**Amnesty International**



### **Blackheath and Greenwich**

### **Newsletter**

# MARCH 2016

## Group Meeting 8.3.16

**Present:**

Angela Dock

Ann Hillary

Brigitte Hurrell

David Webbe Wood

David Weekes

Geoff Torry

Graham Dock

Ken Ryder

Peter Francis-Mullins

Rachel Errington

Roger Hardwick

Simon Ware

**Apologies:**

Dee Weekes

Eileen Smith

Katie Dick

Miki Flannery

Olwen Pearson

Rachel Errington

Roger Hardwick

**CAMPAIGN UPDATES**

**Central America:** Roger mentioned the vigil that had taken place the day before (7 March) outside the Honduran Embassy to mark the murder of the Honduran activist, Berta Cáceres, who had been campaigning against the building of the Agua Zarca Dam. Roger had attended with Angela, Graham and Rachel. He will write to Farshid querying the fact that AI had not publicised the vigil.

There were no updates for any of the other current campaigns.

At this point Peter reported that he had received a letter, replying to a letter he had sent, from Russia. Then nearly all those present said they had received a letter also, written in Russian, many of which, surprisingly, had to be signed for.

**POETRY EVENT**

Roger reported that Ann Garett from ‘Write for Rights’ would give a presentation to the group at the May meeting. It was agreed that it should be after refreshments, from 19.45 to 20.15.

**BOOK SALE PLANNING**

Following Heidi Alexander’s input there had been a number of offers of help and donations of books. It was agreed that the group would not collect books. It was agreed that we would decline offers of fiction. It was also agreed that donors would be asked to keep the books until the garage opened on 16 May, if possible.

Brigitte passed round the rota for drivers and helpers for the book collections. Please contact Brigitte if you can offer help.

Roger said that he would find out if we could distribute Book Sale leaflets at the Greenwich Book Fair in May.

David W reported that Dee had been in touch with Lewisham Volunteers re helpers and that the credit card machine was organised for the Book Sale.

David W.W said that he had had a reply from Joseph about volunteers. It was agreed that we would accept this offer of assistance. Simon will check with Farshid that all volunteers are covered by insurance when working for the Book Sale.

There was much discussion about the opening hours at the garage to include daytime opening. It was decided to make a decision at the April meeting.

**LETTER WRITING**

Next letter writing at Greenwich Tavern is on 22 March. Letters to David Webbe Wood by 09.00 that day, and email the group saying which letters/case you are covering.

**AI AGM**

After some discussion it was decided that Rachel will be the official representative, as she had been present during the discussions and thus would be able to take forward the nuanced views of the group on certain resolutions which were discussed in detail at the meeting.

**A4:** Review of Amnesty International’s international policy on access to abortion services: The group voted in favour of a review.

**A5:** Climate change is a human rights issue: The group voted against. Many members voiced their concern that Amnesty was continually widening its remit. Originally its aims had been clear but now it was continually widening its scope. Climate change was dealt with by many organisations, e.g. Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth. It was mentioned that if protesters about climate change suffered ill treatment, then their case would come under the umbrella of AI anyway.

David W.W. mentioned **A2:** Human Rights in Eritrea and **A3** Western Sahara. A2 referred to borders of the country: surely AI can’t get involved in that. These resolutions would mean prioritising specific countries, stretching AI’s resources. What would have to be axed to do this?

The group did not have strong feelings about many of the other resolutions and it was left to Rachel to decide how to vote on the day.

**AOB:** (None?)

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|  | **EVENTS 2016** |
| Tuesday  22 March | 7.30 pm Letter writing, Greenwich Tavern King William Walk, SE10 |
| Thursday  31 March | This is Exile; Diaries of Child Refugees Human Rights Action Centre |
| Tuesday 12 April | 7.30 pm, Group monthly meeting, The Crypt, St. Margaret’s Church, Lee, SE13 5DL |
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Group Meetings: Second Tuesday every month (apart from June) at 7.30pm in the crypt of St. Margaret’s Church, Lee Terrace, SE13 5DL

Letter writing evenings: Fourth Tuesday every month (apart from December) 8pm currently at Greenwich Tavern, King William Walk, SE10

Book Sale: A Saturday mid-to-late June; a Saturday after Remembrance Sunday in November; both at Church of the Ascension (COA), Dartmouth Row, SE10 8BF (see EVENTS 2015 above)

Human Rights Action Centre (HRAC): 17–25 New Inn Yard, London EC2A 3EA; for any official events please register via the website at [www.amnesty.org.uk](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/) or tel: 020 7033 1675

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**Website**: [www.amnesty.org.uk/groups/blackheath-and-greenwich](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/blackheath#_blank)