



Minutes of [Amnesty International Reading Group](#) Meeting

Thursday 10th April 2025

Chair: Anne

This meeting was held on Zoom

Welcome and introduction

12 people joined the meeting tonight: Vicky, Paula, Blanca, Sue, Ruth, Helen, Angus, Liz, Hilary, Ilaria, Ian - no cats present today!

This group meeting was a meeting to discuss current campaigns and future plans, to allow for information discussion and decision-making.

Annual Campaign - We Stand with Afghan Women

Team leading on this campaign - Hilary, Helen, Ilaria, Paula and Blanca

The team reported back that they had met to put together a rough plan for the year.

Focus areas - awareness raising so more people understand and take action to defend Afghan women.

Events to plan

- an online webinar (possibly with Amnesty Feminists- AF). ACEN are very keen to work on this too. Timing - early Autumn?? team are researching speaker
- an in person panel discussion or film showing in Reading for International Festival - October/Nov
- action at Waterfest and any other local festivals, petitions, photo actions, etc

Areas to explore and do further research

- Safer routes to UK for Afghan women
- Gender apartheid campaign.

Are there any local diaspora for us to consult with?

- Team to explore with local charities

Working with our MPs

- A meeting was held with Liv Bailey, MP for Reading West and Mid-Berkshire. Discussed attending local events - Liv was very keen. Discussed Liv presenting a petition to the House of Commons. We have sent her the wording of the current Amnesty petition for her perusal. If she's happy as it is, we can move forwards. If she wants it amending, we need to consult with Amnesty. She could put it in anonymously; however, we felt we would default to the 10 Downing St idea, as we can do more publicly about that.
- Hilary and Ian were keen to contact Yuan Yang - Angus was able to find out her surgery dates and could support with any meeting.
 - Helen to put Hilary, Ian and Angus in touch with each other and pass on her notes for the meeting with Liv Bailey

Working with other Amnesty groups

- CEN
- Amnesty Feminists
- other groups keen to work on this issue

Group to feedback more at the next meeting

Group business

- **Group subscription discussion**

Anne opened a discussion about reinstating group subscriptions. We used to have a £10 annual request for our regular members. We also had a collection tin on the table for meetings. We used to have fundraising targets for the group and Amnesty would share the top 5 fundraising groups at the annual conference.

However, it was noted that many costs have been reduced as we meet online now, so no room hire costs. Also there are no costs for speakers to come to Reading.

Ruth, our treasurer, reported that Amnesty seemed happy with our current funds, which will be reported fully at our group AGM in June.

Also noted was the fact that some members didn't claim for some costs, the Zoom membership and postage for the Write for Rights letters at larger events, for example. We do need to ensure we have funds for costs that allow us to raise awareness, so we need to monitor fundraising. Also for the £72 we have to send to Amnesty to be recognised as a local group.

Questions and discussions

- Do we get funds from Amnesty? - no. We send money to them (although some grants are occasionally available for specific events/campaigns)
- Some of our money might be ring fenced - ie. the bequest we received had to be spent on a party
- Isn't Amnesty a charity? - yes and no! Amnesty covers this well on their website - <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/amnesty-international-uk-two-organisations-working-defend-human-rights>
- Could we have a just giving page that came directly to us? We used to have one but it no longer runs. There are some costs involved in that.
- Could we just ask people to donate directly to our bank account, to avoid costs - yes entirely possible
 - The group decided to put the bank details on the newsletter and promote donations.
 - Plus encouraging people to join Amnesty itself.
 - Also to continue to monitor funds versus costs.

Flags and Placards

- We now have two flags with Reading Group logo on! One single, one double sided.
- We now have 50 placards for last year's Hong Kong campaign!

Anoosheh Ashoori Exhibition

- Amnesty have now organised these placards and are offering them to local groups to borrow. Reading Biscuit Factory are willing to exhibit for free! We have asked if Anoosheh might come to read for a launch event - that would determine timings.
- it was asked if we could do a film showing at the same time - possibly. That takes quite a bit of organising, licenses, costs, etc.. let's see what the timeline might be to see if that's possible
- Can Anoosheh come to Reading? Helen to be in touch with Phillippa at groups

Upcoming dates

- **Chance2Dance4Charity - Friday 25th April** [tickets here!](#)
 - Bus details - Bus for chance2dance4charity - Pink 25 to Peppard Common, from Friar St at 18.55. Get off at Peppard Stores stop, turn left onto Gallowstree Road, and the Hall is just down a bit on the right. Buses back at 21.01 and 21.51, to Reading Station North & Friar St.
- our next meeting- Thursday 8th May - Racial Justice speaker Ilyas Nagdee from AIUK

- Anne and Helen have been involved with creating a webinar on Immigration Detention - Thursday 5th June 7-8.30pm - booking details to follow
- National Conference and AGM - 5th/6th July at Warwick Uni . [More details here.](#)
- Regional Conference - 11th October - we think in Leicester?

Group campaign updates

- **Cuba**
 - Sue noted that Cuba was one of the few countries not to be included in US tariffs
- **South Asia**
 - Hilary updated us with key points from the current South Asia newsletter - [see here](#)
 - Garment workers - Of particular note is the Activists Lead campaign about garment workers in Sri Lanka, Pakistan, India and Bangladesh. Nearly 100million women are at risk in their work, as they ensure poverty wages, gender-based violence, harassment, excessive workloads and poor working conditions. Of the 21 brands being focused on, 8 are UK brands, including H&M, M&S and Next. We will get further updates from this campaign as it evolves.
 - **Anti-death penalty, South East Asia, Hong Kong, Türkiye, UAE - our prisoners of conscience, Ahmed Mansoor & Dr Mohammed al-Roken** - no updates this month

Our Group's confirmed Upcoming Events:

Event	Dates	Venue
Chance2Dance4Charity	Friday 25th April, 7.30-9.30pm	Peppard War Memorial Hall tickets here
Immigration Detention webinar	Thursday 5th June 7.00-8.30pm	online - booking details to follow
Waterfest	Saturday 28th June, daytime	Forbury Gardens/Abbey Ruins
Reading Pride	Saturday 30th August, daytime	Kings Meadow

Sponsored Human Rights Trail	Sunday 14th September at 2.30pm	City of London - booking details to follow
Barn Dance with the Scamping Rogues	Saturday 15th November, 7.30pm	St Michael's church - booking details to follow
Write for Rights	Thursday 11th December, 7.30-9.00pm	Reading Biscuit Factory

Other events likely to be planned in

- International Festival - October/November

Other Amnesty or local upcoming events:

Event	Dates	Venue
National Conference and AGM	5th/6th July	Warwick uni
Regional Conference	11th Octo	TBC

Next meeting: Thursday 8th May 2025

Zoom at 8pm

Ilyas Nagdee - Racial Justice

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82789559652?pwd=hQpxJaOWfEHppKy3KdMjzaob2X0hF6.1#success>

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