



# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL Bromley & Orpington Group Summer 2019 Newsletter



## COME TO OUR NEXT MEETINGS

*No meeting in August*

*Tuesday 10 September*

*Tuesday 8 October*

*Speaker: Croydon Community Against Trafficking*

*Campaign Meeting*

Our thanks to Roy Parker of Bromley for sponsoring this month's Newsletter

## Speaker - Samir Raiza:

Croydon Community Against Trafficking

### “Modern Slavery: Local & Close to Home!”

What is the reality of trafficking and Modern Slavery close to home? We are delighted to welcome back to Bromley Amnesty our friends from CCAT to talk about trafficking – Local – Close to Home.

**Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> September at 7.30pm**

*We are taking our normal summer break with no meeting in August. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> September, and the next Newsletter is due to be published towards the end of September. We wish all our supporters a very enjoyable summer!*

#### **Crisis: Human Rights in Nicaragua**

We were delighted to welcome **Pauline Crosfield**, Amnesty country co-ordinator for Nicaragua to the meeting. Pauline gave us some background and context by saying Nicaragua is a small country of 6m people, bordered by Honduras and Costa Rica, with a very low per capita income of just \$5,800 (compared to the UK of \$43,260). The violent dictatorship of Somoza, overthrown by the Sandinista revolution in the late 1970s led to political intervention by the US. Daniel Ortega is the ‘great survivor’ in the region having come to power in 1981 and being returned in 2016. Since last year there has been a rise in political protest against poverty and Ortega’s authoritarian leadership resulting in arrests, torture, disappearances and killings. Two students were killed during a peaceful university occupation, and in total it is believed around 332 have been killed, and 2,000 injured in mostly peaceful resistance to the regime. Amnesty believes 1,900 are being held without trial. The widespread violence has also caused a refugee crisis with Nicaraguans fleeing to Costa Rica. Amnesty has also documented at least six extra-judicial executions, and multiple cases of torture. Amnesty’ concerns show excessive use of force against protestors and impunity for a range of crimes, such as the attack on unarmed students. Amnesty sets out an official strategy of repression with no respect for freedom of expression. Whilst the situation has eased this year, there have been no investigations into those killed, tortured or held without trial. We signed cards of protest, and were pleased to have more information on a country and region only rarely reported on in the UK.

#### **Group Finance**

There was no income received in June. The proceeds of our successful Bromley Little Theatre evening in June were sent to Amnesty (£1,100), bringing our total contribution for 2019 so far to **£2,072.00**.

<b>Balance brought forward</b>	£1628.86
<b>Income</b>	NIL
<b>Expenditure</b>	£1,108.76
<b>Balance at 9<sup>th</sup> July</b>	<b>£520.10</b>
<b>CHANGE</b>	- £1,108.76

### Monthly Action: Philippines

What would it be like to receive an anonymous text message saying you are on a hit list and will be killed this year? That happened to **Christina Palabay** in June. She and her fellow campaigners in Karapatan have been targeted for their peaceful advocacy of land rights in the Philippines, in which at least 50 farm workers have been murdered in one region alone since President Duterte took office in 2016. Campaigners are regularly smeared as enemies of the State and fronts for the Communist party, and it now appears that threats and direct attacks are increasing – so far with complete impunity for the perpetrators. One such was land rights lawyer, Bernardino Patijas who was killed in April this year as he left an event seeking re-election to a council seat. He was the founder and Secretary-General of North Negros Alliance for Human Rights Advocates. We are fearful for the safety of Christina and her fellow advocates and wrote to the Police General calling for an urgent enquiry into the killings and calling on him to provide Christina with protection. There is an e-mail petition for this action on the Amnesty website at [www.amnesty.org.uk](http://www.amnesty.org.uk)

### The USA: Geography Teacher Faces 10 Years' for Helping Migrants

Geography teacher **Scott Warren** is facing a punitive jail sentence for his humanitarian work as an aid worker. Dr Warren is known to have saved countless lives by leaving food and water out for migrants in the border area between the USA and Mexico. Dr Warren from Arizona is also a member of 'No More Death', an advocacy group that arranges for emergency supplies to be made available for desperate people trying to cross the border. These supplies – food, water, clean-clothes, are a lifeline and have saved countless lives. The US Federal Government is prosecuting Dr Warren for 'harbouring illegal migrants', the only charge they could bring linked to his work with 'No More Death'. The group recently published video footage of border guards destroying the supplies left by the Group thereby directly putting lives at risk. Dr Warren's prosecution is the most aggressive so far in which his first trial resulted in a hung verdict; Federal prosecutors are now proceeding with a second trial. Amnesty is strongly supporting the case – offering humanitarian aid MUST never be a crime and his prosecution is a worrying sign of the Trump administration's determination to impede any help at the border. There is an online petition for Dr Warren at [www.amnesty.org.uk](http://www.amnesty.org.uk)

### The Death Penalty: 40 Years of Progress

It is now over 40 years since Amnesty created the world's first manifesto calling for the global abolition of the death penalty. At the time, with state-sanctioned executions a dominant feature of the judicial system in many countries, the call appeared hopeless. Amnesty's message that every individual can make a difference has seen the most amazing progress in the death penalty's widespread abolition.

*"When the State uses its power to end the life of a human being, it is likely that no other right is inviolate. The State cannot give life, it should not presume to take it away"*

**Amnesty International Declaration of Stockholm, 1977**

Amnesty's case has been based on the fact that it breaches the fundamental right to life; that it does not deter crime, the innocent will die, and it is often used as part of very unequal or unfair trials. In 1977 the **majority** of countries executed, in 2018 the death penalty is illegal in over 110 countries with a further 36 having repealed it for ordinary crimes – a complete turnaround from 1977. In 2018, just 23 countries executed people – a death penalty free world is now realisable and in sight.

**Present on 9<sup>th</sup> July:** Neville White; Vivien Glanz; David Howkins; Ted Burke; Gladys Edmonds; Peter Martin; Patrick & Carolyn Nield; Wendy Simmons. **Apologies:** Vivienne Andrews; Waltraut Gilchrist.

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

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