**Amnesty International Blackheath and Greenwich**

**Group Meeting Tuesday 14th November 2023, in the crypt at St Margaret’s Church, Lee**

Meeting chair: Anne F

Newsletter writer: David WW

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| **1** | **Introductions**, welcome to visitors / new members, apologies for absences, appointing newsletter writer (Anne F) | No introductions needed.  **Present:** Jennifer, David Wi, Rachel, Graham, Angela, Anne F, David W-W, Illona  **Apologies for absence:** Ken, Anne & Brigitta |
| 3 | **Country/regional campaigns** **–** updates from Country Contacts (All) | **Africa (W&C)** Anne F reported that.  Guinea: 13 journalists had been arrested for participation in an unlawful protest.  Cameroon: 2 individuals had been killed by independence fighters. The authorities must take measures to prevent human rights abuses. Also, a woman had been imprisoned for attending a demonstration.  **China** – Angela reported that there was a new country coordinator.  A human rights lawyer was being held on unspecified charges following rendition from Laos and is at risk of ill treatment. A letter will be prepared for letter writing.  **Europe** – A report was given by David Wi in Brigitte’s absence.  Turkey: The Sunday Mothers are being prevented by force from attending vigils to protest the disappearance of relatives.  Cyprus: A letter was signed at the meeting protesting against racist demonstrations and attacks in Limassol.  Greece: A vigil will be held outside the Greek Embassy on 14th October at 15:00 to call for safe routes for refugees.  Poland: A demo will be held outside the Polish Embassy on 2nd December to support Justyna Wydrynskaja and call for access to safe and legal abortions.  Trade in Policing Equipment: An online petition had been set up to call for better regulation of the export of police equipment.  **Iran** Graham reported that the Nobel Peace Prize had been awarded to Narges Mohammadi, who had been imprisoned since 2021.  AIUK urge us to help free two British nationals, Mehran Raoof and Alaa Abdel Fattah, by writing to our MPs. Graham will bring template letters to the November letter-writing.  **Mexico & C. America** No report.  . |
| 4 | **AIUK (standing item) -** Proposal for London groups meeting, Sun 10th / Tues 12th December 2023 at Amnesty HQ, London | **Action:** David Wi has contacted 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 – It won’t be possible to fix a date until early in 2024. Illona will liaise with the venue and a date will be decided.  Anne F had liaised with the manager of the cinema in Catford. It was agreed that screening the film in November would not be practical. I was agreed that we would aim for a date of 27th February, and we would endeavour to get Andy (?) to give an introduction and participate in a Q & A session.  The price of tickets would be discussed with the cinema. It was agreed that the purpose of the screening was to publicise the cause rather than to raise funds for the group.  . |
| 6 | **Social media** (Jennifer) | **Action:** David Wi would be given the social media login details to act as a back up to Jennifer.  Charlotte at AIBG would be notified / reminded of the new email address for the group |
| 7 | **Arrangements for future** **meetings**  Other speakers and guests – | The list of possible speakers from the Sutton group was discussed. It was agreed that we would seek to arrange the following to address us (via Zoom). These would be arranged to take place instead of group letter writings.   * Care4Calais * Iran action group * Death Penalty Project * The former MP on how to lobby. |
| 8 | **December Meeting and Mayfair & Soho Group Remembrance Event** | It was agreed that we would not have a group meeting in December, so that members could attend the Mayfair & Soho group witness event.  The event will be at 6.30 on Tuesday 12 December at Central YMCA, 113 Great Russell Street, WC1 (close to Tottenham Court Road station) |
| 8 | **AOB**  Appointment of letter writer for next meeting  North Korea Event | Graham volunteered to write the January newsletter.  Anne F had attended an event / film showing regarding North Korea at the Human Rights Action Centre. A report is attached |

**FUTURE EVENTS**

* **Tuesday 28th November 2023:** Letter writing

Location: The Princess of Wales, Blackheath

Time: 7.30pm

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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.** |

Annex North Korea Event:

‘Healing Hearts: The stories and voices of North Korean refugees’

This was a fascinating evening. It was organised, through Amnesty, by an American organisation called Freedom Speakers International, or FSI.

The organisation was set up by Eunkoo Lee and Casey Lartigue Junior, an American who graduated from Harvard University. They clearly have a lot of speakers on their books, because the leaflets that we were given featured many more than the three speakers that we had that night.

The three speakers (2 women, 1 man) spoke of the hardships that they experienced while living in North Korea, and while trying several times to escape. They were sent back, put in prison, freed and then tried to escape again. Two of them (Eunju Kim and Yeongnam Eon), spoke English but were quite hard to understand. The third one (Taehee Kim) had a translator.

After the presentations and the questions, we were shown a film, which was actually too long for the length of the event, so we were sent a link to the film on YouTube. Unfortunately, it was a private link that timed out after 48 hours, so it can’t be viewed any more, but it would be well worth watching if anybody gets the opportunity at a later date. It was called “You Don’t Know “.

It was made by a young South Korean director who interviewed one woman in particular (Lee Young-joo) about her experiences of living in North Korea, escaping, living in China and having a child there, then being held in prison there in terrible conditions, being “repatriated”, living again in North Korea, and trying again to escape before she finally succeeded.