



AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Bromley & Orpington Group

March 2014 Newsletter



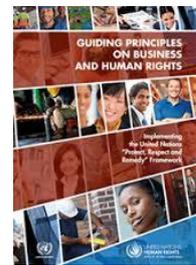
Our thanks to Ann Elliot of Bromley for sponsoring this month's Newsletter

COME TO OUR NEXT MEETINGS

Tuesday 11th March **18th AGM**
Tuesday 8th April **Campaigning Meeting; AGM Resolutions**
Tuesday 13th May **Speaker: Asylum Aid**

Business & Human Rights

What responsibility does business have towards human rights? This was the fascinating question **Paul Eagle** of the **Amnesty Business Group**, our speaker this month, came to answer. Paul gave a historic oversight of 'hit and miss' approaches to human rights protection by business based on nominal acceptance of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights. More recently, the UN has codified what should be expected of business through the UN Norms for Transnationals, now known as the UN Guiding Principles. These outline a **Protect, Respect and Remedy Framework** in which there is a State duty to protect, a corporate responsibility to respect and access to remedy for victims of human rights abuses. Businesses need not only to avoid contributing to adverse situations, but to seek to prevent or mitigate them wherever their operations bring conflict or resistance. Paul noted that the Government here has published a UK National Plan but this provides little new thinking; in fact Government policy has made it harder for the victims of human rights abuses to seek remedy in the UK. Amnesty is continuing to work on Shell in the Niger Delta, UK Export Finance and EU Business and Human Rights initiatives. Major sporting events such as the forthcoming World Cup are also a fertile ground for abuses and Amnesty campaigning.



Group Finance

Balance brought forward	£562.97
Income	£3,657.22
Expenditure	£988.45
Balance at 11th February	£3,231.74
CHANGE	£2,668.77

A bumper month included monies banked from the 2013 sponsored walk (£1,500), and jazz concert income of £2,132.22; expenses included £874.25 in respect of the jazz concert. The Group agreed to make a donation of **£2,672.00** to Amnesty – a fantastic start to the year!

Amnesty Jazz

The 190 or so who turned out for our evening of jazz with the **Nick Beston Quartet** were treated to an evening of scintillating musical entertainment. Now in its third year, this event just gets better and better. We owe many thanks to Nick Beston and the band, Sue Rivers, our guest singer, and to group members for mounting the amazing buffet during the interval and to David for magnificent organisation. The event raised £2,132.22 gross and net profit of £1,257.97. A terrific result!



Bromley & Orpington Amnesty International
18th AGM
Tuesday 11th March 2014 at 7.30pm

Your Group Needs You!

At our AGM next month we will elect Group officers to serve for the next 12 months. To continue, the Group needs to elect a Chair, Treasurer and Secretary. Shirley will stand down as Secretary at the AGM. David and Neville are seeking to 'transition' interested members into the roles of Treasurer and Chair over the next year. If you are interested in getting more involved please contact David or Neville. Full support will be given to ease individuals into these three roles. We are also seeking a volunteer to lead our Prisoner Case File work.

Monthly Action: Philippines

On 5 March 2010, Darius Evangelista was arrested by police in Manila on suspicion of theft. Fellow detainees saw him brought back to their cell badly injured, before being taken from the police station. They never saw him again. In August 2010, a video was broadcast on national television of a naked man crying out in pain on the floor, while a police officer beat and abused him. Darius's wife is convinced that the man in the video is her husband as she recognised his tattoos. It's the last time she saw her husband alive. No one has been brought to justice for the torture, enforced disappearance and possible extrajudicial execution of Darius Evangelista. We sent a letter to the Chief of Philippine National Police calling for justice for Darius and an urgent investigation into the case.



Good News! Write for Rights Campaign

The annual Write for Rights 'send a message of hope' campaign is one of Amnesty's most popular. We hope you took part in the campaign last Christmas. There has already been good news. Russian POC, **Vladimir Akimenkov**, one of the Bolotnaya three, was freed under amnesty at the end of December, and earlier in the month, following almost 90,000 appeals for her release, the Cambodian housing rights activist **Yorm Bopha** was released on bail. Over **2.1 million actions** have been taken in over 83 countries! That's the power of Amnesty, thank you!

Ihar Tsikhanyuk – Belarus wrote:

"When I feel left with no hope to fight, I'll get a letter and it inspires me. The light of hope appears again, and my confidence in myself and my ability to change things returns! I thank everyone for their support and solidarity letters."

Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment....

Is how Amnesty defines the death penalty. The ultimate penalty was already something of a lottery in the US but it has recently taken an even more sinister turn. An international export ban on the chemicals used in the administration of lethal injection has left many US States without the means to execute. In their place some states are 'experimenting' with alternatives that are leading to horrifying consequences. In Texas, executions are now taking twice as long following a switch to a single chemical – pentobarbital. States are using untested drug protocols to end life, with surveys pointing to problems in respect of potency and purity. In Ohio, Dennis McGuire took over 25 minutes to die in reported traumatic circumstances. His family are suing the state for cruelty.



Find us on Facebook and on the web.

Present on 11th February 2014: Neville White, Shirley Henderson, Joan Williams, Ted Burke, Waltraut Gilchrist, Wendy Simmons, Patrick McDonnell, Simon Nash, Patsy Paine, Gladys Edmonds, Claire Ellis, Vivienne Andrews, Vivien Glanz and Mariela Quaranta. **Apologies:** David Howkins, Margaret Coppard, Eleanor Ivens, Pat Eastaugh, Chris Purnell, Rene Eastwood and Pamela Smith.

Meetings are held in the Wesley Room, Orpington Methodist Church, Sevenoaks Road, Orpington commencing at 7.30pm. **E-mail** aibromley@btinternet.com **website:** www.amnesty.org.uk/bromley

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