



News from the Minehead Group

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Actions you can take this month:

- ✓ **Send a letter** on behalf of **Josina Ziyaya Machel**, a Woman Human Rights Defender and founder of the Kuhluka Movement, a non-profit making initiative working to end gender-based violence in Mozambique. A draft letter is sent with this newsletter. Don't forget to add your name, address and date!
- ✓ **Write a letter** in support of the Bhima Koregaon11 (**BK11**). See the letter template sent out with this newsletter. Please don't mention Amnesty in your letter. [See our previous newsletters for more information on the BK11.]
- ✓ **Don't forget to Vote** on the resolutions being put to this year's **AIUK AGM**. All members have been sent details of this in the post. Voting (whether by post or on-line) closes at 0900 on 8 October.
- ✓ **Join our next group meeting** on Zoom on Thursday 8 October. Email Alison Dietz (see address overleaf) if you'd like to join us.
- ✓ **Come up with ideas** of how we can widen participation in the **2020 Write for Rights** campaign. Please send or phone your ideas to Alison or Susan.

Round up of August/September news



Sadly, the heavy rain on the afternoon of our planned August **picnic**, meant most people stayed away. However, Judith and Susan had a good chat and catch-up sitting under the trees in Blenheim Gardens! Our **get-together** on 9 October was more successful and it was great

to see eight members in person at the Beach Hotel, spaced out around a large table. Unfortunately, the new 'Rule of Six' makes it more likely that we will have to revert to online meetings for the next month at least. We discussed current and future campaigns; Cherry updated us on developments in South Asia; and Jenny shared her lovely photos from the holidays for Syrian refugees. (See their reports overleaf.) The group included Hannah Norman (pictured) and we are delighted to learn that she has secured a place at the University of South Wales to do Counselling and Therapeutic Practice, starting on 21 September. However, the course is online until at least January, so hopefully we might still see Hannah now and again!



Cherry is getting stuck into her new role as regional 'Activism Representative' and has started a **regional newsletter** to enable groups to share news of their activities. A copy is being circulated with the emailed version of this newsletter.

Letter writing – many thanks to those who responded to the cases in the Real Lives leaflet emailed with our last group newsletter. At least letter writing is something we can all still do! ☺

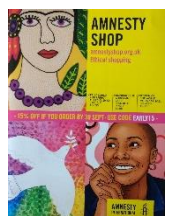
News from AIUK

AIUK AGM: all members will have received information about this and how we can participate. Key dates are listed above.

Webinars: the AIUK Human Rights Education Team is hosting a series of on-line events. The next one is on 29 September from 1800-1900 and is a panel discussion on police brutality in the USA. It is free to join but you must register in advance. Go to

<https://www.amnesty.org.uk/press-releases/usa-police-brutality-online-panel-discussion>

Amnesty Shop & Christmas card order: members will have received a leaflet that includes this year's Christmas cards. If you'd like to order via the group (you'll save on postage) please let Cherry know by 26 October. A wide range of gifts and products is available on-line.



Diary Dates

The Minehead Group aims to meet at least once a month. All Amnesty supporters are welcome to join us!

AIUK AGM:

Sat 19 September

Video conference to discuss resolutions.

Thursday 8 October

Voting closes.

Tues 29 September

AI webinar

1800-1900 Police brutality in the USA.

Check the AIUK website for details.

Thurs 8 October

Group meeting

1430 via Zoom.

Contact Alison to receive meeting link.

Sat 10 October

World Day against the

Death Penalty

individual actions.

1 November

Start of the 2020 Write for Rights Campaign.

Plans & actions tba.



Campaign News

I WELCOME REFUGEES: *Jenny Gateau* says: Good news! Thanks to your real generosity, we have just had a hectic and marvellous few weeks with five Syrian/Kurdish families from Taunton/Wellington staying in the splendid Baptist Holiday Apartments, right beside the sea. This meant that five families – 27 people including three babies - have had the time of their lives playing on the beach, in the sea and in the park. Three of these families have never had a family holiday before. I quote from the beautiful card that Asmaa (9) made us: "Thank you :-) Jenny and your friends and thanks for the invitation. I hope we can come again." I can honestly say they have all benefitted immeasurably in wellbeing, confidence, English, self-sufficiency and sheer joy. They loved their accommodation. Mamood cried when it was time to go, and of course they all want to come again. Some of the other families have heard about it..... Thanks to Amnesty members who helped raise money towards the cost of these holidays through our mini AmnesTeas in June.



INDIA: *Cherry writes* – Amnesty India is calling for investigation by independent civilian authorities into alleged extrajudicial executions of three labourers by troops on 18 July 2020 in the Shopian district of **Jammu & Kashmir**. The Indian army say three 'terrorists' were killed, but families in the area have reported three labourers missing. The Defence spokesperson says the army had noted social media inputs and were 'investigating the matter.' Amnesty India has repeatedly called for repeal of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act as it grants members of the security forces virtual impunity from prosecution for alleged human rights violations.

NEPAL: AI is planning to scale up campaigning on migrant labour rights as we come closer to the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar. AI wants to bring positive change for the more than 2 million migrant workers in the Gulf, such as addressing non-payment of salaries and impounding of passports. Read more: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2020/06/qatar-migrant-workers-unpaid-for-months-fifa-world-cup-stadium/>

In a study by VSO in four rural districts where they have a project helping girls to attend school, 89% of girls reported increased pressure to do housework or agricultural labour instead of school work. There has also been an increase in early marriage. In the districts where VSO works, families rely on migrant labour as a major source of income. Since many workers have lost their jobs, rural households are struggling to stay afloat and the pressure on young girls to marry increases. It is known that marriage at a young age can have devastating and lifelong consequences. Beyond the immediate loss of their education, it puts girls at increased risk of a life of abuse, ill health and poverty.

DEATH PENALTY: There has been some good news regarding **Magai Matiop Ngong**, a young boy in South Sudan who was facing a death sentence for a crime he committed when he was just 15. Under South Sudan and international law a child cannot be sentenced to death. Magai's death sentence has now been dropped and his case will be sent back to the High Court to rule on an appropriate sentence.

World Day against the Death Penalty is on Saturday 10 October. We had hoped to stage a vigil in Minehead but have decided that this would be impractical owing to the current Covid restrictions. Instead we invite you to look for Urgent Actions on the AIUK website and take action on a death penalty case.

BOOK RECOMMENDATION

The Wind in my hair – my fight for freedom in modern Iran by Masih Alinejad.

An extraordinary personal story of grit, determination and courage, but also very informative about the politics and systems in Iran – a country that encompasses a strange mixture of modernity and archaic traditions. The book focuses particularly on the injustices meted out to women, built around the enforced wearing of the hijab and what that really means at a very personal level. [*Cherry Bird*]

How to contact the Minehead Amnesty International Local Group:

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Facebook: www.facebook.com/amnestyminehead

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