

**Amnesty International**

### **Blackheath and Greenwich**

### **Newsletter**

# August 2023

## Group Meeting Tuesday, 8.08.2023 in the crypt of St Margaret’s church

*Meeting chair: Anne F. Newsletter writer: Graham.*

1. **Introductions and Apologies**

Present: Amanda, Angela, Anne F, Brigitte, David We, David WW, Graham, Illona, Jennifer, Ken, Roger Visitors: Nabila H and Graham B

Apologies: Ann H, David Wi, Rachel

1. **Guest Speaker: Nabila H AIUK CC for China and Taiwan.** Nabila confidently led a wide-ranging discussion including China’s image and the global south, community activism and the threats posed by mass surveillance in China and in the UK. China is increasingly focussed on its relations with the global south. It plans to import oil and gas from the middle east using a pipeline through Pakistan. The Pakastani diaspora in Britain is the third largest in the world and if AIUK involved that community in human rights issues it might influence the Pakistan government to pressure China to change its polices on the Uighurs and other Muslim minorities. Iftars, the fast-breaking evening meal during Ramadan provides an opportunity for reaching out to this community. Ramadan 2024 runs from 10 March to 9 April.

Nabila described the frightening level of surveillance in China and recommended watching the film “Total Trust <https://total-trust.org/> . Surveillance is an increasing source of concern in the UK. She is also heading an Amnesty campaign opposing the building of a new “super” Chinese Embassy on the site of the old Royal Mint near the Tower of London. The Tower Hamlets local Amnesty group has closed and so Nabila wondered whether we would like to take on the campaign. Discussion of this will be a main item on our September agenda.

**Graham B,** chair of the Sutton local AI group, made a number of helpful and informative contributions to the discussion. His group meets in the Sutton Quaker Friends’ Meeting House. This provides wifi so they are able to hold hybrid meetings involving speakers from all over the world, something we might like to consider.

1. **Country/regional campaigns** – updates from Country Contacts.

CHINA – Angela Nothing further to add.

MEXICO AND CENTRAL AMERICA - Roger: No update as they are bimonthly.

CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE – Brigitte

**Turkey** The **Istanbul Pride**, which AIUK supported last month, was cancelled again – over 100 protesters were arrested in lstanbul and Izmir. Convictions were quashed in June of **Taner Kilic**, honorary chair of Turkey’s AI, **Idil Eser**, ex-director of Turkey’s AI and 4 others - 6 years after Taner’sinitial arrest.The **Saturday Mothers**: Vigils have continued for 40 years about disappearances but are always stopped and arrests made. A letter to be done about freedom to protest.

**Poland**: Repression of reproductive Rights: In March **Justyna Wydrzjynska** was convicted of helping a desperate woman obtain an abortion pill. A letter to be prepared.

Brigitte also gave brief reports on Greece, Tunisia and the Action on Burma campaign.

IRAN – Graham -The Iranian authorities are doubling down on their oppression of Iranian women and girls for defying degrading compulsory veiling laws, Amnesty International said in a new nine-page [briefing](https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde13/7041/2023/en/) 26 July. No action suggested.

WEST & CENTRAL AFRICA Anne F

A new report exposes the persecution of human rights defenders in West and Central Africa exposing corruption, bribery and abuse of office. Anti-corruption activists in 19 countries across the region risk arrest, harassment, detention, fines and death for speaking out about this abuse of power. Activists are also targeted with criminal prosecutions, an attack on their right to freedom of expression.

GUANTAMANO Anne F attended an effective vigil outside Parliament on 2 August and will bring information about sending messages of solidarity to the remaining prisoners at our next letter writing session.

1. **AIUK matters** (standing item)

Proposal for London groups meeting, Sun 10th / Tues 12th December 2023 at Human Rights Action Centre, London. It is proposed that meeting content, timing, etc be discussed at a meeting online in the coming weeks (David Wi) *carried over to the September meeting.*

1. **Future fundraising initiatives:**

Jazz concert (Brigitte)

* 1. Proposed date / location: either Fri 14th or Sat 15th June 2024 / Mycenae House, Blackheath, SE3 7SE – Brigitte will book once she has secured a band.
	2. Music group “sampler” – Fri 11th Aug, 8.30pm, Emmanuel Church, West Wickham BR4 9JS Brigitte, Angela, Graham and possibly David Wi will attend.

Screening of “The Mauretanian”, Catford Mews Cinema (Anne F, Rachel) Amanda has found that we could hire the Goldsmith’s College Cinema (101 seats) at initial cost of£330 but somewhat reduced for subsequent showings. Perhaps it could be used for a campaign at the same time.To be discussed by Anne Rachel and Amanda asap and followed up in September.

1. **Social Media** Jennifer and David Wi had been unable to attend the Amnesty Digital training event but will keep alert for future opportunities, In response to a query from David WW, Nabila said that AIUK were in the process of upgrading websites including those local groups.
2. **Arrangements for future** **meetings** Graham B said that he was willing to share the Sutton group list of speakers.
3. **AOB** None

**UPCOMING EVENTS 2023**

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| Tuesday 22 August |  Letter Writing 7.30pm Greenwich Tavern |
| Sunday 3 September | Summer Social. The Squirrels, Belmont Hill SE13 5DR |
| Tuesday 12 September | Group meeting in the Crypt of St Margaret’s Church |

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| **AIBG CONTACTS** |
| **Position**  | **Name**  |
| Chair  | Anne F |
| Vice-Chair | Brigitte |
| Secretary (enquiries contact) | David Wi |
| Treasurer | David We |
| Country Contacts | Africa (W&C) – Anne FChina – AngelaEurope - Brigitte Iran – GrahamMexico & C. America – RogerMyanmar - Brigitte |
| Publicity & Social Media | Jennifer |
| Membership & AIBG Website | David WW & David Wi |
| Letter writing co-ordinator | Brigitte |
| Newsletter writer / provider of meeting refreshments | To be rotated between all members of the group. Sept – Anne F. |

**AIBGenquiries**: enquiries.aibg@gmail.com

**Website**: [www.amnesty.org.uk/groups/blackheath-and-greenwich](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/blackheath#_blank)