



Manchester Group Quarterly Bulletin Number 14, September 2025

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This newsletter is compiled by the Group Communications Secretary, Alison Wearden (alison.wearden@gmail.com). If you have any ideas for short or more in-depth articles for the newsletter, please feel free to contact her. We would welcome pieces on any area of Amnesty's work, and also human-interest stories. If you would prefer to stop receiving this newsletter, please let Alison know.

News from our campaigns

Anti-Racism and Prevent

Anti-racism sub-group update

We continue to meet every 6 weeks online, splitting the hour between our book club discussions and our campaigning work. We are currently reading *The Science of Racism* by Keon West. Published this year, the book takes a scientific approach to examining racism, drawing on research findings and applying these to everyday situations and occurrences. The final section of the book (which we haven't reached in our discussions yet) addresses ways of responding to racism, including the writer's ideas on how to effectively reduce racism.

Joint Enterprise Law

We have been in touch with Amnesty UK recently to check on the progress of our resolution on Joint Enterprise law that was passed almost unanimously at the Amnesty UK AGM in 2023. Our resolution called on Amnesty UK *'to investigate the ways in which Joint Enterprise and conspiracy laws, including the use of racist gang narratives are being used against communities in the UK, especially young people of colour.'* We understand that due to capacity, the work had to be delayed but the proposed research project is currently going through standard internal checks before it is started between October-December this year. Amnesty UK also provided us with information about the scoping process that has been carried out for the research work: *'All UK has met with numerous academics, activists, researchers and civil society organisations and barristers who work on joint enterprise and conspiracy cases to assess an area of focus that will be as impactful as possible. We are also attuning to the current Westminster Commission which is focusing on Joint Enterprise.'* We look forward to hearing about the research in more detail and ways in which we can continue campaigning for an end to the injustice that continues to be experienced by so many people when Joint Enterprise laws are used in UK courts to convict people of crimes

committed by others. We are fortunate to have links with Joint Enterprise Not Guilty by Association (JENGbA), a grassroots organisation of family members fighting the Joint Enterprise laws on behalf of their loved ones. We encourage everyone to support their work. Further information about JENGbA can be found on their website <https://jengba.co.uk/> and they can also be followed on social media.



Manchester 10 update:

Although we have no further news on the Manchester 10 boys who remain in prison, Kids of Colour have recently welcomed three of the Manchester 10 who have been released to become members of the KoC team working on a project to archive and document the injustice and resistance within their case and their journey. As KoC state on their social media post about the project and the boys, *'A journey that is by no means over for them or those who should be free.'*



KoC hope to include more of the boys in the project over time. This work will be invaluable for the Manchester 10 boys themselves but also for their communities, ensuring that the realities of the racism and state violence that they have experienced and continue to experience are not lost. If any Manchester Amnesty supporters feel able to support Kids of Colour in their work with Manchester young people of colour, including the Manchester 10, it is very easy to donate on their website: <https://kidsofcolour.com/>

Three Manchester Amnesty members attended a KoC event in July, which focused on the Director of KoC, Roxy Legane's PhD that documents young people's experience of police power in Greater Manchester and their resistance to it. One of the young people involved in the research took part in a discussion with Roxy reflecting on her experiences of racism in school and the ways in which young people of colour are constantly resisting this racism and the exhaustion caused by this. It was a very powerful and moving discussion that highlighted once again the need for us as adults (and especially professionals) to be stepping up in support of young people of colour and recognising the resistance to racism that they are taking on throughout their childhoods.

Campaign to Scrap the government's Prevent duty



Our work on the campaign to scrap the 'Prevent' duty is starting to gather momentum.

Our campaign has evolved into three 'prongs':

1. working a bureaucratic angle in the Council to try and get a petition published;
2. members emailing Councillors;
3. coordinating local activism.

On prong 1, Tom has taken into account feedback on a previous attempt to get a petition published on the council website, and has worked hard at redrafting it. He has recently re-

submitted the petition, calling on it to make a public record statement that condemns the implementation of the Prevent duty. We await the council's response.

On prong 2, we have a call to action for all our members. If you live in the City of Manchester, **please write to or email your own councillors**, [using this template \[docs.google.com\]](#). Please note that councillors Annette Wright or Zahid Hussain have already expressed some interest in the campaign, so we will be writing to them separately. Please therefore **do not** email these councillors, but please **do** contact the other councillors who represent your wards. It would be good if you could let Tom know that you have done so on thomasmilnes@gmail.com. It is important we start making a lot of noise in the Council!

In order to further coordinate local activism, for prong 3 we aim to hold an Open Meeting in mid-late November. Tom is working with AIUK on this and hopes to invite speaker(s) and collaboration from Manchester based organisations who are also working on scrapping the Prevent duty.

If you have any questions or if you would like to help with any aspects of the campaign please email thomasmilnes@gmail.com.

Human Rights in the UK

We are pleased to welcome Richard Umpleby as the new coordinator for campaigning on Human Rights in the UK. Richard only agreed to take on the role a few days ago, but has provided preliminary thoughts on some of the issues and areas that we might consider focusing on in the coming months.

European Convention on Human Rights

Richard is particularly interested in defending the participation of the UK in the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). The ECHR is increasingly demonised and misrepresented in anti-rights rhetoric, and some commentators see the whipping up of the idea of leaving the ECHR as the “next Brexit”. AIUK published two briefings on 24th June ([here](#) and [here](#)) about Article 8, which protects the right to family and private life. They point out that successive governments have dismantled domestic safeguards against wrongful immigration decisions, forcing claimants to rely on Article 8, which is then seized on by anti-migrant/immigration activists who wrongly state that Europe is interfering in “our decisions”.

In a [press release](#), Steve Valdez-Symons said:

“People threatened with exile from their homes, families and communities after years, decades, even lifetimes in the UK, are left with only Article 8 to defend them. Lawyers and judges have no choice but to centre legal cases on it.

“Article 8 has become a lightning rod for attacks on the European Convention, often based on myths that omit key facts or include absurd inventions about the significance of cats, chicken nuggets, or other nonsense.”

The right to protest

Turning to the right to protest, Articles 10 (freedom of expression) and 11 (freedom of assembly and association) of the ECHR protect the right to peaceful protests. The UK is also a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), a treaty which also protects peaceful assembly.

We are all aware of how our rights to protest have been gradually eroded and undermined by a series of laws passed by the previous government – the Police Crime Courts and Sentencing Act 2022 and the Public Order Act 2023. Not only are there no plans by the current government to repeal these repressive laws, but it has recently turned to the much older Prevention of Terrorism Act 2000 for its latest outrageous assault on protest, the proscription of Palestine Action (PA). Since the proscription was enacted there have been numerous arrests of peaceful protestors sitting holding cardboard placards, and the arrest of five Defend Our Juries activists, which AIUK has described as a clear breach of International Law. With regard to the ban on PA, AIUK [commented](#) that:

“Counter-terrorism laws must always be treated with the highest degree of caution and restraint, as they exist to authorise interference with due process and other fundamental human rights protections”

and that

“...the Terrorism Act 2000 contains a deeply flawed definition of terrorism, which has been criticised by domestic and international human rights monitors for many years.”

The assault on our right to protest in the UK prompted Amnesty International to [launch a global campaign](#) to protect UK protest rights. You can sign the AIUK petition [here](#).

We await judicial review of the decision to ban PA. This will take place in November.

Digital and AI driven human rights harms.

In line with its recently launched campaign to expose the human rights destroying aspects of the current UK social security system, AIUK have [recently commented](#) on the reliance on digital applications and the use of AI in the social security system, stating that “the DWP’s unhealthy obsession with AI discriminates against people with disabilities.” People are being forced to use digital and AI systems to claim benefits which undermines the rights of individuals with disabilities and many of those who experience poverty and disadvantage. The mass use of digital/AI risks basic rights in areas like bias, privacy, and denial with no easy method of redress.

Forthcoming event

- National Day of Solidarity to End Immigration Detention – 18 October 2025

Rights network Right to Remain plans both an online rally on 16 September and physical solidarity events on 18 October, calling for demonstrations outside detention centres in locations across the UK, including Manchester, as well as local independently-organised actions

Individuals at Risk



As noted in the last bulletin, Liz Carter became the organiser for this work in May.

We had five people at the May session and seven at the July session, which took place on 26th July.



Across the two sessions, we have written 43 letters, 17 emails and one tweet for cases from across the world, including Canada, Mozambique, USA, Iran, Cuba, Georgia, Russia and Israel. We have also recruited two new members at the appeal-writing sessions.

The next appeal-writing drop in session will be on Saturday 26th September, in the usual place beside the café area at Manchester Central Library, 2-4pm. It would be great to see you there!

Israel and Palestine

ACTION!!

We are all horrified at the continuing, and even increasing, atrocities committed by Israel against the Palestinians. We struggle to cope with the endless shocking images on our news bulletins. Many can't get a decent night's sleep anymore. We are inclined to throw up our arms in despair. But we can – and we **MUST** – act. Every small action is important, if only to show our humanity – and to declare our total opposition to the crimes against humanity.

Here are just a few of the many actions you can take:

- **Write to your MP**

Implore the government to stand up for justice and human rights. Demand that Britain stop providing arms to Israel. Insist that Britain complies with the International Court of Justice and supports the International Criminal Court. Demand an end to genocide, occupation and apartheid.

- **Join a rally or march**

There are marches and rallies almost every day in areas of Manchester, including a major event every Saturday in the city centre. For a quieter but very effective approach, join our Friday vigil (see below).

- **Attend an event**

See below for a list of events including films, comedy, exhibitions etc.

- **Keep informed**

Read reports and information on websites such as Amnesty UK, British Palestine Project, Palestine Solidarity Campaign, Medical Aid for Palestinians. Join our Israel campaign email list and WhatsApp group to keep in touch with our news and actions.

- **Tell Others**

Spread the word. Discuss the issues. Pass on messages. Forward videos and images received via social media and online.

Amnesty Policy on Sanctions and Resolution to AIUK AGM (5-6 July)



As reported in the June bulletin, Mike Reed submitted a resolution to the Amnesty UK AGM calling on Amnesty to support boycotts and sanctions against Israel. The Amnesty UK Board could not support the resolution as it was not in line with Amnesty International policy. This would effectively prevent it being implemented even if passed.

Therefore, after discussion, the resolution was amended to ask

the UK Board to **call on the international movement to develop a policy** for sanctions against Israel and support for the BDS movement. Mike's resolution called on the Board to "apply great urgency and every possible mechanism to urge consideration and adoption of the policy changes and campaign actions". The revised resolution gained the full support of the AIUK Board and was passed at the AGM with huge support.

After the AGM we were contacted by Amnesty USA who had passed a similar resolution. Since then, Mike and Jack Farrar, AIUK Israel Coordinator, have held discussions with AIUSA. We prepared an appeal to send to Agnès Callamard, Amnesty's Secretary General and the Chair of the International Board. Subsequently we have received expert advice which requires us to amend this appeal. We have learned that:

- Amnesty will not give endorsement of the BDS movement or blanket approval to whatever another organization may propose.
- A proposal for a policy change based on a single country will fail. Policy must be applicable to all like situations. It cannot relate to a single country or situation.

We have also decided to delay our appeal while we await news on developments within the movement. We are told that Amnesty International was due to issue an updated draft policy on boycotts and divestments on 9 September. We have learned that Amnesty UK staff are in discussion with Amnesty International staff regarding this issue and we expect to learn more soon. We await news of these developments. In the meantime, we are contacting many other Amnesty national sections to encourage support for the policy change.

Global March to Gaza

Mo Miah, a regular supporter of our weekly vigil, bravely travelled to Egypt in June to join the Global March to Gaza. This was a peaceful march of 48km across Egypt to Rafah, the southern entry point into Gaza. The purpose was to draw world attention to Israel's illegal



blockade of aid and vital supplies into Gaza. Thousands joined the march from all over the world. But they were met with huge resistance by the Egyptian authorities, including blockades by the military, and also intimidation and even physical attacks. Many of the marchers turned back, but others including Mo made substantial progress. Sadly progress to Rafah eventually proved impossible and Mo along with many others withdrew and returned home. Several members of Manchester Amnesty contributed funds to help with Mo's

costs, but he politely declined the offer and the money was donated to Manchester Amnesty. Mo talked to Manchester Amnesty Group about his experience at our July group meeting. We are full of admiration for his brave work. See photo taken on the march below.

The Global March to Gaza was one of many international attempts to break the illegal blockade of Gaza. The Global Sumud Flotilla is sailing to Gaza as we go to press, with Greta Thunberg and other people of international repute on board. There is news of two drone attacks on the flotilla. Israel is determined to prevent any ships reaching Gaza even if that involves breaches of international and maritime law. In June 2015, Freedom Flotilla III carrying parliamentarians, journalists and public figures from over 20 countries was intercepted around 100 miles off Gaza. Israeli forces boarded some of the ships, and there were report of the Israeli navy using tasers during the operation. In October 2016, the Women's Boat to Gaza was also intercepted before it reached Gaza. In 2018, Israeli naval forces intercepted and seized two ships belonging to the Just Future for Palestine Flotilla. Crew members said Israeli forces assaulted some of the activists.

Settlement Goods Campaign

The International Court of Justice has called for all states to abstain from economic or trade dealings which support Israel's illegal occupation of Palestinian Territory. And the UN General Assembly Resolution ES-10/24 calls on all states to cease imports of products originating in the illegal Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Amnesty has mounted a campaign calling for a ban on settlement goods. We are writing to MPs in the Manchester area and beyond.

Appeals to MPs

Members have received replies from 8 MPs. Most were positive and expressed their deep concern about Israel's human rights abuses. But most avoided our key demand asking them to support the call for a ban on settlement goods. We are now sending follow up messages to MPs.

Lisa Smart, MP for Hazel Grove, replied to Liz Carter, informing her that the Lib Dems have called on the Government to legislate to stop all trade with Israeli settlements. They also

call for an immediate ban on the export of all UK weapons to Israel, including F-35 components.

We would like to reach many more MPs. Please get in touch if you can write to your MP on this issue.

Updates

In June the Irish parliament approved legislation prohibiting trade with the Israeli settlements. The Ireland Prime Minister, Simon Harris, received strong parliamentary backing for this initiative. He stated: "This decision aligns with Ireland's longstanding commitment to international law and human rights. We cannot continue economic relations with entities operating on land acquired through means that violate fundamental principles of international order." Benjamin Netanyahu called the move "a hostile act against Israel" and recalled Israel's ambassador. The Israeli Foreign Ministry said the ban "undermines prospects for peace and dialogue between parties." The President of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, described it as "a meaningful step toward accountability" and called on other nations to follow Ireland's example.

Ireland was the first European nation to take this action. In August the government of Slovenia passed similar legislation. These actions follow soon after a ruling by the International Court of Justice in May. The ICJ determined that "continued Israeli settlement activities in Palestinian territories constitute a violation of international law". This provides legal backing for countries to restrict economic relations with the illegal settlements.

Meeting with Jeff Smith MP for Manchester Withington

Kathryn Fletcher and Alison Wearden arranged a meeting in person with their MP, Jeff Smith. Jeff promised to raise the issue of settlement goods with Jonathan Reynolds, Business and Trade Secretary, and report back. He will convey our concerns and ask for the government's position on a trade ban.

Kathryn and Alison also raised concerns about military support to Israel by the UK. Only 30 of 350 contracts have been suspended. They challenged the government argument that the remaining contracts do not contribute to the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, saying that any contribution to the functioning of the IDF allows it to operate in Gaza. They asked that the government reviews this decision. Kathryn asked JS to look into the loophole that allows the UK to provide parts for F-35 jets into a NATO pool from which Israel is supplied. JS agreed to ask how decisions are made about which countries can buy F-35 parts from the pool and whether Israel can be barred.

Kathryn and Alison also raised concerns about the proscription of Palestine Action and the effect on people who wish to protest in other ways. Jeff said that the PA proscription does not have a chilling effect, and people are free to protest about Palestine. Kathryn and Alison strongly contested this. They said that activists feel constrained by the proscription of PA and by the general climate of repression around protest due to excessively restrictive protest laws that the government shows no sign of repealing. Jeff seemed surprised at the strength of feeling that protest rights are under threat.

Kathryn and Alison gave Jeff a copy of Amnesty's report on the Prevent policy, the summary Israel Apartheid report, and AIUK briefings about settlement goods.

The weekly vigil

Participants and response

The weekly vigil for Gaza and Palestine continues. Every Friday from 5 to 6pm in St Peter's Square. In recent weeks the attendance has been about 35. The response from the public is generally very warm and positive. We are keen to attract more participants, and we encourage everyone to promote the event. We have again asked GMFP to promote the vigil and await their response.

Banner and placards

We display our 50 feet long paper banner at the vigil (as pictured in the June bulletin) and it has made a big impact. On June 27th, the [Morning Star](#) carried a piece with picture of us standing with our banner.

But this long paper banner cannot be used in rainy weather when we use our placards covered in cling film. We are planning to make some new placards with the messages: Stop Starving Gaza, Stop bombing hospitals, Stop killing Medics, Stop killing Journalists.

Some placards have a single large letter on the reverse spelling out in huge text: STOP THE GENOCIDE. The reverse of the new placards will spell out: STOP STARVING GAZA.

Please get in touch with Mike Reed if you can help make new placards.

100th Vigil

On Friday 24 October we will hold our 100th vigil. We would like to make a big impact on this occasion. We will promote the vigil widely and aim for a big attendance. We will try to get media coverage, but this is very difficult. We have ideas for changes to the placards and the display to help make a big impression on people who see the vigil.

Please join our Friday vigil when you can. Please promote it widely.

Exhibition

We are working with Greater Manchester Friends of Palestine to promote an exhibition produced by Birzeit University in the West Bank. Some or all of the exhibition panels will be displayed in the following places: Manchester University (GDI Conference); Friends Meeting House, Mount Street; Cheadle Mosque, Wythenshawe Mosque; Bolton Socialist Club; St Mary's Church, Golborne. We also hope to have them displayed at: Chorlton Central Church; St Clements Church, Chorlton; Bridge 5 Mill, Ancoats. Some venues have turned down the request due to concerns about controversy and possible objections.

Manchester Amnesty Garden Party

On a beautiful warm and sunny day in August, Manchester Amnesty enjoyed a summer garden party, very generously hosted by Mike Reed and Mary Gifford. Twenty four MAI members got together in Mike's house and garden in Little Bollington. On this occasion we largely put aside our hard work for human rights and enjoyed the chance to share lively conversation, along with some lovely food and drinks. It was a great opportunity to meet

some relatively new members and catch up with colleagues in our joint campaigning work over many years. We held a collection at the end and raised £425 for Medical Aid for Palestinians and Gaza Flour Fund. Very many thanks to Mike and Mary for putting on such an enjoyable afternoon.

Launch event for Mothers of Hind.



On 15th June, Mike represented Manchester Amnesty at a launch event for the Manchester section of the organisation "[Mothers of Hind](#)".

Hind Rajab was a five-year-old Palestinian girl, in Gaza. Her family fled the bombardment of their city, but their car was targeted by an Israeli attack. Hind was surrounded by her dead or injured family and desperately called the emergency services, only for the car to be struck by over 300 bullets. After hours of negotiation an ambulance was sent to

save her, but was obliterated by the Israeli army. Hind's story has inspired the creation of the Hind Rajab Foundation and the Mothers of Hind organisation. A film about her life and death received a 23 minute standing ovation at the Venice Film Festival and won the Silver Lion prize. We do not yet know the release date for this film.



Reconstruction of the car in which Hind Rajab and her family were killed.

Talk by Mustafa Alakchar

At our September meeting Mustafa Alachkar of Rethink Rebuild (a Manchester based Syrian organisation providing support to refugees) spoke to Manchester Amnesty about his recent time in Gaza. Mustafa is a psychiatrist and psychotherapist and was there to give psychosocial support to aid workers from Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP). Mustafa talked of the dehumanisation of people in Gaza and the idea of re-humanisation as a form of resistance. His work was clearly a very human and personal intervention. He explained that MAP does amazing work in Gaza but is severely restricted by Israel, including

preventing vital equipment being brought into the region. Only days after our meeting with Mustafa we heard news of further restrictive conditions imposed by Israel on MAP and other aid organisations. Israel has introduced a new registration process which demands the handover of sensitive personal data about Palestinian staff and their families. This would allow Israel to control who MAP can and cannot employ. MAP is refusing to comply.

Forthcoming events to note

Lecture

Tom Hurndall Memorial Lecture at Manchester University: 6pm, 17 October

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/tom-hurndall-19th-memorial-lecture-17-october-2025-tickets-1621800692529> Free admission

Films

From Ground Zero. A collection of 22 short films, including documentaries, fiction, animation about the people in Gaza in the midst of Israel's attacks
Vue Printworks 6.45pm Sat 13 Sep & Odeon Trafford Centre 7.15pm Tues 16 Sep

Put Your Soul on Your Hand and Walk

About Fatma Hassona, killed by an Israeli airstrike. Includes video-call conversations with Fatma, interspersed with news reports filmed by Fatma and photographs she took showing Palestinians in Gaza getting on with life as the city is destroyed.

Home M'cr: Wed 17 Sep, 6pm; Also Sun 14 Sep, 1pm; Thurs 18 Sep, 8.15pm.

Video on Social Media

Imagine: A short and powerful campaign film (on Instagram)

https://www.instagram.com/reel/DMLgD8fOYKI/?igsh=MXY2dTFyaWpoZTh0cQ%3D%3D&fbclid=IwY2xjawMpFa1leHRuA2FibQlxMABicmlkETFRTGxqN1Q0eU5Md1RvWERTAR6mraKot4LfN74qQegtZzlJeTHx2RwbwLrGZpsSRe06wyfXokItMobtSRkG1w_aem_Ybp8Gjr7Nc2jZHannlSqsQ **Please circulate this widely**

Comedy

Arabs and Asians Stand Up for Gaza at the Frog & Bucket M'cr, Sun 21 Sep, 6.30pm

<https://frogandbucket.ticketsolve.com/ticketbooth/shows/873623005/events/128596474>

NB We will not proceed with our plans for a comedy night for Gaza. We secured the services of many comedians, including some big names. But all are based in the London area, and the cost of travel and accommodation means the event would not be financially viable.

London

A major benefit event, Together for Palestine, is being held at Wembley Arena on 17 September.

Petition

Please see the [Avaaz petition](#) to ban Israel from the football World Cup. It has attracted nearly half a million signatures.

For further information on our work on Israel / Palestine, please contact:

Mike Reed, Israel Campaign Leader, Manchester Amnesty mikewreed101@gmail.com

LGTBQ+ rights

Concerning Developments in the Field of LGBTQ+ rights

Throughout the Western world there is a growing trend of conservative and right-wing governments deliberately attacking and restricting the rights of transgender people.

- In the United Kingdom, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) issued provisional guidance in response to the UK Supreme Court's ruling in *For Women Scotland (FWS) v Scottish Ministers* (July 2025), which held that the term 'gender' in the Equality Act refers to biological sex. This interim guidance states that single-sex spaces (SSSs) must be defined by biological sex rather than self-identified gender. Consequently, trans women (people assigned male at birth) are excluded from female-only spaces such as toilets and changing rooms. Furthermore, the guidance appears to apply among others to sports teams and competitions, allowing organisers to exclude transgender female athletes from women's events.
- In Germany, the Federal Interior Ministry under Alexander Dobrindt (Christian Social Union in Bavaria (CSU), the sister party of the German equivalent of the Conservative Party (CDU)) has proposed a special register capturing both previous and current gender markers and names of trans individuals across the Melderegister, the Federal Pension Insurance and the Federal Central Tax Office, prompting warnings of forced outing and comparisons with historical persecution files.
- In the United States, President Trump's Department of Justice has floated a plan to ban trans people from purchasing firearms by classifying them as "mentally ill", a move that has drawn criticism from civil-rights advocates and legal experts over its constitutional and discriminatory implications.

European Acts of Defiance



Budapest Pride took place on 28 June as a municipal event organised by Mayor Gergely Karácsony to circumvent Hungary's tightened anti-LGBTQ+ assembly law. over 280 Amnesty International activists and staff

from Hungary and 22 other national offices around the world, defied restrictions and marched to peacefully demand equality and the right to assemble. Up to 70 members of the European Parliament took part in the march to deter the police from making arrests. According to the organisers, an estimated 200,000 people participated, which is thought to be the largest turnout to date. However, at the end of July the mayor of Budapest was questioned as a suspect in connection with the Pride march and now faces legal action.

Our LGBTQ+ Activism

To show our support for the LGBTQ+ community across Greater Manchester we have participated in a number of Pride events in Rochdale, Oldham and Stretford.



Rochdale Pride Parade on 22 June 2025

We carried out Manchester Amnesty banner in the inaugural Stretford Pride parade on 2nd August, and also had a well-visited stall at the event (two photos below).





We have also been in touch with Sparkle, the national charity for transgender people. We were unable to participate in Sparkle this year, but Fynn has had a good exchange with them, and we are hoping to be able to participate in Sparkle next year.

Refugee Rights

In the past three months, there have been several developments in relation to Refugee Rights. In early August, the government announced that it had struck a “one-in, one-out” deal with France in relation to asylum seekers. AIUK said that rather than offering protection to those fleeing war and persecution, this “deeply flawed” deal used asylum seekers as pawns in a political game, “sacrificing human lives for political convenience.”

[AIUK said that immigration figures](#) released by the government on 21st August showed that the Government’s commitment to clear its backlog of asylum claims is “being pursued at the expense of fairness and efficiency.” Particularly worrying was the dramatic decline in successful initial claims for asylum from Afghan asylum seekers, down to 44% in the past 12 months compared with 98% a year ago. The effect of all these denied claims is a marked rise in the number of appeals against asylum decisions, during which asylum seekers can continue to be housed or detained in punitive conditions for months or even years.

During the summer, there were widely-reported demonstrations by anti-migrant protestors outside hotels housing asylum seekers, often fuelled by [complete lies and misinformation](#) about asylum seekers posing a threat to women and children. It was disturbing that our government regarded the protestors as having “understandable concerns,” and shamefully failed to provide a counter narrative to the divisive and hate-filled outpourings from the far right. See below for our response to this situation.

Epping council successfully applied to the courts for an injunction on the use of one hotel to house asylum seekers, citing breaches of planning regulations. Thankfully this injunction was overturned several weeks later on judicial review. The housing of asylum seekers,

sometimes including children, for long periods in completely unsuitable hotel accommodation is of course totally unsatisfactory, and is exacerbated by the huge number of appeals that are piling up, [after poor decision making on initial asylum applications](#).

Finally, there have recently been two additional blows to the rights of asylum seekers. Prior to 2023, asylum seekers who were successful in their claims had 28 days to find accommodation after receiving refugee status. The last government reduced this period to 7 days and triggered a huge increase in homelessness. The present government restored the 28 day rule and had been trialling a 56 day period in some locations. However, this has now been dropped. 28 days to sort out one's living conditions is simply an inadequate period of time, especially as it takes 35 days minimum to claim universal benefit. Then on 1st September, the then home secretary announced a temporary ban on applications for family reunion for asylum seekers. This policy will mean that child refugees will be unable to apply to be reunited with their parents. Thus the final "safe route" is cut off and yet more desperate refugees will be forced to turn to people smugglers, an outcome which Yvette Cooper herself [predicted in 2021](#). Whatever its effect, a more cruel policy is difficult to imagine.

Our campaign for a fair asylum system

On 19th June, we added our signature to a letter from Together with Refugees supporting an amendment to the Border Security and Immigration bill which was at that time going through the House of Lords, calling on the government to drop the proposed plan to deem any who had arrived here by an "irregular route" an "illegal migrant" and thereby remove their right to eventual citizenship here.

The questions that were submitted (as parliamentary questions) on our behalf by Tom Morrison, MP (see June's bulletin) received rather bland replies. As Tom is a Stockport MP, we contacted the Stockport group and will work together on any further communications with him.

In early August, AIUK and Manchester Amnesty both signed an open letter, reported here in [The Guardian](#), coordinated by Together with Refugees. The letter called for an end to the divisive and hateful rhetoric which is currently poisoning discourse about refugees and asylum seekers, and encouraging demonstrations outside hotels. Several members of the group then adapted the letter to write individually to their MPs.

Refugee Month activities

During refugee month (June), we had a presence at several open gardens. We reported on our open garden event at the beginning of the month in the June bulletin. Below are some pictures from gardens we attended at the end of June. At these open gardens, we hung up orange felt hearts, provided information about campaigning activities in relation to refugees, and invited visitors to the gardens to write messages for refugees on orange card hearts.



Our orange hearts displays at two of the Chorlton Open Gardens



Acoustic Amnesty

Thanks very much to Steve Lindsay for once again putting on a fabulous Acoustic Amnesty event on Friday, 20th June, during Refugee Week. Thank you to AIUK for providing financial support for the event. The event was attended by several of our members and raised £450 for refugee charities Refugees at Home and Rainbow Haven. (See news below of another Acoustic Amnesty event held on 28th August at Band on the Wall).

Orange hearts banner

A selection of the orange hearts with supportive messages for refugees which we collected from visitors to the gardens and at the Acoustic Amnesty event on 20th June was made into a banner which has been displayed at Rainbow Haven in Gorton. Thank you Caroline for making this banner!



Banner made from orange hearts displayed at Rainbow Haven

Campaign for the right to work for asylum seekers – Lift the Ban

We have decided to support the “[Lift the Ban](#)” campaign. Lift the Ban is a coalition of 300+ organisations from across the UK, which is trying to overturn the ban on people seeking asylum obtaining paid work while their asylum applications are being considered.

Currently, asylum-seekers are allowed to work in only a very narrow restricted list of highly specialised occupations. This means they are dependent on minimal financial support and have no opportunity to contribute to their communities or the wider economy. The economic benefits of lifting the ban on asylum seekers working are estimated at £1 - 1.2 billion.

So far over 3000 people have written to members of the House of Lords, which debated the issue on 8th September. Peers from across the political spectrum made compelling arguments to lift the ban on asylum-seekers working. We hope to build on this during the autumn by asking local councillors to add their signatures to an open letter to Local Government Secretary Steve Reed, emphasising the benefits that employment can bring to local communities.

At the moment, we are consulting with City of Sanctuary about the best way to support this campaign. More information and actions for members will be communicated via the Fortnightly Action and Newsletter. Please look out for it. In the meantime, you can read more about the Lift the Ban campaign [here](#)

Local hotels

After contacting a local hotel housing asylum seekers, we plan to deliver some orange felt hearts with welcoming messages as a token of our support for the people living there.

United Arab Emirates

Kathryn and Hazel recently attended an AIUK training session on making videos for campaign purposes, and Kathryn kindly passed on some of what she learned at our August meeting (see box on next page for some of the points which we discussed).

The UAE group met on 9th September to plan making videos to put on Instagram to raise awareness of Ahmed Mansoor and Mohammed al-Roken. We will meet again to develop the ideas further, write the script and record the video. If you would like to be involved in this humble film industry, please get in touch with Kathryn

1. The Hook: Spoken or visual

Grab attention within the first few seconds with a compelling hook. This could be a bold statement, a visual pattern interrupt, or an intriguing question (breadcrumb).

Viewers have short attention spans, so your hook needs to immediately make them want to watch more. It is important to be timely – reacting to world events.

2. Concise Content:

One message focus: Keep the video focused on a single, clear message or idea.

Brevity is key: Aim for videos that are under 60 seconds

Get to the point: Avoid unnecessary fluff and get to the core of your message quickly.

3. Value and Engagement:

Offer something useful, informative, or entertaining to the viewer.

High-quality visuals and engaging audio (include subtitles) are crucial.

Storytelling: Even in short videos, storytelling can be very effective.

Be authentic: Let your personality shine through and connect with your audience.

4. Call to Action:

Encourage interaction: Ask viewers to like, comment, share, or visit a link.

Guide next steps: Tell viewers what you want them to do after watching.

5. Technical Aspects:

Mobile-friendly format: Vertical videos are generally preferred for platforms like TikTok and Instagram Reels.

High-quality production: Even short videos need good lighting, clear visuals, and clean audio. Split screen with images to back up content. (BUY A MICROPHONE)

Experiment and analyse: Try different styles and content formats and track what works best for your audience.

Some tips for making great campaigning videos

Acoustic Amnesty at Band on the Wall.



This event on 28th August was another great success, raising money for charities including Hope not Hate.

AIUK AGM and Amplify Summit



The UK government seems more bent on abusing terrorism laws to restrict protests rather than addressing the root cause behind these actions – **livestreamed genocide in Gaza.**

Agnes Callamard

Several members of our group attended the AIUK AGM and Amplify summit in person, with others joining online. Anyone who was there, in person or online, cannot have failed to be inspired the stirring keynote speech given by Agnes Callamard, with its central message, “Resist, transform, disrupt”.

Hazel attended the Prevent workshop which was informative and which highlighted how Manchester is one of the leading groups in the campaign.

Information about the the resolutions passed by the meeting, and how the decisions made are being/will be implemented, can be seen [here](#).



Mike, Hazel, Anne and Sen from the Manchester group were very pleased to meet up with ex-Manchester member Sara at the AGM.