

Action

THE BRIGHTON AND HOVE AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL GROUP NEWSLETTER



April 2018

Forthcoming Brighton & Hove Amnesty Group Meetings/Events

Group meetings take place on
the first Thursday of each
month from 8-10pm at Com-
munity Base, Queens Road,
Brighton

5th April
Group meeting
Guest speaker
Clara will talk about the EU/
Turkey deal

3rd May
Group campaign meeting

7th June
Guest speaker
Chris will talk about Cambodia
and the Brave campaign

Monthly Collection

21st April/19th May
Contact Madeline
01273 508620

madeline@peasgood.plus.com

Monthly Stall

Contact
celiastubbs@yahoo.co.uk

Fundraising gig

April 13th
Latest Bar

PRIDE

4th August Parade
5th August Stall outside the
bookshop

Write for Rights 2018

1st December
10am to 4pm
Friends Meeting House



A NIGHT OF LIVE POP, SOUL AND ROCK
WITH
BRILLIANT MISTAKES AND BARRELHOUSE

FRIDAY 13 APRIL
- LATEST BAR -

14-17 MANCHESTER STREET, BRIGHTON, BN2 1TF
(OPPOSITE THE SEALIFE CENTRE)

DOORS OPEN 7:30PM FIRST BAND 8:15PM

£5 IN ADVANCE £7 ON THE DOOR

TICKETS AVAILABLE FROM:
[HTTPS://AMNESTYBRIGHTONGIG.
EVENTBRITE.CO.UK/](https://amnestybrightongig.eventbrite.co.uk/)



Visit to Palestine

I recently returned from a 10 day trip to Palestine. This was my fifth visit and I had decided that it might be more beneficial to both the Palestinians and myself were I to actually do something practical rather than just being a witness to the desperation and frustration of the Palestinian people. With the help of a contact in Gaza a programme of teacher training was set up at the University of Al-Najah in Nablus. The university is enormous, 40,000 students. I was tasked to set up various communicative drama -like activities for those undergraduates who were training to be English teachers. On two days I visited the town of Jenin where I undertook some teacher training with in-service teachers which was both rewarding and fun. On another occasion I did some training in a military academy in Jericho. The academy has been set up to train young men and women to be police officers. I found it rather strange to be surrounded by people in military uniforms who weren't Israeli!

I was treated everywhere with great warmth, hospitality and friendliness. I was, however, very conscious all the time of the frustration of everyday life. I visited two refugee camps in Nablus, Askar and Balata. Askar is home to 7,000 inhabitants and Balata 30,000 in an area of 1 square kilometre!! Most of these people were made refugees in 1948 when they were driven out of Jaffa by the newly-rived Zionists. I was introduced to two separate families in the camp who had both lost sons to the Israeli armed forces. Balata is a desperate place, youth unemployment is shockingly high and housing conditions are palling.



Balata refugee camp

This was the first time I had done English language teaching in Palestine. My aim was to give some examples of communicative language activities to encourage fluency but also for the teachers to have fun. I feel if they incorporate drama into their teaching this will have a productive and possibly therapeutic effect on their students.

I am planning to set up a rolling programme and will be returning in October. If you or any of your friends are interested in being volunteers either then or next year, please do contact me .
Caroline O'Reilly (07886126968)

DRC URGENT ACTION

FOUR ACTIVISTS ARBITRARILY DETAINED

Youth activists Grâce Tshiuza, Mino Bompomi, Cedric Kalonji and Carbone Beni, members of Filimbi, a citizen's movement campaigning for President Joseph Kabila to step down, remain in arbitrary detention since their arrest on 30 December 2017 while mobilizing the public to participate in a peaceful protest.

Please sign, add your address and send the letter attached to this newsletter before 25th April.

Or email to: minjustdh@gmail.com

DRC Situation update - March 2018

Congo police kill activist in church-led march against Kabila

Security forces in the Congolese capital Kinshasa shot dead a civil society activist and wounded several other people during church-led demonstrations against President Joseph Kabila on Sunday, 25 February.

As with previous protest marches, internet, mobile data and phone messaging were cut across Congo early on Sunday.

Swiss actions on Kabila's allies

Switzerland imposed sanctions including asset freezes and travel bans on 14 allies of Congolese President Joseph Kabila on 21 February amid a worsening political crisis linked to his refusal to step down. The sanctions list published by the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs largely mirrors one already enforced by the European Union. The United States has also imposed sanctions on senior Congolese officials over the past two years.

Congo defends right to explore for oil in national parks

Democratic Republic of Congo's oil minister on 15 February defended the country's right to explore for oil anywhere on its territory after media reports that President Joseph Kabila approved drilling in Africa's largest tropical rainforest reserve, the Salonga National Park.

Salonga, a UNESCO World Heritage site, covers 33,350 sq km of the Congo Basin, the world's second-largest rainforest. It is home to rare species including bonobos, forest elephants, dwarf chimpanzees and Congo peacocks. The park in central Congo's Cuvette Centrale also sits on peatlands that scientists say could release massive quantities of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere if disturbed.

President Joseph Kabila has not yet signed into law a new mining code.

The new proposed code, which the industry has warned will stifle investment in the copper and cobalt-rich nation, passed the Senate without opposition at the end of January.

The code could see royalties on cobalt, a vital component in electric car batteries, increase five-fold to 10 percent and it removes a stability clause in the current law protecting miners from changes to the fiscal and customs regime for 10 years.

In a statement in December 2017, several of Congo's largest mines said investors would look elsewhere if the code were approved by the Senate and signed into law by the president.

Under the constitution, the president has 15 days from the time parliament sends him the bill to either sign it into law or return it to parliament for further deliberation. If he takes no action, the bill automatically becomes law.

Sue says: I'm afraid I don't understand the implications of this complex piece of legislation and have asked AIUK for clarification. This is the reply:

"Regarding your question, it's absolutely understandable that you are confused: it's not clear yet how it will impact the country's economy and people. As corruption looms in the DRC, the additional income from mining tariffs might (again) end up in the hands of the elite, leaving those who mine the precious minerals and their communities in poverty. It's not to be expected either that the new law will improve the labour rights of miners.

However, one major concern is that the code risks being stripped of a critical part of its conflict of interest provision. As Global Witness** writes, "*in Congo's restive eastern provinces, members of the national army have long vied for positions of control over areas endowed with lucrative mineral reserves. While they are officially forbidden from participation in the minerals trade, the illicit involvement of officers of all ranks has been well documented for decades.*" "

Report back from monthly stall

PRO DEMOCRACY ACTIVISTS ARBITRARILY DETAINED

This Saturday 24th March Madeline, Andrew and Celia asked members of the public to sign letters to the Minister of Justice in Kinshasa, DRC calling for the release of five Pro-democracy activists Rachel Pilipili, Francois Kahombo Hangi, Justin Mutabesha,

Benamin Kamuntu and Parfait Muhani who have been arbitrarily detained since 21st January this year. The five were arrested during a peaceful demonstration in Goma.

These 5 human rights activists have been imprisoned for their beliefs and for speaking out for freedom of expression and peaceful assembly.

BRIGHTON & HOVE AMNESTY GROUP CONTACTS

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Lanes collection organiser: - Madeline—01273 508620

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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.

