



AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Bromley & Orpington Group

March 2020 Newsletter



COME TO OUR NEXT MEETINGS

Tuesday 10 March

Tuesday 14 April

Tuesday 12 May

Bromley & Orpington Group 24th AGM

Campaign Meeting

Campaign Meeting

Our thanks to Gladys Edmonds of West Wickham for sponsoring this month's Newsletter

Amnesty International Bromley & Orpington Group 24th Annual General Meeting Tuesday 10th March 2020 at 7.30pm

An AGM Notice is included with this mailing

Nominations (duly seconded) for Chair, Secretary and Treasurer to be received by 3rd March

Monthly Action - Russia

Human Rights in Russia remain hugely under pressure where activists find themselves sentenced to punitive imprisonment for expressing their right to freedom of expression. Emir-Usein Kuku is an ethnic Crimean Tatar and prominent human rights defender. He has faced regular harassment since the Russian occupation and he was arrested in 2016 charged with 'organising activities in a terrorist organisation.' He and five co-defendants have been given lengthy jail terms of between five and 19 years. Amnesty views them to be Prisoners of Conscience. Elsewhere, the sentencing of two young human rights defenders was upheld, confirming a six year term of imprisonment for 'organisation of mass disturbances'. Yan Sidorov and Vladislav Mordasov were prosecuted for organising a peaceful protest in Rostov-on-Don in 2017. Both cases show the danger human rights defenders now routinely face in Russia for organising peaceful protest.

Group Finance

The balance is currently £560.00. A full financial update will be given at the AGM on 10th March following the completion of the annual Independent Examination.

Group Action Roundup

We took action on a number of cases at the February meeting:

- We wrote to the Turkish Minister of the Interior expressing our concern of the risk of enforced deportation of refugees to a known conflict zone in Northern Syria. Turkey views the location to be a 'safe zone' but it has seen considerable military activity including by Turkish forces.
- We then wrote to the Turkish Minister of Justice, calling on him to unconditionally release writer and journalist **Ahmet Altan** who Amnesty views to be a Prisoner of Conscience. Altan has been held in detention for over three years for exercising his right to freedom of expression.
- Members agreed to sign an online Amnesty petition to be sent to the UK Home Secretary calling on the UK Government to support the right of refugees held in Turkey to join their family members living in the UK. The 'Fortress Europe' Policy overseen by the EU is keeping hundreds of thousands of refugees in difficult, inhumane conditions when under the Dublin Regulation they are entitled to be reunited with families settled throughout the EU.
- We noted a new AI Report that highlighted escalating violence and sexual offences in Sweden that have gone without adequate investigation. In 2015 the Swedish Government agreed to tighten the law to protect Roma citizens who do not have Swedish citizenship, but five years on this has not been

done. Also worryingly, Sweden has failed to criminalize the use of torture in Swedish criminal law. Amnesty has urged Sweden to adopt a definition of torture as an addendum to the criminal law based on Article 1 of the Convention against Torture.

Group – Banking Arrangements

Disappointingly, we have been notified by our bankers, Nationwide Building Society, that they will be closing all Treasurer Accounts which are used by charities and small organisations. This is presumably on cost grounds. The Building Society offered an alternative business account with a requirement to keep a minimum balance of £1,000 in the account. This is not acceptable given our generally small holding balances, and so the Group agreed to ask David to open a charity account at National Westminster Bank. The transfer should be finalised in March.

The Future of the Group – Part IV

At the AGM in March we will appoint a new Independent Examiner; David has been successful in recruiting a successor to Karl for appointment. Neville reported that the handover of tasks is going well with an up to date mailing list completed and circulated, and the revised Inventory approved. The Group agreed that elderly Group assets such as the Amnesty banners dating back to the 1980s could be disposed of. Patrick has been made administrator of the Group Facebook page and will take this over in April. He has also kindly agreed to assume responsibility for the Group Website from the same time!

AI Case File: Argentina

There has been no new update on our Argentinian case file, **Jorge Gonzalez Nieva**, however, we wrote to the President of the Supreme Court urging a quick resolution to the interminable delay in the Court ruling on the appeal against his conviction which has been pending since 2015. Overall Jorge has now languished in legal limbo since his conviction in 2007.

Amnesty Social

Our annual Amnesty Social held in Café Medi, Orpington on January 30th attracted a lively crowd who enjoyed a splendid evening of good food, AI conversation and companionship.

Save the Date

Bromley Little Theatre Charity Preview

“Breaking the Code”

By Hugh Whitemore

The story of Alan Turing who broke the Enigma Code

Thursday 2 July 7.45pm - More details soon!

Bromley & Orpington Amnesty International 24th AGM

Although we have been in existence since 1962 and remain one of the oldest continuous Amnesty Groups in the UK we only began holding an AGM in 1996. Our 24th Annual General Meeting will be held on **Tuesday 10th March at 7.30pm** when Group Officers (including a new Chair – only the 3rd in the Group’s 58 year history) will be elected, approval given to the financial statements 2019 and budget 2020, and we will appoint a new Independent Examiner. Please do come along and support your local Amnesty Group!

Present on 11 February: Neville White; Vivien Glanz; David Howkins; Wendy Simmons; Waltraut Gilchrist; Patrick and Carolyn Nield; Ted Burke; Peter Martin; Claire Ellis and Vivienne Andrews.

Apologies: Rindy Bakker; Gladys Edmonds and Margaret Coppard.

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

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