

Newsletter: January 2023

Bognor Regis, Chichester & District Group



Dates for your diary	Wednesday 25/01/2023 Vigil for Giulio Regeni, London Thursday 02/03/2023 Online Meeting hosted by Brighton Group (TBC) Saturday 25/02/2023 South East England Conference, London (programme, speakers TBC) Tuesday 25/04/2023 19:30 Group AGM, in person, Friends Meeting House, Chichester
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Dear writers

Human Rights Day Action: Write for Rights 2022

A bright but very cold day, the committee collected 19 cards signed for artist and musician Aleksandra Skochilenko, imprisoned for protesting the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and 15 cards signed for environmental activist Shahnewaz Chowdhury, facing jail for a Facebook post on the impact of a local power plant on environmental destruction in his area. These cards decorated our Christmas tree on the Cathedral Green.

- Our thanks to the Chichester Christmas shoppers who took the time to sign; to Chris Gilbert and Ann Stewart for the card designs; and to Terry Timblich for collecting a further batch of cards on Sunday 11 December.



Local events

- **Thursday 02/03/2023 Online Meeting:** hosted by Brighton Group (details TBC)
- **Tuesday 25/04/2023 19:30 Group AGM (in person).** This will take place at the Friends Meeting House, Chichester. Reports from the committee and details to follow

Other events

- **Saturday 28/01/2023 - Sunday 29/01/2023** Amnesty UK Student Conference. Taking place at the Human Rights Action Centre in London.
 - Booking is via Eventbrite: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/amnesty-uk-student-conference-2023-tickets-481472857277>
- **Saturday 25/02/2023: South East England Conference (PROVISIONAL).**
 - Taking place at the Human Rights Action Centre, London: please ask if you would like further details. Kath Shakespeare plans to attend on behalf of the Group and is in contact with the organisers, but other members are welcome to attend. We do not know yet if there is an option to attend online.
- **Deconstructing Israel's Apartheid Against Palestinians [course](#).**
 - If you're looking to support Amnesty's campaigning on this area, then brush up your knowledge around what apartheid is, understand relevant international law, and learn how the oppression and domination of Palestinians by Israel amounts to apartheid.
 - Amnesty's education shopfront also has links to a wide variety of other training and education to help you learn more about human rights, Amnesty's campaigns and how to be an effective activist. There are online courses you can take in your own time, and training both online and in person to sign up for.

Carry on writing!

Bob Dewick, Amnesty

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Amnesty action: campaigns & letter-writing

Egypt update from Margaret, our Campaign Co-ordinator

Firstly, I'd like to thank all of you who have supported our calls to action, during the past year whether lobbying MPs, writing to governments and embassies or directly expressing solidarity with our prisoners of conscience and their families. Although it is sometimes disheartening not to see immediate results, we know that your support is greatly appreciated by Amnesty colleagues and, most of all, by the detainees and their families. As we start 2023, there is still much to do, so please continue to support actions in any way you feel able to respond.



Alaa Abd El-Fattah

Mona Seif, Alaa's sister and friend at Foreign Office in October

After a year of intensive campaigning on behalf of Alaa Abd El-Fattah, we face a very uncertain situation at the start of 2023. The good news is that he is still alive and, for the time being at least, is no longer on hunger strike and is in a less critical physical/mental condition.

However, despite the high profile focus on his case before and after the Cop 27 conference in Egypt, it seems that there has been little immediate effect on his long term prospects. It is essential, therefore, that the momentum built up during this campaign is not allowed to lapse.

Debora Singer, Amnesty's Egypt Coordinator, joins me in thanking all those of you who have supported recent actions and is currently planning future campaigns which will focus on urging the UK Government to use its influence on behalf of Alaa, who has joint UK/Egyptian citizenship.

Future Actions

Online Meeting hosted by Brighton Group Thursday 2 March 2023 – no further details yet but I will keep you posted.

Vigil for Giulio Regeni : Weds 25 January 12-20m vigil at Egyptian Embassy 26 South Street, London W1K 1DW

This is a vigil to commemorate **Giulio Regeni**, the Cambridge PhD student researching trade union activities in Egypt who was abducted on this date in 2016 and horribly tortured and killed in Egypt, allegedly by Egyptian security forces.

Please let me know if anyone is interested in attending mn_robertson@hotmail.com

Best wishes to all of you for 2023, Margaret

Protect the Protest campaign update

The Government is currently pushing a Public Order Bill through Parliament. This Bill, if passed, will further restrict the right to protest in England and Wales.

Police already have a very broad range of existing powers at their disposal to deal with offences that may take place during a protest. Amnesty is concerned that the breadth of



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those powers already give scope for subjective over policing and potential abuse of those powers.

The recent arrest of journalists for reporting on protests – which is a fundamental breach of universally held rights – should serve as a chilling warning to parliamentarians voting on this Bill. The police should not be given new vague and increased powers in the context of policing protest.

The Public Order Bill is likely to be voted on by Peers in December before it goes back to the House of Commons for the final stage of the parliamentary process. We are working with a number of partners to urge Parliamentarians to oppose the Bill in its entirety.

- See Amnesty's latest joint briefing on the Public Order Bill [here](#).
- See Amnesty's latest briefing [here](#)
- Amnesty has written to the Home Secretary in response to the arrest of journalists covering Just Stop Oil protests.

Action: Iran

During protests in response to the death of Mahsa (Zhina) Amini, Iran's authorities have used violence, killing dozens, with impunity.

Recent unrest follows decades of human rights violations in Iran. On the ground, Iranian people are calling for **Zan, Zendegi, Azadi** (Woman, Life, Freedom) - a global rallying cry in the face of brutal repression Stop execution of Iranian protestors

The execution of the UK-Iranian dual-national Alireza Akbari has been condemned: see Amnesty's press release <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/press-releases/iran-execution-alireza-akbari-condemned>

To read more details about the current situation in Iran: <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/issues/iran>

- Please contact Bob Dewick, Group Secretary, if you would like further information in hard copy rather than online.

What you can do:

Woman, Life Freedom. Sign the online petition to the Iranian Embassy in the UK to quash all convictions and death sentences on those detained; support independent investigations into the deaths of protesters; repeal the laws imposing compulsory veiling of women and girls; and abolish the "morality" police.

- <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/actions/woman-life-freedom>

Action on the execution of Iranian protestors

- Urge Iranian authorities to halt plans to carry out executions and immediately quash all convictions and death sentences in connection to the uprising.
- By writing to the Iranian Head of Judiciary and Iranian Embassy in the UK, MPs can add pressure to the authorities.
- Recommended actions are likely to change, so you are encouraged to check the dedicated page on the Amnesty website; with the recent execution of Alireza Akbari, the text of the letters/emails may change
- <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/resources/stop-execution-iranian-protesters-now>
 - This page provides guidance for you as a constituent: with resources for action at the bottom of the screen. This page also provides guidance for your MP.

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