



Actions you can take this month:

- ✓ **Sign the petition** from AI's International Secretariat urging the Government of **Bangladesh** to ensure the participation of **Rohingya refugees** in the decisions that affect their human rights. NB: When signing the petition, because we are targeting the Bangladesh government and not our own, please remove the words 'you to work with' and replace them with 'the' – i.e. *I urge the Government of Bangladesh to ensure the participation of Rohingya refugees in the decisions that affect them in order to protect their human rights.* <https://www.amnesty.org/en/get-involved/take-action/protect-the-rights-of-the-rohingya-refugees/>
- ✓ **Write some letters** on cases in the summer edition of *Real Lives Matter* at our letter writing session at the Beach Hotel, Minehead on Thursday 15 July at 1430. Two tables of six have been booked for us at the far end of the restaurant.
- ✓ **Send a letter** to the Chinese Government asking them to ensure that Uyghur children are allowed to leave China to be reunited with their parents and siblings already living abroad. [Template attached to emailed newsletters.]
- ✓ **Come along to our Amnesteas** at Alison's home in Roadwater on Saturday 7 August at 1500. Tea, cake, competitions and more! Please let Alison know if you can help in any way (07981 866905).

News from our group



On 29 May, nine of us met for a picnic in Blenheim Gardens to celebrate **AI's 60th birthday**. We enjoyed eating Alison's delicious cake and chatting in the sun. We held meetings via Zoom on 13 May and 10 June. In May, Cherry gave us an update on the situation in Kashmir. And in June we made some plans for the next few months.



We marked **Refugee Week** in various ways. We had a very interesting and stimulating talk via Zoom on AI's work on Syria (see report overleaf). And we held two successful events to raise money for sea-side holidays in Minehead for Syrian refugee families settled in Bridgwater, Taunton and Wellington. *Alison reports:* on Saturday 12 June, I held a '**coffee and flapjack morning**' which raised **£265**. The amount includes £52 raised by a friend with her bric a brac stall, and all our neighbours were very generous. The weather was perfect, a bit hot, so I provided cold home-made lemon squash as well as coffee. This was a really enjoyable event for all ages.



On Tuesday 15 June, another hot and sunny day, Susan held a **tea party** in her garden for 30 people which raised **£470**. Again people were very generous. A local



supporter, Lyn, had made a beautiful welcome banner – see the photo on the right.

Diary Dates

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

Thursday 8 July

Group meeting at 1700
Short planning meeting on Zoom.

Thursday 15 July

Letter writing session
1430 at the Beach Hotel, Minehead.

Saturday 24 July

Roadwater Fete – information stall.

Sat 7 August

AmnesTea at 1500 at 10 Watersmeet Close, Roadwater.

Thurs 9 September

Group meeting (time/venue tbc)
campaigns and planning.

Sat 11 September

Fundraising concert at 1500 with The Hummingbirds. At St Andrew's Church in Minehead.

Sat 9 October

Regional Conference in Exeter.

Update on seaside holidays for Syrian refugee families

A family settled in Wellington stayed in Minehead during half term week and had a lovely time. Four more holidays will take place between 23 July and 19 August. Jenny is still looking for help with meet and greet, accompanying to shops, inviting out for tea, sharing a beach picnic, going paddling etc. If you can help, please ring her on 01643 708 471.

Why not do one more thing for Refugee Week and Test your knowledge with this quiz from the Refugee Council? How much do you know about refugees? Visit their site on https://act.refugeecouncil.org.uk/form/refugee-week-quiz-0?s=share_email&refsid=119263

Campaign News

Syria

Alison writes: On Monday 14 June 10 members drawn from Minehead, Taunton and Weston-super-Mare local groups heard an authoritative and informative talk about Syria given on Zoom by Kristyan Benedict, Campaign Manager in AIUK's Crisis & Tactical team. Kristyan has been monitoring events in Syria since 2003 and has made visits to refugee camps in Syria, Turkey and Lebanon. He said we must go beyond just condemning the Syrian regime and support lawyers and Human Rights Defenders in Syria and Turkey who are able to provide the facts that will lead eventually to criminal prosecutions. In Koblenz, in Germany, the first Syrian official was given a four and a half year prison sentence in February. Witnesses recognised him as a torturer. It is hoped that a second Syrian official will be brought to trial in October. It was very encouraging to hear that AI is campaigning on behalf of the Syrian people who have suffered too much for too long.

India and Nepal

Cherry writes:

BK16 Action

On 12 June Amnesty sections in Switzerland, Germany and Austria organised an action day for the BK16, with speeches, statements from friends of the detainees and a film showing, held at the same time in Zurich, Berlin and Wien. Photos were posted on social media with the hashtag #freeBK16. They contacted me, and several groups around the UK also took part, including Minehead. At our Zoom group meeting we took a screen shot of six of us holding pictures of the BK16 and posted this on our social media sites. It is exciting to be part of a wider movement of people committed to helping the BK16, some of whom have been in prison, without trial, for almost two years. There will be more social media publicity about the 16 prisoners during the summer, followed by petitions to the Indian Embassies/High Commissions in different countries. If you follow our social media sites please share/retweet to spread the word.



Kashmir

Arbitrary arrests and curbs on free speech continue in Kashmir, where generations of children have grown up in the shadow of the gun. Cheek-by-jowl existence with Indian armed forces, still posted in the state to 'maintain peace', is bitterly criticised by human rights activists, but nothing changes. Following the passing of our 2020 Kashmir resolution and based on the interest shown at a Kashmir evening at which I spoke during the recent Central England Amnesty Festival of Social Justice, a small group of us have begun working on a plan for an activist-led campaign, using Kashmir as a pilot. It is hoped this will enable us to be more nimble and responsive in our campaigning, without over-stretching AIUK resources, which we know are limited and have many other priorities.

How to contact the Minehead Amnesty International Local Group:

Website: www.amnesty.org.uk/minehead

Facebook: www.facebook.com/amnestyminehead

Email: amnestyminehead@gmail.com

Instagram: [@amnestyminehead](https://www.instagram.com/amnestyminehead)

Chair & group contact: Alison Dietz: Tel. 01984 641603 or 07981 866905 Email: aledietz7474@gmail.com

Treasurer: Cherry Bird Tel. 01984 641052 Email: cherryebird@gmail.com

Meeting notes, newsletter, website & press: Susan Mew 01643 821209 Email: brightmanmew@btinternet.com