**Amnesty International Blackheath and Greenwich**

**Group Meeting Tuesday 12th September 2023, in the crypt at St Margaret’s Church, Lee**

Meeting chair and notes writer: Anne F

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| **1** | **Introductions**, welcome to visitors / new members, apologies for absences, appointing newsletter writer (Anne F) | No introductions needed.  **Present:** Amanda, Jennifer, David Wi, Rachel, Graham, Angela, Ken, Brigitte, Anne F, David W-W  **Apologies for absence:** Roger, Ann H, Ilona, David We |
| 2 | **China Campaigns – Debrief from discussion at August meeting** (Angela, All) | Angela gave a long and detailed debrief on the August discussion and her subsequent communications with Nabila H.  The 2 campaigns Nabila had suggested we get involved with were - to try and get the UK Pakistani diaspora involved with the campaign to support the Uyghur people, and a campaign to oppose the building of a new Chinese embassy near the Tower of London.  After much discussion on the first idea, the overall feeling of the group was that there was a need to respect the needs of the community and not just parachute in with our campaign and then leave. We also felt that this would require a lot of effort and that it was too big an issue for one group.  The second idea was also rejected as possibly falling outside Amnesty's remit, as it was essentially a planning decision.  **Action:** Angela to feed this back to Nabila |
| 3 | **Country/regional campaigns** **–** updates from Country Contacts (All)  Update on Guantanamo vigil (Anne F) | **Africa (W&C)** – Anne F summarised the West and Central Africa newsletter (see below). There is a proposed letter regarding a prisoner in Burundi, to be circulated before the next letter writing meeting on Tuesday 26th September (Anne F).  **China** – Angela had nothing further to report following her lengthy summary above.  **Europe** - Brigitte had nothing to report.  **Iran** – Graham had received an invitation to join a Zoom call for local groups chaired by Paul Dawson, country coordinator for the Middle East and the Gulf on Thurs 14th. He asked about the ‘left behind’ campaign.  **Mexico & C. America** – Roger sent a summary of news from the region (see below).  **Myanmar** - Brigitte has not received any news for some time now, so will no longer be reporting back on this.  **Guantanamo vigil** - Anne F attended on Weds 6th September. |
| 4 | **AIUK (standing item) -** Proposal for London groups meeting, Sun 10th / Tues 12th December 2023 at Amnesty HQ, London | **Action:** David Wi to contact head office to say that the group is interested in this. |
| 5 | **Future fundraising initiatives** (standing item)  Jazz concert (Brigitte, Graham, Angela)  Proposed dates/location  Mycenae House, Blackheath, SE3 7SE  Booking of music group    Other?  Screening of “The Mauritanian” – options include Catford Mews Cinema or Goldsmith’s College Cinema (Anne F, Rachel, Amanda) | **Jazz Concert** - A group called ‘The Jukes’ are willing to do this for Amnesty and might charge a reduced fee. Mycenae House can provide a sound system. They would take 20% of the proceeds depending on how successful the event is. Their capacity is 200. Fridays are less expensive. Agreed that it could be seen as a loss maker as it’s the first of its kind for us and we are testing the waters.  Need to know deadline for the MH newsletter, which goes out to 8000 people.  **Action:** Brigitte to investigate and coordinate with Graham and Angela. Possible dates - Friday 11th May or end May/early June.  **Possible garden concert venue:** Rachel and Amanda to follow up (this would be for next year).  **Film screening**: All agreed that we should have a campaigns/info desk at whichever venue we choose.  Further info needed re cost of hire of film at Goldsmith’s.  **Action:** Amanda to follow up(?) with Goldsmith’s  Anne F has completed the online inquiry form for Catford Mews but is not confident that it is functioning properly. **Action:** Anne F to enquire in person - done. Will follow up with an email next week. It sounds promising. |
| 6 | **Social media** (Jennifer) | We need a second recovery email address.  **Action:** Jennifer to investigate. |
| 7 | **Arrangements for future** **meetings**  Other speakers and guests – Graham B’s list of speaker events | The Sutton AI group runs hybrid meetings which enables them to attract speakers from outside the UK. This is not possible for our group, because of WiFi issues at our current venue.  **Action:** All to research possible new venues that could support this kind of meeting. |
| 8 | **AOB**  Appointment of letter writer for October meeting  Vote of thanks to Amanda and Jennifer for hosting the social | None yet appointed  Those present thanked Amanda and Jennifer for hosting the social. It was a perfect location. |

**FUTURE EVENTS**

* **Tuesday 26th September 2023:** Letter writing

Location: The Greenwich Tavern, 1 King William Walk, Greenwich, London SE10 9JH

Time: 7.30pm

* **Future meetings: Speakers / events tbc**

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| **AIBG CONTACTS** | |
| **Position** | **Name** |
| Chair | Anne F |
| Vice-Chair | Brigitte |
| Secretary (enquiries contact) | David Wi |
| Treasurer | David We |
| Country Contacts |  |
| 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. Oct – volunteers please!** |

**West & Central Africa newsletter - please click on link**

**Central & South America update**

**IBG Mexico & Central America Update**

**Mexico.** The head of a commission charged with finding tens of thousands of missing people has resigned for unknown reasons which may mean the true number of the “disappeared” will not be known.

The international team investigating the murders of the Aytozinapa students has been encountering obstructions from people in the army and navy.

Mexico is considering making severe or widespread damage to the environment a crime.

**Guatemala.** An anti corruption candidate has been elected President but there is a legal challenge.

**El Salvador.** Amnesty’s El Salvador campaign, #ThankYouBukele, has now launched. The state of exception, initiated originally in March 2022 for 30 days, has been extended repeatedly and will now run to at least the 13th of September. During the state of exception, more than 150 people have died in custody and the number of people who have been arbitrarily detained is now well over 60,000. People are being held without a fair trial or means to legally defend themselves.

**Please sign the on-line petition** <https://www.amnesty.org/en/petition/end-human-rights-violations-in-el-salvador/>