



News from the Minehead Group

www.amnesty.org.uk/minehead www.facebook.com/amnestyminehead Instagram: @amnestyminehead

Actions you can take this month:

- ✓ **Take action** to help save our Human Rights Act which the UK government is officially scrapping. Now more than ever we need to come together in the fight to save our rights. Sign the petition at <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/actions/save-our-rights> or if you don't like doing things on line, why not write to your MP about it?
- ✓ **Sign the petition** urging the **Bangladesh** government and the international community to ensure participation of Rohingya refugees in the decisions that affect them. Nearly one million Rohingya refugees are living in threadbare camps in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, after they fled their homes in **Myanmar** due to the military's crimes against humanity. Petitions are currently addressed to the governments of Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, Indonesia and the United States, not the UK government. You can find the petition at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/petition/protect-the-rights-of-the-rohingya-refugees/?fbclid=IwAR1ro6JEEM1RfiU26uMcPBv88GVRHG8qRRW7xj72D9pFDA36AvpnkM2YAPk>
- ✓ **Come along** to our group's planning meeting on Thursday 15 September and help shape our future campaigns and events.
- ✓ **Make a date and tell your friends** about our fund-raising Harp Afternoon Tea Concert on Saturday 22 October at 1500 in Carhampton Village Hall. For more details about tickets and how to get them, contact Cherry Bird.

News from our group – July was a busy month!

We had a productive **letter writing** afternoon at the Beach Hotel on 21 July. Between us, we wrote 30 letters about cases in seven different countries.

At the Roadwater **Fete** on 23 July, we enjoyed sunny weather for our **stall** and engaged with a steady stream of visitors who were invited to sign solidarity messages to three activists imprisoned in India and are part of the group known as the BK16. We also persuaded children (and their parents) to play some of our Amnesty games.



Our third event in July was our **AmnesTea**. *Here's a report from Alison:* members of our group were joined on 29 July by friends and neighbours for a most enjoyable AmnesTea, held this year in Susan's beautiful garden in Carhampton. The sun shone, and more than 50 people came to enjoy the chat, as well as the tea and a huge selection of

home-made cakes. There were games for the children (and the grown-ups), a raffle, a bookstall, and a 'For Sale' stall. We also invited people to sign more solidarity cards to activists in the BK16. We are grateful to everyone who came and supported us. Thanks to their generosity, we raised **£485** for Amnesty.



Diary Dates

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

Thursday 15 Sept
Group planning meeting 1430 at the Beach Hotel.

Saturday 22 Oct
Harp Concert with afternoon tea 1500 at Carhampton Village Hall, TA24 6ND

Saturday 5 Nov
AIUK one day conference 1000 to 2000 at the HRAC in London. Details on the AIUK website.

Tuesday 1 Nov
Launch of the 2022 Write for Rights details of our Minehead events to follow.

Campaign News

I WELCOME REFUGEES

The West Somerset Refugee Support Group has been busy over the summer hosting refugee families settled in Bridgwater, Taunton and Wellington and enabling the families to have a week's holiday beside the sea in Minehead. Well done, once again, to Jenny Gateau for organising this complicated but very worthwhile project and thanks to her and all her helpers who have welcomed the families and arranged various activities for them. We were delighted that the Syrian family who were staying in Minehead at the time joined us for our AmnesTea in Carhampton in July.

SOUTH ASIA *Cherry Bird reports:*



Afghanistan: In the year since the Taliban seized power the position of women has deteriorated drastically. Amnesty's latest report *Death in Slow Motion* makes depressing reading, with professional women and girls of secondary school age confined to their homes and more vulnerable to domestic violence, a surge in child marriage, increased neonatal death rates due to poor nutrition and lack of healthcare facilities, arrest and torture of women who protest and increased suicide rates among women.

<https://www.amnesty.org.uk/resources/death-slow-motion-women-and-girls-under-taliban-report-2022>

Pakistan: Amnesty's report on the climate crisis in Pakistan is due out at the end of August, in which Amnesty is calling on the Pakistan government and global powers to do more to help poor and marginalised groups suffering from the severe effects of climate change. Scorching heat, water shortages and inadequate housing are triggering concerns about food security and health, undermining basic human rights.

HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE UK *[Source: AIUK website]*

The UK government plans to replace the **Human Rights Act** with a 'Bill of Rights'. They want us to believe they're doing it for the greater good, but that couldn't be further from the truth. In reality, it will give people in power MORE power, and make it much harder for people to hold them to account when they need to. It'll also make it harder to hold other countries to account - at a time where it's needed more than ever. We've already seen this power grab playing out. The recently passed Policing Bill will now make it harder to stand up to power. Now more than ever we need to come together in the fight to save our rights.

Our Human Rights Act protects all of us. It brings home fundamental, universal rights we all have as human beings, and allows us to challenge authorities if they violate them. It's an invisible safety net, working to ensure our rights are respected. It is a crucial defence for the most vulnerable. We know that the Human Rights Act works. It worked for the Hillsborough families in their fight for justice. It worked for the victims of John Worboys. It worked to overturn the near total ban on abortion in Northern Ireland. We don't need to change it.

Please take the actions listed overleaf, if you can.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2023

You may remember the special event we held in May 2011 to celebrate Amnesty International's 50th birthday. Our group commissioned local composer, Emily Feldberg, to compose a piece of music to mark this anniversary. Emily's **Amnesty Cantata** for bass soloist, choir and orchestra formed the central piece of an afternoon concert in Minehead, followed by a birthday tea. Emily would like to hold a repeat performance of the Cantata to mark our group's 21st birthday next year, so plans are afoot to hold an afternoon concert and tea in Minehead in June 2023. Watch this space for more exciting details!

How to contact the Minehead Amnesty International Local Group:

Website: www.amnesty.org.uk/minehead

Email: amnestyminehead@gmail.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/amnestyminehead

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: cherrybird@gmail.com

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