



MANCHESTER AMNESTY GROUP NEWSLETTER

1st November 2021

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

Facebook page: Manchester Amnesty International

Facebook group: Manchester Amnesty

Twitter: @amnestymanc

November Online Group Meeting

6.30 pm Monday 8th November

Focus on Syria

+ Catch up on our Campaigning Activities

Speakers from Amnesty International UK and Rethink Rebuild Society (a Manchester-based charity that works towards improving the lives of refugees, asylum seekers, and immigrants), will provide updates on the situation in Syria and how we can support their work. PLUS Online raffle (link below) to raise funds for Amnesty and Rethink Rebuild. More details in Crisis and Tactical section of newsletter.

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/manchester-amnesty-group-november-meeting-focus-on-syria-tickets-190301355477>

Everyone is welcome to attend this meeting including new members.

If you have ideas & experience to contribute that is great but we welcome everyone, whatever your knowledge or experience.

We will send out an agenda and link beforehand. 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.

COMING SOON AND DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Saturday 6th November, 12 noon, Climate Justice protest, St Peter's Square

We are attending as an Amnesty group, meeting by the Emmeline Pankhurst Statue at 12 noon.

Please join us!

<https://actionnetwork.org/events/manchester-cop26-protest>

<https://www.facebook.com/events/1025938184909751>

Exploring the stories of radicals and rebels transported to Australia as political convicts

Event at the People's History Museum, 11th November, 6.30pm.

https://phm.org.uk/events_new/conviction-politics-the-convict-routes-of-australian-democracy/thur-11-november-6-30pm-8-30pm/

Benefit Bash for Refugees

Friday, 19th November, 7-11pm, Chorlton Central Church - see last page for more info and tickets.

Manchester Amnesty Craftivism Group

The next meeting will be on Saturday November 20th at 10am. Venue to be planned

Campaigning

Human Rights in the UK Stop the Rights Raid Week of Action



The various pieces of legislation which will significantly affect rights in this country are continuing to progress through parliament and during the week of 10th – 17th October Amnesty held a week of action (in conjunction with many other organisations) throughout the UK to draw attention to this raid on our rights.

We did our bit and hope that we have made a difference:



Alison and Kathryn had an online meeting with Jeff Smith MP who was very supportive of our concerns and will do his bit in voting against the legislation. We had hoped to have a meeting with Lucy Powell MP as well but there was a diary mix-up but we hope to reschedule. For the future, we thought it would be good if we could speak to more Tory MPs, so we were pleased to hear that the Stockport

Turkey

Welcome acquittal of all Pride participants: “A victory that should never have been necessary.”

Responding to the decision of Ankara Criminal Court of First Instance No. 39 to acquit 18 students and an academic who were prosecuted for taking part in a campus-based Pride parade in May 2019. Massimo

Amnesty group have asked for a meeting with Mary Robinson MP.

Hazel, our chair, had a letter published in the Manchester Evening News (thanks to Steve for the text) and we also placed an ad in the City Life section.



We held a photo action in St Peter's Square by the Emmeline Pankhurst Statue and, as a result, had an article in the online newspaper About Manchester: <https://aboutmanchester.co.uk/activists-call-on-local-mps-to-oppose-government-raids-on-human-rights/>

Thanks to all who took part!

Join the sub-group

This campaign is on-going. We expect to be asked to take more actions, especially when the long awaited report of the review of the Human Rights Act is published. We have a group of members working on this campaign. If you want to get involved email anne.walker9@ntlworld.com

Moratti, Amnesty International's Europe Deputy Director said: “More than two years ago, a peaceful Pride march in Ankara was met with police using pepper spray, plastic bullets and tear gas, and participants were rounded up and dragged through the courts. Today's verdict is a victory for justice, but

this protracted legal battle should never have happened. “

Today we take a moment to rejoice but tomorrow we will continue the struggle to end the crackdown on human rights in Turkey, and redouble our efforts to protect freedom of expression and peaceful assembly.

UAE Update

More good news!

Cambridge University announced that they have paused talks with Dubai about a 400M deal because of concerns about the use of spyware by the UAE government on UK mobile numbers. Thank you to members who wrote or asked contacts who were alumni of the university to write to the Dean.

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2021/oct/14/cambridge-university-halts-400m-deal-with-uae-over-pegasus-spyware-claims>

Fatih and Kathryn met with two people from the UAE desk at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) in London on Friday 28th October, along with Oscar Jenz, the

Malta

Three youths risk life in prison for their roles in helping fellow asylum-seekers escape torture. Call for justice for The El Hiblu 3. Call on the Maltese Attorney General to drop all charges against The El Hiblu 3 and close the case before trial.

<https://www.amnesty.ie/el-hiblu-3/>

Amnesty co-ordinator for the UAE. We shared our concern for the well-being of Mohammed Al-Roken and Ahmed Mansoor; that both men have been in solitary confinement for over 4 years and as far as we are aware, do not have a mattress or clean water. It was a constructive discussion and a couple of promises were made to us about broaching the subject with authorities in the UAE. We were also given advice on how we could be more effective in our work.

We hope to keep a dialogue open with the FCDO in the future.

The UAE subgroup will meet in November. Please contact Kathryn if you would like to join in. kathrynmbuss@gmail.com

Crisis and Tactical

Syria



March 2021 marked the 10th anniversary of the start of the Syrian conflict. As Amnesty International stated, even now parties to the

conflict continue to commit, with impunity, “serious violations of international humanitarian law, including war crimes, and gross human rights abuses”.

As recently as October 2021, in a briefing to the UN Security Council, the UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Martin Griffiths, spoke of a humanitarian crisis that continues to worsen. He noted increasing poverty, a water crisis, growing food insecurity, and increasing attacks against civilians.

On **Monday 8th November at 6.30pm**, Manchester Amnesty group will be holding an online event focusing on Syria.

At the November meeting, speakers from **Amnesty International UK** and **Rethink Rebuild Society** (a Manchester-based charity that works towards improving the lives of refugees, asylum seekers, and immigrants), will provide updates on the situation in Syria and how we can support their work.

An important part of our support for Syria is fundraising for both Amnesty and Rethink Rebuild. In the lead-up to the meeting we will be holding an online raffle and we would be very grateful if you would consider buying some tickets, even if you are unable to attend the event. You can buy up to 20 tickets per person by clicking on the link below, which will take you to the Eventbrite page:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/manchester-amnesty-group-november-meeting-focus-on-syria-tickets-190301355477>

A list of raffle prizes is included on the Eventbrite page. The raffle will be drawn at the event and prize-winners will be notified afterwards if they are not present.

Like many organisations, Amnesty International and Rethink Rebuild Society have struggled to fundraise during the pandemic, so we would be most grateful if you are able to contribute on this occasion.

Anyone buying raffle tickets, as well as all members of Manchester Amnesty group, will be sent a joining link nearer the event.
Resources on Syria:

Amnesty International continues to research the situation in Syria, with the most recent report, from 7th September, 2021, addressing human rights violations against returning Syrian refugees
[\(https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde24/4583/2021/en/\)](https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde24/4583/2021/en/).

Amnesty International UK Syria page: <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/issues/syria>.

Amnesty International's country page on Syria continues to be updated, including with press releases and statements: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/middle-east-and-north-africa/syria/>.

Statement from the Under-Secretary-General: <https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/under-secretary-general-humanitarian-affairs-and-emergency-relief-118>

Rethink Rebuild's website: <https://www.rrsoc.org>.

Palestine



Local authorities campaign
–TAKE ACTION!

Your council could be contributing to the breach of human rights in Palestine, by selecting suppliers of goods and services that are based in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. This occupation is illegal under international law.

If you live in **Trafford, Oldham, Tameside** or **Wigan**, we would like to hear from you. We will ask you to contact your council and ask them about their procurement policy. We will provide you with all the information needed, templates of letters/emails and support all the way through. **Let your council know that you care where and how your money is being spent!**

Please, contact Simona smattanza8mail.com

Refugee Campaign

At our October meeting, Quentin Duflos (a previous member of Manchester amnesty) gave a presentation about his work as a legal caseworker with young unaccompanied minors near Calais. He also updated us on the situation for migrants in Calais, which continues to result in the denial of basic human rights and a rising death toll. Since 1999, 304 people have died at the Franco-British border and Quentin reports that the situation is not improving. Currently, some of the volunteer workers at Calais are on hunger strike in protest at the treatment of the migrants who they are trying to help. On a more positive note, Quentin reminded us about the Walk with Amal, which reached Calais soon after he spoke to us & he sent these photos when the Calais Amnesty group went to meet her:



Walk with Amal

<https://www.walkwithamal.org/>

You may have already seen coverage of the Walk with Amal in the UK media recently. At the heart of *The Walk* is 'Little Amal', a 3.5 metre-tall puppet of a young refugee girl, created by the acclaimed Handspring Puppet Company. Representing all displaced children, many separated from their families, Little Amal is travelling over 8,000km embodying the urgent message "Don't forget about us".

Little Amal's journey will be ending in Manchester on Wednesday 3rd November at 7pm in Castlefield Bowl. Manchester International Festival are organising the event which unfortunately is now sold out. However, it may be worth checking on this link to see any last minute tickets become available.

https://mif.co.uk/whats-on/the-walk/?utm_campaign=985972_NOE%20The%20Walk%202nd%20release&utm_medium=email&utm_source=Manchester%20International%20Festival&dm_i=4XNF,L4S4,1PAOCT,2JAIL,1

If not, we think Little Amal may be walking through different parts of Greater Manchester on her way to Castlefield & it would be great if we could have a Manchester amnesty presence somewhere along her route. If you are interested in taking part, please contact Rebecca Barnes: rebeccabarnes5@gmail.com

Anti-Racism

Anti-racism subgroup

At our first meeting we discussed three possible strands of our anti-racism work:

- **Education on anti-racism for ourselves & group members** – we decided to read the book 'Me and White Supremacy' by Layla F. Saad with a view to using sections and exercises from the book in group meetings during the year ahead.

We also hope to take advantage of any training workshops that may be provided by AIUK over the next 12 months.

- **Anti-racism campaigning** – Mary Gibbs updated us on the work already carried out with regard to Greater Manchester Police and their response to the Black Lives Matter movement, specifically the over-policing of people of colour within GM. This is on-going work and we will

be working out how best to respond following the recent Achieving Race Equality report commissioned by Andy Burnham, which found GMP to be 'institutionally racist'. Despite the evidence contained in the report, Stephen Watson, the chief constable of GMP since May 2020, has rejected this finding.

- **Making links with other local anti-racism campaigning groups** – we discussed a range of possible anti-racism groups that it may be useful to contact & explore ways of working together on local and/or national anti-racism campaigns. Groups discussed included Black Lives matter, Manchester stand Up to Racism, Runnymede Trust, UK Is Not Innocent.

The group's anti-racism jamboard, which was started at our April meeting is available by clicking the link below:

<https://jamboard.google.com/d/1LwJyQs7MTN-haSwjg2ji9e8kXiZ7JqfCmbBXne-6uQg/viewer?f=0>

Please feel free to have a look and add any ideas or questions. The next sub-group meeting will be on Monday 15th November

at 6.30pm. We would welcome more members so please contact hazellerrey@gmail.com if you would like to join – you do not have to be experienced in this area of work, we welcome anyone who would like to find out more.

Anti-Semitic attack on Manchester Reform Synagogue

Since our last meeting, there has been another appalling racist attack on a religious group in Manchester. The Manchester Reform Synagogue had their Friday online service interrupted with anti-Semitic shouting & images. This was a shocking and frightening experience for all the members of the synagogue as well as the wider Jewish community in Greater Manchester. Along with many individuals and organisations in Manchester, we have sent a message of support and solidarity to the synagogue congregation via Twitter and also by email to Rabbi Robyn who was present at the service. All the messages were gratefully received by the synagogue & they responded with their own message, *'Together we are stronger'*.

Group News

Craftivism Group

Next meeting Saturday November 20th at 10am.

Venue to be planned

Please join us to plan our next project. No previous craft experience needed and all materials will be provided. We are also open to ideas of what we can work on next. One suggestion has been to make a small gift for our new council leader, Bev Craig when we send her a welcome card and request a meeting. There is also a small community garden along the pavement in Didsbury who would be happy to hang craft objects made by Amnesty as an outreach action.

University of Manchester Amnesty group

The group held its first meeting since the start of the pandemic on Wednesday 27th October with a view to rebooting and revitalizing the group. The next meeting will be on 3rd November, in room B2 in the Students Union, at 1-2 pm (and all further meetings are planned to take place on Wednesdays 1-2pm). More news from this group in subsequent newsletters. University students wishing to join or contact the group should do so via Instagram - @uom_amnesty (but in case there are any problems, since the account was already deactivated once, @amnestymanc will do as well), or email amnesty.uom@gmail.com.

****Volunteers still needed – Crisis and Tactical campaigns****

Our group's 'Crisis and Tactical team' is looking for new volunteers to coordinate Amnesty's campaign concerning humanitarian crisis and tactical campaigns, organised strategically around events.

Currently, our main campaigns focus on Syria and Palestine, although we keep an eye on Myanmar, Yemen and in the near future possibly also Afghanistan.

If you would like to find out more about what the role entails, please contact Simona smattanza8@gmail.com.

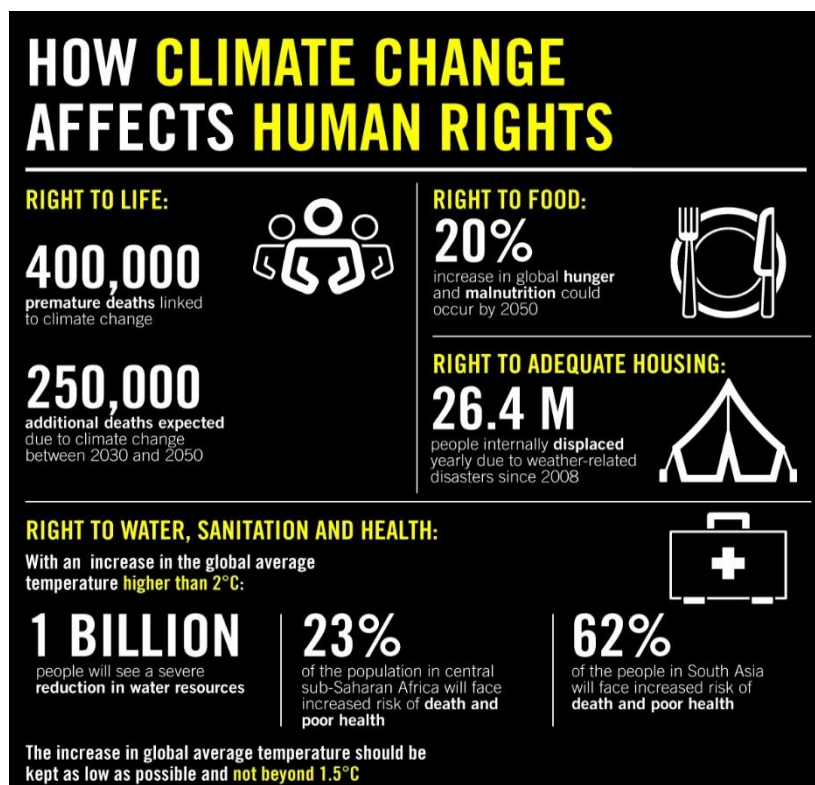
Weekly actions

If there is anything that you would like to suggest as a weekly action, please email Anne.walker9@ntlworld.com with details and a link to the action.

If you would like to get involved in any of our subgroups to support a particular area of work, email Anne.walker9@ntlworld.com and she will put you in touch with the relevant group lead.

Other News

AIUK climate change and human rights resources



To coincide with Cop26, AIUK has issued some material explaining how the climate crisis impacts on human rights by disproportionately affecting those who are the most impoverished and discriminated against. These can be accessed here:

<https://www.amnesty.org.uk/what-has-climate-crisis-got-do-human-rights>

You can also read some inspiring stories about how 5 young women are fighting climate change worldwide <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/climate/five-women-colour-fighting-climate-change-worldwide>



Climate Coalition Cop 26 Protest, St Peters Square, 12 noon

We are attending this as an Amnesty group and are meeting by the Emmeline Pankhurst Statue at 12 noon. **Please join us!**

<https://actionnetwork.org/events/manchester-cop26-protest>

People's History Museum

Following on from the #Together with Refugees events on 23rd October, the People's History museum has made some materials available here: <https://phm.org.uk/campaigning/>

and here: <https://phm.org.uk/blogposts/hope-for-justice-working-to-end-modern-slavery/>

Members might also be interested an upcoming event, exploring the stories of radicals and rebels transported to Australia as political convicts

https://phm.org.uk/events_new/conviction-politics-the-convict-routes-of-australian-democracy/thur-11-november-6-30pm-8-30pm/

Benefit Bash to welcome and support Afghan and other refugees

Friday 19th November, 7-11pm, Chorlton Central Church, Barlow Moor Road

Tickets here: <https://www.tickettailor.com/events/chorltoncentralchurch>



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