**Amnesty Kent Network newsletter June 2025**

Dear Kent Network members and supporters

**HIGHLIGHTS**

Welcome to our June newsletter.  Lots of disturbing developments this month, but also lots that you can do challenge the threats to human rights, including

* **Join our speaker meeting this Tuesday** to hear about the work of Refugee Action and how we can support each other
* **Visit our stall** at the **Dover Multicultural Festival** next Saturday
* **Join us** at the **Medway Walk for Peace** on 12 July
* **Write to your local MP** calling on them to support a **ban on Israeli settlement goods**
* **Sign the petition** to **stop the cuts to social security** and **raise the issue with your local MP**
* **Seek a meeting with your local MP** to raise these and other matters
* **Volunteer** to join us at one of this year’s **Pride events**
* **Take part** in this year’s **AGM and National Conference** at Warwick University

**SPEAKER MEETING THIS TUESDAY: REFUGEE ACTION**



**Join us this Tuesday 17 June at 7:30pm** when Colin Parker, member of the Campaigns team of Refugee Action, will talk about their work and how we can support each other. Refugee Action is an independent national charity founded in 1981 that provides advice and support to refugees and asylum seekers in the UK and campaigns for a fairer asylum system. **Email** **mark.clixby@amnesty.org.uk** **for a link**.

**REFUGEE WEEK**

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Our speaker meeting is well timed as **Refugee Week starts tomorrow 16 June**. Our **Maidstone, Medway and Swale Group** started early with a **stall at Faversham Market** yesterday when we presented a positive message about refugees and why we should welcome them. We collected **lots of signatures for a letter to local MP, Helen Whateley**.

**Next Saturday**, from 10:00am to 5:00pm, our **Dover Team** will have a stall at the **Dover Together Multicultural Festival** at Pencester Gardens, when we shall be sending a similar message and collecting signatures for **a letter to local MP, Mike Tapp**. If you are free, do go along and say hello.

Finally, a reminder that on **25 June from 7:00pm to 8:30pm**, Amnesty’s Central England Network will host an online event: "**Immigration Detention in the UK: what’s going on?”** [**You can register here**](https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/r3zGn8PKTUW1QaZH1uNr7Q#/registration) .

**MEDWAY WALK FOR PEACE**

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A group of us will be joining the [**Medway Walk for Peace on 12 July**](https://medwaypeace.wordpress.com/). Organised by our friends at Medway Inter Faith Action, this is a great opportunity to network with other groups of various faiths and promote our activities**. If you would like to join us, please email me**.

**ISRAEL AND THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES**



Following the launch ofthe next phase of Amnesty’s End Israeli Apartheid campaign, Kent Network local teams have started to reach out to local MPs to call, among other things, for a **ban on Israeli Settlement Goods**. To support local activists in this, it has produced a [Settlement Goods Campaign Pack](https://www.amnesty.org.uk/resources/ban-israeli-settlement-goods-campaign-pack?utm_content=162409&utm_campaign=MCFR1428S_LG_MM_May_25&utm_medium=email&utm_source=amnestyuk). **If you would like advice on approaching your MP about this, please email Mark on** **mark.clixby@amnesty.org.uk****. If you get a response from your MP, please let Mark know.**

Amnesty’s call for an independent and impartial investigation into the killings of at least 15 Palestinian medics and rescue workers in Gaza in April has [**received coverage in the Hastings Byline Times**](https://hastingsonlinetimes.co.uk/hot-topics/politics/amnesty-branch-calls-for-action-on-gaza-from-mps-dollimore-and-mullan), thanks to the efforts of Amnesty’s Hastings and Bexhill team who have asked their two local MPs to raise the issue with the UK Government. Amnesty has published [fresh evidence of genocide against Palestinians](https://www.amnesty.org.uk/press-releases/israelopt-fresh-evidence-genocide-satellite-imagery-reveals-total-razing-khuzaa), with satellite imagery revealing the **total razing of the town of Khuza'a in southern Gaza**. Evidence suggests the destruction is a **deliberate campaign by Israeli forces to render the area uninhabitable**..

Meanwhile in the West Bank, the [**Israeli military has displaced tens of thousands of Palestinians**](https://www.amnesty.org.uk/press-releases/israelopt-west-bank-military-operation-part-ruthless-apartheid-system-new-briefing) by destroying homes and essential civilian infrastructure in Jenin and Tulkarem refugee camps, part of a wider pattern of unlawful Israeli policies and practices to dispossess, dominate and oppress Palestinians in the West Bank under a ruthless system of apartheid.

Amnesty has also condemned Israel’s **interception of the Gaza Freedom Flotilla's Madleen boat,** saying that, byflouting its legal obligations towards civilians in Gaza, Israel has demonstrated [**its chilling contempt for legally binding orders**](https://www.amnesty.org.uk/press-releases/israels-interception-gaza-freedom-flotillas-madleen-boat-condemned-chilling-contempt) of the International Court of Justice. Amnesty said that the humanitarian mission was itself **an indictment of the international community’s failure to put an end to Israel’s inhumane blockade.**

Here in the UK, [**Amnesty has expressed concern over the news that Foreign Office staff had been told that they should consider resigning if they disagreed with government policy on Gaza**](https://www.amnesty.org.uk/press-releases/uk-foreign-office-staff-told-consider-resigning-if-they-disagree-gaza-chilling). Amnesty said that staff were raising legitimate human rights concerns about the UK’s role in Gaza and the Government’s response sends a chilling message to civil servants, and to the wider public, that principled dissent on matters of international law and human rights is unwelcome in Government.

**SOCIAL INSECURITY**

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Following last month’s launch in Manchester of Amnesty’s new report, [Social Insecurity: The Devastating Human Rights Impact of Social Security Failures in the UK](https://www.amnesty.org.uk/resources/social-insecurity-report?utm_content=161515&utm_campaign=MCFR1427S_LG_MM_April_25&utm_medium=email&utm_source=amnestyuk), we have **started to include the issue in the agenda of our meetings with local MPs**, starting with Ashford MP, Sojan Joseph – see below. You can now **watch a recording of the launch event** [**here**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GSjJbAjqnIQ) **and sign the petition** [**here**](https://www.amnesty.org.uk/actions/stop-the-cuts?utm_content=162409&utm_campaign=MCFR1428S_LG_MM_May_25&utm_medium=email&utm_source=amnestyuk)**.** If you would like **advice on raising this issue with your local MP**, please email me.

**BUILDING LINKS WITH LOCAL MPs**



Following last year’s General Election, we are gradually rebuilding links with our local MPs, including those who were elected to the office for the first time. On 6 June, I accompanied two of our Ashford-based members, Tim and to **a meeting with their MP, Sojan Joseph**. Sojan gave us an hour of his time enabling us to cover three issues in depth: refugees and asylum, Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and social security. We raised our concerns about the UK’s policies on all three issues, asked Sojan to relay these to the Government and urged him to speak up for human rights in all three areas. **The meeting was constructive and friendly and we have put in a bid for a further meeting in three months’ time**. As above, if you would like advice on approaching your MP, please email me.

**PRIDE**

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We have had to cancel plans to have a stall at some Kent Prides this year, due to a mixture of high participation fees and a lack of volunteers to staff the stalls. However, our participation in **Deal Pride (12 July)** is confirmed and we expect to participate in **Margate Pride (9 August).** We also hope to participate in the Pride events in **Folkestone (26 July), Tunbridge Wells (16 August)** and **Dover (23 August),** subject to cost and enough volunteers being available. **If you would like to support us in any of these events, please email Mark at** **mark.clixby@amnesty.org.uk****.**

**ANTI-RACISM AND THE PREVENT DUTY**

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We held our fourth roundtable conversation in Medway on 4 June. This series of conversations has been a useful means for **raising awareness of Amnesty’s concerns about the Prevent Duty** and **learning of the experiences of local people** who have encountered it in various ways. One thing we discussed was the concerns raised by the NGO Rights & Security International about **the treatment of autistic people who are referred to the scheme**.

We intend to pause these conversations pending the government’s anti-terrorism review, which will include a review of the Prevent Duty, with a view to resuming them after that. Meanwhile, **if you have an interest in raising awareness of Amnesty’s concerns about the Prevent Duty in your area, please get in touch.**

**USA**

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**Amnesty has**[**strongly criticised the US Government’s militarised response to protests**](https://www.amnesty.org.uk/press-releases/usa-deployment-military-chilling-preview-more-human-rights-violations-come), including the deployment of the [National Guard](https://www.amnesty.org.uk/press-releases/usa-deployment-national-guard-los-angeles-deeply-alarming) and the Marines in Los Angeles, as further escalating tensions, stoking fear and suppressing opposition. The protests themselves have been described by Amnesty as an **urgent outcry against a broader pattern of human rights violations**: death and destruction, mass deportations, unlawful detentions, expulsions to dangerous conditions in other countries, suppression of dissent, and the denial of due process.

**NORTHERN IRELAND AND RACISM**

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Amnesty UK has launched an action to **call on the UK government to take action to protect Northern Ireland journalists** who are receiving threats and acts of violence to try to silence them. According to [Amnesty’s recent report](https://www.amnesty.org.uk/resources/occupational-hazard-protect-journalists-northern-ireland-report), At least 70 threats and acts of violence - including rape and death threats - have been made against journalists in Northern Ireland since 2019. Most threats come from armed paramilitary groups, yet there have been no related prosecutions. **You can** [**take action here**](https://www.amnesty.org.uk/actions/ni-press-freedom?utm_content=162563&utm_campaign=MEMA6114S_ACT_UKHR_FoE_NIJournalists_3Jun&utm_medium=email&utm_source=amnestyuk#client_id=1317924&guid=3099a1df59384d75).

Following the **violent disorder in** **Northern Ireland**, fuelled by racist hatred, stoked by disinformation on social media and amplified by politicians who irresponsibly conflate immigration with crime and social issues which affect all communities, [**Amnesty has called for politicians to speak truthfully about immigration**](https://www.amnesty.org.uk/press-releases/northern-ireland-racist-violence-fuelled-disinformation-and-irresponsible-political), not echo false claims on social media.

**ALAA ABD EL-FATTAH**



In a landmark decision, the United Nations’ Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (UNWGAD), a panel of independent human rights experts that investigates cases of arbitrary arrest and detention, has found that **British-Egyptian writer Alaa Abd el-Fattah is arbitrarily detained** in Egypt and that Egyptian authorities **therefore have an obligation to release him immediately** under international law. **You can** [**read the full UNWGAD report here**](https://freealaa.net/unwgad-ruling).

**AGM / NATIONAL CONFERENCE (OR THE AMPLIFY SUMMIT)**

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**There is still time to book your ticket for the Amplify Summit on 5 & 6 July at the University of Warwick**. The event combines AIUK’s Annual General Meeting and a host of workshops, opportunities to meet other activists, learn about key campaigns and time to celebrate our achievements as a movement. Attendance is free for all members and activists, but the deadline for booking accommodation at the university has passed. **To book your ticket for the event, and view the event FAQs, please head to** [**Eventbrite**](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/amnesty-amplify-summit-agm-national-conference-registration-1234724587479?aff=LGM2).

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**Tuesday 16 June at 7:30pm to 8:30pm.  Kent Network online speaker meeting: Colin Parker of Refugee Action. Email****mark.clixby@amnesty.org.uk****for a link.**

**Wednesday 2 July at 1pm to 3pm. Monthly Guantanamo vigil outside Houses of Parliament. Email** **mark.clixby@amnesty.org.uk** **for details.**

**Monday 7 July at 7:30pm to 9:00pm.  Maidstone, Medway and Swale Group meeting at Maidstone Community Support Centre, 39-48 Marsham Street, Maidstone, ME14 1HH, and online.  Email****mmands.amnestygroup@gmail.com****for details or for a link.**

**Saturday 21 June. Stall at Dover Multicultural Festival. For details, email Martin at** **martin3769@hotmail.com****.**

**Wednesday 25 June 7:00pm - 8:30pm - Central England Network Online Event: "Immigration Detention in the UK: what’s going on?”** [**Register here**](https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/r3zGn8PKTUW1QaZH1uNr7Q#/registration)

**Saturday 5 July to Sunday 6 July.  Amnesty UK National Conference and AGM at Warwick University.**[**Tickets here**](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/amnesty-amplify-summit-agm-national-conference-registration-1234724587479?aff=LGM)**.**

**Saturday 12 July at 10:30am to 5:00pm. Medway Walk for Peace. Email** **graham.minter@amnesty.org.uk** **for details.**

**Saturday 12 July. Deal Pride. Email** **mark.clixby@amnesty.org.uk** **for details.**

**Saturday 26 July. Folkestone Pride. Email** **mark.clixby@amnesty.org.uk** **for details.**

All the best

Graham