

Action

THE BRIGHTON AND HOVE AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL GROUP NEWSLETTER



October 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

October 5th
Group meeting

Monthly Collection

21st October
18th November
Contact Madeline
01273 508620

madeline@peasgood.plus.com

Monthly Stall

30th September

Refugees Welcome
Contact

celiastubbs@yahoo.co.uk

Refugee campaign

"Hairy Arms Action"

30th September

In 2016 5.8 million people became refugees. Only 0.18 were granted asylum in the UK.

On 30th September we will be out and about with a pair of giant yellow hairy arms asking the people of Brighton to join us to send a message of welcome to refugees.

Write for Rights 2017

2nd December
10am to 4pm
Friends Meeting House

STOP THE ARMS FAIR : DSEI

DSEI (Defence & Security Equipment International) is the world's largest arms fair. It allows arms buyers and sellers to network and make deals. It happens once every two years, in the second week in September, at ExCeL – the huge exhibition centre in London Docklands.



The arms trade is dominated by the five permanent members of the UN Security Council: China, France, Russia, UK and the US, along with Germany and, increasingly, Israel. The permanent members alone account for around three quarters of exported arms.

While relatively few countries sell large volumes of weaponry, the buyers are spread across the world. Some of the largest purchasers are in the Middle East and South and East Asia. The sales range from fighter aircraft, helicopters and warships with guided missiles, tanks and armoured vehicles to machine guns and rifles. They also include components and surveillance equipment. For the UK the big scandal at the moment are the arms we sell to Saudi Arabia to be used in Yemen.

So, one has to try to stop it. An organisation called Campaign Against the Arms Trade (CAAT) organised a series of protests in the week before the fair started (i.e. 4th – 10th Sept. The fair ran from 12th – 15th). The aim was to make it as difficult as possible for the organisers to get

their weaponry into the buildings.

Each day had a theme:

Mon – Stop Arming Israel

Tues – No faith in war

Weds – No nuclear, Arms to renewables

Thurs – Free movement of people, not weapons

Fri – Scholars and supervillains against the Arms trade

Sat – Festival of Resistance

Sue went on Tuesday when various faith groups did their best to stop vehicles entering including abseiling from a bridge on the entrance road and hanging in front of the lorries. The police did not know how to deal with that.

Madeline and I, along with Jenny Engledow from Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), went up on the Wednesday bearing the wonderful "arms" in the picture on the front page which Jenny had made. Several people had arrived with various ways to "Lock on". This involved ingenious ways to immobilise oneself in the road, blocking the traffic and causing the police to call upon specialist team. Here two people had a suitcase filled with concrete with a pipe through the middle into which they put their arms from opposite ends and cuffed themselves together. Very simple but highly effective. The police have to be very careful – hence the protective gear and the time taken to remove them. Altogether the entrances were blocked for 6 hours that day.



On Saturday Charlie Chaplin locked himself to a lorry for a couple of hours before being removed.



There was also, over the week quite a lot of art created which was put on display during the actual fair. Banksy donated a piece which eventually sold for £205,000 to fund CAAT.



It's the picture and the 3 drones. The rest, including me, are just window dressing!
So, did we stop the fair? Unfortunately no. I went up on the Weds of the fair and saw lots of men, and a single woman, wearing very fancy suits and talking about the networking opportunities.
Will it be back? Unfortunately it probably will be in two years time
Will CAAT be there? Yes, bigger, stronger and more determined to stop this heinous trade.
Many more pictures are on our Flickr pages at <http://bit.ly/2wo6EFc> Peter

Stop the violence against the Rohingya in Myanmar

In the last few weeks, over 400,000 people – mostly Rohingya – have fled Myanmar to nearby Bangladesh. In fact, more Rohingya refugees fled to Bangladesh in the space of three weeks than the total number of people who fled by sea to Europe in 2016.

Some are badly injured, and with children. Thousands more are also believed to be stranded in the mountains of northern Rakhine State. They are being denied basic aid because NGOs and humanitarian organisations are not being allowed access to the area.

We have also found evidence of a [mass scorched-earth campaign](#) across the region, where Myanmar security forces and vigilante mobs are burning down entire Rohingya villages and shooting people at random as they try to flee.

Security forces have even planted internationally-banned landmines along its border with Bangladesh which have seriously injured at least three civilians, including two children, and reportedly killed one man.

Take action online to demand that the authorities end the violence now:

<https://www.amnesty.org.uk/actions/stop-violence-against-rohingya-myanmar>



SAVE THE DATE! - National Conference & AGM 2018

7-8 April, Swansea University - Free to attend!

In uncertain times, it is more important than ever for Amnesty to grow and strengthen as a movement. The national conference is a fantastic opportunity for members to come together to share knowledge and skills, hear from amazing speakers and feel energised to campaign in the months ahead. The event is also an opportunity to get involved in debate and decision-making and to engage in the democracy of Amnesty UK by voting on the resolutions that will shape our work in the coming year.

Turkey – Amnesty members imprisoned

The chair, Taner Kilic and Director, Idil Eser of Amnesty Turkey have been imprisoned on false charges. Please if you can sign an on-line petition to urge their release; www.amnesty.org.uk/actions/free-taner-and-idil

Or write, urging that they be released immediately and unconditionally, to His Excellency Mr Abdurrahman Bilgic, Embassy of the Republic of Turkey, 43 Belgrave Square, London SW1X 8PA and ask him to pass your sentiments to the Turkish authorities.

Annual Street Collection

On Saturday 23rd September we held our annual street collection and raised a total of £368.73 made up of about half from the day and half from generous supporters who sent us money. Very many thanks to all who gave so generously of their time and money.

In retrospect, if we had realised the opportunities offered by the newly invigorated Labour Party Conference we would have been collecting at the bottom of West Street outside the Synergy Centre, rather than just being displaced by a set of fringe meetings from our booking for collection central.

Next time, the Conservative Party!

Peter

BRIGHTON & HOVE AMNESTY GROUP CONTACTS

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Refugees welcome campaign co ordinator— TBC

Guest speaker co ordinator—Caroline

West and Central Africa Region campaign – Peter

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DRC campaign - Sue 07790 755921

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.

