**AMNESTY UK KENT NETWORK NEWSLETTER: NOVEMBER 2024**

**HIGHLIGHTS**

Welcome to our November newsletter. This month you can:

* **Join our online speaker meeting** this **Tuesday** to learn more about Amnesty’s **Paths to Freedom Campaign** and how you can support it
* **Take part** in this year’s **Write for Rights** Campaign
* **Call on** **your local MP** to support Amnesty’s five-step asylum proposal
* **Get a ticket** to **Amnesty’s human rights festival “Amplify”** at Woolwich Works on 7 December
* **Visit** the **Guantanamo Art Exhibition** in Shoreditch from 5 December to 5 January – or attend the opening evening
* **Join the Silent Protest** against **Violence Against Women and Girls** in Canterbury on 30 November
* **Join Cliffs of Sanctuary’s games night** **with refugees** in Dover on 14 December
* **Support care for torture survivors and refugees** at a fundraising event in Hastings on 22 November
* **Join** Amnesty’s new United Nations activist network
* **Buy cards and gifts** from the Amnesty shop

**SPEAKER MEETING THIS TUESDAY: UK NATIONALS ARBITRARILY DETAINED ABROAD**

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In its **Paths to Freedom Campaign**, Amnesty is calling on the UK government to develop a coherent strategy to **support UK nationals arbitrarily detained abroad**. Amnesty campaigned strongly for the release of Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe and Anoosheh Ashoori, who were wrongly imprisoned in Iran and were finally released. But many others are still behind bars, including **Alaa Abdel Fattah**, imprisoned in Egypt for using his voice to champion justice and **Mehran Raoof**, imprisoned in Iran for advocating for workers' rights.

**Join us online this Tuesday at 7:30pm** when **Sena Atici,** from Amnesty UK’s Individuals at Risk Teamwill tell us about the campaign and how we can support it. Email [arianna.pisetti@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:arianna.pisetti@amnesty.org.uk) for a link.

**WRITE FOR RIGHTS**

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Amnesty’s annual **Write for Rights Campaign** is well under way. Yesterday, 14 November, the Maidstone, Medway and Swale Group held a stall at Faversham Street Market (picture above). They will hold a further one at the **Christmas Fayre at Aylesford Priory on 23 November. A group of local Amnesty members are holding** a card writing session at **St Thomas’s Church, Groombridge, on 10 December**. The youth group at **Maidstone Grammar School** are promoting the campaign within the school and the **Soroptimist International** branches in **Medway and Maidstone** and **Tunbridge Wells** are doing so among their members. **If there are others of which we are unaware, or that we have forgotten to mention, please let me know and we can publicise what you are doing to our members.**

**You can take action on any or all of the cases** [**here**](https://www.amnesty.org/en/get-involved/write-for-rights/)**.**

ASYLUM

A wooden post with signs on it

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For years, Amnesty has been urging the UK government to reform the asylum system. Bureaucratic delays, backlogs and a refusal to process claims have turned an already difficult journey for people seeking asylum into an impossible maze. Previous governments have passed the buck on their responsibility, hoping someone else will pick up the pieces. But now, the UK is at a crossroads.

The current government has taken a step in the right direction, scrapping the disastrous and cruel Rwanda scheme and committing to clear the backlog of asylum claims. Yet we must urge them to do more. More than 100,000 asylum claims have been left in limbo, some dating back years. The question remains - will the UK build an asylum system that is both fair and efficient? Or will the Home Office continue down the same disastrous path?

Amnesty is urging the government to do the former. This month, Amnesty UK has released a five-step proposal illustrating how a fair system for deciding asylum goes hand-in-hand with an efficient one. When people are treated fairly, they can engage better with the system and decision-making processes and this saves time, money and resources.

To read about the five steps the government must take in order to create an asylum system that is both fair and efficient, [read this blog here](https://www.amnesty.org.uk/blogs/campaigns-blog/crossroads-future-uks-asylum-system?utm_content=155450&utm_campaign=MCFR1287S_LG_MM_Oct_24&utm_medium=email&utm_source=amnestyuk) and [download the full proposal here](https://www.amnesty.org.uk/files/2024-10/Asylum%20decision-making%20process%20FINAL.pdf?VersionId=zhhCvqg0427eeIpPIxbBAY_nNOeZDTkk&utm_content=155450&utm_campaign=MCFR1287S_LG_MM_Oct_24&utm_medium=email&utm_source=amnestyuk).

**We encourage you to write to your MP to draw attention to this proposal and ask them whether they will support it. Please let us know if you write and send us any responses that you receive.**

AMPLIFY: A NEW HUMAN RIGHTS FESTIVAL ON 7 DECEMBER

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A reminder that Amplify, Amnesty UK’s Festival of Human Rights, is taking place on 7 December at Woolwich Works. Amplify will bring Amnesty members and supporters together with leading thinkers, community organisers and changemakers to celebrate achievements, hear from inspiring success stories and explore next steps. Tickets are still available so don’t miss out!

The event will offer:

* Leading campaigners and activists in conversation
* Creative workshops
* Family-friendly activities
* Live music
* Opportunities to come together, meet and share stories
* An inspiring, energising and fun day out!

This event, to be held just across our border, is a great opportunity for Network members and supporters to meet each other in person, as well as other participants in the fight for human rights. It is also an opportunity to raise the profile of our Network and attract new members to it.

[For full details and to book tickets, click here](https://email.amnestyuk.org.uk/c/12nhvtY7ieNzWByDJBK8F9VET32e).

**GUANTANAMO BAY ART EXHIBITION: DON’T FORGET US HERE**

This exhibition, which includes photographs of 50 pieces of art from ex- or current detainees of Guantanamo Bay, will be displayed at Rich Mix, 35-47 Bethnal Green Road, Shoreditch, London, E1 6LA, from 5 December to 5 January. On 5 December at 6pm, the UK Guantánamo Network, in collaboration with Amnesty UK, is holding an opening evening on **5 December at 6pm**, at which one of the artists, Mansoor Adayfi, will be present.Flyer attached **RSVP**[**Dominique.oneil@outlook.com**](mailto:Dominique.oneil@outlook.com)**and**[**Lise.rossi@amnesty.org.uk**](mailto:Lise.rossi@amnesty.org.uk)**.**

**SILENT PROTEST IN CANTERBURY AGAINST VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS**

Our friends at **Soroptimist International Canterbury** have invited us to march with them on Saturday **30 November** to raise awareness of and speak out against **violence against women and girls**.   The march is silent to symbolise the silenced and unheard voices of those suffering abuse. The rates of domestic abuse and violence against women and girls in the UK today are shocking: statistics record that 1 in 3 women will experience such violence in their lifetime. On average this abuse results in the murder of 2 women every week. This year the march will be joined by the Rev Wendy Dalrymple and the Lord Mayor of Canterbury who have not hesitated in giving their support. handheld placards will be provided if you wish to carry one **For more information, please email dawnlilford@gmail.com.**

**CLIFFS OF SANCTUARY**

**Cliffs of Sanctuary, Dover, Deal and District** are holding a games afternoon with recently arrived refugees and local residents at **St Mary’s Church Hall, Dover from 2:30 to 5:30 pm on Saturday 14 December**. If you would like to attend, please email [cliffsofsanctuary@gmail.com](mailto:cliffsofsanctuary@gmail.com).

Cliffs of Sanctuary believe that every human being deserves to live in a place of safety, and recognise the contribution which refugees have made to the UK in centuries past and present. Their mission is to foster a more humane and compassionate attitude towards such people.

**SUPPORTING CARE FOR TORTURE SURVIVORS AND REFUGEES: FUNDRAISING EVENT**

**Hastings Community of Sanctuary** and **East Sussex Freedom From Torture Support Group** are holding a comedy night fundraiser **at Hastings Museum on 22 November from 7:00pm.** Tickets are [available online here](https://freedomfromtorture.us21.list-manage.com/track/click?u=7c088ee045990f5809eedb865&id=fee499fa37&e=9279885263) for £16.96, which includes the Eventbrite booking fee.

Both groups are supporting a campaign led by Detention Action to **end the UK’s practice of allowing indefinite immigration detention**, the only country in Europe to do so. Tens of thousands are detained indefinitely in prison-like conditions while their immigration or asylum claim is processed, sometimes for years at a time.

**NEW AMNESTY UK UNITED NATIONS NETWORK: STOPPING MASS ATROCITIES**

A new Amnesty activist-led United Nations Network has been established. The Network is campaigning against the abusive use by UN Security Council permanent members to veto resolutions aimed at stopping or preventing mass atrocities, such as the resolution calling for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza. **Please see the attached flyer for further details**. **If you would like to know more, please contact Mark Clixby on**[**maclixby@gmail.com**](mailto:maclixby@gmail.com)**or**[**amnestyunnetwork@gmail.com**](mailto:amnestyunnetwork@gmail.com)**.**

NEW AMNESTY SHOP CATALOGUE

A person with red hair wearing a black shirt with white text

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Buying and sending out cards and gifts from the Amnesty Shop is a great way to help spread Amnesty’s message. You can [order online here](https://www.amnestyshop.org.uk/?utm_content=155450&utm_campaign=MCFR1287S_LG_MM_Oct_24&utm_medium=email&utm_source=amnestyuk).



**Tuesday 19 November online at 7:30pm to 8:30pm. Kent Network speaker meeting about Amnesty’s Paths to Freedom Campaign with Sena Atici from Amnesty UK’s Individuals at Risk Team. Email** [**arianna.pisetti@amnesty.org.uk**](mailto:arianna.pisetti@amnesty.org.uk) **for a link.**

**Friday 22 November. Amnesty UK's Youth Conference, led and organised by the Children's Human Rights Network.** [**Book here.**](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/aiuk-youth-conference-tickets-1012813340967)

**Friday 22 November from 7:00pm. Fundraising event in support of torture survivors and refugees at Hastings Museum. Tickets** [**here**](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/sanctuary-comedy-special-2024-tickets-1016262276827)**.**

**Saturday 23 November at 9:00am to 4:00pm. Write for Rights stall at Christmas Fayre at Aylesford Priory.** **Email** [**mmands.amnestygroup@gmail.com**](mailto:mmands.amnestygroup@gmail.com) **for details.**

**Saturday 30 November. Silent Protest against Violence Against Women and Girls in Canterbury. Email** [**dawnlilford@gmail.com**](mailto:dawnlilford@gmail.com) **for details.**

**Monday 2 December at 7:30pm. Maidstone, Medway and Swale Group meeting at The Chiltern Hundreds,** **Penenden Heath Road, Maidstone, ME14 2DG. Email** [**mmands.amnestygroup@gmail.com**](mailto:mmands.amnestygroup@gmail.com) **for details.**

**Wednesday 4 December at 1:00pm. Monthly Close Guantanamo Vigil in London. Email** [**maclixby@gmail.com**](mailto:maclixby@gmail.com) **for details.**

**Thursday 5 December. Opening of Guantanamo exhibition at Rich Mix, 35-47 Bethnal Green Road, London E1 6LA. RSVP**[**Dominique.oneil@outlook.com**](mailto:Dominique.oneil@outlook.com)**and**[**Lise.rossi@amnesty.org.uk**](mailto:Lise.rossi@amnesty.org.uk)**.**

**Saturday 7 December. Amplify Human Rights Festival, organised by Amnesty UK**. [For full details and to book tickets, click here](https://email.amnestyuk.org.uk/c/12nhvtY7ieNzWByDJBK8F9VET32e).

**Tuesday 10 December: Human Rights Day**

**Tuesday 10 December from 7:00pm to 9:00pm: Write for Rights card writing session at St Thomas’s Church, Groombridge. Ring 07752960007 for information.**

**Saturday 14 December from 2:30 to 5:30pm: Cliffs of Sanctuary’s games night with refugees at St Mary’s Church Hall, Dover. Email** [**cliffsofsanctuary@gmail.com**](mailto:cliffsofsanctuary@gmail.com)**.**

All the best

Graham