

Newsletter: October 2020

Bognor Regis, Chichester & District Group



Dates for your diary	Thursday 29/10/2020, 19:30: Online meeting with the Horsham Group: Egypt/Case 173 Tuesday 10/12/2020: Human Rights Day
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Dear Amnesty members,

Corona and the weather has postponed the PUMBLE, perhaps to next spring, but while we all sit out the second way, there is much Amnesty work to do.

Local events

- **Thursday 29/10/2020, 19:30. Joint meeting with Horsham Group** Egypt, Case 173. This meeting will take place online using the wonders of Microsoft Teams - see overleaf. If you wish to take part, please contact Margaret Robertson on (01243) 552113 or mn_robertson@hotmail.com by 24/10/2020 to get full information about how to join, help accessing the online meeting and some tips on what you can do prior to the online meeting.
- So far Amnesty have not sent details of our WRITE FOR RIGHTS campaign for the last two months of the year (focussed, as usual, around Human Rights Day on 10/12). I'm afraid we had to skip our usual publicity table and Christmas Tree of cards for this year, but I hope to bring you full details of what we are doing in the next newsletter.

Other events

- UK Amnesty had a virtual AGM on 10/10/20. Please contact me for more details about the outcome (my number: (01243) 823016 or bobandmarg@bdewickderby48.com).
- Amnesty are currently developing a **new strategic plan for Amnesty UK**, to run from 2022 to 2030, and need your input. This work is all part of the same drive to building a more connected, more impactful movement to ensure we are in the strongest position to tackle the growing threat to human rights at home and abroad. We need you to tell us what the opportunities are to strengthen the Amnesty movement, and what's holding us back currently.
 - To date there has been input from the Activist Sub Committee, staff and others, and Amnesty would like to develop the final version in consultation with as many activists as we possibly can. Please do join one of the feedback sessions, which will take place on Microsoft Teams. These are the dates, please click on the date to register:
 - [Tuesday 27 October 5pm-6.30pm](#)
 - [Tuesday 3 November 5pm-6.30pm](#)
 - [Wednesday 4 November 5pm-6.30pm](#)
- **Amnesty International India** was forced to close its offices on 29 September. With its bank accounts frozen by the Indian Government, sadly staff have had to be let go. This shocking and shameful act by the Indian Government, has stopped the crucial human rights work that Amnesty International India was leading. Vital research on the human rights violations in Jammu and Kashmir, as well as a report looking at the conduct of the Delhi police following riots in February, which claimed the lives of at least 53 people, have been affected. We will update you as this situation develops, and how we hope to continue to support the struggle for human rights in India.

Carry on writing!

Bob Dewick, Amnesty

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Amnesty action: campaigns & letter-writing

Egypt Urgent Action: update from our Campaign Co-ordinator, Margaret Robertson

As we face the winter months ahead and the prospect of further restrictions, it is becoming increasingly challenging to find original and creative ways to continue our campaigning. However, we are trying hard to find new, fun, imaginative and sociable ways to rise to the challenge. We are also aware of the need to keep ourselves safe in the process so, as far as possible, we are asking you to send shorter, more visually appealing, online messages wherever this is practical and to join with other members, including our colleagues in Horsham group, from the safety of your own homes.

Future action and events: Case 173



As you know, our campaign in support of the Egyptian human rights lawyer, Azza Soliman, has now become part of the general campaign in support of NGO workers and human rights defenders facing charges and restrictions under the **Case 173**. Under the repressive NGO Law 2019, Azza and 14 others have faced the imposition of travel bans and asset freezes but their appeal against the ban was rejected in July 2020. We have been asked to express international dismay at the decision, by sending as many creative images of the number 173 as possible to the Egyptian authorities with short messages in support of Azza and other NGO workers.

We are hoping to meet online with our friends in the Horsham Amnesty group at **7.30 p.m. on 29 October** to share ideas and information about the campaign and to launch a joint response. Those of you feeling creative might like to think about simple but effective ways of designing images of the number 173 (raid the cupboards for beads, buttons, Smarties, pebbles...) or you might prefer to use the ready made templates supplied for the occasion. Please join us if you can for what promises to be a lively, sociable evening.

If you are interested, please contact me at mn_robertson@hotmail.com or (01243) 552113 **by 24 October** so that I can send you all the information you need for joining the meeting and taking part. We hope as many people as possible will participate in this new venture.

What you can do this month



We know that the Egyptian authorities are very sensitive to international opinion so it is essential to keep the pressure up in support of human rights defenders and to send copies of all appeals to the Egyptian Embassy in the U.K.

Please try to support our urgent action on behalf of Ibrahim Ezz El-Din, the housing activist who has already made two suicide attempts following his enforced disappearance and torture.

See below for details of how to respond.

You can either use the Bognor and Chichester photo action on the website

- <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/groups/bognor-regis-chichester-district/photo-action-ibrahim-ezz-el-din>

Or you can use the template message below to appeal using email or social media

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- President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi Email: p.spokesman@op.gov.eg
- Minister of the Interior, Mahmoud Tawfiq Email: center@iscmi.gov.eg
- Ahmed Ihab Gamal-Eldin, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Email: Contact.Us@mfa.gov.eg
- Hamada al-Sawy, Public Prosecutor Email: m.office@ppo.gov.eg
- Copies to : H.E. Tarek Ahmed Ibrahim Adel Email: egtamboff@gmail.com

Twitter: @AlsisiOfficial
Twitter: @moiegy

Message

Ibrahim Ezz El-Din is a housing rights researcher in Cairo who was arrested in June 2019. While in detention, he was tortured to extract a false confession and has been convicted of joining a 'terrorist group.' There is no other evidence against him and Amnesty International believes him to have been detained solely because of his housing rights activism. He is currently in very poor mental and physical health and has twice attempted to take his own life.

I appeal to you to release him immediately and unconditionally.

Name

* Please keep trying if emails are returned. We have been advised that there are problems with delivery at some of the addresses.

- Or if you prefer to write a letter please send your appeal to H.E. Tarek Ahmed Ibrahim Adel, Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt, 26 South Street, London W1K 1DW

It would be very helpful if you could let me know if you respond. Just a very brief note to let me know you've taken action provides very useful feedback. Thank you very much for all you do. Sometimes the issues can seem overwhelming but, together, our efforts can make changes.

Action: Iran: Free Nasrin Sotoudeh



Sentenced to 38 years and 148 lashes for her work defending women's rights, Nasrin is a human rights lawyer who had dedicated her life to this cause. She protested against Iran's discriminatory and degrading forced veiling laws. This is the harshest sentence Amnesty has seen in Iran against a human rights defender in recent years.

Her health is at serious risk following her hospitalisation when her health deteriorated following her hunger strike. The hunger strike was in protest at the Iranian authorities abuses in the criminal justice system, including their refusal to release eligible prisoners held on politically motivated charges. If you would like to read more

about Nasrin, please find some additional information here:

<https://www.amnesty.org.uk/urgent-actions/jailed-lawyers-health-serious-risk>

What you can do:

Please ask the Iranian authorities to release Nasrin immediately and unconditionally, via the online petition

<https://www.amnesty.org.uk/actions/free-nasrin-sotoudeh>

If you would prefer to write on her behalf, here is a template letter you can use.

Head of Judiciary Ebrahim Raisi

*C/o Permanent Mission of Iran to the UN Chemin du Petit-Saconnex 28
1209 Geneva, Switzerland*

Dear Mr Ebrahim Raisi

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On 10 August 2020, unjustly jailed human rights lawyer Nasrin Sotoudeh, aged 57, began a hunger strike in protest at the Iranian authorities ongoing abuses in the criminal justice system. On 19 September 2020, Nasrin Sotoudeh, whose health deteriorated on hunger strike, was transferred to a hospital outside of prison. Reza Khandan, Nasrin Sotoudeh's husband, said on Twitter at the time that she was in "dire health" and was suffering from an irregular heartbeat, low blood pressure, and shortness of breath making her unable to complete sentences. After she was transferred to Tehran's Evin prison on 23 September, she communicated in a phone call that she needed a medical procedure on her heart according to doctors who treated her in the hospital outside prison. Despite this, she is now held in the women's ward quarantine section of Evin prison while on hunger strike, without the round-the-clock presence of health professionals monitoring her condition. Her transfer from hospital to the quarantine section of the prison raises serious concerns that she is not receiving the specialized medical care she requires, which is unavailable in prison. During her hospitalization, security forces barred her family from communicating with her and her family was not able to access her treating physicians or test results. The lack of information surrounding her diagnosis only adds to her family's anguish about her health and wellbeing.

Nasrin Sotoudeh was sentenced to a total of 38 years and six months in prison and 148 lashes following two grossly unfair trials in 2016 and 2018 for her peaceful human rights work, including opposing Iran's abusive, degrading and discriminatory forced veiling laws and the death penalty. In late March 2020, a prison official verbally told Nasrin Sotoudeh that she had been granted a pardon for the 2016 sentence, but she has not been formally notified in writing. If this pardon applies, under Iran's sentencing guidelines, she must serve 12 years. She and her family have been subjected to repeated reprisals and harassment, including most recently the arrest of Mehraveh Khandan, her daughter, on 17 August 2020 and the blocking of her bank accounts.

I urge you to release Nasrin Sotoudeh immediately and unconditionally as she is a prisoner of conscience, jailed solely for her peaceful human rights work. Pending her release, ensure that she is provided with the specialized health care she needs outside prison, in compliance with medical ethics, including the principles of confidentiality, autonomy and informed consent, and that she has family visits. I also urge you to ensure an end to state harassment and intimidation of her family.

Yours sincerely

Want to do more?

Please take a look at the current Urgent Actions <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/urgent-actions>. Cases can be sent **by email** or **by post**:

- Nasrin's case is included: <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/urgent-actions/jailed-lawyers-health-serious-risk>
- Detained Algerian political activist Abdallah Benaoum. His life is at risk as he is in urgent need of heart surgery. Benaoum has been detained since 9 December 2019 for Facebook posts in which he criticised the contested 2019 Algerian elections and the repression of the Hirak pro-reform movement. He is currently detained in Oran prison. Due to his vulnerable health, he has not been physically capable of meeting his lawyers or family.
<https://www.amnesty.org.uk/urgent-actions/detained-activist-critical-condition>
- Detained opposition leader Maryia Kalesnikava, who was abducted by the Belarusian authorities on 7 September and charged with "undermining national security" after she resisted expulsion from Belarus. She is a prisoner of conscience and must be released immediately and unconditionally.
<https://www.amnesty.org.uk/urgent-actions/free-opposition-leader-maryia-kalesnikava>

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