



Amnesty International UK

October 2025

News from the Minehead Group

www.amnesty.org.uk/minehead www.facebook.com/amnestyminehead



Actions you can take this month:

- ✓ **Register** for the launch of the **Amnesty International Southwest England Network** on Thursday 16 October at 1930 and join the webinar. Luiz Aberbuj from 'Breaking the Silence' in Jerusalem will talk about this organisation and give an update from their perspective on the current situation on the **West Bank**. Book your free ticket at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/1659755616729?aff=oddttdcreator>
- ✓ **Send a solidarity message** to **Chow Hang-tung**, a fearless activist who's been jailed for speaking up for human rights and democracy in Hong Kong. She's in prison under the brutal National Security Law. Her only 'crime' is fighting for human rights and speaking out about the Hong Kong authority's crackdown on free speech and activism. Send the message using this link <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/actions/hk-solidarity-message>
- ✓ **Reserve two dates** in your diary for November/December and join in the **2025 Write for Rights Campaign**: 11 November for letter writing and 5 December for card/letter signing. And contact Susan if you'd like a booklet of cases, which will be available from 1 November.



News from our group



AmnesTea: Our tea party in Susan's garden at Carhampton on 16 August was a very enjoyable and successful occasion. The weather was perfect – sunny and dry but not too hot. And although we put up several gazebos to give some shade, most people chose to sit in the sun! People chatted, drank tea and ate cake, played our Amnesty games and took part in a quiz consisting of anagrams of words

connected with Amnesty which were located around the garden. There was also an Amnesty information stall with letters to sign, a book stall, produce stall and a raffle. Thanks to everyone's generosity we raised £420, part of which was from donations made by friends who couldn't join us on the day. Thank you everyone!



Au Revoir: We have been very sorry to say goodbye to our long-standing chair, Alison Dietz, and husband Roy, who have sold their house in Roadwater and moved back to Twickenham. We are very grateful for all their hard work and support of our group over the years and wish them well in their next phase of life. We will continue to keep in touch with them through this newsletter and their occasional visits to West Somerset in the future. Thank you, Alison and Roy!



Diary Dates

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

Thurs 16 October at 1930 on-line.

Launch of the SW Regional Network. Webinar with a speaker from 'Breaking the Silence'.

Tues 11 November

Letter writing for the 2025 Write for Rights campaign. 1430-1600 at the Beach Hotel.

Fri 5 December

at 1330 card and letter signing for Write for Rights 2025. This will follow on from the Quakers' monthly quiet half hour and soup lunch, to which all are invited.

Sat 21 March 2026

SW Regional AI conference in Exeter.

Southwest Regional Network

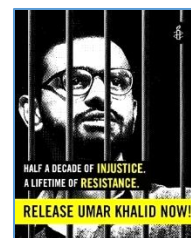
The new **SW network** will operate principally online, and aims to bring people in the region, whether or not they are Amnesty International members, to be part of a movement for positive change both in the UK and around the world. You can find out more about how to join the new SW Network by emailing the organising group at aswenetwork21@gmail.com

The speaker at the network's launch event on 16 October (see actions overleaf) will be **Luiz Aberbuj**, who will talk about the work of **Breaking the Silence**, an organisation of veteran soldiers who have served in the Israeli military. They aim to stimulate public debate in Israel about the horrendous conditions faced by the Palestinians in the West Bank and to bring about the end of the occupation.

West Somerset Refugee Support Group: *[Jenny Gateau writes]* In the school holidays we arranged a *Day by the Sea* for 14 Syrian/Kurdish friends whom we have now known and cared for since they first arrived from Syria. It was a beautiful sunny day, the tide was in, and we had a lovely picnic enjoying the very generous and exotic bowls of food contributed by the Kurdish mums! During the day no fewer than 14 volunteers came to help out with the various activities: beach games, paddling, crazy golf and the eating of ice creams. We are grateful to the Beach Hotel which gave us free use of their sitting room as our base for the day. Everyone was so pleased to meet friends and enjoy the seaside again. All this was made possible by a generous donation from Amnesty that paid for the minibus hire door to door for the families. We are now saving up so we can send our usual Christmas greetings containing a small gift once again to each of the 24 families currently on our books.

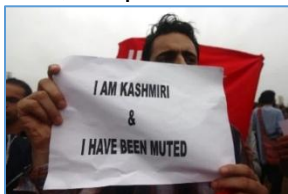
Campaign News

India *[Cherry writes]* **Umar Khalid:** Umar Khalid has now been in prison without trial for over five years for his part in protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). Marking this anniversary, Amnesty International and six other international human rights organisations released a joint statement calling on the Government of India to immediately release him as his imprisonment is based on politically motivated charges. His bail applications have been denied at least five times. In a press release, Amnesty International said that there are clear cases of selective prosecution aimed at criminalizing and chilling dissent in India.



BK16: In a further example of denial of justice, the Bombay High Court criticised the Maharashtra Police and the Prison Authorities for not releasing Ramesh Gaichor, one of the BK16, who was granted a temporary bail of three days on humanitarian grounds to visit his ailing father. Despite a clear order granting three days bail, the Superintendent of Prisons did not release him.

Kashmir: Local contacts say Kashmir is effectively a police state, with almost complete control of people's lives, despite the election victory in September/October 2024 which resulted in the appointment of a Kashmiri



Chief Minister. Freedom of speech is non-existent and there is no right to freedom of assembly. No journalists can publish anything even slightly critical of the Indian government. Security patrols in rural areas have increased considerably, so that permission is required for anyone to move around. Even to graze livestock in the traditional summer mountain grasslands and forests, farmers and shepherds must go through a lengthy and complex process which may not result in permission being given. Inability to graze animals on common ground has significant effects on livelihoods and may make a farm unviable, as the average landholding is only one acre. Alongside this there is a huge Indian programme of infrastructure development (roads, railways etc) promoting extraction of natural resources and trade links. This too has significant impacts on local farmers, who are forced to give up land and suffer from the polluting effects of the construction work. Compensation is minimal or non-existent.

How to contact the Minehead Amnesty International Local Group:

Website: www.amnesty.org.uk/minehead

Facebook: www.facebook.com/amnestyminehead

Email: amnestyminehead@gmail.com

Group contact & Joint Convener: Susan Mew 01643 821209 Email: brightmanmew@btinternet.com

Treasurer & Joint Convener: Cherry Bird Tel. 01984 641052 Email: cherrybird@gmail.com