

# Action

## THE BRIGHTON AND HOVE AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL GROUP NEWSLETTER



December 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

December 7th  
Group meeting with  
Seasonal Social

### Monthly Collection

16th December

20th January

17th February

Contact Madeline

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### Write for Rights 2017

2nd December

10am to 4pm

Friends Meeting House

# WRITE FOR RIGHTS

SATURDAY 2ND DECEMBER

10AM - 4PM

BRIGHTON FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE

One small letter has the potential to  
change somebody's life.

Email [brightonandhoveai@googlemail.com](mailto:brightonandhoveai@googlemail.com) for more information

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL



Amnesty International Brighton and Hove Group

Every year, we run Write for Rights, a campaign over November and December where we encourage you to write messages of support to people around the world who have suffered injustice, and show you how to support their campaigns for justice.

We do it because we know it works. Please join us

**Mohammad Abu Sakha**

The Palestinian circus performer and teacher was released on 30 August, after almost two years in administrative detention in Israel

"I love you all. I feel a part of you given how much you stood by me in your actions...I want to thank everyone individually...No words can express it enough."

Mohammad Abu Sakha, Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories



## Democratic Republic of Congo

### November Monthly action

Based on and inspired by article below, we are proposing a photo action. We'd like to ask you to hold up a poster that says something along these lines:

**"End the attacks on freedom of expression in the DRC. Don't block social media."**

Take a photo of each individual with the poster and post the photos on social media. Please include the hashtags #ExpressionNotRepression and #DRC in your tweets. You could also target President Kabila and the Minister of Justice and Human Rights in your messages by adding the handles @PrimatureRDC and @MinJusticeRDC to them.

Thank you in advance for your efforts around this action.

## Democratic Republic of Congo

### Background Situation update - November

#### U.N. condemns arrests of Congo opposition members

On 22 October, police broke up a meeting by the Union for Democracy and Social Progress (UDPS) party on the eve of a return to the city of opposition leader Felix Tshisekedi in the southeastern city of Lubumbashi. Officers arrested about 30 opposition members. The U.N. peacekeeping mission in Congo condemned the arrest of the opposition members.

Congo's government has banned opposition demonstrations since last year.

#### Delayed elections

Earlier this month, the national electoral commission (CENI) announced that the election to replace Kabila can't take place until April 2019. Subsequently, activist groups in Goma had called for a general strike on 30 October to protest against the election delay.

On 30 October early in the morning, unrest broke out between police and protesters, who barricaded roads and burned tires, local residents and the police said. At least four civilians and a police officer were killed in clashes between security forces and protesters demanding the departure of President Kabila this year.

In reaction to the CENI's announcement, Nikki Haley the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations said that the DRC must hold a long-delayed election to replace President Kabila by the end of next year or the vote will lose international support.

#### Bodies of ambushed travellers found in eastern Congo

After an ambush on travellers that took place at the beginning of October in eastern DRC, bodies of 26 people have been discovered. The victims disappeared after they were ambushed by militants on a main road in North Kivu's restive Beni territory, where more than 800 people were killed in dozens of massacres between 2014 and 2016. Independent and separate U.N. experts say several armed groups as well as national army commanders have been involved in the killings.

#### Aid can reach the Kasai

President Joseph Kabila has agreed to help aid reach the Kasai, a region of the Democratic Republic of Congo where ethnic conflict has spawned a humanitarian emergency.

The conflict in Kasai region turned Congo into the world's biggest displacement crisis this year. Although many people have started going home, Beasley said Congo still had about 600,000 children on the brink of starvation and 7.7 million severely malnourished people.

## From Amnesty International's website

### DRC: Block on social media images an appalling attack on freedom of expression

In response to a Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) government order to block the sharing of images on social media websites, Amnesty International's DRC researcher Jean-Mobert Senga said:

"The order for internet companies to take 'technical measures' to limit social media use is an appalling attack on everyone's right to share and receive information.

"Most worryingly, it comes amid a worsening political crisis where the risk of human rights violations and abuses – and therefore the importance of social media as a documentation tool - is high.

"This move is the latest in a series of attacks on freedom of expression in the DRC, including the closure of several media outlets and the harassment of Congolese and international journalists.

"This unacceptable measure must be repealed immediately and people must be allowed full access to the internet and social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Whatsapp."

#### Background

On 7 August, the president of the DRC telecommunications authority sent a letter to telecoms companies that provide internet services in the country.

It read: "To prevent abusive sharing of images through social media between clients of your network, I ask you to take the necessary technical measures to restrict the capacity to transfer images to the bare minimum."

The order came ahead of a two-day nationwide general strike called by the main opposition party, which is demanding the publication of the electoral calendar.

The government order followed a day of violence in several neighbourhoods in the capital Kinshasa, as well as in the central cities of Matadi and Boma, images of which were shared widely on social media.

#### **Now that Robert Mugabe has gone, here are some others to monitor in Africa.**

Some sad unifying themes

Use of political power for personal gain.

Nominal democracy abused to retain power

Often brutal repression of opposition

Economic stagnation of countries with rich natural and human resources

#### **Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo of Equatorial Guinea**

He took power in a coup in August 1979. Till now he has been in charge of the Central African country for 38 years and is the longest serving of the bunch.

#### **Paul Biya of Cameroon**

November 1982 - present

#### **Denis Sassou Nguesso of Congo**

President 1979-1992 and then 1997 – present

#### **Yoweri Kaguta Museveni of Uganda**

1986 - present

#### **Some relative newcomers but still causing problems**

#### **Joseph Kabila of the Democratic Republic of Congo**

2006 – present

#### **Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya**

2013 – present

#### **Salva Kiir Mayardit of South Sudan**

2011 – present

#### **Another one who quit this year**

#### **Jose Eduardo dos Santos of Angola**

1979 – 2017. This year has seen a peaceful transition to Joao Lourenco

## **FREE TEP VANNY, PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE**

Last Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> November, Madeline, Sue, Andrew and Celia collected signatures from passers by in support of Cambodian housing activist Tep Vanny who has received a year's imprisonment. She was arrested at a peaceful demonstration defending the housing rights in the Boeung Kak Lake community where thousands of families have been forcibly evicted from their homes to make way for a tourist development by a private company, granted the land by the government on a 99 year lease.

Unfortunately the rain stopped us half way through but we still had 50 letters to send to the Prime Minister of Cambodia Samdech Hun Sen.

Celia

## **BRIGHTON & HOVE AMNESTY GROUP CONTACTS**

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**Guest speaker co ordinator—**Caroline

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**Children's Rights Campaign** - Gwyneth Gwyneth.jones@ntlworld.com

**DRC campaign** - Sue 07790 755921

**Amnesty Websites:** international - [www.amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org) AI UK -

[www.amnesty.org.uk](http://www.amnesty.org.uk) local group – [www.amnesty.org.uk/brighton](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/brighton)

Follow us on twitter @AmnestyBrighton

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**Amnesty UK Human Rights Centre** - Tel: 0207 0331500.

