

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY
FEBRUARY TO JUNE 2023



ISLE OF WIGHT
AMNESTY NEWS



JANUARY 2023

FEBRUARY

Friday 3rd 7:30 pm **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** 21 Watergate Road
Newport ☎ 523294

MARCH

Friday 3rd 7:30 pm **GENERAL MEETING** 21 Watergate Road
Newport ☎ 523294

Sunday 26th 2:00 pm **SPRING CONCERT** Gurnard Village Hall
Refreshments available ☎07752356311
Retiring collection

APRIL

Friday 7th 7:30 pm **GENERAL MEETING** 21 Watergate Road
Newport ☎ 523294

MAY

Friday 5th 7:30 pm **GENERAL MEETING** 21 Watergate Road
Newport ☎ 523294

Sunday 14th 2:00 pm **WALK & PICNIC** Bryn & Catherine
108 New Road
Brading ☎ 406125

JUNE

Friday 2nd 7:30 pm **GENERAL MEETING** 21 Watergate Road
Newport ☎ 523294

Sunday 11th 12:00 noon **GARDEN PICNIC** 21 Watergate Road
Music and Poetry Newport ☎ 523294



Vahid Afkari

After peacefully attending protests in Iran, Vahid and his brother Navid were arrested on 17 September 2018. Three months later, his brother Habib was also arrested for peaceful protesting. They were kept in solitary confinement, tortured and forced to 'confess' to crimes they repeatedly said they had not committed.

In September 2020, Navid was secretly executed, sparking renewed campaigning for the brothers. Habib was released in March 2022 but Vahid remains in solitary confinement.

Our group sent cards with messages of support to Vahid in prison. Although it was unlikely they would be given to him, they would show the prison authorities that Vahid had not been forgotten.

, Our individual efforts may be small, but together we can influence things and bring about change.

Why not join the Isle of Wight Group?
YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

60TH ANNIVERSARY

The group marked its anniversary at Appley Manor Hotel on 24th September. Bryn Davis, chairman, welcomed the gathering saying that although it was sad that Amnesty's work was still needed, it was good to see the group still going strong after all these years. Sasha Deshmukh, AIUK's chief executive, sent a message to congratulate the group for 60 years dedicated to the work of Amnesty and for its many achievements. The guest speaker was Beverley Foulks-Jones who gave an update on the work of the North Africa Campaign.

The human rights anthology 'Forget Me Not', written by local poets and compiled by Sue Norman, was ready for the guests at the event. Pat Murgatroyd read two of Joan Waddleton's poems from the booklet. Also available was Virginia Stirmans's history booklet '60 Years of Amnesty International on the Isle of Wight'.

Sasha had already read this booklet and so was able to comment on some of the extracts in his message.

GOOD NEWS!

Bernado Caal Xol, a teacher and trade union leader, was released after four years in prison in Guatamala. After protesting against a hydro-electric dam project, he was sentenced in 2018 to more than seven years in prison. On 24 March 2022 a judge ordered his release for "good behaviour".

CAMPAIGNING

WRITE FOR RIGHTS CAMPAIGN

The annual campaign was launched on Human Rights Day. Group members gathered to sign A3 sized 'map cards' with messages of support for three individuals at risk in Cuba, Morocco and Cameroun. The campaign also featured Russian artist and musician Aleksandra Skochilenko, arrested in April 2022. If convicted, she faces up to 10 years in prison for opposing the invasion of Ukraine.

NORTH AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN REGION.

Fresh appeals were sent to President Biden to close Guantanamo Bay on its 21st anniversary. Thirty-five people are still held there.

We campaigned for the release of Cuban artist Luis Manuel who is serving 5 years for defending freedom of expression. His health is declining and he is not receiving adequate medical care.

NORTH AFRICA CAMPAIGN.

Unfortunately Alaa Abdel Fattah is still in prison with no timetable for his release. He is no longer on hunger strike but is still not allowed consular visits. Our group sent cards with messages of support to his two sisters, Mona and Sanaa Seif.

Messages of hope were sent to Nasser Zelzafi who is serving a 20 year sentence in a Moroccan prison. Being a firm believer in justice and equality he had become a prominent figure in the Hirak El-Rif movement.

WOMEN'S CAMPAIGN.

Peaceful protest is a powerful tool for demanding human rights but it is dangerous for women to express dissent. Research by Amnesty shows that increased restrictions on protest are in force around the world.

From anti-war protests in Moscow to widespread demonstrations in Iran, so many women risk being silenced.

In May, women leading a demonstration in Zimbabwe were hospitalised following cruel abuse by the police. Russian women risk being jailed for opposing the invasion of Ukraine. Courageous Saudi women have been jailed for simply demanding their right to education and equality in their choice of careers. Peaceful protest is a right, not a privilege. Human rights victories cannot be won without continuous support. Everyone is entitled to justice.

In the past six months our group has responded to many actions, including: Yulia Tsvetkova, a Russian who risks imprisonment for posting drawings of women's bodies online; Netipom Sanesangkhorn and Nutthanit Duangmusit, both teachers, calling for their right to bail in Bangkok and two Kurdish women detained in Urumieh prison West Azerbairjan province. They were being held in hospital but denied proper care and have been denied access to their lawyers.

ANTI DEATH PENALTY.

During the past 6 months we have campaigned on behalf of seven people in three countries:

Algeria 1 case of a whistleblower, who was extradited from Spain and tortured.

Iran 2 cases of LGBTI defenders, and 1 case of a Swedish-Iranian academic who was at risk of a retaliatory execution as a hostage for Iranians in Sweden.

USA I case in Missouri; I case in Oklahoma where also a series of executions have been scheduled over the next two years; and I case in Texas of a man who committed the crime at the age of 18 following a childhood of abuse and neglect.



PUBLICITY

The County Press gave good coverage for the 60th anniversary event at the Appley Manor Hotel. An exhibition showing the group's sixty years' activities was displayed at the Lord Louis Library, the Minster and Appley Manor.

Copies of the thirty articles of the UDHR were sent to each of the High Schools plus the VI Form College. It was hoped that the articles might be the theme for assembly or collective worship on Human Rights Day.

CAN YOU HELP?

Amnesty is well supported on the Island but the group would welcome more active members.

The group meets on the first Friday of each month to plan future campaign activities and fund raising events. It is not essential to attend group meetings to take part in any of our campaigns, as they can be effectively undertaken from home. Full details will be sent with each action.

If you would like to receive your copy of the Isle of Wight Amnesty News via e-mail or require information on any event or any aspect of Amnesty's work, please contact one of the Officers listed below or e-mail us at:

stubbsrw@btinternet.com

For further news and latest updates visit our website at:-

www.amnesty.org.uk/isleofwight

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