

Newsletter: May 2020

Bognor Regis, Chichester & District Group



Dates for your diary	TUESDAY 10/12/2020 Human Rights Day
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Dear writers

First of all, I hope you are all well, and if you have had the misfortune to catch Corona, you have made a speedy and complete recovery. To those of you who are alone in lockdown, even more so to those deemed extra vulnerable; don't be shy about contacting all the help agencies that are now springing up in Sussex.

We have been advised by Amnesty HQ that we should NOT use Zoom for any Amnesty work; it is beholden to the Chinese government.

Local events

- TUESDAY 10/12/20 Human Rights Day
- We shall, of course, let you know as soon as the government and Amnesty HQ allow us to organise events later this year. If anyone wants three bags of carefully dried bay leaves prepared for the cancelled Plant and Book Sale, contact me on 823016.

Other events

Since the last email, Amnesty has launched an [online action](#), calling on the government to protect the rights of individuals who we believe to be at particular risk as a result of the Covid-19 crisis - women who are victims of domestic abuse, refugees and migrants, and essential workers. Some of us may fall into one or more of those categories ourselves, others will have family members, friends and neighbours who do. Please take this action and share it as widely as you can in your communities.

Internationally, Amnesty has warned that the Qatari authorities appear to have used the pandemic as a smokescreen for further abuses against migrant workers and we have called on the Turkish authorities to release those convicted in unfair trials under the country's overly broad anti-terrorism laws, who also now face the prospect of infection from coronavirus. In Iran, we have called for an independent investigation into the torture and deaths in custody of prisoners who protested after the authorities reneged on promises to release some inmates to prevent the spread of Covid-19. Have a look at the website for more on how we're responding to the crisis <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/coronavirus>

Amnesty has prepared online human rights education, which adults might profit from too. Contact me on (01243) 823016. There is a podcast on the Windrush scandal two years on – contact me.

Meanwhile stay safe and CARRY ON WRITING (and e-mailing etc..)

Bob Dewick, Amnesty

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Amnesty action: campaigns & letter-writing

Action: Egypt update

Our Campaign Co-ordinator, Margaret Robertson, writes:

“Thanks to all of you who are continuing to use your time during lockdown to write on behalf of victims of human rights abuses, especially our Egyptian prisoners.

In view of the alarming spread of Covid 19 in Egyptian jails, Amnesty is calling for the immediate release of nonviolent offenders and prisoners of conscience. This month we have received requests for action on behalf of three prisoners with severe health problems, namely **Ibrahim Ezz El-Din**, a housing rights researcher who has already made two suicide attempts; **Alaa Abdel Fattah**, an activist who is on hunger strike in protest against conditions in jail and human rights lawyer, **Mohamed el-Baqer**, who already suffers from asthma, chest and back pain and kidney problems. They are all extremely vulnerable and need urgent help.

Azza Soliman's court hearing about her appeal against her travel ban has been postponed from 23 April to an, as yet, unspecified date. There will be further actions later. Meanwhile, we have sent her a birthday card and good wishes from the group so that she knows she is not forgotten at this difficult time.

My thanks to all of you who support these appeals. I hope you are all staying safe and well.”

What you can do: letter template

Please use the model template (or amend) as a guide and send appeals asap to :

- Public Prosecutor Hamada al-Sawi (Dear Counsellor) m.office@ppo.gov.eg
- President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi (Dear President) p.spokesman@op.gov.eg
- Minister of Interior Mahmoud Tawfiq (Dear Minister) center@iscmi.gov.eg
- Copies to HE Mr Tarek Ahmed Ibrahim Adel (Your Excellency) egtamboff@gmail.com

To : Public Prosecutor Hamafa al-Sawi

Cc : HE Mr Tarek Ahmed Ibrahim Adel for information

Dear Counsellor

In view of the alarming spread of Covid 19 in Egyptian jails, I am extremely concerned about the health of prisoners, particularly those with underlying health problems.

I am especially disturbed to learn of the plight of Ibrahim Ezz El-Din, a human rights researcher with ECRF, who is suffering from severe depression as a result of the torture which he has suffered and the insanitary conditions in which he is held. I understand that he has twice attempted to commit suicide.

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I am also distressed to hear of the condition of Alaa Abdel Fattah, a human rights activist, and Mohamed al-Baqer, a human rights lawyer, both held at Tora Maximum Security Prison 2. Alaa Abdel Fattah is apparently on hunger strike in protest against the conditions in which he is being held. Mohamed al-Baqer already suffers from asthma, back and chest pain and kidney problems. They are, therefore, particularly vulnerable to the Covid 19 virus.

May I respectfully appeal to you to order the immediate and unconditional release of these named men and all other non violent prisoners of conscience, detained solely because of their peaceful exercise of the right to freedom of expression and assembly.

I also call upon you to do all in your power to ensure that all prisoners are guaranteed adequate healthcare and preventative measures are taken to control the spread of the Covid 19 virus.

Yours sincerely

If you are short of time and would prefer to take this action online:

www.amnesty.org/en/get-involved/take-action/release-egyptian-prisoners-now-to-protect-them-from-covid19/

Action for individuals: India - crackdown on dissent continues during Covid-19

Activists Gautam Navlakha and Anand Teltumbde were arrested by the National Investigative Agency (NIA) on 14 April 2020 and charged under various provisions of the Indian Penal Code along with the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) for their involvement in the 2018 Bhima Koregaon riots.

These arrests appear to be politically motivated and relate to the massive crackdown on human rights defenders in 2018, when nine other prominent activists were arrested in the same case.

You can take action online here: <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/urgent-actions/crackdown-dissent-continues-during-covid-19>

The website gives you an option to email the action or print the action letter.

Want to do more?

If you have the opportunity, there are a number of Urgent Actions you can take in support of individual human rights defenders, here: <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/urgent-actions>

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