



MANCHESTER AMNESTY GROUP NEWSLETTER

May 2018

<http://manchester.amnesty.org.uk/>

Facebook page: Manchester Amnesty International

Facebook group: Manchester Amnesty

Twitter: @amnestymanc

Forthcoming Events

Please support!

'Ban Israeli Settlement Goods' Vigil

Sunday June 10th

For half a century, Israel's occupation of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip has resulted in systematic human rights violations against Palestinians living there.

Amnesty wants

governments to stop enabling the economy that keeps these illegal settlements growing and fuels the suffering of Palestinians. Amnesty UK is calling on the Foreign Secretary to ban Israeli settlement goods from entering UK markets, and to stop companies in the UK from operating in settlements or trading in their goods. Find out more at <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/ban-israeli-settlement-goods-local-groups> and at our May group meeting when Jonathan Cornejo, AIUK campaign lead, will be talking about this campaign.



Together with the Quakers of Manchester we will hold a silent vigil outside the Friends Meeting House in Manchester city centre (6 Mount Street, M2 5NS) on Sunday 10th June from 12.15pm to 13.15 pm. We will be providing information on this campaign to passers-by and asking them to sign the petition to the UK government.

**Come along and join in the vigil on
Sunday June 10th
12.15pm to 13.15 pm
All Welcome!**

Didsbury Festival Saturday June 16th

We have a stall at this great local festival, current plans are to feature I WELCOME refugee, Ahmed Mansoor, Palestine (ban on settlement goods) campaigns.

We need volunteers to help man the stall – can you spare a couple of hours that Saturday? If so, please email manchestergroup@amnesty.org.uk.

'This is who I am' Wednesday June 20th

Theatre company, Ice&Fire are putting on a production at HOME as part of HOME's Refugee Week events. Ice&Fire are a company with a distinct and determined voice, developing original theatre pieces from human rights testimony and documentary evidence. Each piece is shaped by the real people and communities with whom they closely work. We are delighted to be working with them to put on a production during this year's Refugee Week.

Using the verbal testimonies of refugees, *This Is Who I Am* is a reading that focuses on the challenges faced by LGBT people going through the UK asylum process.

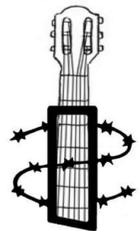


See <https://homemcr.org/production/this-is-who-i-am/>

We will have a stall and will host a Q&A after the show. Tickets at a reduced rate (£1) will be available for Manchester group members – details to be confirmed.

Acoustic Amnesty Thursday June 21st

We're holding an Acoustic Amnesty fundraising event for the excellent Musicians Without Borders (<https://www.musicianswithoutborders.org/>) as part of their worldwide music day.



Where? Sacred Trinity Church, Salford, M3 5DW
When? Thursday 21st June 2018, at 7pm

The gig will be seated and totally silent for performances with the (well stocked!) bar in a separate room. There will be no sound system whatsoever - totally acoustic using the natural acoustics of the venue.

The acts confirmed so far are **All This Rain**, **Chris Tavener**, **Dave Broomhead**, and **Dave Viney**.

Free on-street car parking is available and the venue is a stone's throw from Deansgate/Market Street in Manchester city centre.

You can purchase advance tickets for only £8 at the following link: <https://www.wegottickets.com/event/437740>

May Group Meeting

N.B. Usually on the 4th Monday of the month - 7.30pm.

Wednesday 23rd May

We have changed to Wednesday to avoid the Bank Holiday – only for this month!
Featuring a talk on the Palestine campaign by Johnathan Cornejo, AIUK campaign coordinator

MadLab/Plant Noma
Dantzig Street, M60 OAE

PLEASE NOTE CHANGE FROM OUR NORMAL DATE AND THE CHANGE OF VENUE

Some of us will meet at Trof about 6pm to get a bite to eat before the meeting – you are welcome to join us

Campaigns

United Arab Emirates

AHMED MANSOOR ON TRIAL

There are no updates on the situation of Ahmed Mansoor as yet. However, he appeared before a court in Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in March and April. Amnesty International considers him to be a prisoner of conscience.

It is not known which court is hearing his case, the exact charges he is facing nor whether he has a defence lawyer.

Thus, it is important to take action:

– Calling on the UAE authorities to release Ahmed Mansoor immediately and unconditionally, as he is a prisoner of conscience detained solely for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression, including through his human rights work;

– Urging them to disclose, pending his release, his exact whereabouts and information about the stage of his trial, and ensure that he is held in an official place of detention and he is not subjected to torture and other ill-treatment;

– Urging them to ensure he is granted immediate and regular access to a lawyer, his family, and any medical care he may require.

The Urgent Action was sent round with last month's newsletter but is attached again. PLEASE take action as soon as possible if you haven't already.

If you have any questions for this urgent action please contact Henrike: henrikegreuel@gmx.de

Furthermore, a meeting of activists working on the case for Ahmed Mansoor is scheduled for the 1st of June in Manchester. Let Henrike know if you would like to join and she will send you all details.

Unfortunately, there will be **NO VIGIL** in June for Ahmed, because we are lacking a volunteer to take on the lead for

holding the vigil. Please if you are interested to take over this role, contact Henrike..

'I Welcome' Refugee Campaign

Refugee week is 18-24th June. We have two events to mark this – see forthcoming events above - with the possibility of a SofaSounds concert as well.

PLEASE SUPPORT!

Crisis and Tactical

Update on campaign 'BAN ISRAELI SETTLEMENT GOODS'

Jonathan Cornejo from AI UK and co-ordinator for this campaign will update us on how the campaign is going and how Amnesty see the future for Palestine. Q&A session to follow.

PALESTINE

Amnesty calls for arms embargo on Israel

There has been extensive coverage in the press about the recent unrest in Gaza, part of the OPT (Occupied Palestinian Territories). These protests are part of the 'Great March of Return', through which Palestinians peacefully request to go back to their pre-1948 lands and homes, from which they were expelled in 1948.

The protests are planned to end on 15th May 18., which coincides with the anniversary of the 'Nakba' (catastrophe), the mass eviction.



(image of Palestinians being evicted from their land in 1948)

Amnesty has condemned the violence adopted by the Israeli forces towards protesters. Since the start of the protest on 30th March 18, according to Amnesty, 35 Palestinians have been killed and more than 5,500 people have been injured, with some of the injuries being life changing.

Research from Amnesty shows that the Israeli armed forces are "carrying out a murderous assault against protesting Palestinians ... who pose no imminent threat to them".

Amnesty has also renewed its calls on "governments worldwide to impose a comprehensive arms embargo" towards Israeli. According to Amnesty, the USA is the largest supplier of military equipment to Israel (with \$38 billion in military aid agreed for the next 10 years). However, also the UK, Germany, France and Italy have trade agreements in place with Israel.

(Quotes and data taken from Amnesty press release of 27th Apr 18)

SYRIA

The increasing challenge of doing research in Syria

In April 18 Amnesty has attended a meeting in Brussels, organised by the EU, called "Syria: The Road Towards Accountability". During his speech, Lynn Maalouf, the Middle East Research Director at Amnesty International, explained that carrying out research in Syria has become increasingly difficult. When the protests started in Damascus, Amnesty researchers witnessed them first-hand.



As the conflict deepened, their access to opposition-held areas decreased due to security reasons. Access to government-controlled areas was never an option, because the Syrian government has denied it to them repeatedly. To overcome the lack of access, Amnesty collected first-hand testimonies from people on the ground or in diaspora, as well as images, videos and satellite imagery, which were extensively examined to verify authenticity, and also obtained analysis from medical and weapons experts.

A new aspect, however, has come to the fore: people on the ground have every reason to fear retaliation for speaking out. Lynn Maalouf stated: "never before has it been as limpid that the main victor in this conflict today is widespread fear and disillusionment of the survivors".

BURMA

Jean Mary, our Burma coordinator, will be leaving Manchester this summer. Our thanks to her for keeping this work going over the last few years. If anyone is interested in taking on the lead on this, please email manchestergroup@amnesty.org.uk.

Individuals at Risk

Letter Writing

We held our regular bi-monthly drop in session on 12th May - We had 6 adults & 2 children and wrote 25 letters. Hazel brought along Urgent Actions this time, including Ahmed Mansoor & some Turkey cases & a Slovakian case for our Europe work, and an Israel/Palestinian Occupied Territories case. We also wrote

letters re. China, USA death penalty & Eritrea...so it felt like a good afternoon's work!

New Coordinator

Necmettin has volunteered to take this on as well as leading on Turkey. However, it would be good to have a little subgroup on this, if you are interested, please email manchestergroup@amnesty.org.uk.

Next Letter Writing Drop In

Saturday July 14th 2-4pm

The Eighth Day Café, Oxford Road

Come along to our regular letter writing session and make a difference

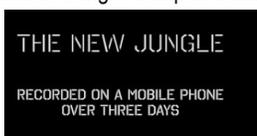
Just turn up!

All Welcome.

Children's network

Child Refugees in Calais

Despite the demolition of the infamous 'Jungle' camp in Calais, and the media's sudden silence, this footage in an Amnesty blog shows the ongoing reality for people stuck in refugee camps.



https://www.amnesty.org.uk/blogs/childrens-human-rights-network-blog/child-refugees-calais?utm_campaign=MEMA1661_CHRN_May_newsletter&utm_source=Email&utm_medium=Networks&utm_content=1287

Women's Rights

Noura Hussein was 16 years-old when she was forced into marriage. Her father and new husband signed a marriage contract, but she wanted to finish her education and train as a teacher. When her family insisted that she marry Hammad Hussein, she ran away to her aunt's house.

Three years later, when she finished school in April 2017, she was tricked into returning home by her family. They handed her over to her husband, forcing her to move into his home.

The first time Noura's new husband raped her, he got his two brothers and a male cousin to pin her down while he did it. The next day he tried to rape her again, but she defended herself. In the ensuing struggle, Hammad sustained fatal knife wounds.

Noura went to her family and told them what had happened, her father took her to the police station and her family have disowned her. The police charged Noura with murder.

Sentenced to death

At her trial, the judge applied an outdated law which does not recognise marital rape. A medical examination report from the fight with Hammad indicated she'd sustained several injuries,

including a bite and scratches. Noura was charged with intentional murder, though she was defending herself from her rapist. Now, at just 19 years-old, she has been sentenced to death.

Act now: tell the Sudanese authorities to repeal Noura's death sentence and allow her a retrial considering her mitigating circumstances. Visit the Amnesty website: <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/actions/sentenced-death-killing-her-rapist>)

(Please note, when sending the email, all the items on the form alongside it need to be completed – except for the phone number – or it will not be sent.)

Europe/Turkey No updates this month

Group Business

Change of Venue for Group Meetings

MadLab have moved to Plant NOMA which is on Dantzig Street behind the Printworks and right next to the CIS tower. It is very close to both Victoria and Shudehill tram stops.

See <https://www.plantnoma.com/about>

They are able to offer us space for our meetings as before, so our meeting on May 23rd and all subsequent meetings, will be at this new venue – PLEASE NOTE!

Pride

We have a stall booked at Sparkle in the Park this year. This is a weekend event to celebrate the trans community. Sparkle will be held on **Saturday 7th and Sunday 8th July** at Sackville Gardens in Manchester: <https://www.sparkle.org.uk/sparkle-in-the-park>

Manchester Amnesty will be having a stall over the two days. Please get in touch with Sen Raj (sen.raj@amnesty.org.uk) if you would like to help out with the stall.

We have also applied to be in this year's Pride Parade so put it in your diary now – **Saturday August 25th**.

Subscriptions please!

Annual donations from members are vital to keep the Group going. The suggested sum is £20 if you have a wage, £5 otherwise, or whatever you can afford to give.

Please bring your cash or cheque to the next meeting or contact Treasurer Sean Dunne (Sean.a.dunne@btinternet.com) and he will tell you how to get the money to him. **Thanks!**

Data Protection

In the light of the new Data Protection Regulations we have produced a data protection policy, attached with this newsletter.

Other News

'A Cambodian Spring' film screening – June 4th

'A Cambodian Spring' charts the lives of three Cambodian activists over the course of six tumultuous years. You can see the film trailer here



<https://vimeo.com/209625471> and you can read much more about the film at <http://acambodianspring.com/>

The three central characters are a fearless Buddhist monk and two bold female leaders who rally neighbours to oppose land-grabbing politicians and businesses, but at considerable cost to their own personal lives. Through his 'engaged Buddhism' as a filmmaker activist, the Buddhist monk is defending the rights of his fellow Cambodian's against a corrupt and violent government. He is faced with the corruption of his own religious leaders and must walk a difficult path between enlightenment and activism.

One of the female participants from the film is currently in jail in Cambodia for standing up for her community, and we are using the film as an advocacy tool to raise awareness about her case and to petition for her release. She is also the focus of the global Amnesty International campaign Stand up for the Brave <https://www.amnesty.org/en/get-involved/brave/?viewCampaign=69135>

The film has been showing at major international film festivals around the world and won several prestigious awards. It will be released in cinemas on the 18th of May across the UK and will be shown at the Odeon Great Northern in Manchester on 4th June. See <https://www.ourscreen.com/screening/46433>

We would like to have a BRAVE campaign stall at the event.
If you can volunteer to help
email manchestergroup@amnesty.org.uk NOW!

N.B. If you wish to subscribe to, or unsubscribe from, this newsletter and other general group emails from the Manchester Group of Amnesty International, please email manchestergroup@amnesty.org.uk