



# News from the Minehead Group



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## Actions you can take this month:

- ✓ **Call on the Prime Minister** to protect UK nationals arbitrarily detained abroad for exercising their basic human rights. For example, **Mehran Raouf** is imprisoned in Iran for advocating for workers' rights, while **Alaa Abdel Fattah** is in detention in Egypt simply for using his voice to champion justice. In such cases, the UK government fails to take urgent action and it lacks a coherent strategy to support individuals or deal effectively with such cases. Sign the petition at

<https://www.amnesty.org.uk/actions/protect-uk-nationals-arbitrarily-detained-abroad>

- ✓ And if you haven't done so already, **sign the petitions** on the AIUK website calling on the UK Government to scrap its new **anti-protest laws** at <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/actions/scrap-new-anti-protest-laws> and demand an **urgent cease-fire in Gaza and Israel** now.

<https://www.amnesty.org.uk/actions/ceasefirenow>

- ✓ **Take more actions for South Asia** – see overleaf.

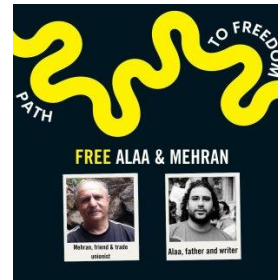
## News from our group

On 9 April, a small group of us met at the Beach Hotel in Minehead. In an hour and a half we wrote a pile of letters on cases featured in the spring edition of AIUK's **Real Lives** supplement. It was really nice to see some members we hadn't seen for a while. And thank you yet again to Peter for supplying the stamps.



## West Somerset Refugee Support Group

[Jenny Gateau reports] Providing summer holidays for our refugee friends is the least we can do in such troubled times, but as you know, these holidays are of such value to each person that comes. I have calculated that over the years, more than 180 individuals – men, women, children and babies - have enjoyed a day, a three-day or a full week's holiday with us, funded and looked after by our supporters. This year they will mostly be families newly arrived in Taunton or Bridgwater. We have already booked four holidays for this year but, sadly, this is the last time we will be able to use the Baptist Holiday Apartments, as they are having to close in November. So we need to make these holidays extra special. We have an on-going agreement with Taunton Welcomes Refugees and hope to put in place some afternoon visits for new families, just to help them get orientated before their holidays. They are nearly all from Afghanistan and have never been on a beach or seen the sea before. If you can help in anyway, please contact Jenny on 01643 708471.



## Diary Dates

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

### Monday 3 June

Group meeting to discuss the AIUK AGM resolutions. Via Zoom. Let Alison know if you'd like to take part.

### Saturday 22 June

AIUK AGM  
Further details on the AIUK website.

### Thursday 18 July

AmnesTea 1500-1700 at Mayhill, Woodland Close, Carhampton. Contact Susan for more information.

### Saturday 27 July

Amnesty Stall at Roadwater Fete. Timings tbc.

### Thursday 1 August

Kashmir event to mark the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Kashmir being made a union territory rather than a state. Details tbc.

### Saturday 14 Sept

Fund-raising afternoon concert with harpist and author Hazel Prior. 1500 at Roadwater Village Hall. Music followed by tea & cake.

## Regional Conference

[Here is Cherry's report of the day.]

This was a very successful and enjoyable event, again organised by the Exeter group. 48 people attended from local groups across the South West, including Penzance, Exeter, Plymouth, Mid-Devon, East- Devon, Taunton, Salisbury, Bristol, Wells, Minehead and Frome. A great opportunity to connect with others, and particularly nice to meet some enthusiastic young people.

There was a range of interesting topics, starting with Peter Radford's talk on being an effective **anti-racist ally**,

which really got people thinking much more deeply about this sensitive issue. Nadiya Shafi, a video-journalist from **Kashmir**, currently at the Centre for Applied Human Rights at York University, spoke movingly about the situation in Kashmir, particularly for women, who are so often heavily impacted by conflict. Many have been left as 'half widows' as their husbands have disappeared, but they have no evidence to prove whether they are alive or dead. Break-out sessions run by country coordinators offered a choice of Israel/Palestine, Peru or Turkey. I joined the Israel/Palestine group, which offered deeper insights into the whole sorry situation.

We ended the day with a lively discussion led by Chris Ramsey on **Amnesty Futures**, in the light of AIUK's new plans and the sense that the traditional model of local groups is no longer considered as relevant. In particular, we looked at how local activism might be enhanced without 'throwing the baby out with the bath water', and the support needed from AIUK.

*The picture shows the lunchtime action in front of the cathedral, in support of human rights defenders.*



## Campaign News

**INDIA** Cherry writes: Good news is that one of the BK16 activists, Shoma Sen, has been granted bail by the Supreme Court. She is a former Nagpur University professor held under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act for alleged Maoist links, held without trial since her arrest on 6 June, 2018. Now that elections are underway, we are seeing a crackdown on any opposition. Arvind Kejriwal, Delhi State Chief Minister and leader of the opposition Aam Aadmi Party, was arrested on charges of financial misconduct, and the bank accounts of another opposition party, the Indian National Congress, were frozen. The BJP government regularly misuses financial laws to detain and harass any opposition, including Amnesty, whose India offices have been shut down since 2020.

### Actions for South Asia

- Sign the petition to stop the roll back on human rights in Afghanistan:  
<https://www.amnesty.org/en/petition/stop-the-roll-back-on-human-rights-in-afghanistan/>
- Support 2 actions on the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh:
  - Stop Forced Prostitution and Sex Trafficking of Women and Girls in Rohingya Refugee Camps  
<https://www.amnesty.org.uk/activist-actions/ccsasrohingyarefugeestrafficking1123>
  - Demand the Bangladeshi government ensures security and Freedom of Movement for Rohingya Refugees <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/activist-actions/ccsasrohingyarefugees1123>

**THE UK's RWANDA BILL:** Despite widespread opposition, late into the night on 22 April, Parliament passed the **Rwanda Act**. Amnesty considers that this new law strips away the fundamental rights of those seeking safety on our shores and that it's a deliberate act of cruelty and a national disgrace. Amnesty will continue to challenge this act of injustice. Watch out for campaign updates on the AIUK website.

### 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](https://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)