

Action

THE BRIGHTON AND HOVE AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL GROUP NEWSLETTER



July 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

July 6th
Campaign Meeting
All welcome

August 3rd
Guest Speaker
David Benedictus
The History of Amnesty

Monthly Collection

15th July
19th August
Contact Madeline
01273 508620
madeline@peasgood.plus.com

Monthly Stall

8th July
Sydney Street
Contact Celia 01273 593833
11am to 1pm

Brighton Pride

5th August
Stall and Parade
Details to follow

Refugee campaign "Hairy Arms Action"

30th September TBC

Write for Rights 2017

2nd December
10am to 4pm
Friends Meeting House
Ship St, Brighton

BRIGHTON PRIDE – SATURDAY 5TH AUGUST

Come and join in "The Summer of Love"!!

Once again we will be taking part in the Brighton Pride Parade as a walking group. It's a fantastic opportunity to publicise our campaigning work in the biggest lesbian and gay event outside London, and one of the biggest in Europe. And we always get a huge cheer from the crowd in recognition of our support for LGBTI rights.

The theme is "The Summer of Love" and we'll be getting out our brightest and most colourful "hippy" clothes to really make a splash! As well as our great LGBTI banner we'll have placards and balloons advertising our Human Rights message. This year we'll be particularly focussing on the appalling situation facing gay men in Chechnya, where there are reports of the abduction, torture and even killing of gay men.....see below. If you would like to join us in this fabulous event, please email me susandcwilliams@gmail.com

N.B Please note that the Pride Committee are being extra careful regarding security this year and insist that groups in the Parade know who is in their group BEFORE the event – so that means you cannot just turn up on the day.

CHECHNYA: STOP ABDUCTING AND KILLING GAY MEN Over a hundred men suspected of being gay have been abducted, tortured and some even killed in the southern Russian republic of Chechnya.

According to independent daily newspaper, Novaya Gazeta, up to 100 men suspected of being gay have been abducted as part of a coordinated government campaign.

It claims the men have been tortured and otherwise ill-treated, and three are reported to have been killed by their captors – but there could be more.

Our researchers have spoken to some of the men who managed to escape Chechnya. They talked about their harrowing experiences, but for the sake of their safety we are unable to provide details.

We do however, need you to urge the Russian and Chechen authorities to investigate these abductions and bring those responsible to justice.

Campaign Action—Democratic Republic of Congo

From the Amnesty International website:

DRC: Human rights grievances fuelling a "desperate and dangerous" situation

16 June 2017, 16:42 UTC

Responding to an urgent appeal by former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan and nine former African heads of state warning that the future of the DRC is in grave danger, Sarah Jackson, Deputy Regional Director for East Africa, the Horn of Africa, and the Great Lakes said:

"The launch of this appeal is extremely timely and we echo the concerns raised by Kofi Annan. The Democratic Republic of Congo is a powder-keg of human rights grievances that frequently spill over into violence. Instead of taking concrete steps to ease the tensions, the government has chosen to focus its efforts on quashing dissenting voices, killing and imprisoning dozens of protesters in the process.

"Violent conflict in the Kasai region has forced 1.3 million people to flee their homes and requires urgent and immediate action from the UN Human Rights Council. Hundreds of extrajudicial executions and other human rights violations committed by the armed forces have gone uninvestigated fuelling a conflict now affecting eight provinces in which an estimated 500 to 1,000 people have been killed.

"The international community, and African leaders in particular, cannot afford to continue ignoring this desperate and dangerous situation."

Democratic Republic of Congo – July campaign update

Our campaign around human rights in the DRC continues, as does the violence and instability, unfortunately. With President Kabila still in power after his constitutionally mandated two-year term of office ended in December 2016, there is huge frustration at further delays of voter registration and therefore elections. Efforts to implement a power-sharing deal with opposition parties has so far failed. Fighting between armed militias and Government forces continues in many areas, often affecting civilians with hundreds of thousands being displaced, and as if the country's fortunes weren't bad enough, there has been an outbreak of Ebola.

For all these reasons we must keep up our campaign supporting democratic movements, human rights defenders and those brave enough to speak out and challenging the many corporate interests that seek to benefit financially from this extremely resource-rich but economically poor country.

Initially our campaign came under Amnesty International's *Individuals at Risk* (formerly known as *Prisoners of Conscience*) and we campaigned for the release of two men detained for their establishment of, and active participation in, LUCHA (*Lutte pour le Changement / Struggle for Change*), an educational youth movement. Having secured their release, no doubt thanks in part to the international publicity and our worldwide letter-writing campaign, Amnesty would like us to concentrate on the shocking human rights abuses, and in particular the use of child labour, in the mining of cobalt, which is used extensively in the batteries of all our personal electronic gadgets and many car batteries. (More than half the world's supply of cobalt is found in DRC.)

We have already had two very successful letter-writing stalls outside the Amnesty bookshop in Sydney Street, where we have collected nearly 200 signed letters to Volkswagen and Samsung. These also proved very useful opportunities to engage with members of the public about this issue and our other campaigns.

Attached is a letter for you to sign and send – **please DO IT! It DOES make a difference!**

Thank you. You can also email it to info@volkswagen-sustainability.com

Sue Williams – DRC Campaign Co-ordinator

Monthly Stall outside the Amnesty Bookshop

This is what has been happening on our regular stall in Sydney street over the last couple of months.

If you want to get involved then the next stall is on 8th July. Contact Celia on 01273 593833 if you can spare an hour to help out.

MAY

Andrew, Sue, Madeleine and Celia worked hard for two hours talking to passers by and asking them to sign a letter to Samsung in Korea about their mining of **COBALT in the DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO.**

A key component of rechargeable batteries is a metal called cobalt. These batteries recharge our phones, laptops, electric cars etc. Over 50% of the world's supply of this metal comes from the DRC. Samsung often use children as young as 7, on 12 hour shifts, hauling loads of the raw ore, and often working underground in very unsafe conditions. They get paid US\$1-2 a day. This practice has been documented by Amnesty. We think it is wrong for children to be forced to work at all and certainly not to produce goods for western consumers such as us. These children have a right to education and a normal childhood.

Our letter asked Samsung to stop these human rights abuses and to improve working conditions for adult miners.

The public were very receptive and we got 120 letters signed.

There is a copy of the letter with this newsletter for you to sign.

June

DR SALEM MOHAMED BEITELMAL ABDUCTED IN LIBYA

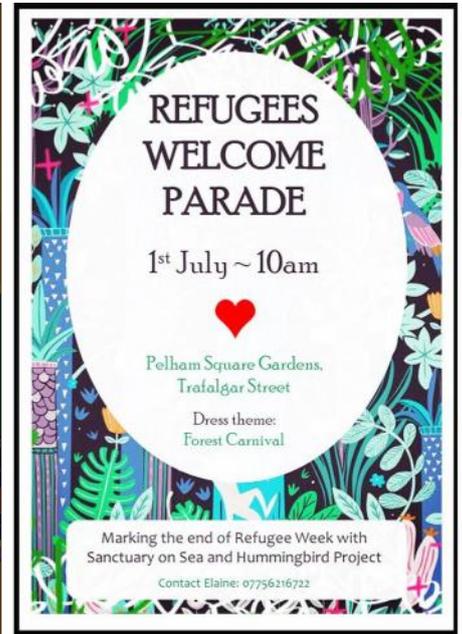
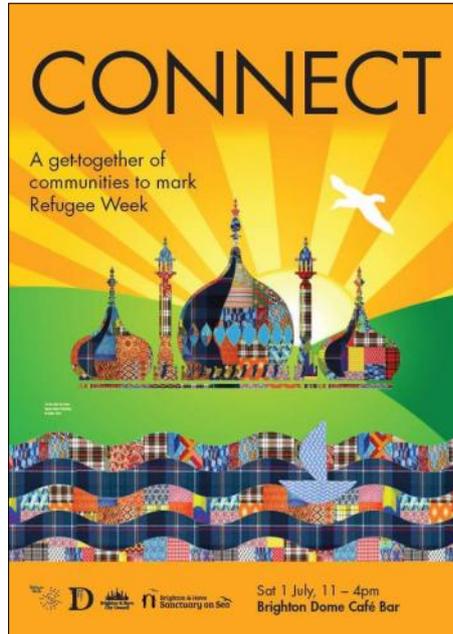
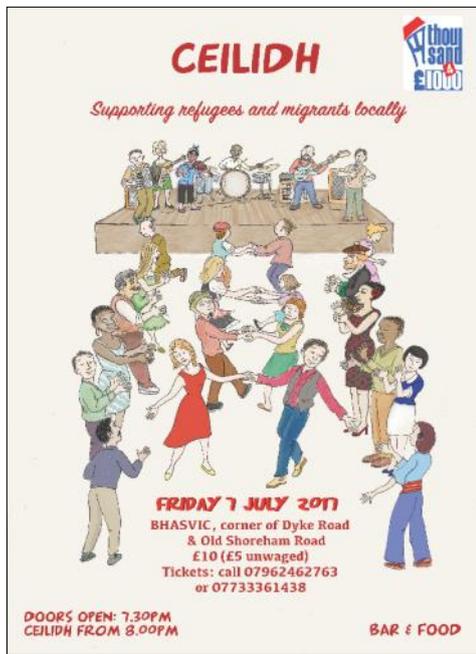
On Saturday 10th June, with Sue, Julian, Andrew and Celia, our Amnesty stall campaigned for the release of Dr. Beitelmal who was kidnapped by local militia while driving to work at the University of Tripoli. His car had been abandoned near his home and in spite of family and neighbours searching for him, there was no trace of him. The area where he had been abducted, Siyyad, is under the control of several militias, all affiliated to three different factions struggling for power in this dangerous country.

Dr. Beitelmal is an engineer involved in the reconstruction of his country and much respected by his students and colleagues. In spite of his family being in contact with the authorities, they have been unsuccessful in getting information and no group has claimed responsibility for his abduction. His health is not good and his family are very concerned.

Thank you for campaigning for this prisoner of conscience.

Celia

Noticeboard for local events



BRIGHTON & HOVE AMNESTY GROUP CONTACTS

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

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Newsletter editor: - Emma: Tel: 01273 232397

Please email any contributions for the newsletter to

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Lanes collection organiser: - Madeline—01273 508620

Individuals at Risk – Musasa Tshibanda —Sue 07790 755921

sue@suewilliams44.fsnet.co.uk

Refugees welcome campaign co ordinator— TBC

Guest speaker co ordinator—Caroline

West and Central Africa Region campaign – Peter

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Children’s Rights Campaign - Gwyneth Gwyneth.jones@ntlworld.com

DRC campaign - Sue 07790 755921 sue@suewilliams44.fsnet.co.uk

Amnesty Websites: international - www.amnesty.org AI UK -

www.amnesty.org.uk local group – 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.

