



MANCHESTER AMNESTY GROUP NEWSLETTER

October 2020

<http://manchester.amnesty.org.uk/>

Facebook page: Manchester Amnesty International

Facebook group: Manchester Amnesty

Twitter: @amnestymanc

Campaigning

Refugee Rights

Take action so that child refugees can sponsor their family and be reunited.

Currently, adult refugees are able to sponsor their close family to join them in the UK - but child refugees are not.



'My family are in a refugee camp in Ethiopia. I'm imploring the UK government to change the rules so that young refugees can be together with their families' Merhawi Hagos, 18

Tell Boris Johnson to change the rules so child refugees can be reunited with their loved ones - sign the petition!

<https://www.amnesty.org.uk/actions/families-together>

News

As we draw into Autumn, with the cold nights and bad weather that comes with it, we see further heartless actions being considered by the government that directly impact migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers.

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/sep/30/revealed-no-10-explores-sending-asylum-seekers-to-moldova-morocco-and-papua-new-guinea>

Please consider supporting the organisations that work with refugees and asylum seekers in the Greater Manchester area.

Campaign for the release of Dr Mohamed al-Roken and Ahmed Mansoor, imprisoned in the UAE.

We continue to be concerned about the wellbeing of Dr Mohamed al-Roken and Ahmed Mansoor because of ongoing reports of cases of Covid19 in three UAE prisons. Human Rights Watch (HRW) have received reports from relatives that prisoners continue to be held in overcrowded and unsanitary conditions and are denied adequate medical care. They have not been issued with increased supplies of soap or hand sanitiser nor given masks and gloves. HRW has called on the UAE to urgently address the outbreak of Covid 19.

In April the UAE released 4,000 detainees, but this amnesty didn't include any of the many political detainees help for peaceful dissent.

News of actions

1. Twitter Storms

Thank you to everyone who joined in the successful Twitter Storms on 20th Sept for Ahmed and on 26th Sept for Mohamed. it was great to see so many people from different groups take part.

We will hold another joint storm on **Tuesday 20th October.**

PLEASE JOIN IN.

2. Motion to the City Council in support of Ahmed and Mohamed

We are waiting for feedback from AIUK on the wording of the motion that our two supportive councillors will put to the city council.

3. Football Welcomes and cooperation with the National Football Museum

We are meeting with someone from the National Football Museum next week to discuss possible collaboration with Amnesty.

4. Letter writing rota.

We write every week to the UAE government. Please let Kathryn know (kathrynbuss@gmail.com) if you want to be included in the rota. Each person comes to the top of the list roughly every three months.

Write for Rights

In the run up to the festive season, Amnesty launch an international campaign of messages of support and appeals to the authorities to a handful of key cases from around the globe. We have received the order form for booklets.



Usually, we hold greetings card signing stalls etc and take part in the marvellous event organised by Whalley Range Peace and Justice group. We suspect none of this will be appropriate this year. We are thinking that, as well as getting our own members to write, we should try and reach out to other community groups and encourage them to take part in this campaign. We are thinking of local places of worship, schools, women's groups, neighbourhood groups etc.

We could do with two or three volunteers to get their heads together (virtually of course) and come up with a plan of action. So far, no one has come forward! Contact Anne anne.walker9@ntlworld.com.

Please consider volunteering

Crisis and Tactical

Lebanon

Beirut Explosion: international investigation needed

Instead of supporting those impacted by the Beirut explosion and the severe economic crisis, the Lebanese state is attacking its population.

The explosion of 4 August 2020 killed over 200 people with an estimated 6,000 more injured and 300,000 left homeless.

Full accountability over the explosion has been one of the key calls made by the thousands of protesters who streamed onto the streets four days after the explosion. These protests were met by excessive use of force by the military and security forces, leading to hundreds of injuries.

See the Amnesty Press Release at:

<https://www.amnesty.org.uk/press-releases/lebanon-security-forces-sprayed-protesters-rubber-bullets-and-tear-gas-canisters>

So far Lebanon's President has rejected calls for an international inquiry into the incident.

Last month, Amnesty reiterated its call for an International Investigation: <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/press-releases/lebanon-international-investigation-needed-beirut-explosion-fresh-call>

Also see Human Rights Watch's call for aid to go directly to those affected by the explosion, rather than through the Lebanese government given its inability to secure these rights: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/09/16/lebanon-ensure-aid-goes-directly-those-need>

Crackdown on Freedom of Expression

Since the 17 October 2019 protest movement, Lebanon's security and military agencies have summoned, interrogated and intimidated dozens of individuals in reaction to social media posts criticizing the authorities. None of these agencies are mandated to investigate issues of free speech.

This harassment continued this year despite the country's Covid19 lockdown and is particularly worrying when considered alongside the force used against the post-explosion protests.

Take Action!

Write to Lebanon's Prime Minister to demand the end of the crackdown on journalists

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/get-involved/take-action/lebanon-freedom-of-expression/>

Israel and Palestine

UAE-Bahrain-Israel agreement

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Bahrain have signed agreements to normalise relations with Israel, without a resolution of Israel's decades-old conflict with Palestinians, who have condemned the agreements.

While some have hailed this as a diplomatic achievement, many Palestinians believe it is a broken promise by Arab states who have embraced ties with Israel without the creation of Palestinian statehood.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/9/15/israel-uae-and-bahrain-sign-us-brokered-normalisation-deals>

Group News

October Online Group Meeting

6.30pm Monday 12th October

We have invited Bilal Hussain,

the new Community Organiser at AIUK for Football Welcomes and local groups. It will be a great opportunity to find out more about his role and how we can work together.

We will send out a link over the weekend. Keep an eye out for it

N.B. Our regular group meetings will be at 6.30pm online on the second Monday of the month until further notice.

Virtual Street Collection

Our online collecting tin is still open!

This year we are holding an online collection as our usual street collection in Manchester City Centre has been cancelled. If you haven't got round to putting money into our collecting tin, there is still time!



Visit <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/manchesteramnesty>

Make our virtual collecting tin rattle.

Weekly Actions.

We are keeping going with the Weekly Actions, at least until we can start face to face events again. They will

appear in your inbox Friday morning and we ask you to do them during the following week. We are featuring actions from Amnesty websites and also actions from other organisations close to Amnesty's concerns.

If you have any ideas for future actions, please drop Anne Walker an email with your suggestion – anne.walker9@ntlworld.com.

Please take part and make a difference!

Group Meetings

Our Group meetings will continue online for the next few months. We hope to have meetings on Palestine, Human Rights and Race, and Write for Rights over the next few months. If you have any suggestions for meetings – whether speakers or discussions etc, drop our chair Hazel an email – hazelerrey@gmail.com.

Other News

National AGM

The 2020 Amnesty International UK AGM will be held on 10 October. Sadly, members will not be able to attend in person this year because of Covid-19, government guidance on social distancing and gatherings, and our concern to protect staff and members. But members can still have their say by voting by proxy. You can also submit written questions to the Board and discuss resolutions by video conference ahead of the AGM.

See <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/national-conference-and-agm-2020> for how to get involved. You will need to be a fully paid up member of the UK section (not just on our mailing list) to fully participate in this.

End the Hostile Environment for Migrants in our NHS in Greater Manchester.

There will be a socially distanced demonstration, on **Saturday 10 October, Piccadilly Gardens, Manchester, 11 am – 12 noon** organised by pressure group Greater Manchester Keep Our NHS Public

More details at <https://fb.me/e/2RSjggxM8> or from John Pearson konpmcr@hotmail.com

The Future of the Death Penalty – Online talk

Paul Bridges, the Chair of Amnesty's Anti-Death Penalty Project, will be giving an online talk about this important issue on Wednesday Oct 14th at 7.30pm.

This event is free and anyone is welcome to attend. It is organised by Hammersmith and Fulham Amnesty International Group.

To attend, please email secretaryhammersmithamnesty@outlook.com by the end of Oct 12th to receive the video conferencing link.

N.B. If you wish to subscribe to, or unsubscribe from this newsletter and other general group emails from the Manchester Group of Amnesty International, please email manchestergroup@amnesty.org.uk

Online courses

Do you want to develop your knowledge of human rights, and get the skills and confidence to defend?

Amnesty has a whole range of on-line learning:
<https://www.amnesty.org.uk/online-learning>

