

Newsletter: March 2019

Bognor Regis, Chichester & District Group



Dates for your diary	Sat 09/03/2019 10:30 AmnesTea for International Women's Day, Barnham Tues 19/03/2019 19:30 (Date Change!) Group AGM, Chichester Sat 06/04/2019 09:00 - 13:00 Street Collection, Chichester
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Dear writers

Kath and Margaret write: "It was lovely to meet everyone involved in **Night Cathedral 2019**. This annual event opens the Cathedral to students and staff from the University of Chichester for performance, craft-making and awareness-raising."

Those who have heard about the problems with Amnesty International Secretariat (NOT our UK Amnesty) and want to know more – ask me for details.

Local events

Sat 09/03/2019, 10:30 - 12:30. AmnesTea coffee morning, 67 Downview Road, Barnham, **PO22 0EE**. To mark **International Women's Day 2019**, we are holding a coffee morning in Barnham to rally support for Egyptian lawyer and human rights defender, **Azza Soliman**. To show their solidarity with Azza, guests will be invited to sign cut out paper figures bearing the message : ***I stand hand in hand with Azza*** to form a linked chain of support, and sign solidarity cards. If you can, please share the poster for the event (attached).

- Please let host Maggie (01243 552099), Egypt Campaign co-ordinator Margaret (01243 552113 or mn_robertson@hotmail.com) or Group Chair Kath (01243 552131) know if you are coming along

Tue 19/03/2019, 7:30 pm Agenda for Group AGM Friends Meeting House, Priory Road, Chichester.

Action for Azza and refreshments!!

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of 2018 AGM
3. Matters Arising
4. Reports (included with this newsletter)
5. Election of officers (CHAIR, TREASURER, SECRETARY, MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY, CAMPAIGNS CO-ORDINATOR, and up to THREE others).
6. Looking forward to UK AGM Nottingham
7. Future programme for our Group
8. Any other business

This year our **Chichester Street Collection** will be from 9am – 1 pm on **Saturday 06/04/2019**. Please contact Jilli Webber on 01243 371463 or tomandjilli@outlook.com to offer HELP! If you can just spare 30 minutes, it would be really appreciated, and more would be splendid. We can beat our 2018 sum of £653.85 with just a few more collectors. Every year we aim to have musicians playing and singing during the collection, and they make a real difference. If you know anyone who would like to sing or play, dance or entertain in any way, please contact Jilli now.

Other events

- **FRI 08/03/2019:** 11am-5pm International Women's Day at My Sisters House, Phoenix Centre, Bognor – contact me or see the details in the January 2019 newsletter.
- Refugee Week **17-23/06/2019** – more details later

Carry on writing!

Bob Dewick, Amnesty

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Amnesty action: campaigns & letter-writing

Action: Egypt - Islam Khalil, arbitrarily detained



This is Islam Khalil, who went on hunger strike on 25 January in protest against his arbitrary detention in Egypt. Islam Khalil is one of many Egyptians who have been caught up in the mindless, indiscriminate repression that passes for politics under the rule of President Al-Sisi. In May 2015 he was abducted from his home by security officials, and he disappeared for 122 days, and was tortured into making "confessions". He was charged with belonging to the banned Muslim Brotherhood, inciting violence, and attacking the security forces. He was released in August 2016. Then on 10 March 2018 he went missing again, and his family was only informed of where he was - in Tora prison in Cairo - in early April 2018. He is still in detention, while the authorities "investigate" charges of "membership of an illegal group" and "spreading false news". It is believed that the charges brought against him are in retaliation for his political activism. According to information received by Amnesty International, Islam Khalil is physically and mentally exhausted and requires urgent medical care.

What you can do:

Amnesty is urging the Public Prosecutor to release Islam Khalil immediately, to protect him from further torture pending his release, and to investigate his allegations of torture.

Please write a letter (by 15/03/19), either using the template letter below or in your own words, and send it by post to the Public Prosecutor, copied to the new Egyptian ambassador in London:

- **Mr. Nabil Sadek**, Public Prosecutor Office of the Public Prosecutor, Dar alQadaal-Ali, Down Town Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt Fax: +202 2577 4716
- **His Excellency Tarek Ahmed Ibrahim Adel** Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt, 26 South Street W1K 1DW, 020 7499 3304/2401, Fax 020 7491 1542, eg.emb_london@mfa.gov.eg and etembuk@hotmail.com

Dear Counsellor,

On 25 January 2019, Islam Khalil and four other prisoners started a hunger strike in protest of their arbitrary detention. The date coincides with the eighth anniversary of the 25 January revolution that toppled the Hosni Mubarak's government in Egypt in 2011. Islam Khalil went missing on 10 March 2018. It was not until 2 April 2018 that his family was informed of his whereabouts, after someone reported seeing him at the Tora Investigation prison in Cairo governorate during a visit.

Islam Khalil and three other co-defendants faced the same charges. However, while all the other co-defendants were released in September 2018, Islam remained in arbitrary detention over unfounded charges of "membership of an illegal group" and "spreading false news". The charges, of which Islam Khalil maintains his innocence, are believed to have been brought against him in retaliation for his perceived political activism. On 8 January, the Cairo Criminal Court renewed his detention for another 45 days.

According to information received by Amnesty International, Islam Khalil sleeps on the floor in a small cell that he shares with 14 inmates and suffers from back pain, as well as other health issues. He has been denied access to health care and the medication he urgently needs.

I urge you to ensure the immediate and unconditional release of Islam Khalil, who is being detained arbitrarily and drop all charges against him, and that, pending his release, Islam Khalil is protected from torture and other ill-treatment and that his detention conditions are in line with international standards, including access to water, food, medical treatment and medication. I urge you to ensure that prompt, independent, effective and impartial investigation is conducted into Islam Khalil's allegations of torture and other ill-treatment and the circumstances surrounding his enforced disappearance from 10 March to 1 April 2018, and ensure that all those suspected to be responsible are brought to justice in fair trials.

Yours sincerely,

Further information here: https://www.amnesty.org.uk/files/2019-02/FI17618_2.pdf?xipeVyU4wbt8Np4Nh9UzZvRu3dpv_auz=

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Group AGM: Friends' Meeting House, Chichester

Tuesday 19/03/2019, 19:30 - 21:00

Treasurer's Report

Bognor Regis, Chichester and District Amnesty International Group
Report to AGM 2019 For Year 2018

Income	Expenditure	Total (£)
Subscriptions		566.00
Donations		00.00
Kate Allen Talk		107.00
Jamnesty/MOxtoby		88.50
Street Collection		653.85
GreetingsCardsCathedral		50.07
	Secretary	-84.60
	Membership Sec	00.00
	Rent	-20.00
	Greetings Cards postage	-8.42
	AIUK affiliation fee	00.00
	AIUK Donation	-1600.00
	<i>Brought Forward</i>	957.97
	Balance	710.37

Very many thanks to all who have contributed in any way to the finances of the group in the year 2018. We continue to be able to send a healthy amount to AIHQ, thanks to subscriptions and events. Our main fundraising event this year was the street collection, for which grateful thanks are due, as always to Jill, for her inspiring commitment and attention to detail. Other events, though not primarily for fundraising, such as Kate Allen's talk, and the Greetings Card event, brought in additional funds. We would like to thank the cathedral very much for their help and support. Grateful thanks, too, to Manya, and to the University of Portsmouth Staff for support with Jamnesty. Thanks to the Society of Friends in Chichester, and the School of Music in Bognor, we are able to keep rental costs to a minimum. The next street collection is on 06/04/2019. Please contact Jill if you can help. Once again, your efforts are all greatly appreciated.

Breege Gallagher

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Review of the Year: Campaigns

Action for Individuals: The group continues to focus on human rights abuses in Egypt. We welcomed Margaret Robertson to co-ordinate the group's actions, which concentrated on on-going support for Azza Soliman but also included action on other human rights defenders in Egypt - Hanan Badr el-Din, Amal Fathy - and seeking pardon for the death penalty upheld against 80 year old Sheikh Abdel Rehim Gabreel.

Write for Rights campaign: Our annual event at the Cathedral Green repeated last year's successful deployment of Kath's pop-up Christmas tree, with the additional impact of the group's original Amnesty candles, refurbished and with an additional support stand created by Alan Carn (see photo below). Cards from Amnesty HQ supplemented the lovely cards produced at the Cathedral print-making workshop

Other campaigns: Actions were taken via the newsletter and at public and letter-writing meetings on:

- Northern Ireland and abortion rights
- Family photo album in support of refugee families.
- In support of Noura Hussein Hamad Daoud, sentenced to death in Sudan; and actions for *World Day against the Death Penalty* on 10 October
- In support of women campaigners for the right to drive, arrested in Saudi Arabia
- Solidarity action for community water rights activist Rodrigo Mundaca in Chile; human rights defender Pavitri Manjhi in India; Algerian blogger Merzoug Touati who is a prisoner of conscience, held solely for expressing his peaceful opinions; for youth worker Geraldine Chacon in Venezuela; and for communal land rights activist in South Africa, Nonhle Mbuthuma.

A year in the life of an Amnesty Group: Chair's report, March 2018 - February 2019

2018 marked the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, so this provided a theme for our events through the year:

- Kate Allen's talk *Standing up for human rights* in June (see below)
- Remembering the 70th anniversary at the Amnesty memorial plaque on 5 December
- Write for Rights on the Cathedral Green on 8 December
- A 70th birthday cake on the anniversary of the signing of the UDHR on 10 December.

Working with other groups and organisations to promote human rights:

- We were happy to support the Sanctuary in Chichester Football Project, and to encourage them to work with the Amnesty Football Welcomes project; to support the Bishop Luffa Amnesty Group's jumble sale; and to promote the Bosham concert in aid of Sanctuary in Chichester.
- We were excited to continue to work with Chichester Cathedral. The Cathedral hosted the talk by Amnesty Director Kate Allen, *Standing up for human rights*, as part of the 70th anniversary celebrations, our contribution to Refugee Week and as part of the Chichester Festival. Following the launch of the global campaign *Brave*, in response to the increased attacks and targeting of human rights defenders, activists and civil society organisations, Kate reminded us that we need to stand up for human rights defenders in all parts of the world.
- We also participated in the inaugural Live Better Together event called *Taking action for a better world*, in the Vicar's Hall. This was one of a programme of events around the UN Day of Peace, 21 September; the Amnesty candle also featured in the Peace and Reconciliation display in the Cathedral during this series of events. Attending Night Cathedral 2019 gave us the opportunity to meet staff and students of the University of Chichester in February. Our

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grateful thanks to Cynara Davies, Head of Learning and Engagement at Chichester Cathedral, and Canon Dr Anthony Cane, Chancellor, for their support in these shared events.

Our Pumble (= PUB RaMBLE) followed the Chichester canal towpath to the Blacksmiths, Donnington: our thanks to Peter James for planning such a lovely walk and venue - it's great to meet up with group members outside a meeting!

We had a very successful year financially, as you can see from the Treasurer's report, and our thanks to all who contributed to this.

On more mundane matters, a good deal of time spent making sure that we were compliant with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which came into force in May 2018.

My grateful thanks to the members of the Committee for their hard work, support and friendship over the last year; and to the group members, their friends and families that were able to support our actions and events this year: I hope you enjoyed them as much as I did. Do consider coming along to help the Committee members in 2019, even for just one event: the work we do is serious, but the Committee never takes itself too seriously and we are a friendly bunch!

Kath



< Buskers for Street collection

Write for Rights > Christmas Tree

70th anniversary Cake >>



< Amnesty candle, Peace Trail in the Cathedral

Group members Pumbling by the Chichester Canal >



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