

Newsletter: January 2019

Bognor Regis, Chichester & District Group



Dates for your diary	TUE 19/03/19 (Date changed!!), 19:30: Group AGM, Chichester Friends' Meeting House. SAT 06/04/19 09:00 - 13:00: Chichester Street Collection
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Dear writers

Many thanks for those who wrote and helped in the WRITE FOR RIGHTS campaign, on Bognor seafront to celebrate the 20th anniversary of our plaque, at the Cathedral Green stall, and on Human Rights Day itself to cut the 70th birthday cake.

For those of you who do not receive a copy of the *Bognor Post*, follow this link to read the article on our celebrations commemorating the 70th anniversary of the UDHR and the 20th anniversary of our commemorative plaque in Bognor: https://issuu.com/postnewspapers5/docs/bognor_regis_post_issue_137 (the article is on page 3)

Local events

Amnesty Quiz, Horsham Group Saturday 09/02/2019. 7.30 pm, Trinity Church Hall, Rusham Lane, Horsham. Please contact Gaynor Cooper at tallgaynor@hotmail.com if you want to go.

Formal notification of our Group's AGM on TUESDAY 19/03/2019 in the Friends' Meeting House, Priory Road, Chichester
NOTE CHANGED DATE!! Full details and reports in the next newsletter.

This year our CHICHESTER STREET COLLECTION will be from 9am – 1pm on SATURDAY 06/04/2019. Please contact Jillie Webber on 01243 371463 or tomandjillie@outlook.com to offer HELP! More details in next newsletter.

Other events

Friday 08/03/2019, 11:00 - 17:00: *My Sisters' House* in Bognor are planning an event to mark International Women's Day at the Phoenix Centre, Westloats Lane in Bognor (by the Arena), which will include 'an array of fabulous speakers and book signing'. Further information <https://en-gb.facebook.com/events/761113800918640/>

Those of us who remember the late URSULA BAILY might like to know she has now got into the history books – her teenage experiences in Nazi Germany are now a key part of Julia Boyd's *Travellers in the Third Reich*. Anyone can borrow Ursula's memoirs (mis-titled *An Ordinary Life*) from me.

Carry on writing!

Bob Dewick, Amnesty

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Amnesty action: campaigns & letter-writing

EGYPT: Campaigns Update from Margaret Robertson

First the good news! Thanks to all of you who have written on behalf of Azza Soliman and other Egyptian victims of human rights abuse. You will be encouraged to know that there are positive signs that our campaigning is having some effect. Just before Christmas we heard that 43 defendants in the notorious **Case 173** 'foreign funding' case have been acquitted and there is evidence to suggest that President al-Sisi is reviewing his draconian measures against NGOs and charities as a result of international pressure. The second item of good news is that we hope **Amal Fathy**, the activist detained because of her protests against sexual harassment, who featured in a previous newsletter, is soon to be released.

Failure to Protect children's Rights in Egypt

However, there is still a great deal of work to be done. Reports about the failure to protect the rights of children are particularly disturbing. A report published by Amnesty on 20 November 2018, highlights a range of problems : 12 children have been forcibly disappeared and tortured; children are not separated from adults while in detention nor tried separately with the result that at least 3 children have been sentenced to death.

1. Case of Aser Mohamed

This case involves a 14 year old, who was arrested and forcibly disappeared for 34 days, during which time he was tortured. He is accused of belonging to the illegal Muslim Brotherhood and involvement in an attack on a hotel. During his trial the prosecutor's response to Aser's denial of the charges was : *it seems you want to go back to the electric shocks again*. Aser's treatment is in direct contravention of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and Egyptian law yet he is still in detention and due back in court on 19 January.

What you can do:

Please write on his behalf to Ministry of Interior and The President as a matter of urgency using the template below :

Your Excellency

Re : Case of Aser Mohamed

I urge you to release Aser Mohamed immediately. On 12 January 2016 NSA officers detained Aser, who was 14 years old at the time, for 34 days. He was tortured into 'confessing' the crimes with which he is charged. Aser is facing trial as a result of these confessions extracted under torture and faces 15 years in prison.

As a signatory party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Egypt has an obligation to ensure all of its children are free from torture. This right is also enshrined in the Egyptian constitution under Article 80.

I strongly implore the authorities to drop the charges against Aser and to release him unconditionally.

Yours respectfully

Please send your letters to:

Minister of the Interior

Magdy Abdel Ghaffer, Fifth Settlement, New Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt. (Greeting : Your Excellency)

President

Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, Office of the President, Al Ittihadia Palace, Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt. (Greeting : Your Excellency)

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2. Case of Hoda Abdelmoniem

On 15 January 2019, Hoda Abdelmoniem appeared before the prosecution for investigation, and her pre-trial detention was renewed for 15 days. Hoda told her daughter that she is being detained in an undisclosed location. Hoda's last appearance before the public prosecution was on 21 November 2018, after being forcibly 'disappeared'.

Hoda Abdelmoniem is an experienced lawyer who is active in Egypt's appeal and upper courts, who also worked on a voluntary basis as a consultant for the civil society association Egyptian Coordination for Rights and Freedoms. She's a member of the Egyptian Bar Association and a former member of the official National Council for Human Rights. This of course made her a target of the current "insecurity state" being governed by President Al-Sisi.

What you can do:

Please write to the Public Prosecutor in Egypt, using the template below (which you are welcome to adapt);

Dear Counsellor,

Hoda Abdelmoniem

On 15 January 2019, Hoda Abdelmoniem appeared before the prosecution for investigation, and her pre-trial detention was extended for 15 days. Hoda told her daughter that she does not know where she is being detained. The security forces took her blindfolded to an unknown location after the investigation.

On 21 November 2018, after being forcibly disappeared, she was seen at the Public Prosecution. On 22 November her family was able to meet her and reported that she was wearing the same clothes, was afraid and shaking and could not talk about what happened to her. She was then taken to the state security. Her family met her again on 24 and 28 November, and since 2 December 2018 they were unable to locate her until 14 January when they were informed that she will appear before the prosecution.

Hoda's daughter who saw her on 15 January reported that she was very thin due to the insufficient and poor quality of food.

We therefore urge you to reveal Hoda Abdelmoniem's fate and whereabouts and to release her from arbitrary detention. We also call on you to ensure that Hoda Abdelmoniem has adequate and regular access to qualified health professionals and to prescribed medication, in compliance with international standards and medical ethics, including the principles of confidentiality.

Yours sincerely

Please send your letter to:

Mr. Nabil Sadek, **Public Prosecutor**, Office of the Public Prosecutor, Dar al-Qada al-Ali, Down Town Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt

Action: Yemen Conflict: UK must stop arming Saudi Arabia

The British government are selling billions of pounds worth of weapons to Saudi Arabia, fuelling a dreadful conflict that has left 22 million people struggling to simply survive. Thousands have been killed. Despite this unimaginable human suffering, the British government has shown no sign of halting sales. This must be stopped.

What you can do:

Call on Secretary of State for International Trade Liam Fox to stop the UK supplying deadly weapons to Saudi Arabia, through Amnesty's online petition: <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/actions/uk-must-stop-arming-saudi-arabia>

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