

Newsletter: April 2022

Bognor Regis, Chichester & District Group



Dates for your diary	20 - 26 June 2022: Refugee Week Saturday 25 June 2022 UK: Amnesty AGM (hybrid: online and in-person)
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Dear writers,

I would like to thank all of you who signed the card and contributed to the gift token presented to me at the AGM to mark my 40th year as Group Secretary. This was quite unexpected and very gratefully received. 1982 seems a very long time ago now, but your support is its own reward.



Local events

Following the Group Annual General Meeting on 27/04/2022, your committee is investigating future events and we will update you ASAP as to proposed dates. Please contact me Bob Dewick for minutes of the AGM and if you would like to organise an event (01243-823016).

Other events

Sat 25/06/2022 10:00 - 18:00 2022 Annual General Meeting of Amnesty International United Kingdom Section

- This year's Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held as a **hybrid** meeting on Saturday 25 June, at the Human Rights Action Centre (HRAC) in London at 17-25 New Inn Yard, London EC2A 3EA; it will however be primarily held **virtually** because there are a limited number of spaces available to join in-person.
- Information about attending can be found on the [Amnesty website](https://www.amnesty.org.uk)
- **Save the date: practice run for online attendees.** On Thursday 16/06/2022 between 18:00-19:00, Amnesty UK are holding a practice run to give you an opportunity to practice logging into the online AGM. The IT Team will be available to assist with any technical issue and answer any questions you have regarding joining the virtual meeting.

20/06/2022 - 26/06/2022: Refugee Week. The theme of this year's Refugee Week is "Healing".

<https://refugeeweek.org.uk/theme-of-refugee-week-2022-healing/>

- Nearer the date, please check the [Events Calendar](#) for events taking place near to you.
- If you are involved in a local event and would like to share it with other Amnesty members, please let me know and we can promote the event in the next Group newsletter!

New Right to Protest priority campaign launching June 2022

- As the right to protest is being attacked around the world, Amnesty International is responding to this by launching our next priority 'flagship' campaign with a specific focus on the right to protest (name TBC!). The International Secretariat's launch date is currently set for **22 June 2022**.
- Amnesty UK will develop and deliver a campaign to support this work, which will include both UK and international components. This will include continued work in response to the *Policing, Crime and Sentencing Bill* once this becomes an Act (if it passed), but also respond to international threats to the right to protest and supporting protesters.
- While the Amnesty UK priority campaign is not set to launch until the Autumn (date TBC), in June 2022 Amnesty UK will launch a new online training course together with FutureLearn on the right to protest in the UK. The 2022 Write for Rights campaign will also have a focus on right to protest cases, so do watch this space for more updates on this new campaign

Carry on writing!

Bob Dewick, Amnesty

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

For more information about this Group, go to: <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/groups/bognor-chichester-and-district>

Amnesty action: campaigns & letter-writing

Egypt update from Margaret, out Campaign Co-ordinator

Release of Ibrahim Ezz El Din

I am delighted to pass on the breaking news that **Ibrahim Ezz El Din** has been released as one of 41 detainees released under a Ramadan presidential pardon. As you will know, we have taken part in a number of actions on his behalf over the three year period while he was arbitrarily detained. The last action last month was linked to his interest in football so perhaps President al-Sisi was more of a football fan than we realised! My sincere thanks to all of you who have written in support of his case. This is a great result!



Alaa Abd El -Fattah

Since it seems that Ibrahim's case is closed, we are now hoping to take on a new case campaigning on behalf of **Alaa Abd el- Fattah**. Many of you will already be aware of his dire situation as we have already undertaken actions in support of him and his fellow activist and human rights lawyer, Mohamed el-Baqer, who are currently detained in appalling conditions. Alaa Abdel Fattah is a member of a leading family of activists and author of a newly published book, *You have Not Yet Been Defeated*. It is hoped that the recent decision to accord him UK citizenship will prove helpful in campaigning for his release. Please look out for more guidance on actions in next month's newsletter.



This month's actions

Meanwhile, we have received appeals for further action on behalf of Moroccan activist, **Sultana Khaya**, Algerian journalist, **Merzoug Touati** and Tunisian lawyer, **Abderazzak Kilani**. Although Abderazzak Kilani has been released from detention, he still faces trial on 12 May, so please continue to call for the dropping of charges using this link <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/urgent-actions/lawyer-prosecuted-military-court>

What you can do:

Please see details and template messages below.

Sultana Khaya

To: His Excellency Mr Abdesselam Aboudra (ambalondres@maec.gov.ma)

Please forward to:

Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Morocco
Mr. Aziz Akhannouch
Palais Royal- Touarga
Rabat,
Morocco

Your Excellency,

I am very disturbed to learn about further harassment of Sultana Khaya and female visitors to her home in Boujdour, Morocco where she has been arbitrarily detained with her mother and sister. Since November 2020. This follows previous violent attacks upon her and her family by security forces.

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On 21 March 2022 at least five women were harassed and physically intimidated by plain clothes security agents outside the house. I urge you to ensure a prompt, thorough, independent, impartial, transparent and effective investigation into the security forces' abusive force and attacks against Sultana Khaya's visitors and Sultana herself and her family, including the reports of rape and sexual assault. I call upon you to ensure that those suspected of responsibility are brought to justice in fair trials.

I also urge you to ensure that Sultana Khaya and her family are provided with access to justice and effective remedies, including adequate compensation, and guarantee of non-repetition for the violations of human rights to which they have been subjected.

I appeal to you to announce an immediate end to the arbitrary house arrest against Sultana Khaya and grant safe and free access to her domicile for all who wish to visit her, including Sahrawis.

Yours sincerely

Merzoug Touati

President of the Republic of Algeria Abdelmagid Tebboune (Presenditiel@el-mouradia.dz)

Your Excellency,

I am writing to raise concern about the deteriorating health condition of Algerian journalist **Merzoug Touati**, who has been on hunger strike since 29 March 2022 to protest against his prison conditions and transfer to Al-Aghouat prison, 500km away from his residence in Bejaia, Algeria.

Since February 2022 he has been held in very crowded conditions and is poor health. Since he began a hunger strike in protest against conditions, he has lost half his body weight and is complaining of stomach pains. However, he has not received medical treatment.

I believe the charges against him of publishing 'fake news' after he posted a Facebook comment criticising prison conditions relating to another activist are politically motivated and unjust.

I, therefore, urge you to quash the sentence against Merzoug Touati and release him immediately and unconditionally as he is imprisoned only for exercising his right to freedom of expression. Pending his release, I urge you to ensure that he is held in conditions meeting international standards and provided with the adequate medical treatment he may require, including during his hunger strike.

Yours sincerely

Brave campaign evaluation

- Amnesty's work to support human rights defenders continues but Brave - launched in 2017 - has now ended as a global priority campaign.
- Thank you to everyone who supported this campaign over the past few years: from putting pressure on the UK Government to do more and better to support HR defenders, to taking action in support of individuals targeted for their human rights work.
- Amnesty has commissioned an independent evaluation of this campaign, to learn what worked well and what needs to improve. You can read the full evaluation report, watch a short animation summarising its findings or listen to podcasts of the external evaluators talking about their conclusions and discussing the use of the term 'human rights defender'

<https://www.amnesty.org.uk/BraveEvaluation>

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