**Amnesty International Blackheath and Greenwich**

**Group Meeting Tuesday 10th September 2024, 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 note taker for October meeting (Anne F) | The meeting welcomed Anita.  **Present:** Amanda, Jennifer, David Wi, Rachel, Brigitte, Anne F, Anita  **Apologies for absence:** Graham, Angela, Ken, Roger, Illona, Ann H, David We |
| 2 | **Fundraising event 2025** - **Preferred dates:** (1) Fri 09/05/25; (2) Fri 16/05/25; (3) Fri 25/05/25  **Location:** TBC. Mycenae House likely not available  **Music group?** | Discussion re possible venues and capacity. Agreed that it could not be too big as we could risk not having a big enough audience. Brigitte still awaiting reply from Charlton House. David W.W. was going to check whether Colfe’s School could provide a space.  Amanda raised the possibility of asking a local primary school.  David Wi to check with Illona whether she has managed to speak to Mark at Mycenae House. |
| 3 | **Country/regional campaigns** **–** updates from Country Contacts | **Africa (C&W)** – No updates  **China** – Angela had sent information about the screening of a film about the Uyghurs (“All Static and Noise”) on Sunday 22 September at the Human Rights Action Centre, EC2A 3EA, from 3-7pm. Tickets are free and can be booked here:  <https://buytickets.at/amnestyinternational/1383689>  **Iran** – Graham has summarised an update from the country coordinator (see page 3 below). Reminder of the film screening “There is No Evil” on Weds 25th September at 19:50 at The Garden Cinema in Covent Garden.  **Mexico & C. America** – Roger sent a summary of news from the region (see page 3 below).  **Europe** - Brigitte reminded the meeting about next month’s speaker, Ulrike Schmidt, one of 4 coordinators for the region. David Wi to publicise this on the Amnesty London Region WhatsApp group. |
| 4 | **Write for Rights - December** (Brigitte) | Discussion re a venue for this (Brigitte has had no success asking Lewisham Shopping Centre). There was a suggestion that the Blackheath Arts Centre (Ann H is the contact) or St Margaret’s Church (Amanda will ask) might be able to help.  In the meantime, this action is likely to be merged with the Woolwich event (see next point) |
| 5 | **Woolwich event** - December 7th 2024 (Anne F) | This event, called Amplify, will be held on Saturday 7th December at Woolwich Works, SE18 6HD, between 10am and 6pm (time TBC). It aims to raise the profile of human rights, with speakers, short films and stalls among other activities on offer. Anne F attended an online meeting on Weds 28th August with the Amnesty organisers and Graham Bisset (Amnesty Sutton Group). The next meeting is on Weds 25th (TBC). |
| 6 | **AIUK (standing item) -** London Region Group (Anne F, David Wi) | Graham Bisset, AIUK activist rep, London Region Chair and Sutton Amnesty Group, has proposed online meetings on the 4th Tuesday of the month, every other month. (This would clash with our letter writing sessions.) The aim of these would be to find ideas and ways to rejuvenate London Amnesty groups. Amanda has offered to attend the September and November meetings, and will report back. |
| 7 | **Arrangements for future** **meetings** (David Wi, All) | See below |
| 8 | **AOB**  1.Publicity & Social media contact  2.Stalls to raise our profile  3.Enquiry emails  4.Wifi in the crypt  5.Vote of thanks to Amanda and Jennifer for hosting the social | TBC  Amanda suggested Blackheath Farmers’ Market.  Anne F to set the address for this to auto-forward to her and David Wi.  Amanda to ask the new vicar.  Those present thanked Amanda and Jennifer for the perfect location and the unexpectedly good weather. |

**FUTURE EVENTS**

* **Tuesday 24th September 2024:** Letter writing

**Location:** The Princess of Wales, 1a Montpelier Row, Blackheath, London SE3 0RL

**Time:** 7.00pm for 7:30pm

* **Tuesday 8th October 2024:** Ulrike Schmidt from the Amnesty Europe team to join the meeting

**Location:** Crypt at St Margaret’s Church, Lee Terrace, London SE13 5DL

**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 | China - Angela, Iran - Graham, Europe - Brigitte, Roger - Central America, Central and West Africa - Anne F |
| Publicity & Social Media | TBC |
| Membership & AIBG Website | David WW & David Wi |
| Letter writing co-ordinator | Brigitte |
| Newsletter writer / provider of meeting refreshments | **To be rotated** |

**Iran** (Graham)

Iran (extract from AI Press release 11 September 2024): Two years after ‘Woman Life

Freedom’ uprising, impunity for crimes reigns supreme

People in Iran continue to endure the devastating consequences of the authorities’ brutal

crackdown on the “Woman Life Freedom” uprising amid systematic impunity for crimes

under international law, Amnesty International said today, ahead of the two-year anniversary

of the protests that saw people across Iran challenge decades of oppression and gender-

based discrimination

Two years on, the authorities have also further escalated their assault on human rights,

waging a “war on women and girls” through an increasingly violent crackdown on those

defying draconian discriminatory compulsory veiling laws and have intensified their use of

the death penalty to silence dissent.

With no prospect for independent and impartial investigations domestically, it is imperative

that states initiate criminal investigations into the crimes committed by the Iranian authorities

through their domestic prosecution offices under the principle of universal jurisdiction.”

**Central & South America** (Roger)

Mexico & Central America report September 2024

One piece of good news, but the general picture across the region remains gloomy.

The good news comes from **Honduras** which has passed a law that safeguards

protected areas in Honduras and prohibits mining in these areas. We have

campaigned for several years on the issue of defenders of water rights. Let’s hope the

new law makes a difference.

In **Mexico**, according to the National Registry of Missing and Disappeared Persons,

approximately 115,443 people have been registered as missing and disappeared and

never found from December 31, 1952 to August 21, 2024. There has also recently

been a surge in violence toward searchers, especially women. Amnesty has published

a new report Searching Without Fear: International Standards for protecting women

searchers in the Americas.

https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr01/8458/2024/en/

**El Salvador** has again extended its state of emergency under which thousands of

people (labelled gang members) have been detained without trial. 265 have died in

prison.

**Guatemala**. The anti-corruption lawyer Virginia Laparra who was herself prosecuted,

has decided to go into exile for the safety of herself and her family.

Amnesty has declared journalist José Rubén Zamora a prisoner of conscience and

calls for his immediate and unconditional release. He was arrested in July 2022 on

charges of money laundering and has been in pretrial detention since then. In June

2023 he was sentenced to six years in prison.

https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/08/guatemala-amnistia-

internacional-nombra-jose-ruben-zamora-preso-conciencia-exige-liberacion/

The **Nicaraguan** government has revoked the registration of another 1,500 NGOs.

They are accused of failing to report their financial statements for a period of

between one and 35 years. At least 695 were religious associations, while others

related to sports, health, women’s rights, LGBTQ rights, legal associations and

veterans’ clubs. United Nations Human Rights Office Spokesperson Liz Throssell

called the closures “deeply alarming”. In total, more than 5,000 NGOs, media

outlets, and private universities have had their legal status cancelled since late June

2022.

Repression of the media continues with 263 journalists going into exile since 2018.