

Newsletter: July/August 2018

Bognor Regis, Chichester & District Group



Dates for your diary	Sat 28 July, 10:00 for 10:30: PUMBLE, Canal Basin, Chichester Wed 26 Sept, 16:30 - 18:30: Vicar's Hall, Cathedral Close, Chichester "Live Better Together"
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Dear writers

Many thanks to all of you who came to hear KATE ALLEN at the Cathedral on 13/06 – more than I can remember at an Amnesty event for many years. I'm sure you'll agree that she was well worth hearing. There will be another event in the Cathedral grounds on 26/09 – see 'Dates for your diary', above.

Local events

Our PUMBLE (=PUB raMBLE) will leave from the canal basin behind the "Richmond Arms" near to Chichester bus and railway station, south of the council car parks. We can have cold/hot drinks at the canal café, then leave at 1030 to Donnington, walking along the canal towpath past the remains of the tramway bridge, then south to the "Blacksmiths". Please bring a water bottle to keep you going until you can get something stronger. If wet, please ring Peter James on (01243) 533745 to check if the Pumble is still on.

Other events

- **Safe European Home?** This exhibition runs at [Worthing Museum and Art Gallery](#) until 13 October 2018 and explores the identity of Europe as a safe haven. First shown outside the Parliament building in Vienna in 2011, the exhibition returns to the artists' home town of Worthing.
- **Hot Topics talk: Antisemitism Beyond the Headlines** 18/07/2018, 1030 - 1200, Chichester Cathedral, 4 Canon Lane. Rabbi Dr Andrea Zano, Brighton & Hove Reform Synagogue, will give a personal view on the development of antisemitism and what can be done to challenge antisemitism in the world today. The session will be introduced and chaired by the Cathedral Chancellor, the Reverend Canon Dr Anthony Cane. Tickets £7.50, advance booking essential. Chichester Box Office, Novium Museum, Tower Street, Chichester 01243 816525
- **Fund-raising: Great South Run.** Mark Stables, one of our Amnesty group members, is undertaking the Great South Run on 21/10/2018 for [Children on the Edge](#), the Chichester-based charity that exists to help marginalised and forgotten children, who are living on the edge of their societies. Specifically, Mark is raising funds for work with refugees from Syria in Lebanon and refugees in Burma. If you would like to sponsor Mark, his Just Giving page is <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/Mark-Stables1>

GDPR update: a quick reminder that we will continue to send you a copy of your Group Newsletter (average: 10 issues per year) as part of your Group membership. If you would like to receive **additional email notifications about other human rights related events**, and **local Group email notifications** in-between your Group Newsletters, remember that you need to let us know: we do need your consent to do this. Please see your reminder emails from Kath, our Group webmaster, on how to do this online.

Carry on writing!

Bob Dewick, Amnesty

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Amnesty action: campaigns & letter-writing

Action: Free Saudi women who fought for the right to drive.

After years of campaigning, women in Saudi Arabia were legally allowed to drive on 24 June. But in a cruel twist, three women who bravely fought for this right have been arrested and branded 'traitors'. They face up to 20 years in prison in a desperate attempt to stop progress.

What you can do:

Email the Saudi Embassy here: <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/actions/free-saudi-women-who-fought-right-drive>

Action: Algeria: blogger convicted with 10 year prison sentence

Following more than 16 months in pre-trial detention, Algerian blogger Merzoug Touati was convicted to 10 years prison terms for some peaceful online posts. The Court of Appeal in Bejaya will review its conviction on 21 June. He is a prisoner of conscience.

On 24 May, the Court of First Instance in Bejaya convicted Algerian blogger **Merzoug Touati** to 10 years in prison and a fine of 50,000 Algerian dinars (approximately USD \$430) on trumped-up charges based only on his online posts. He was sentenced on charges of "incitement to non-armed gathering", "foreign intelligence aiming at harming diplomatic ties", and "incitement to gatherings and sit-ins in public spaces". A charge of "incitement to take up arms against the authority of the state", which could have carried a death sentence, was dropped. The Court of Appeal in Bejaya will review his sentence on 21 June, which could reintroduce the death penalty charge.

Merzoug Touati has conducted at least seven hunger strikes to protest his extended detention. According to his lawyer, the prison guards prevented him from sleeping during his hunger strikes by entering his cell several times during the night. He was recently moved to a new overcrowded cell, where he is forced to sleep on the floor as he doesn't have a bed or a mattress, unlike the other fellow detainees.

Merzoug Touati is a university graduate who was unemployed at the time of his arrest. He was not affiliated to any political party or association. In 2015, he began to run a Facebook page and a blog called *Alhogra.com*, since deleted, where he regularly commented on political and human rights developments in Algeria. **He is a prisoner of conscience held solely for expressing his peaceful opinions.**

What you can do:

Please write immediately by 27 July 2018, urging Algerian authorities to:

- release Merzoug Touati immediately and unconditionally and ensure that his conviction is quashed, as he is a prisoner of conscience detained solely for peacefully expressing his views online;
- immediately ensure that his detention conditions are in line with international law;
- amend legislation that criminalizes freedom of expression and immediately and unconditionally release all individuals held solely for the peaceful exercise of their rights to freedom of expression.

Write to:

- President of the Republic Abdelaziz Bouteflika, Presidency of the Republic, El Mouradia, Algiers, Algeria. **Salutation: Your Excellency** Email: president@el-mouradia.dz
- Justice Minister Tayeb Louh, Ministry of Justice, 8 Place Bir Hakem, 16030 El Biar, Algiers, Algeria. **Salutation: Your Excellency** Email: contact@mjustice.dz

Copies to:

- President, National human rights institution Mme Fafa Benzerrouki Sid Lakhdar, Conseil national des droits de l'Homme, Palais du Peuple, Avenue Franklin Roosevelt, Algiers, Algeria. Email: contact@cncppdh-algerie.org
- HIS EXCELLENCY Mr Amar Abba, Embassy of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, 1-3 Riding House Street, London, W1W 7DR. Email: info@algerianembassy.org.uk

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