

# Newsletter: May 2021

## Bognor Regis, Chichester & District Group



Dates for your diary	<b>15/06/2021 - 21/06/2021: Refugee Week</b> <b>Saturday 19/06/2021: National Conference &amp; AGM</b> <b>Saturday 07/07/2021: Human Rights in the UK online event</b>
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Dear writers

Many thanks to Terry Timblich, Howard Morgan and my wife for decorating with forget-me-nots and photographing our Amnesty plaque in Bognor (the Steyne) to celebrate Amnesty's 60th birthday



### Local events

**28 May 2021** ('Forget-me-not Day') marks the 60th anniversary of Amnesty International. To commemorate this, we've created a short history of this Group and some photos to remember events and actions, which accompany this newsletter.

### Other events

**15/06/2021 - 21/06/2021: Refugee Week.** The theme of this year's Refugee Week is "We cannot walk alone":

<https://refugeeweek.org.uk/about/>

- Local event: **Tears of Joy exhibition and workshop.** To mark Refugee Week, Article12Arts, in collaboration with Sanctuary in Chichester, are running a week-long exhibition in Chichester Cathedral <https://festivalofchichester.co.uk/event/tears-of-joy/> Article12Arts is for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and young refugees to express themselves and enjoy being creative.
- A Seat at the Table: Food Festival organised by Freedom from Torture. Join online to celebrate the power of food to bring people together with A Seat at the Table. <https://foodfestival.freedomfromtorture.org/>

### Amnesty organisational changes: sessions 26/05/2021 - 16/06/2021

- Many of you may have, by now, read the accounts of racism within Amnesty, shared in *The Guardian* and on social media. The Boards have recognised that AIUK has not been an effectively anti-racist organisation to date, that this is unacceptable, and that this needs to and will change.
- Eilidh Douglas (Chair, Amnesty International UK Section) would like to discuss our wider plans with you in a series of briefings and discussions, starting next week. These meetings are scheduled to take place over the next 4 Wednesdays between **6pm and 8pm** starting on 26<sup>th</sup> May: Weds 26 May, Weds 2 June, Weds 9 June, Weds 16 June
- If you are a National member and you'd like to attend one of these sessions please send an email to [governance@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:governance@amnesty.org.uk) saying the date of the session you'd like to attend. The staff team will then respond with the meeting arrangements and details of how to attend.

If you no longer wish to receive information about this Group, please reply to this newsletter with a request to **Unsubscribe**.

Please let us know if there have been any changes in your personal information

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**Saturday 19/06/2021:** The AGM (Annual General Meeting).

- If you are a national member, you should have received your AGM notice, containing your personal code number for voting and joining the online AGM (which are sent out by post or by email) in early May.

**Saturday 17/07/2021** "Human Rights in the UK" online by London Amnesty - contact me for details (01243) 823016.

**Humanist Heritage: 2021** marks the 125th anniversary of Humanists UK. The new website [Humanist Heritage](#) is a rich new web resource that uncovers the untold story of humanism in the UK – a story of people, groups, objects, places, movements, publications, and ideas. There is an excellent section on [human rights activism](#).

Carry on writing!

*Bob Dewick, Amnesty*

#### Action: Save our Human Rights Act: Faiths and Beliefs Open Letter

Our human rights are the basic rights and freedoms that we exercise every day - the essential tools that empower us to stand up to people in power, and to create a stronger, fairer, more compassionate UK and wider world. But Human Rights in the UK are at risk, through the form of a 'review' of our Human Rights Act, due to make its recommendations in June.

To protect our rights, as many different people in as many different ways as possible need to speak up together and say: 'the attack on our rights ends now'. As part of this, people of different faiths and beliefs are joining behind a joint letter, addressed to the Prime Minister, highlighting how the Human Rights Act helps protect the inherent dignity in all people.

If you are a person who is part of a faith or belief group, please consider adding your name to the below. If you or your group knows anyone who is an Imam, a Rabbi, a Vicar, a Quaker meeting clerk, a Humanist group convener, a Buddhist teacher or a leader in any other faith or belief group, please forward this to them, but you don't need a religious title to sign. Signatories must reach Tim Gee [tim.gee@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:tim.gee@amnesty.org.uk) by 1 June.

You can [find the letter here](#).

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#### Amnesty action: campaigns & letter-writing

##### Egypt Update from Margaret, our campaign co-ordinator

Sadly, the news this month is very distressing. Following our response to an urgent action appeal to save the Egyptian Christian (Coptic) monk, Wael Tawadros (aka Father Isaiah) from imminent execution, we heard via Debora Singer, Egypt Coordinator, on 9 April that he had been executed the previous day. She comments that "It brings to 17 the total of men put to death in recent weeks, without families being notified.... This appears to be part of a ruthless execution campaign during a period of religious celebrations for Christians and Muslims in Egypt." This case underlines the vital need for us to support all urgent action appeals in Egypt as a priority. Thanks to all of you who responded to this appeal and other cases of human rights violations in Egypt.

##### Action: Algerian journalist Rabah Kareche

On 18 April, the Algerian authorities arrested journalist, Rabah Kareche, shortly after he published an article in Liberté newspaper, covering a protest staged by the Tuareg population of the Tamanrasset area, in southern Algeria, contesting the recent transfer of parts of their province into a newly established province. He is detained in a prison in Tamanrasset awaiting trial and could face up to 23 years in prison if convicted.



##### What you can do:

Please find below an Urgent Action, calling for Rabah Kareche's immediate and unconditional release.

To: [president@el-mouradia.dz](mailto:president@el-mouradia.dz)

Your Excellency,

I am writing to express my grave concern about the recent arrest and detention on 18 April of Algerian journalist, Rabah Kareche, a correspondent of the Liberté newspaper in Tamanrasset in southern Algeria, after he reported a protest by the Touareg population of Tamanrasset against proposals to transfer an area of Tamanrasset rich in natural resources into a newly created province.

I am very disturbed to learn that, simply for carrying out his work as a journalist, he has been accused of "spreading fake news or information which threatens security or public order" and "harming the national security or national unity" under Penal Code articles 196 bis and 79 respectively as well as "creating or supervising an electronic site to publish information likely to cause discrimination and hatred in society" under article 34 of the newly adopted Law on Preventing and Combating Discrimination and Hate Speech. As a result, he could face up to 23 years in jail.

I urge you to drop the baseless charges against Rabah Kareche, and to release him from detention immediately and unconditionally, as he is detained solely for peacefully exercising his human rights and carrying out his job as a journalist. I also call on you to ensure that authorities stop harassing and intimidating journalists in Algeria and that authorities respect, protect, promote and fulfil people's right to freedom of expression and media freedom in line with international human rights standards, including through amending provisions of laws that are used to restrict freedom of expression.

Yours sincerely

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