



Amnesty International UK

August 2025



## News from the Minehead Group

[www.amnesty.org.uk/minehead](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/minehead)

[www.facebook.com/amnestyminehead](https://www.facebook.com/amnestyminehead)

Instagram: @amnestyminehead

### Actions you can take this month:

- ✓ **Come along** to our **AMNESTEA** on Saturday 16 August from 1500-1700 in Susan's garden: Mayhill, Woodland Close, Carhampton TA24 6PE and bring your friends. And, if you can **donate a raffle prize** and/or **bake a cake**, please let Susan know (01643 821209).
- ✓ **Write** to our MP, Rachel Gilmour, using the template letter sent out with this newsletter. This asks her to support the call for the UK to join the ICJ (International Court of Justice) proceedings against the Afghan authorities and to formally recognise the gender apartheid taking place in Afghanistan. The case was launched by Australia, Canada, Germany and the Netherlands in September 2024.
- ✓ **Sign the petition** calling on the Iranian Embassy in the UK to urgently demand that Iranian authorities halt the executions of **Pakhshan Azizi** and **Verisheh Moradi**, quash their convictions, and release them immediately. Pakhshan, a humanitarian aid worker, is being punished just for helping women and children displaced by ISIS. Verisheh, a member of the group East Kurdistan Free Woman Society, is facing the death penalty following a grossly unfair trial. In the aftermath of the #WomanLifeFreedom uprising, Iran's authorities have intensified the use of the **death penalty** as a tool of repression and fear. In 2023 alone, the Iranian authorities executed at least 853 people—the highest number in eight years. Follow this link: <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/actions/stop-executions-pakhshan-azizi-verisheh-moradi>

### News from our group

**Refugee week:** On 16 June, 11 of us got together for a bring and share supper. We were lucky with the weather and were able to enjoy the sunshine in Susan's garden. Jenny gave us an update on the Minehead & District Refugee Support Group's plans for the summer and also on the work of RAFT (Refugee Aid from Taunton) and the Taunton refugee support groups. It was a lovely, relaxed evening with plenty of chat and good food! The 'day be the sea' for local refugee families will be on 12 August and is being supported by a grant from AIUK. We look forward to hearing how it goes!



**Roadwater Fete:** our stall at the fete attracted lots of attention from adults and children alike. We collected a good number of signatures on our letters about women

in Afghanistan and had some interesting conversations with fete-goers. The children (and some parents!) enjoyed all the games. The big yellow banner was visible from various points on the recreation ground, so it was good for raising Amnesty's profile too.



### Diary Dates

We aim to meet or take action approximately once a month. All are welcome to join us.

#### Sat 16 August

AmnesTea in Susan's garden in Carhampton 1500 to 1700.

#### Early September

Launch of the SW Regional Network. Let Cherry know if you'd like to be kept informed about this.

#### October (date/time tbc)

Letter writing session and update on our BK16 campaign.

#### 1 November

Launch of Write for Rights 2025.

## AIUK Amplify event and AGM

Susan and Cherry attended 'Amplify' at Warwick University, the first full two-day conference AIUK has run since Covid. It was good to meet up with people from other local groups and AIUK staff. The highlight of the weekend was the keynote speech by Amnesty Secretary General **Agnes Callamard**, who was there in person. A bundle of energy and commitment she noted that the rule of law is under attack across the globe, as never before. But this is not just about Donald Trump. Other countries have not adequately defended the rule-based order and universal rights envisaged after WWII. Trump is a consequence. Agnes spoke of betrayals everywhere and the **creeping spread of authoritarianism**, saying there had been destruction of institutions without a Plan B. She called for a halt to the growing dominance across the globe of an anti (human) rights movement.

Closer to home, Agnes highlighted the **repression of freedom of expression** evident in the UK, sadly by our own government, targeting both political and environmental protests. She labelled it rule by law rather than rule of law. She concluded saying that '**resistance begins locally**'. That means us!

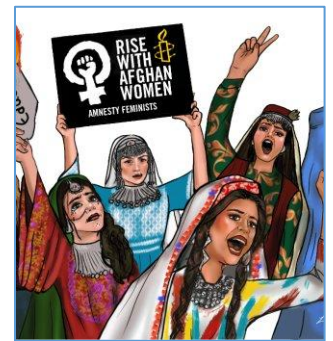
**Prosecuting the Powerful:** earlier in July, Alison and Cherry both joined a **webinar** organised by the AIUK UN Network. The speaker was **Steve Crawshaw**, a former journalist, writer of several books and currently the policy and advocacy director at Freedom from Torture. Steve spoke very powerfully about his experiences of war as a reporter, and how these led him to work in human rights organisations. He emphasized the importance of the International Criminal Court and the need for us to keep pressing politicians to keep supporting it, even when the US President and others want to abolish it. Steve described the beginnings of the idea of creating an ICC in the 1960s, to its formal establishment in July 2002. He recounted a meeting with Milosevic where he spoke about the Court and asked Milosevic if he was worried he might be put on trial. 'Me?' he answered, 'I am for peace!' Nine years later Milosevic was behind bars but died before the trial in 2006.

## Southwest Regional Network

A small group of members continue to meet and plan this new network. An A4 flier has been printed and was distributed at the AIUK conference and at our local events. We are hoping to launch the network in September.

## Campaign News

**Afghanistan** [Cherry writes] 15 August marks four years since the Taliban's return to power in 2021. Since then, they have systematically worked to **erase women from public life**. Rates of poverty, early and forced marriage, maternal and child deaths and suicide are rising. Mental health among women is a major issue. Being a voice for Afghan women can give them hope. As part of their campaign for Afghan women, Amnesty Feminists are running a **webinar** for local groups at 1800 on **20 August**. This will explain what has happened to women's rights in Afghanistan and how groups can support the campaign, using the new action pack. You can register for the webinar here: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/meet-the-amnesty-feminist-network-tickets-1515866861589?aff=oddtcreator>



**India: BK16** It is seven years since the first arrests on 'terrorism' charges and none of the accused has undergone a trial as required under international law. Their only crime is their record as human rights defenders. Six of the original detainees are still in jail, one died and nine are on bail under very restrictive conditions. The case illustrates the authoritarian nature of India's government, headed by Narendra Modi, and its increasing intolerance of any dissent or diversity. Journalists are particularly at risk if they write anything critical of the government. Use the letter sent out with this newsletter to write to the Indian High Commission in London asking for all charges to be dropped and for the prisoners to be released.

### 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)

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