

Newsletter: September 2020

Bognor Regis, Chichester & District Group



Dates for your diary	SATURDAY 03/10/2020: Pumble, Arundel (weather permitting) TUESDAY 10/12/2020: Human Rights Day
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Dear Amnesty members

I'm afraid the recent tightening of anti-Corona rules will postpone any large indoor meetings for a while. There's still plenty to do as individuals and families – see overleaf.

Local events

Saturday 03/10/2020. We are restricted to a maximum of six for our PUMBLE, organised by Peter James, so please ring him on (01243) 533745; first come, first served. We aim to meet at Arundel station at 10:30 on SATURDAY 3/10, weather and Boris permitting. The 0956 from Bognor gets there at 1013 (Southern permitting); the connection from Chichester leaves 0939, change at Barnham. We hope to go to Burpham by way of the "Black Rabbit" and lunch at the "George" (booking preferred). Stout footwear and tough trousers will be needed.

Other events

UK Amnesty will have a virtual AGM on 10/10/2020. Only six resolutions are on the table. The Board members are having a questions-and-answer session beforehand (14/09-27/09). National members can use their proxy vote. Please contact me for more details after 14/9 (my number; [01243] 823016 or bobandmarg@bdewickderby48.com).

Carry on writing!

Bob Dewick, Amnesty

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Amnesty action: campaigns & letter-writing

Egypt Update from Margaret, our Campaign Co-ordinator

Campaigning in the context of Covid 19

Ironically, just as the Covid 19 pandemic increases the need for action in support of human rights defenders, we are becoming ever more restricted in terms of the actions we can take on their behalf. This is particularly worrying in the case of Egypt where there has been a severe crackdown on protest and dissent. It is more important than ever for us to do what we can to campaign on behalf of prisoners using online and social media channels so I am appealing to those of you who are happy to use social media and email actions to do what you can from the safety of your own homes. I will try to ensure that actions are online as far as possible and hope to organise some joint virtual letter writing sessions with our friends and colleagues in the Horsham group this autumn.

Ibrahim Ezz El-Din

We are particularly concerned about the case of **Ibrahim Ezz El-Din**, the housing rights campaigner, who was forcibly disappeared and tortured while in detention. He is suffering from depression and has made two suicide bids already this year.

He is currently denied medication for his allergies and is particularly vulnerable to Covid 19.



What you can do:

We are currently creating a customised template message which can be used to email the Egyptian authorities appealing for his release and advice on using social media to call for his release. Details will be included in the next newsletter. For further information please contact me at mn_robertson@hotmail.com

Case 173

As reported in the Summer newsletter, Azza Soliman's appeal against her travel ban and asset freeze was rejected in July and it has been decided, with her consent, that we should continue to campaign on her behalf as part of the general **Case 173 or foreign funding** case against 12 NGOs in Egypt charged with receiving foreign funding 'for criminal purposes.' A card was sent directly to Azza expressing our disappointment at the news and sending her good wishes. We shall continue to support Azza by campaigning on **Case 173**.

What you can do:

Look out for further information in future newsletters about creative ways to use images of the number 173 in campaign messages for email and social media appeals.

Hoda Abdelmoniem



Some of you may remember writing on behalf of Hoda Abdelmoniem, a human rights lawyer, in January 2019, after she was forcibly disappeared. We are very concerned about her health as she has suffered a heart attack. In common with other Egyptian prisoners, she is currently denied visits from family or lawyers and is also forbidden to send or receive letters.

What you can do

Please email Public Prosecutor Hamada al-Sawi email m.office@ppo.gov.eg, copy to His Excellency Tarek Ahmed Ibrahim Adel egtamboff@gmail.com, using the template message below.

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To: Public Prosecutor Hamada al-Sawi, m.office@ppo.gov.eg

Copy: His Excellency Tarek Ahmed Ibrahim Adel, egtamboff@gmail.com

Dear Counsellor

Re: Hoda Abdelmoniem

Hoda Abdelmoniem, a human rights lawyer, who was arbitrarily detained in November 2018, is currently held in the al-Qanater Women's Prison, pending investigation into charges of 'terrorism.' I believe her to be a prisoner of conscience, detained purely because of her human rights work.

I am particularly worried by reports of her poor health, including reports of a heart attack which she suffered on 26 January 2020, high blood pressure and a blood clot in her leg. In addition, I am concerned that, since the Covid 19 outbreak, she has been denied letters from her family and may be also be forbidden visits from her family, although other prisoners have been permitted visits and communication with their families.

I appeal to you to release her immediately and unconditionally and to drop all charges against her. I also call upon you to ensure that she has prompt and adequate health care and access to her medical records and that she is allowed immediate communication with her lawyers and family.

Yours sincerely

Action: Moroccan journalist Omar Radi

On 29 July 2020, Moroccan journalist Omar Radi was charged with "harming national security" and "rape". The Moroccan authorities had been harassing him since the publication in June 2020 of an Amnesty International report revealing they had unlawfully spied on him through his phone. Omar Radi is a vocal critic of the government's human rights record and has investigated corruption by the authorities.

What you can do:

Write an appeal in your own words, or use this model letter.

Twitter @Elotmanisaad

Head of Government Saad Dine El-Othmani
Palais Royal, Touarga, Rabat 10070, Morocco

Your Excellency

I am writing to raise concerns that the Moroccan authorities are subjecting Moroccan journalist **Omar Radi** to legal harassment. On 25 June 2020 and six subsequent occasions in July 2020, he was summoned by the Central Bureau for Judicial Investigations and questioned about phone calls and text messages dating back to 2011 and transfers of funds to his bank account. On 29 July, he was charged and detained and is due to stand trial before the First Instance Court of Casablanca on 22 September 2020. On 22 June Amnesty International had published a report revealing that he had been targeted for surveillance through spyware on his phone.

Omar Radi is charged with "harming national security" based on an accusation that he received funds from sources linked to foreign intelligence agencies. Amnesty International understands that funds transferred from abroad were actually for research grants in the

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context of a journalism fellowship and freelance consultancies. Amnesty International therefore has serious concerns that the charge is spurious and indicates an intensification of government harassment.

He is also charged with “rape”, based on an accusation by a woman who alleges he assaulted her on 12 July. He denies this, affirming that he had a “consensual sexual relationship” with her. Sexual assault is a serious offence and accusations of such conduct, if genuine, warrant investigation and prosecution before a fair trial. While such accusations must each be considered on their merits and Amnesty International is not well placed to assess their veracity, I note with concern that the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention found in another case that the publisher of an opposition newspaper was accused of rape and arbitrarily detained in what amounted to “judicial harassment attributable to nothing other than his investigative journalism”.

*I urge the Moroccan authorities to drop the “national security” charge against **Omar Radi**. I ask them to impartially and thoroughly investigate the complaint on which the “rape” charge is based, while guaranteeing his due process rights. In accordance with the right to presumption of innocence, I call on them to release Omar Radi pending trial unless they can demonstrate to a court that it is necessary and proportionate to deprive him of his liberty.*

Yours sincerely

Want to do more?

There are many Urgent Actions to be taken online (or, if you are able, post), such as:

Opposition activists rearrested

Opposition activists Joana Mamombe, Netsai Marova and Cecilia Chimbiri, together with their lawyer, were rearrested by the police on 31 July whilst on their way to Harare Central Police Station where they were scheduled to report as part of bail conditions. Joana Mamombe and Netsai Marova were later released without charge. Cecilia Chimbiri was only released after being charged with insulting a police officer after a soldier falsely accused her of insulting him and assaulted her with a whip.

<https://www.amnesty.org.uk/urgent-actions/opposition-activists-rearrested-one-charged>

Nigerian singer at risk of imminent execution

Yahaya Sharif-Aminu, a 22-year old singer detained in Kano prison, Kano State, in northern Nigeria, is at risk of imminent execution after an Upper Shari’a Court sentenced him to death by hanging, for circulating a song via WhatsApp, considered blasphemous.

<https://www.amnesty.org.uk/urgent-actions/nigerian-singer-risk-imminent-execution>

All current Urgent Actions can be found on the [Amnesty website](https://www.amnesty.org.uk)

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