

# Newsletter: November/December 2023

## Bognor Regis, Chichester & District Group



Dates for your diary	<b>Saturday 09/12/2023: Write for Rights action</b> , Chichester <b>Sunday 10/12/2023: Human Rights Day</b> , 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights <b>Saturday 27/01/2024: Holocaust Memorial Day</b>
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Dear writers

### Local events

**Saturday 09/12/2023: Write for Rights event at Chichester City Council House Portico 11:00 - midday.**

- If you would like to help collect signed cards, please come along from **10:45** when we will set up the table and Christmas tree for pinning and displaying signed cards for two of the cases in this year's Write for Rights campaign (we will provide cards, Christmas tree, Amnesty hi-vis and pens, as you can see from our photo of the 2022 event).
- Alternatively, do pop along and sign a card with us! The cases we will be focusing on this year are Chaima Issa (Tunisia) and Ahmed Mansoor (United Arab Emirates)



### Other events

#### Write for Rights 2023, 1 November - 31 December

This winter, join hundreds of thousands of Amnesty supporters around the world by taking part in our annual *Write for Rights* campaign and showing your support for people enduring human rights abuses.

Local groups have always been at the heart of *Write for Rights*, organising events in their communities in many different ways, mobilising people to take action in solidarity with the individuals, or calling on those in power to stop human rights abuses.



Please join us again this year: if you are able, please come along to Chichester on Saturday 09/12/2023, to ask passers-by to sign cards for two of the cases highlighted in this year's campaign (details of this event, above) and to help us decorate our Xmas tree with cards; and join us in sending cards or taking action online for as many of this year's individuals.

There are several resources for you to use this year, which you can download.

- [Download this year's handbook here](#) ; Group members who receive the Newsletter by post will be sent a print copy of the handbook. This handbook includes information about each individual case, what type of card you can send and suggested messages of support.

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- [Take action online here](#) from 1 November: this is if you have only limited time. These 'Focus Cases' are the cases where Amnesty UK believes solidarity from the UK will be particularly helpful.

### Good news from previous Write for Rights campaigns

- Human rights lawyer Mohamed Baker and researcher Patrick Zaki were released from prison after a presidential pardon on 19 July 2023. Mohamed featured in Write for Rights 2021. He said that everyone from Amnesty did much more than he expected and that he will never forget them standing by him.
- More than half a century after his first and grossly unfair trial for murder, Hakamado Iwao, 87, has been granted a retrial (October 2023). He spent 45 years on death row in Japan, until his temporary release in 2014 after a long-standing Amnesty Campaign, including Write for Rights 2021.
- More than 594,000 actions were taken to support Aleksandra Skochilenko from St Petersburg, who was detained after peacefully protesting against Russia's invasion of Ukraine: she was included in Write for Rights 2022 "Your attention warms us up at this difficult time and lets us feel that we are not left alone...She sends you a bit hello and thanks for the postcards!"
- Find more good news about previous Write for Rights campaigns in [this year's booklet](#)

### Letter-writing for Write for Rights/Human Rights Day

- 10 December 2023 marks the 75th anniversary of the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#), adopted by the United Nations on 10 December 1948.
- If you would like to hold a letter-writing/card-writing event to celebrate this and to write a few cards to support this year's cases, and would like a print copy of the Write for Rights leaflet for this event, please let me know: we have spares of the print copy to share!

**Amnesty Christmas Raffle: closing date 12/12/2023.** Enter the Amnesty Christmas Raffle and grab your chance to feel like a winner! How would you spend £5,000? That's what's up for grabs when the raffle is drawn in December. Buy your raffle tickets online today <https://amnestyinternational.thecharityraffle.co.uk/play> for your chance to experience that winning feeling, and you could help more people like unfairly imprisoned Taner Kılıç walk free!

### Amnesty International's latest information on the crisis in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

- As the situation is so fast moving, Amnesty is publishing the latest developments via publications on the Crisis page of the AIUK website, which you can see here: <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/issues/crisis-gaza-israel> This is the best page to keep an eye on if you want to understand all the latest information and developments from Amnesty.
- **Wednesday 06/12/2023 14:00- 14:55 Online briefing: Amnesty's Crisis Response - Gaza, Israel and the wider Occupied Palestinian Territory.** Presented by staff who are leading Amnesty's response, with information on Amnesty's efforts today working with international bodies and governments. [Register online to attend.](#)

**Update on planned Amnesty bookshop in Chichester:** we have been advised by the Amnesty National Retail Manager that this will not be progressing. We understand that Amnesty has decided not to open any new retail outlets this coming year, apart from a shop move in Malvern which was already committed. This means that our closest Amnesty bookshop remains the Brighton one, with Oxfam being the nearest fund-raising bookshop in Chichester.

Carry on writing!

*Bob Dewick, Amnesty*

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### Amnesty action: campaigns & letter-writing

#### Egypt update from Margaret, our Campaign Co-ordinator

##### Alaa Abd El-Fattah Update

The current crisis in the Middle East, the recent change of U.K. Foreign Secretary and imminent presidential elections in mid-December in Egypt, have combined to make campaigning on behalf of Alaa exceptionally difficult recently.

However, as his 42<sup>nd</sup> birthday (18 November) approached, we were asked to send a birthday card c/o the Egyptian Ambassador in London to remind the authorities of his situation. A card was sent from the group with the message:

*We are thinking of you on your birthday and hoping that you will soon be free. With best wishes from your friends in the Bognor Regis & Chichester Amnesty International Group.*

Thanks to all members who also sent email messages reminding the Ambassador about Alaa's continued imprisonment and appealing for his release. This appeal included poignant reminders of social and family events which Alaa has missed in the course of the past year including the birth of his niece and the chance to celebrate the wedding of **Patrick Raki** with other released political prisoners, **Mohammed Baker** and **Ahmed Douma**.



Alaa's family have continued to campaign vigorously for his release and we were delighted to hear that his sister, Mona, managed to visit Alaa so that he could meet and hold his baby niece. He is now held in much more comfortable conditions and is allowed music, books and family visits, but still no meetings with consular officials.

His other sister, Sanaa, has also featured in a recent *Observer* article 'My brother the political prisoner', by Sanaa Seif.

- To read the article click on this link:  
[https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/nov/19/my-brother-the-democracy-campaigner-and-political-prisoner-by-sanaa-seif?CMP=Share\\_iOSApp\\_Other](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/nov/19/my-brother-the-democracy-campaigner-and-political-prisoner-by-sanaa-seif?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other)

Sanaa can also be heard on two extended radio interviews available in which she gives moving accounts of her family background and their struggle to obtain Alaa's freedom.

- You can hear Sanaa, being interviewed on the BBC World Service [here](#).

#### Action for Alaa and Mehran Raof

Mehran Raof, is a labour rights activist unjustly imprisoned in solitary confinement in the notorious Evin prison in Iran.

If you would like to take direct action to enlist the support of your MP to appeal for the release of Alaa and Mehran Raof, two British nationals arbitrarily imprisoned abroad please click on the link below. [Call for Mehran & Alaa's release | Amnesty International UK](#)

#### Urgent Action Network

When you take action here, you do it as part of a movement of tens of thousands of people across the world, working together to raise our voices, demand justice and make change happen. Please do take action in solidarity with individuals at risk everywhere: <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/urgent-actions>

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