



# News from the Minehead Group

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## Actions you can take this month:

- ✓ **Join us** for a talk on **Kashmir** on Thursday 5 October at 1800 at the Quaker Meeting House on Bancks Street, Minehead. Light refreshments will be served, and there will a short planning meeting afterwards for those who can stay.
- ✓ **Sign up** for updates on the 'End Israeli Apartheid' campaign by going on-line at <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/palestine-home>. The campaign is currently focusing on the importance of home. Try out a Palestinian recipe and watch a video of Abu Julia and Shazia Mirza cooking Palestinian food (Knafeh) and talking about life in Gaza. In all, there are three recipes to try with matching videos.
- ✓ **Support Amnesty** by buying your Christmas gifts and cards from the **Amnesty shop**. You can order on-line from [www.amnestystore.org.uk](http://www.amnestystore.org.uk) or by phone on 0800 999 2134

## News from our group

A group of us met at the Beach Hotel on 6 September. We made paper lanterns in preparation for our vigil the following day for the BK16 (see campaign report below). We also covered a small amount of business and agreed that, as our bank balance was looking healthy, we would send off £800 to AIUK.



## Campaign News

### INDIA: [Cherry Bird]

Cherry, Alison, Susan and Philippa marked the start of the G20 Summit hosted in India in September with a peaceful vigil for the BK16 prisoners. These brave people have been held in jail in India, some since 2018, because of their work defending the rights of some of the most disadvantaged people in the country. In the beautiful environment of St Peter's Chapel on the Minehead harbour, we lit paper lanterns and reflected on the bravery of such people and our concerns about the increasingly authoritarian nature of the Indian government and the seeming reluctance of western powers in the US and Europe to call this out, because they all want juicy trade deals with this potentially huge market. Our vigil was posted on social media and was part of a wider action by groups across UK and in Europe.

## Diary Dates

The Minehead Group aims to meet or take action together approximately once a month. All Amnesty supporters are welcome to join us

### Thursday 5 Oct

Talk on Kashmir at 1800 Quaker Meeting House, Bancks St, Minehead

### Wednesday 1 Nov

1430-1600: launch of Write for Rights (WfR) 2023 with letter writing at the Beach Hotel.

### Saturday 4 Nov

AIUK conference in London.

### 1-3 December

Minehead Christmas Tree Festival. Set up date/time tbc.

### Friday 1 December

Quaker quiet half hour at 1230, followed by soup lunch at 1300 and then WfR card/letter signing. Amnesty members are welcome to join the Quakers for any part of this event.

### Thursday 8 Feb

Minehead Group's AGM at the QMH.



Also leading up to the G20 Summit, a press release by AIUK called on Rishi Sunak to address India's human rights record during his attendance at the Summit, saying: 'India's hosting of the G20 offers a crucial opportunity for Rishi Sunak to speak openly and frankly to Prime Minister Modi about India's appalling human rights record, and the much-anticipated UK-India trade deal talks must not silence that.' Amnesty International also signed a joint open letter to representatives of G20 member and guest countries and international organisations raising their serious concerns regarding human rights violations occurring in Indian-administered Kashmir, particularly the unlawful detention and persecution of human rights defenders and journalists.

## AFGHANISTAN

AIUK handed the online petition for Afghan women to the UK government. Signed by 32,000 people, it called for the government to:

- Consult and listen to women-led organisations in Afghanistan.
- Support Afghan activists who are protecting the rights of women and girls.
- Ensure that respecting women's rights is non-negotiable with the Taliban.
- Provide safe passage for Afghan women & girls seeking asylum.

A sobering report in the Guardian newspaper highlighted the fact that rates of suicide and attempted suicide among young Afghan women have surged since the Taliban takeover in August 2021. The rates now exceed those for men, making it one of the very few countries in the world where this is the case.

## IRAN

AIUK recently circulated the good news that Morad Tahbaz - a British father imprisoned in Iran - had finally been freed from his prison sentence and flown out of Iran. Morad was unjustly imprisoned while doing conservation work in the country. He has cancer and his family have been worried he wasn't getting the care that he needed. Amnesty supporters had been actively campaigning for the UK government to do everything in its power to secure his release. Morad is now free and has been reunited with his family. Morad said: *'I...learned that even in the darkest places and worst conditions, there are still good people in this world and that gave me hope'*.

Sadly, there are still other British Nationals imprisoned unjustly abroad and kept in awful conditions. Amnesty continues to press the UK government to do everything in its power to help free prisoners such as Mehran and Alaa, and believes that UK officials are still needlessly keeping family members in the dark, and being too passive.

## ISRAEL AND THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES (OPTS).

As noted in the actions listed overleaf, the End Israeli Apartheid campaign is now focusing on the importance of home and how our need for a home connects us all. But for some of us, this precious space does not exist. Right now, Palestinians are instead experiencing forced evictions and demolitions that destroy their homes and strip them of their safety net. The Israeli authorities' system of apartheid reaches into homes and rips families apart. Despite these injustices, Palestinians are resisting. One of the ways they are doing this is through food. Through cooking, they are preserving their histories and telling their stories. Through food, they are keeping the hope of home alive. You can watch them cooking and listen to their stories at

<https://www.amnesty.org.uk/palestine-home>

### ***How to contact the Minehead Amnesty International Local Group:***

**Website:** [www.amnesty.org.uk/minehead](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/minehead)

**Email:** [amnestyminehead@gmail.com](mailto:amnestyminehead@gmail.com)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/amnestyminehead](http://www.facebook.com/amnestyminehead)

**Instagram:** [@amnestyminehead](https://www.instagram.com/amnestyminehead)

**Chair & group contact:** Alison Dietz: Tel. 07981 866905 Email: [aledietz7474@gmail.com](mailto:aledietz7474@gmail.com)

**Treasurer:** Cherry Bird Tel. 01984 641052 Email: [cherryebird@gmail.com](mailto:cherryebird@gmail.com)

**Newsletter, website & press:** Susan Mew 01643 821209 Email: [brightmanmew@btinternet.com](mailto:brightmanmew@btinternet.com)