

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY
FEBRUARY TO JUNE 2020

FEBRUARY

Friday 7th 7:30 pm **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** 21 Watergate Road
Newport ☎ 523294

MARCH

Friday 6th 7:30 pm **GENERAL MEETING** 21 Watergate Road
Newport ☎ 523294

Sunday 8th 2:00 pm **WALK & TEA** Bryn & Catherine
108 New Road
Brading ☎ 406125

APRIL

Friday 3rd 7:30 pm **GENERAL MEETING** 21 Watergate Road
Newport ☎ 523294

Sunday 19th 3:00 pm **SPRING SONG & DANCE** Marie Sawle ☎ 291063
St. Catherine's Church 11 Church St, Ventnor PO38 1SW

MAY

Friday 1st 7:30 pm **GENERAL MEETING** 21 Watergate Road
Newport ☎ 523294

Sunday 24th 2:00 pm **GARDEN PARTY** Glenn & Michelle
103a Marlborough Rd
Ryde ☎ 812799

JUNE

All month **PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBITION** Ryde Library
Documenting the lives & experiences of refugees and asylum seekers around the world.

Friday 5th 7:30 pm **GENERAL MEETING** 21 Watergate Road
Newport ☎ 523294

Saturday 20th 10:30 pm **COFFEE MORNING** Prab and Jane
10 Royal Crescent
Sandown ☎ 401064



**ISLE OF WIGHT
AMNESTY NEWS**



JANUARY 2020



YASAMAN ARYANI

On International Women's Day 2019 Yasaman walked through a women only train carriage in Tehran with her hair uncovered and handed out white flowers. She spoke of her hopes for a future when women in Iran would have the freedom to choose what to wear.

On 10th April she was arrested and sentenced to sixteen years in prison, of which she must serve at least ten years.

Our group featured Yasaman in the Write for Rights campaign held at the Brighstone Christmas Tree Festival.

**Our individual efforts may be small, but together
we can influence things and bring about change.**

Why not join the Isle of Wight Group?

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

THE GROUP'S ACTIVITIES

FUND RAISING

In 2019 the group raised over £2,400. The ever-popular social events at members' homes raised £486. Two well received Music & Poetry events raised a further £519. Our Flag Day, on a very wet day in August, raised £270. Many thanks to all of you who helped or supported these events.

CAMPAIGNING.

GOOD NEWS! DR. Scott Warren, whom we featured in our July 2019 newsletter, has been exonerated. He was facing up to 20 years in prison for providing migrants with humanitarian assistance at the Mexico/US border. The court of appeal decreed that humanitarian aid was not a crime

NORTH AFRICA CAMPAIGN

Egyptian teenager Aser Mohamed has been sentenced to ten years in prison after being tortured into "confessing". Amnesty said "This disgraceful verdict, following a grossly unfair trial, demonstrates the Egyptian authorities utter disregard for children's rights". Aser is appealing against this sentence.

It is hoped that Ali Aarrass will be released in April. In order not to jeopardise his chances we have been requested not to send further appeals.

WOMEN'S CAMPAIGN

2020 A new decade but the same inequality and cruelty exists towards women and girls in many countries around the world whose governments choose to ignore their human rights.

October 2019 was an historic moment when abortion was decriminalised in Northern-Ireland. This happened because thousands of Amnesty supporters, like us, signed petitions or emailed their Members of Parliament.

We have protested against the detention and unfair trials of several women in Iran who are being held for opposing the forced veiling laws. They face being severely lashed and long prison sentences. These women are prisoners of conscience, not criminals.

Kurdish civil society activist Zahra Mohammadi, detained in Sanandaj, Iran, is in poor health and we have asked for her release as she is a prisoner of conscience.

Actions have been taken on behalf of individuals and groups of women in detention in Haiti, Iran, Colombia, Russia, Nigeria, Turkey, Poland, and Nicaragua.

Good news: After much protesting from AI groups, Asia Bibi, who had been sentenced to death for blasphemy in 2010, was acquitted of the charges and released. Following the decision, the Pakistan Foreign Office later confirmed that Asia had left Pakistan and arrived safely in Canada to be with her family.

ANTI DEATH PENALTY

During this past year we have dealt with cases involving 37 people in 5 countries. Azerbaijan 1; Iran 15; Saudi Arabia 6; Sri Lanka 13 and USA 2

In April we heard that the President of Sri Lanka was planning to execute prisoners on death row. This was alarming as since 1976 there have been no executions. In July we wrote on behalf of thirteen prisoners who were due to be executed for drug related crimes. Then in August we heard that the Sri Lankan Supreme Court had suspended all execution warrants, whilst it hears petitions to halt them. This meant that the 13 prisoners were no longer in imminent danger of being hanged.

Some good and some bad news from America. The bad news was that in

August the US government under President Trump announced plans to reinstate federal executions for the first time since 2003. Five people were identified as the first to be subjected to the new lethal injection protocol.

The good news included a report from the California Innocence Project which reviewed the history of the death penalty in the USA, including its costs. It was reported that 165 people on death row had been exonerated since 1973. It then noted that in 2011 the State of Illinois abolished the death penalty. In 2016 voters in California passed a measure to expedite executions but in 2019 the governor announced a moratorium on executions. More good news is that the State of New Hampshire voted to abolish the death penalty.

SPRING SONG AND DANCE

St. Catherine's Church

11 Church Street, Ventnor

Sunday 19th. April 3:00 pm

**Free Admission with
Retiring Collection**

Refreshments will be available.

PUBLICITY

More than 330 people signed the Amnesty greetings cards at the Brighstone Christmas Tree Festival. This year we focused on children and young people whose human rights are being abused. This was also the theme of the Amnesty tree which was decorated by Susan Norman.

At the College Freshers' Fair in September, students learned about the work of Amnesty. Ninety-two signatures were collected for a card of support for Ali Aarrass.

Local musicians and poets performed at the picnic beside Amnesty's oak tree in the Ventnor Botanic Garden.

LGBTI

Hate crimes against the LGBT community around the world are still far too common although huge strides forward are being made in many areas. We intend to be part of the IW Pride event this year on Saturday 18th July.

REFUGEES.

The future is uncertain for the Families Together Reunion Bill and for funding to support refugees in this country but we hope things will move in a positive direction. Although a lot of great work is being done around the world, sadly various governments find a negative attitude towards refugees is an easy way to win votes.

CAN YOU HELP?

Amnesty is well supported on the Island but the group would welcome more active members.

The group meets on the first Friday of each month to plan future campaign activities and fund raising events. It is not essential to attend group meetings to take part in any of our campaigns, as they can be effectively undertaken from home. Full details will be sent with each action.

If you would like to receive your copy of the Isle of Wight Amnesty News via e-mail or require information on any event or any aspect of Amnesty's work, please contact one of the Officers listed below or e-mail us at:

stubbsrw@btinternet.com

For further news and latest updates visit our website at:-

www.amnesty.org.uk/isleofwight

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