groups and universities

Amnesty groups raised £205,000 for human rights in 2016

Last year groups across the UK stood up for human rights by organising fundraising events in aid of Amnesty. In total, groups raised £205,000. £45,000 of this was donated to our appeal to help end female genital mutilation and early and forced marriage in West Africa – and will be matched by the UK government's Department for International Development. Your support makes a real difference to people facing human rights abuses. Thank you.

If any supporters would like to raise funds for Amnesty or need advice on how to arrange Jamnesty or AmnesTea events, email fundraise@amnesty.org.uk

CONCERTS AND JAMNESTYS

In October, the **Colwyn Bay** group staged their first heavy rock gig. It was a well-deserved sell-out, raising an impressive £900.

The **Richmond and Twickenham** group's first Band Night in January was a 'terrific success' thanks to local bands The Bitter Springs, Asbo Derek and We Happy Few. The night included a raffle and photo petition for imprisoned journalist Shawkan, which was sent to the Egyptian authorities just before his trial. The event raised £1,706.

Salisbury Cathedral held its annual Evensong in aid of Amnesty. The beautiful service ended with a procession to the Trinity Chapel, home to the Amnesty candle and prisoner of conscience window.

The **University of Glasgow** group hosted a Jamnesty, Secret Policeman's Ball and bingo night. The **University of Essex** group's Jamnesty focused awareness on albinism. And the **University of Nottingham** group's Jamnesty featured live music. Thanks to a Jamnesty, live music event, a bake sale and a sponsored head shave, the **Huntingdon School** group raised £334.50.

In January, the **Hull** group's classical concert Trio Volant proved a special occasion. It featured works by Mozart, Rossini and Centelobe, as well as a piece composed by Michael Betteridge inspired by the poem 'Prisoner' from *Small Candles*, an anthology of poetry published by the group.

COLLECTIONS

Bognor Regis, Chichester and District group's collection raised £614 for Amnesty. To attract donors, live music played including a Morris band, flute group and a bagpiper. In addition, a group

member knitted the slogan 'The Human Rights Act, don't let it unravel.' Thanks to talented buskers and determined collectors, their stall proved a great success with Saturday shoppers.

Two street collections held by the **Colwyn Bay** group outside a busy supermarket totalled £305. Several London based groups sang carols, raising £4,406. The **Lambeth** group sang outside Brixton tube station, collecting £828.

A student from **Bedford Modern School** held a collection after their production of *Jesus Christ Superstar*, raising £424.95. A bake sale and Give it Up event organised by the **Central Foundation Girls' School** raised over £400. Students at **Henley College** were silent for the day to highlight freedom of expression, and raised £106.

AND FINALLY...

The latest book sale by the **Blackheath and Greenwich** group raised £4,790 in November – 198 cards for our Write for Rights cases were also signed. See page 4 for more. And congratulations to the **West Cumbria** group members who bravely took part in a sponsored swimathon, raising over £300.



Richmond and Twickenham



Blackheath and Greenwich



West Cumbria



Hull



Bognor Regis, Chichester and District



Bognor Regis, Chichester and District



Henley College

REGIONAL CONFERENCES

Guest speakers, campaign updates, discussion and debate, meeting members, strengthening aims

The **Northern Ireland** regional conference at Queen's University Belfast student union focused on the I Welcome campaign. Speakers included Makhosi Sigabade of Housing 4 All and Liz Griffiths, of Law Centre NI, who announced 87 Syrian refugees had just arrived in Northern Ireland under the Syrian Vulnerable Person's Resettlement programme. This brings the total to 400 resettled in Northern Ireland. Local theatre company Macha Productions performed *Asylum*, based on real-life interviews. Delegates heard about work on abortion access and marriage equality, and the forthcoming human rights defenders campaign. The day ended with Professor Colin Harvey, of Queen's University Belfast law school, on the prospects for human rights given the current political climate.

On the same day, the **South West** regional conference in Exeter opened with Ethiopian journalist Getachew Simie Obse. She spoke about the important role of community radio educating to improve children's rights, gender equality and environmental protection, and how this is being curtailed by government legislation. There is now no internet connection in Ethiopia. The Children's Human Rights Network talked about how to support their work. There were workshops on human rights in

Turkey, China, North Africa and South America. Members took action outside Exeter Cathedral – 43 pairs of shoes laid out highlighted the disappearance of 43 Mexican students in 2014.

The **South East** regional conference took place on 5 March in Guildford. Krisztina Saroy, country coordinator for West Africa, spoke about the horrors of Boko Haram and what is being done about it. Delegates were asked to create a mini 'good news' poster about a prisoner released after an Amnesty campaign – the picture below shows the banner created out of them. There were productive brainstorms on revitalising local groups, and talks about refugees and the arms trade. There was also a review of the Board of Amnesty by its current chair Ruth Breddal.

The **Yorkshire** regional conference was held at Sheffield University on 18 March. Kate Allen, Amnesty UK director, outlined the I Welcome campaign. Laura Trevelyan, of Amnesty UK, spoke about the Human Rights Act, urging continued campaigning for its retention. After a photo action in support of refugees and Against Hate, delegates discussed how to become more active in communities and the benefits of collaborating with other networks. The day ended with a moving reading of two asylum monologues.



'A SENSE OF US ALL COMING TOGETHER – AS AMNESTY, AS A COMMUNITY'

The **North West** regional conference took place in Liverpool on 12 November, themed around modern slavery. An audience of 100 heard Alex Batch, the co-director of the Centre for the Study of International Slavery, and Annette Mawdsley, of Liverpool's Stop the Traffik, give chilling context to the scale of human trafficking. DC Colin Ward from the Greater Manchester Police's Modern Slavery Unit, said that nearly the full range of modern slavery abuses exist in that area, from pop-up brothels to domestic servitude.

An uplifting speech by Ruth Breddal, chair of Amnesty UK's board, followed. She inspired us by emphasising that letter-writing does work. Then we were taken on a harrowing street action, organised by Liverpool's Institute for Performing Arts. Characters wearing 'Authority' signs shouted and frog-marched us into the city where, roped together, we watched a drama about slavery in the past and today. Three workshops followed on the death penalty, Syria 360 and advocacy.

There was a sense of us coming together not just as Amnesty but as a community. With a lot of bad news recently, people felt the conference to be a positive call for action.

Sameena Matthiessen,
North West regional representative



Northern Ireland regional conference © John Hobson



South West regional conference



South East regional conference



Yorkshire regional conference



EVENTS

Send upcoming events info to the Community Organising Unit at activism@amnesty.org.uk by 5 October to appear in the Winter 2017 issue.

5 MAY
ELMSWORTH
Plant and book sale
Contact
kathshakespeare@hotmail.com

13 MAY
READING
Quiz night
7pm-11pm, RISC,
Reading RG1 4PS, £12
(includes fish and chip supper)
Contact Peter Howe,
peter@howedesigns.co.uk

13 MAY
PRESTON
Media training course
10am-4pm, Cotton Court Business
Centre, Cotton Court, Church
Street, Preston PR1 3BY, £6
(towards lunch and refreshments)
How to get the media to publicise
group events and attract new
members. Includes press release
writing and interviewing.
To book www.eventbrite.co.uk
Contact Colin Taylor,
0748 415 7424,
colin.taylor@amnesty.org.uk

NOW-13 MAY
MINEHEAD
Art exhibition
9am-5pm, Toucan Café, 3 The
Parade, Minehead TA24 5NL, free.
Art on the theme of Human Rights
are for Everyone.
Contact Cherry Bird, 01984 641052

18 MAY
LONDON
Comedy
7.30pm, Human Rights Action
Centre, 26 New Inn Yard, London
EC2A 3EA, £14.50
Camouflage, a dark comedy
marking the 50th anniversary of the
Israeli military occupation in Gaza,
Jerusalem and the West Bank-
Palestine.
To book www.brownpapertickets.com/event/2917455

23 MAY
STRATFORD-UPON-AVON
Theatre
7.30pm, Stratford Arts House,
14 Rother Street, Stratford-Upon-
Avon CV37 6LU, £16

Gala night of musical *Into the
Woods* set in a refugee camp.
Proceeds to Amnesty.
To book 01789 207100,
stratfordartshouse.co.uk

1 JUNE
BRIGHTON
Talk
8pm, Community Base,
Queen's Road, Brighton
Detention without trial and control
orders – powerful testimony by local
speakers with personal experience.
Contact 01273 607110,
brightonandhoveai@googlemail.com

17 JUNE
CHICHESTER
Concert
7.30pm, Christ Church, Old Market
Avenue, Southgate, Chichester,
£12.50 (under 16s free)
The Aria and Song for Amnesty –
an afternoon of beautiful music.
Contact
kathshakespeare@hotmail.com

20 JUNE
CRAWLEY
Theatre
7.30pm-9pm, The Hawth, Hawth
Avenue, Crawley RH10 6YZ, £4
Asylum Monologues, an account of
the UK's asylum system in the words
of people who have experienced it.
A Horsham group event.
Contact Jackie Fry, 01293
553636. Book at The Hawth Box
Office 01293 553636

26 JUNE
LONDON
Theatre
7pm, Royal Albert Hall, £5-£25
Amnesty and Chickenshed Theatre
present a one-off performance with
600 children inspired by Amnesty's
children's book *Dreams of Freedom*.
Book at Box Office 020 7589
8212, www.royalalberthall.com

1-5 JULY
Refugee Tales walk
9.30am, Runnymede
Walk on paths taken by travellers
over the centuries, from
Runnymede to Westminster. Five
days or join along the way.
More info www.refugeetales.org

7 JULY
ST ASAPH
Refugee concert
6pm-9.30pm, St Asaph
Cathedral, St Asaph LL17 ORD,
free (donations welcome)
Readings, music, exhibitions
and speakers. Includes the
Amnesty and Magnum
I Welcome exhibition.
Organised by Colwyn Bay and
Eirias Park youth group.
To reserve a seat, Maggie Towse,
01492514870

5 AUGUST
BRIGHTON
Pride Parade
Stall and parade – all welcome.
More info 01273 607110,
brightonandhoveai@googlemail.com

23 SEPTEMBER
CHELMSFORD
East Anglia Regional Conference
10am-4pm, Trinity Methodist
Church, Rainsford Road,
Chelmsford CM1 2XB
Focus on protecting human
rights defenders.
Contact Sarah Mattacks,
sarah.606@hotmail.co.uk

**WELCOME CINEMA AND
KITCHEN**
Regular evenings of food, film
and Q&A panel discussion set
up by ex-volunteers at the Calais
camp. Free for refugees and
asylum seekers, tickets start at
£17.50 for everyone else.
Next event,
www.welcomecinema.org

SAVE THE DATE
Will you be joining your local
Pride 2017? For info on Pride
events www.pinkuk.com.
Download a Pride Guide for local
activists at [www.amnesty.org.uk/
key-resources-local-groups](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/key-resources-local-groups)

WOMAD FESTIVAL
The Reading group is looking for
stall volunteers, 28-30 July. You
will need to buy your own ticket.
Contact Sue Bingham
sue.bingham@amnesty.org.uk
www.womad.co.uk

RESOURCES

I WELCOME REFUGEE CAMPAIGN MATERIALS

Refugees Community Action Pack
How to get your community
behind this campaign

Product code: REF16/001



Refugees Welcome stickers
(15 stickers per sheet)

Product code: REF16/002



Refugees Welcome Pledge poster

Product code: REF16/004



**I WELCOME
REFUGEES**



I Welcome exhibition placards

Product code: REF16/006

CONTACT US

All campaign materials available to order from MDA: **01788 545 553**



I Welcome exhibition pack
Includes 30 exhibition panels (A3 size) including images and information and a 12-page guide to staging your own *I Welcome* exhibition

Product code: REF16/005



I Welcome exhibition poster
To advertise your event

Product code: REF16/007



NEW weatherproof banner
2 metres x 85cm, comes in a tube

Product code: COU001

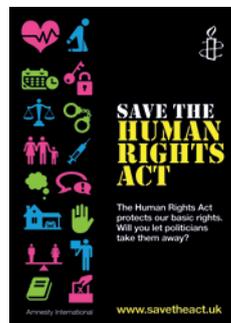
HUMAN RIGHTS ACT



HRA badges

Product code: HRA004 (pink)

Product code: HRA005 (blue)



HRA poster

Product code: HRA003



HRA stickers

(20 stickers per sheet)

Product code: HRA006



HRA placards

Product code: HRA009

SCOTTISH MATERIALS

Scotland Human Rights Act leaflet

Product code: HRA007

Human Rights placard (card)

Product code: HRA008

AGAINST HATE



Against hate stickers

(20 stickers per sheet)

Product code: AH001



Against hate placards

Double-sided (pink and green)

Product code: AH002



Against hate badges

Product code: AH003 (yellow/pink)

Product code: AH004 (yellow/green)

LOCAL, YOUTH AND STUDENT GROUP ENQUIRIES

020 7033 1777

Email activism@amnesty.org.uk

FUNDRAISING ENQUIRIES

020 7033 1650

Email fundraise@amnesty.org.uk

Amnesty International UK
The Human Rights Action Centre
17-25 New Inn Yard
London EC2A 3EA
Telephone 020 7033 1500
Facsimile 020 7033 1503
Textphone 020 7033 1664

www.amnesty.org.uk

GROUPS NEWS

EDITORIAL TEAM

Dan Jones, Farshid Talaghani,
Richard Glynn and Anne Montague

DESIGN

Amnesty International UK

Copy deadline for next issue

5 October 2017

TELL US IF YOU HAVE CHANGED

It is vital that you let us know about any changes to your group's office holders, such as Secretary, President, Campaign Coordinators and Treasurer. This will help us to communicate with the right person in your group. When the office holders or their addresses change, please send us details of name, address, phone and email, as well as details of the outgoing person.

Please send details to
Community Organising Team at
activism@amnesty.org.uk

IF YOU'RE SENDING IN PHOTOS

Photos should be high-resolution jpegs (at least 300KB) and emailed as an attachment or sent on a CD.



YOUTH CONFERENCE

On 24 November, Amnesty's Youth Conference took place. Over 150 youth group members from all over the UK gathered at the Human Rights Action Centre for a day master-minded by the Youth Advisory Group. The I Welcome campaign was a focus, and stimulating workshops included 'Answering tricky questions', creative campaigning and

lobbying MPs. 'Glasgow Girl' campaigner Amal Azzudin spoke eloquently about her own experiences fleeing war in Somalia, and subsequent activism. At 15, she helped to rescue a school friend from deportation. Empowered, students carried their I Welcome placards through the streets for a 'Open your arms' photo action and made cut out figures of adults and

children to add to a giant paper chain promoting child refugee rights (see page 7). The day was rounded off with a talk on the Against Hate campaign, and how Brexit and Donald Trump will affect future activism. Julie Carter-Owen from Burgate School, Hampshire, said: 'My students loved it and are all fired up to work even harder for human rights.'



If you require this document in an alternative format please contact:
Tel 020 7033 1777
Textphone 020 7033 1664
Email sct@amnesty.org.uk

