



AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Bromley & Orpington Group

October 2019 Newsletter



COME TO OUR NEXT MEETINGS

Tuesday 8 October **Discussion 'Future of the Group' – All Welcome!**
Tuesday 12 November **Campaign Meeting**
Tuesday 10 December **Human Rights Day – 2019 Greetings Card Campaign**

Our thanks to Judith Niechcial of Petts Wood for sponsoring this month's Newsletter

Chair's Letter

Dear Bromley & Orpington Amnesty Supporter

When our Group was founded in 1962 the world was a very different place, and the creation of Amnesty reflected the world as it was then – dictatorships in Europe (Spain Portugal and Greece being just three) and a world riven by Cold War. Since then, Amnesty has changed considerably to represent new human rights challenges – the violation of women's rights, land rights and increasingly economic and environmental rights such as climate change. The way Amnesty conducts its advocacy has also changed – away from letter writing towards e-petitions and SMS actions online.

The focus for Amnesty UK has therefore been away from grass roots activism in local Groups towards other, more nimble, forms of campaigning – as a result we have seen many local groups gradually close. Over time this has meant that, whilst we remain a successful and solvent Group, it is becoming harder to service a full agenda of actions and activities at our monthly meetings; our numbers attending meetings have also dwindled to a level that may, soon, question our ongoing viability. We have a monthly mailing list of over 100 people, a monthly Newsletter, and we regularly raise £2,500 or more for Amnesty year in year out from our events such as Amnesty Jazz and our BLT theatre evenings. We need to think therefore, whether meeting in our current form every month is the most useful. At the same time, I also want to announce that after almost 25 years as Chair I will be standing down at the March 2020 AGM so we are at a point where a discussion about the future of our Group and its arrangements is necessary and timely.

Accordingly we are inviting everyone with any interest in the Bromley & Orpington Group to come along to the October meeting where we will devote much of the meeting to a discussion about the future of the Group. This is a key moment for us and we hope you can come along, or alternatively send me any thoughts and comments.

Thank you! Neville, Chair

Group Finance

Balance brought forward	£520.10
Income	£94.30
Expenditure	£105.49
Balance at 10 th September	£508.91
CHANGE	- £11.19

Private donations were £94.30; £100 was paid in room hire. Total donation to Amnesty in 2019: £2,072.00.

***** SAVE THE DATE *****

Amnesty Jazz Returns!

With the Nic Beston Quartet

Friday 21st February 2020 at 7.30pm

Croydon Community Against Trafficking

We were delighted to welcome **Saima Raza** from Croydon Community Against Trafficking – the third visit to our Group. CCAT was founded 15 years ago in response to growing awareness that Croydon was a ‘hub’ for trafficking and slavery. As a transit town for migrants, Croydon has among the highest preponderance of sex and labour trafficking in the UK. The organisation, run by volunteers, has at its heart five programmes – Education, Campaigning, Engagement, Advocacy and Intelligence Gathering. The latter seeks positively to identify potential sites of trafficked individuals – nail bars, car washes, brothels, for onward reporting to the police. Since 2017, around 100 dubious locations have been identified and uncovered. Educating students has also been a key focus, reaching 1,000 Croydon young people in 2018, supported by teacher training to take Modern Slavery awareness into schools. Its advocacy work gathers evidence which was given to the Select Committee investigating trafficking. Croydon is our neighbour borough – Modern Slavery may be invisible but it is close to home; over 45 million people are caught up in trafficking worldwide, with an estimated 136,000 in the UK. The most frequent trafficked people are from Albania, Nigeria and Vietnam. CCAT in identifying over 100 brothels within its Croydon borders all of which have the potential for slavery, shows the shocking extent of the problem. More information, or to support CCAT please go to www.theccat.com

Monthly Action: Saudi Arabia

On 15 August two Qatari men, Ali Nasser Ali Jarallah (70) and his son Abdulhadi Ali Nasser Ali Jarallah (17) entered Saudi Arabia on family visas to visit his brother in the Eastern Province. They communicated with their family until 18 August, since when all communication has ceased. Amnesty has received evidence to suggest they have been detained by the Presidency of State Security for reasons unknown. Ali Nasser is diabetic and there are fears for his health. It is thought the two men have been caught up in the deteriorating political situation between Qatar, Saudi Arabia and its other neighbours. The situation remains tense and unclear. We wrote to the Saudi authorities asking for the two men to be released unconditionally and to ensure Ali Nasser receives vital treatment for his severe condition. More information on this case can be found on the AI website at www.amnesty.org.uk

Iran: Human Rights Violations out of Control

International tensions surrounding Iran appear to be affecting a new draconian clampdown on women’s rights, as well as putting individuals at risk. **Sahar Khodayari** was a 29 year old woman who loved football; under Iranian law, women are not allowed to attend domestic football matches, and so Sahar dressed as a man to watch her beloved team. She was arrested and faced the threat of a six month prison sentence. A few weeks ago she doused herself in petrol outside the court house and set herself on fire. Her death has caused an international outrage, and put a further spotlight on Iran’s harsh penal code. A reformist female member of Parliament said “*Iranian men had deprived women of the most basic rights*”. This has been accompanied by a harsh clampdown on journalists with three sentenced just recently to 18 years in prison for their reporting; a woman who objected to wearing the hijab has been sentenced to 24 years. Now there is pressure on FIFA, football’s governing body, to get tough with Iran over the ban on females attending games.

Present on 10th September: Neville White; Vivien Glanz; Gladys Edmonds; Wendy Simmons; Margaret Coppard; Waltraut Gilchrist. **Apologies:** David Howkins; Vivienne Andrews; Peter Martin.

Meetings are held in the Wesley Room, Orpington Methodist Church, Sevenoaks Road, Orpington commencing at 7.30pm. **E-mail** amnestybromley@gmail.com **Website:** www.amnesty.org.uk/bromley

Neville White (Chairman) 01689 896368
Neville.white@waitrose.com

Vivien Glanz (Secretary)
vivienglanz@hotmail.com