

Newsletter: May 2023

Bognor Regis, Chichester & District Group



Dates for your diary	16/05/2023, 18:00 - 20:00: Activism Assembly: online via Zoom 24/06/2023, 10:00 - 17:00 Amnesty AGM (in person, London or online) 19 - 25/06/2023: Refugee Week Date TBC: Downs Pumble from Singleton
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Dear writers

Local events

Downs Pumble: I am continuing to explore possible routes from Singleton and venues for our annual pub-ramble which will take place in the summer. Details to follow!

Other events

Tuesday 16/05/2023, 18:00 - 20:00 (online): AIUK Activism Assembly

- Activism Assemblies will be events for all AIUK supporters to come together virtually and in person to meet, discuss and work together to build a more powerful movement. They will be open, inclusive, creative sessions giving all AIUK supporters the opportunity to co-design and plan around specific projects.
- At the May Activism Assemblies (in person in London, online via Zoom), we will be coming together to consider these questions and think about some proposals for a potential new way of gathering as a movement. This event is open to all AIUK supporters! So please come along and have your voice heard.
- Amnesty UK won't be making any decisions at these sessions, but your considered feedback will be essential for guiding the direction we take.
- Book your place for the online session:
<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/aiuk-activism-assembly-national-gatherings-online-tickets-611258830617>

19-26/05/2023 Refugee Week. Refugee Week is a UK-wide festival celebrating the contributions, creativity and resilience of refugees and people seeking sanctuary. It was founded in 1998 and held every year around World Refugee Day on 20 June.

- The theme for the 25th anniversary Refugee Week 2023 is **Compassion**
- **Resilience in Clay, Chichester Cathedral (12/06/2023 - 31/08/2023)** The exhibition comprises seven sculptural portraits; each of the subjects are connected by the fact that they are building a new life in Chichester, some having found refuge from persecution based on conflict and religious, social and or ethnic discrimination.
- Explore other Refugee Week events near you, here: <https://refugeeweek.org.uk/events/>

Local fund-raising Events including performances by friends of Amnesty Rebecca Grove and Steph Peat

- **20/05/2023, 11:00 onwards:** to mark Christian Aid Week - Christian Aid event on Chichester Cathedral Green (Rebecca due to perform around 14:00)
- **26/05/2023, 19:30: The Fast Food Show.** Foodbank concert, an evening of readings and music organised by Terry Timblich at Christ Church, Chichester, including Rebecca, Steph and Chris Grove on guitar. Attendees are asked to bring a tin/packet/carton of food in each hand; a retiring collection will also be made after the show. Please contact Terry Timblich for free tickets on 01243 537812 or email terrytimblich@gmail.com

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10/06/2023 - 09/07/2023: Festival of Chichester. There are a number of interesting [events coming up in the Festival of Chichester](#) which have a human rights-related theme, including:



- 15/06/2023 [Steven Frank, child survivor of the Holocaust, shares his story](#)
- 22/06/2023 [Talks at Six: Russia and the Global Power contest](#)

Country co-ordinator for Egypt in the North Africa team. Amnesty are seeking a second Country Co-ordinator focussing on Egypt: these are volunteer activist who lead much of Amnesty UK's work on their countries.

- This is a last-minute call for applications: <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/jobs/country-coordinator-egypt>

An investigation into the Amnesty International Secretariat's report in August 2022 on actions by Ukraine's armed forces has been leaked to the *New York Times*; you may have read about this in UK newspapers as well (29/04/2023). Amnesty UK will be seeking clarification of the findings of the review, as concerns were raised around the quality and robustness of research publications from the International Secretariat. Here is [the link](#) If you would like to read the full statement from Amnesty UK: please ask me if you would prefer a print copy to be sent to you.

- **Saturday 24/06/2023, 10:00 - 17:00: Amnesty UK Annual General Meeting.**
 - This year's Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held as a hybrid meeting at the Human Rights Action Centre (HRAC) in London at 17-25 New Inn Yard, London EC2A 3EA. You will also be able to participate remotely.
 - Amnesty's AGM offers all members - groups, individuals and networks – their say in Amnesty International UK.
 - <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/annual-general-meeting-2023> to apply to attend

Celebrating 50 years of Urgent Actions!

Fifty years ago, the Amnesty organisation sent its first Urgent Action. This UA was issued on 19 March 1973, in response to the unlawful arrest in Brasilia of Professor Luiz Basilio Rossi . Until that point, Amnesty's main campaigning tool had been campaigning for individuals as "Prisoners of Conscience" - defined as someone who was being subjected to a human rights violation, but "who has not used or advocated violence or hatred". However, in crisis situations it was not always possible to gather sufficient information or evidence required to meet the strict criteria of a "Prisoner of Conscience" and it was becoming clear that a more lithe technique was needed.

That initiative helped free a detained professor who opposed the military dictatorship in Brazil.

Over the past five decades, the Urgent Action Network has become one of Amnesty's most effective campaign tools. Here's why:

- More than 500,000 volunteers worldwide are standing by to help those facing imminent human rights violations.
- They respond immediately with letters, emails, faxes, and social media posts.
- These actions put pressure on authorities and let them know the world is watching.
- We help protect people from torture, wrongful imprisonment, and abuse in prison.

When Urgent Actions succeed, the impact is life changing.

We thank you for all actions you've taken, and hope you will continue taking action with us: <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/urgent-actions>

Carry on writing!

Bob Dewick, Amnesty

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Amnesty action: campaigns & letter-writing

Egypt update from Margaret, our Campaign Co-ordinator

Following last month's relatively reassuring messages about the improvements of Alaa Abdel Fattah's health and prison conditions, I am sure you will be dismayed to hear of the treatment of his former fellow prisoner and lawyer, **Mohamed Baker** (aka Mohamed el-Baqer) who has been a highlighted Right for Rights prisoner (pictured here with his wife **Neama Hisham**). Following his intervention to prevent the abuse of another prisoner, Mohamed Baker was stripped, beaten and confined in a 'disciplinary' cell for 3 days without bedding, windows, ventilation or adequate food and drinking water. After his wife visited him and reported on his injuries on social media, she was arrested and has been detained at an undisclosed location.



Our second husband and wife action this month is on behalf of human rights activist, **Aisha el-Shater**, and her husband, **Mohamed Abo Horeira**, human rights lawyer who have been convicted after a grossly unfair trial, to sentences of ten and fifteen years respectively simply because of their human rights activities. We are particularly concerned about the health of Aisha who has been held in prolonged solitary confinement and denied appropriate health care for a serious medical condition. The couple have also been denied family visits and Mohamed Abo Horeira is held in the notorious Badr 3 prison.

What you can do:

Mohamed Baker and Neama Hisham. Please use the template message below to send an email to President al-Sisi appealing for their unconditional release and ordering an investigation into the appalling treatment they have endured.

- To: p.spokesman@op.gov.eg

Dear President

Re: Appeal for the release of Mohamed Baker, Alaa Abdel Fattah, Neama Hisham

We are very distressed to hear of the brutal treatment of Mohamed Baker, human rights lawyer, whilst in detention in Badr 1 Prison and the unjust arrest of his wife, Neama Hisham, detained purely because she expressed deep concern after visiting him and witnessing the severe injuries he sustained as a result of brutal treatment while in prison.

Mohamed Baker and Alaa Abdel Fattah have now been unjustly detained since December 2021 and have been held in appalling and inhumane conditions which constitute torture and extreme physical and psychological ill treatment. The latest attack on Mohamed Baker was the consequence of his intervention to prevent abuse of an older prisoner. He was put in a 'disciplinary cell' for three days with no windows, ventilation, light, bedding or food or drinkable water. This is in flagrant breach of international standards of justice. He has subsequently been placed in solitary confinement and denied fresh air or outdoor exercise and is suffering from several injuries as a result of the assault inflicted on him. The rights of Alaa Abdel Fattah, now held in Wadi al-Natroun prison, have also been severely restricted and he is still denied consular visits, fresh air and outdoor exercise and only has limited contact with family. If his situation does not improve, he has threatened to resume his hunger strike in protest.

We urge you, as a matter of the utmost urgency, to release Mohamed Baker and Alaa Abdel Fattah immediately and unconditionally as they have been detained solely because of the peaceful exercise of their human rights; to improve the conditions in which they are held immediately; to launch an immediate investigation into their brutal and inhuman treatment and bring those responsible to justice and finally, to order the immediate release of Neama Hisham, unjustly detained simply for expressing concern about the abuse of her husband.

Yours sincerely

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Aisha el-Shater and Mohamed Abo Horeira. Please use the template message below to email President Abdelfattah al-Sisi to appeal for their immediate and unconditional release and urgent improvement in their prison conditions.

- To: p.spokesman@op.gov.eg

Your Excellency

Re: Appeal for the release of Aisha el-Shater and Mohamed Abo Horeira

I am extremely concerned to hear of the sentencing, on 5 March in an Emergency State Security Court, of Aisha el-Shater and Mohamed Abo Horeira to ten and fifteen years in prison respectively because of their human rights activities and peaceful dissent. I am also disturbed to learn of prison terms imposed on Ezzat Ghoniem, founder of the Egyptian Coordination for Rights and Freedoms (ECRF), and Hoda Abdelmoneim, human rights lawyer and 26 other defendants.

I believe that their trial was grossly unfair as the defendants were denied rights to adequate defence and had been detained for over four years in pretrial detention. I am also dismayed that they have no rights of appeal.

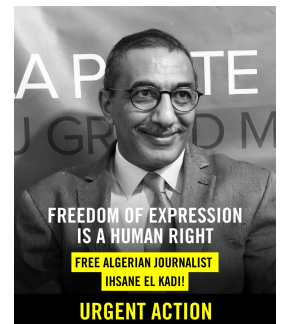
I am particularly distressed about the condition of Aisha el-Shater, who suffers from a rare and serious blood disorder and has not received necessary specialised medical care while in prison. I am also very concerned about reports of prisoner abuse at Badr 3 prison where Mohamed Abo Horeira is held. Both have been forbidden visits and communication with lawyers since their arrest in November 2018, which is in direct contravention of international standards of justice.

I urge you to order the immediate and unconditional release of all the defendants, the quashing of their convictions and the immediate provision of adequate health care and visits from family and lawyers.

Yours sincerely

Action: Freedom of expression is a human right: free Algerian journalist.

Ihsane El Kadi is an Algerian journalist who has been arrested, fined and imprisoned on vague charges because of his outspoken criticism of the repressive regime in Algeria. His conviction is a clear violation of his right to freedom of expression and the latest example of the Algerian authorities tightening their grip on critical voices and the independent media. He must be released immediately and unconditionally, and his conviction must be quashed. Please email the President of the Republic of Algeria using the template message below to appeal for his release.



What you can do:

Please email the President of the Republic of Algeria using the template message below to appeal for his release.

- To: President@l-mouradia.dz

Your Excellency

*I am writing to express my deep concern about the sentencing of journalist **Ihsane El Kadi** to five years in prison and a fine of 700,000 Algerian dinars (around USD 5,150) on trumped up and vague charges which are being used to criminalize journalism. On 2 April, the Sidi M'hamed first instance tribunal in Algiers convicted Ihsane El Kadi on charges of "receiving funds for political propaganda" and "harming the national security of the state", under Articles 95 and 95 bis respectively of the Penal Code. According to his lawyer, these charges relate to money which his daughter sent to him and which he invested into his media company – something which is not a criminal offence under Algerian law.*

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The court presented no evidence that Ihsane El Kadi's media company creates political propaganda nor that it is harmful to state security, meaning the charges against him are unfounded. On 2 April, the Tribunal of Sidi M'hamed also ordered the dissolution of Ihsane El Kadi's media company "Interface Media" and ordered him to pay a fine of 10 million dinars.

He was arrested in his home, without a warrant, on 24 December 2022 after he published an article on his predictions for the next presidential elections in 2024 and outlining the role of the Algerian army in repressing freedom of expression in Algeria.

Ihsane El Kadi remains detained in El Harrach prison in Algiers. I urge you to immediately and unconditionally release Ihsane El Kadi and quash his conviction. I further demand that you end the targeted crackdown and censorship of independent media and journalists in Algeria through vaguely worded articles of the Penal Code which are used to violate the right to freedom of expression.

Yours sincerely

Action in support of refugees/those fleeing persecution and exploitation

If you're concerned about the UK's latest immigration bill, you're not alone. The bill has sparked outrage and is inhumane, divisive, and racist. It carries far-reaching consequences that threaten to dismantle our asylum system and deny vital human rights protections to vulnerable people in our society

- To find out more: <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/blogs/campaigns-blog/inhumane-racist-divisive-5-reasons>
- To take action: <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/actions/stop-cruel-bill-email-rishi-now/thank-you>

Action: Saudi Arabia - release activist jailed for 27 years for tweets

On 9 August, the Specialized Criminal Court in the Saudi capital, Riyadh sentenced, after a grossly unfair trial, **Salma al-Shehab**, a Saudi activist and academic from Saudi Arabia's Shi'a minority to 34 years in prison followed by a 34-year travel ban.

She was accused, among other things, to "disturbing public order" for using Twitter and retweeting activists who support women's rights. We originally took action on behalf of Salma in September 2022.

The Specialized Criminal Court (SCC) in Riyadh, the Saudi capital, resentenced Salma al-Shehab, an academic and mother of two, **to 27 years in prison followed by a 27-year travel ban** on 25 January, after the Supreme Court returned her case to the SCC's appeals chamber to look into it again.

Salma is a Leeds University PhD student and mother of two from Saudi Arabia's Shi'a minority and was arrested shortly before she was due to fly back to the UK to continue her studies.

<https://www.amnesty.org.uk/press-releases/saudi-arabia-leeds-students-outrageous-34-year-sentence-twitter-use-must-be-quashed>

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/02/saudi-arabia-alarming-crackdown-on-online-expression/>

What you can do:

You can take action in support of Salma online:

<https://www.amnesty.org.uk/urgent-actions/release-woman-sentenced-27-years-tweets>



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