

Newsletter: January 2021

Bognor Regis, Chichester & District Group



Dates for your diary	Wednesday 27/01/2021: Holocaust Memorial Day February (date to be confirmed): online meeting on Egypt campaign
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Dear writers,

The dark before the vaccinated dawn. Few of us, I suspect, were sad to finish 2020 even if Lockdown Tier 4 cut Christmas to one day and worsened the guilt of Broken Resolutions (in normal years, that kicked in on 3rd or 4th January). Please keep on using all the means we now have to reduce isolation safely - watching Jo Wicks (even exercising?) and the school programmes, cooking, and using the Web to contact libraries and loved ones. Use the Web to send Amnesty messages (see below) or if Unwebbed, write to help prisoners and others.

Local events

Normally we must have a Group AGM every year. We had to postpone our Group AGM at the last minute in 2020, and it does not look as though we could have a New Normal AGM this March either.. Do you think the committee should postpone a "double" AGM until (say) September, so that you can come in person, or hold a virtual AGM, which would disenfranchise those whose computers are not up to it? Please ring me on (01243) 823016 and tell me what you think we should do.

Other events

Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe and Anoosheh Ashoori: UK nationals arbitrarily detained in Iran. Amnesty has been working closely with both Nazanin and Anoosheh's families and has made [this powerful short film](#) with them to amplify their story. Nazanin's husband, Richard, and daughter Gabriella, came together with Anoosheh's wife, Sherry, and daughter Elika to speak about how they feel about spending yet another Christmas without their loved ones.

Amnesty is planning to offer the National Conference and AGM as a hybrid of physical and online events in 2021 (provisional dates are 19 - 20 June), so you can enjoy and participate from the comfort of your own home. Additionally, Amnesty continues to offer events being broadcast online, which you can either attend in person or watch as a recording at your leisure.

With Amnesty's new course on the [Right to Protest](#), you can learn why protest is protected by human rights, how the freedom to protest is under threat throughout the world, and how you can defend your right to protest. Amnesty has a wide range of other courses available on the [Amnesty Academy](#), where you can learn more about human rights and how to become a human rights defender.

Coming soon! Amnesty International UK: 2020 round up

- One to watch out for as we round up the strangest year in living memory. This video gives us an insight into the major moments for Human Rights change, good and bad, but focusing on all the incredible work and activism we've achieved together this year. You'll also hear from Amnesty Director Kate Allen. We can share this link as soon as we have this.

Carry on writing!

Bob Dewick, Amnesty

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Amnesty action: campaigns & letter-writing

Action: Egypt - update on Ibrahim Ezz El-Din

Our regional co-ordinator Debora Singer writes :

"We have news of our Individual at Risk, Ibrahim Ezz El-Din. We had our hopes raised and then dashed when his release was ordered on 27th December but on 2nd January he was charged with new baseless offences. This "recycling" is common and also extremely frustrating. It must have been so upsetting for Ibrahim to hope to be released only to land back in prison. ..

On 2 January 2021, Ibrahim Ezz el-Din appeared before the Supreme State Security Prosecution for investigations in a new case (No. 1018/2020) over baseless charges of "belonging to a terrorist group". On 27 December 2020, the Cairo Criminal Court had ordered his release in another case, after 13 months of arbitrary pre-trial detention, and he had been transferred the next day to the Samanoud police station in the governorate of his residence, in preparation for his release."



Please email the Public Prosecutor and the Ambassador in the UK, using the following template.

To: Public Prosecutor Hamada al-Sawi m.office@ppo.gov.eg
Copied to HE Tarek Ahmed Ibrahim Adel egtamboff@gmail.com

Dear Counsellor,

I am writing to you to express my extreme disappointment at the news that **Ibrahim Ezz El-Din**, who had been ordered to be released by the Cairo Criminal Court, now faces new baseless charges.

Ibrahim Ezz el-Din, a human rights researcher, detained arbitrarily since June 2019 appeared before the Supreme State Security Prosecution (SSSP) on 2 January 2021. 4, just five days after the Cairo Criminal Court ordered his release on probation in case No 88/2019. He is now under investigation in a new case (No. 1018/2020) over similar baseless charges of "belonging to a terrorist group".

Proceedings against Ibrahim were unfair as he was not granted the right to effectively challenge the legality of his detention or the right to adequate defence. Ibrahim's lawyers were present, but they were not allowed to examine the case files including a report prepared by the National Security Agency (NSA), a specialized police force, that was used as the only evidence against him. The SSSP ordered his detention in the new case for 15 days. He was subsequently transferred to Liman Tora Prison.

I am seriously concerned about his mental and physical health. Ibrahim suffers from an inflammation in his lumbar vertebrae (lower back), chronic allergies, and a fungal infection of the tongue due to poor conditions of detention. According to medical professionals familiar with his case, the torture he endured while forcibly disappeared for 167 days from 11 June until 26 November 2019, in addition to the denial of adequate medical care by the Tora Investigation Prison authorities, might have triggered his depression. Ibrahim attempted suicide twice in 2020. His mental condition can only be exacerbated by this bitter disappointment.

Amnesty International considers **Ibrahim Ezz el-Din** to be a prisoner of conscience, detained solely for his peaceful human rights work. I urge you to release **Ibrahim Ezz El-Din** immediately and unconditionally given that his detention stems solely from his peaceful human rights work

I call on you to ensure that, pending his release, he has access to adequate health care, including psychiatric services if needed. I also urge you to open an investigation into his enforced disappearance and the torture to which he has been subjected and bring all those responsible to justice in fair trials without recourse to the death penalty.

Yours sincerely

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Want to do more?

A new action '**Keys to Freedom**', in support of Ibrahim Ezz El-Din, is about to be launched at a joint online meeting with Horsham Group planned for **February**. Look out for **further information in the next newsletter**.

In view of the current widespread human rights violations in Egypt, particularly the alarming increase in the use of executions, the European Parliament passed a Resolution on 18 December 2020 calling for:

- Calling for the immediate and unconditional release of Ibrahim Ezz El-Din
- Calling for the dropping of Case 173
- Calling for EU members states to take a lead in monitoring and reporting on humanrights violations in Egypt via the UN Human Rights Council.

Action: Egypt - detained lawyer in critical health condition

On 30 November 2020, the family of 63-year-old human rights lawyer Hoda Abdelmoniem learned that she was hospitalized after suffering from suspected kidney failure and severe pain. Her relatives last saw her during a court hearing on 27 October 2020 but continue to be denied prison visits and access to her medical records, raising their anguish about her health and wellbeing. She has been held for more than two years without trial, exceeding the maximum limit for pre-trial detention permissible under Egyptian law.



What you can do:

Please email before 29 January 2021: please use the following template if you would like.

To : Public Prosecutor Hamada al-Sawi m.office@ppo.gov.eg
Copied to HE Tarek Ahmed Ibrahim Adel egtamboff@gmail.com

Re : **Hoda Abdelmoinem**

Dear Counsellor

I am writing to express my grave concern about the situation of **Hoda Abdelmoinem**, a human rights lawyer, who has been arbitrarily detained since 2018. On 27 October the Cairo Criminal Court renewed her detention for 45 days, exceeding the limit of two years pre-trial detention permissible under Egyptian law. I believe she has been detained purely because of her peaceful defence of human rights.

I am extremely worried about her deteriorating health. She has been denied family visits and her family are desperately worried about her medical condition. She suffers from high blood pressure and has already suffered a heart attack earlier this year. Reports from prison suggest that she has also suffered kidney failure. However, her lawyers have been denied access to her medical records and her family have had virtually no direct contact with her except for two minutes at her court hearing on 27 October 2020.

I believe **Hoda Abdelmoinem** to be a prisoner of conscience detained solely because of her human rights work and I appeal to you on humanitarian grounds to release her immediately and unconditionally. Pending her release, I call upon you to allow her lawyers access to her medical records and to allow her proper medical treatment. I also appeal to you to permit her regular communication with her family and lawyers.

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Yours sincerely

If you want to know more about Hoda's case, this is the link to a page with additional details, on the Amnesty website:
<https://www.amnesty.org.uk/urgent-actions/detained-lawyer-critical-health-condition>

Good News: Karim, Mohamed and Gasser released

Many of you will have been involved in calling for the release of Karim Emarah, Mohamed Bashir and Gasser Abdel Razek, who were arrested and detained in Egypt in November for speaking up on human rights. They all work for the same human rights NGO, Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights.

We are pleased to share the news that, thanks to the international pressure and action from people like you, Karim, Mohamed and Gasser were released from prison on 3rd December. Sadly, the charges against them still stand. Furthermore, the Egyptian authorities have frozen Karim, Mohamed and Gasser's personal assets demonstrating the authorities' intent to eradicate the Egyptian human rights movement and making it difficult for them to continue their human rights work. AIUK will be continuing to take action to persuade the Egyptian authorities to drop the charges against these human rights defenders and allow them to continue their peaceful human rights work free of harassment and threat. Thanks to those of you who took action for this case.



Update: Saudi Arabia - Saudi women activists sentenced



Thank you for taking action in the past for **Loujain Al-Hathloul** and the 12 other women's rights activists who were imprisoned for peacefully campaigning for women's right to drive in Saudi Arabia.

After a deeply unjust trial, Loujain has been sentenced to five years and eight months in prison. Saudi Arabia's Specialised Criminal Court has suspended two years and 10 months of Loujain's term and backdated it to May 2018, when she was initially detained, meaning she only has three months left to serve.

This sentencing, whilst partially suspended, shows the cruelty of the Saudi authorities. Loujain is a human rights defender who has driven momentous change for women in Saudi Arabia. She has already spent more than 900 days in prison, during which she endured torture, sexual harassment and ill-treatment, was held in solitary confinement and denied access to her family.

Amnesty is still calling for Loujain's immediate and unconditional release along with all women's rights activists who are still in detention, including Nassima al-Sada, Samar Badawi, Nouf Abdulaziz and Maya'a al-Zahrani, and ensure that charges are dropped against all 13 activists on trial for promoting women's rights.

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