



Actions you can take this month:

- ✓ **Take action** on behalf of **Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe** who has reportedly been sentenced to five years in prison in Iran for unspecified 'national security charges'. **Kamal Foroughi** is serving his sixth year of a seven-year sentence in a Tehran prison after he was convicted of espionage. The treatment of both UK-Iranian nationals by the Iranian authorities has been far from transparent or fair. Go to www.amnesty.org.uk to sign the petition calling on the UK Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson to speak out.
- ✓ **Send** a message of hope and support to Eskinder Nega (Kaliti Prison, Addis Ababa Prison Administration, PO Box 2436, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia).
- ✓ **Book your place** at our **fund-raising meal** at the Spice Merchant, Watchet on Monday 28 November. Numbers are limited so you will need to book your places and arrival time – between 1830 and 1930.
- ✓ **Select your gifts and cards** from the 2016 catalogue and give your order to Cherry Bird by 25 October. Ordering via the group will save you postage and packing and the group receives a discount on its orders.
- ✓ **Make a date** to come along to our Write for Rights campaign stall on Friday 9 December. (Details to be confirmed.)

Round up of August and September group news

Summer Social: *Cherry Bird writes* - As always this was a very enjoyable evening - the weather smiled on us and we were able to sit out in Susan's



beautiful garden watching the sunset and enjoying the antics of bats until late. Susan's introductory game had us all puzzling – having found the names of 20 countries hidden around the garden, on what basis could they be split into 2 groups? Answer: 10 were top refugee sending countries and 10 were top receivers. Thanks to Susan for her hospitality.

September Group meeting: Our group was joined by Revd Simon Robinson and Revd Andrew Vidamour for a discussion of how to mark **Holocaust Memorial Day** (HMD) in Minehead on Friday 27 January 2017. The purpose of HMD is to raise awareness and encourage reflection on the millions of people who have been murdered or whose lives have been changed beyond recognition during the Holocaust and subsequent genocides. We will also focus on support for people suffering persecution today and elimination of discrimination, racism and hatred in our own community. Secrecy enabled the Holocaust to cause such devastation. In contrast, our HMD event must draw public attention. It was agreed that we would organise a range of linked events throughout the town, for example: a display of information in the library, drop-in venue with information to prompt meditation/prayer (St Andrew's Church), vigil in Wellington Square with 'rovers' distributing explanatory leaflets, possibly an installation in the Square giving an experience of being caught up in genocide, a public meeting with Reverend Donald Reeves as speaker, cultural events with music and poetry, and story-telling in schools. A planning group has been set up. For more information, contact Jenny Lennon-Wood.

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.

Tuesday 25 October

Group meeting: training workshop on the new campaign 'I welcome' refugees.

Tuesday 22 Nov

Group meeting: reports from the AIUK Thematic Networks conference and the AIUK launch of the Write for Rights 2016 Campaign.

Monday 28 Nov

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

1-4 December

Minehead Christmas Tree Festival: theme – 'Time for a story'. Set up/opening ceremony on 30 Nov. Date/time for preparing our tree to be confirmed.

Friday 9 December

Write for Rights campaign stall: times and venue to be confirmed.

Campaign News

I Welcome Refugees: the official launch of this new global campaign (previously called People on the Move) is now on 16 November and it will run until the end of 2017. We will be finding out more about this campaign at our October meeting. In the meantime, events have taken place in Britain to coincide with our Prime Minister's attendance at a UN summit on the refugee crisis. *Alison Dietz reports on the Refugees*

Welcome March: It's Saturday 17 September and I have just returned home after the Refugees Welcome March organised by Solidarity with Refugees. Large numbers represented Amnesty International, UNCHR, the Refugee Council, Médecins sans Frontières, Unicef, Socialist Workers, Liberty, Oxfam and many other organisations. All gathered outside the Park Lane Hilton, and other groups met up with their members and supporters all along Park Lane. It was ages before we set off, cold and very windy, but such a friendly atmosphere. I chatted with AI members from Oldham, Mid Devon, Hull, Malvern, and with lots of people of all ages. On the march were tiny babies carried by parents, small children carrying placards, all the way to the even-older-than-me. My placard bore the names of 90 West Somerset residents, members of Minehead group plus many others who wanted to send a message to Theresa May that Britain welcomes refugees. Today, around 20,000 people standing in Parliament Square right opposite the Houses of Parliament sent her the same message. We listened to impassioned speeches from Lord Dubs, Caroline Lucas MP, Vanessa Redgrave, Juliet Stevenson, a recorded one from Jeremy Corbyn (who was in Manchester). We heard from refugees who had made the dangerous journey to Europe, from poets and from bands. Solidarity with Refugees director Ros Ereira said: 'I hope she (Theresa May) is going to set the tone for the kind of country we can be post-Brexit ... We hope she will want to portray us as an open, tolerant, welcoming society ...' It was inspiring to see that so many of us do not subscribe to the 'pull up the drawbridge' mentality that – if one believes the media – is sweeping the UK. We hope that our message will persuade Theresa May to bring from Calais the children who have family here and are in possession of all the documents required. We hope that she will wish to portray our country as the compassionate one we used to be.



Ethiopia: *Cherry Bird reports:* News from Ethiopia is not good - authorities continue to hound peaceful protesters in the Oromia region, who are calling for political reform, justice and rights to their traditional forest lands. Between 60 and 100 people were reported killed as police fired live ammunition at protesters. Four members of the most prominent human rights organisation have also been arrested and detained. There has been no progress on either Eskinder Nega or Andy Tsege. Despite Andy being a British citizen illegally kidnapped while in transit through Yemen, Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson refuses to request his release or lobby for improvements in his conditions, saying he is 'comfortable with the conditions under which Andy is being held' and does not wish to risk harming trade relations with Ethiopia. Our group has sent a contribution to Reprieve, who are very actively campaigning for Andy's release. You can read more about the situation in Ethiopia via the link

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2015/12/op-ed-the-world-must-not-forget-the-jailed-journalists-of-ethiopia/>

Afghanistan: Following Amnesty's hard hitting report on the dramatic increase in number of internally displaced people (IDPs) and their terrible conditions, our members emailed local MEPs asking them to ensure human rights were central to discussions at a recent international conference in Brussels.

India: Amnesty has produced an in-depth report on the violation of the human rights of indigenous communities caused by extensive coal mining on their traditional lands. And the Bengaluru police are filing a sedition case against Amnesty India for organising an event in support of justice for those suffering HR violations in Jammu and Kashmir.

How to contact the Minehead Amnesty International Local Group:

Website: www.amnesty.org.uk/minehead

Facebook: www.facebook.com/amnestyminehead

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