



AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Bromley & Orpington Group

May 2014 Newsletter



Our thanks (again) to Ian Magrath of Chislehurst for sponsoring this month's Newsletter

COME TO OUR NEXT MEETINGS

Tuesday 13 May

Tuesday 10 June

Tuesday 8 July

Speaker: Dr Russell Hargrave, Asylum Aid

Speaker: Release International

Campaign meeting

Speaker: "Protection from Persecution"

Dr Russell Hargrave of Asylum Aid

Tuesday 13th May at 7.30pm

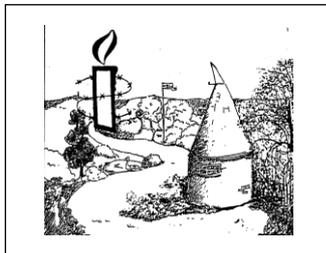
All Welcome!

Monthly Action: Protecting Civilians in the Central African Republic

Anti-balaka militias are carrying out violent attacks in an effort to ethnically cleanse Muslims in the Central African Republic. The existing international peacekeeping forces have not been able to contain the violence nor curb the refugee crisis of entire Muslim communities fleeing to neighbouring countries. According to the latest UN estimate in early March, only 900 of 140,000 Muslims remain in the capital, Bangui, and those left behind fear for their lives. Dozens of towns and villages in the western third of the country, which once were home to thousands of Muslims, have been forcibly emptied of their Muslim population. Many homes, churches and mosques have been destroyed, as witnessed by Amnesty International. We signed a letter to President Obama calling on him to use his position and influence within the UN Security Council to ensure adequate deployment of peacekeeping forces with a mandate to use force to protect civilians.



Sevenoaks Amnesty Group



It is with great sadness and regret that we announce the closure of the Sevenoaks Amnesty Group. Neville attended an EGM held by the Group on March 22nd, at which those present voted unanimously to close the Group. Sevenoaks Group was set up in 1979, and over the next 35 years established a remarkable record of achievement, especially through the annual sponsored walk which we co-partnered with Sevenoaks for over 25 years. In that time, Sevenoaks raised tens of thousands of pounds for Amnesty and made a difference. We shall miss them.

Day of Action

"Afghan Women's Rights: Protecting the Progress"

Churchill Theatre Forecourt, Bromley

Saturday 17th May 2014. 9am-4.30pm. Join us!

Group Finance

Balance brought forward	£543.24
Income	£20.00
Expenditure	£7.44
Balance at 8 th April	£555.80
CHANGE	+ £12.56

Papuan Activists Imprisoned

We wrote letters to the Indonesian authorities following an increase in human rights persecution of peaceful Papuan activists. On 30th April police arrested six Papuan men who were taking part in a peaceful prayer meeting to celebrate a traditional festival. They were accused of supporting the independence of Papua and planning to raise the 'illegal' Morning Star flag that symbolises Papuan independence. They were sentenced to three years in prison for freely expressing their right to celebrate Papuan traditions. Earlier, police had fired on the prayer gathering, killing two participants. We wrote urging the release of the six men; to look into the use of fire at the prayer gathering; to decriminalise freedom of expression (Articles 106 and 110 Indonesian Penal Code, and to respect the right to freedom of expression among all citizens. More information on this action and how to take part can be found here <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/ASA21/008/2014/en>

Good News: Release of Hakamada Iwao

We were delighted to learn of the release of 78 year old **Hakamada Iwao** at the end of March. Hakamada was the world's longest serving death row prisoner, imprisoned in 1963 on evidence now widely discredited. The Judge that released him said evidence may have been fabricated, and pending a retrial it was humane to release him. Regrettably, the prosecution has appealed against the ruling, and Amnesty will continue to campaign for his exoneration at a fresh and fair hearing.



Neville gave a round-up of the state of the death penalty in 2013, which overall saw a backward step. At least **778 executions** were recorded in 22 countries (up from 682 in 2012). China, Iran, Iraq, North Korea, Saudi Arabia, the USA and Somalia account for the majority. China executions are a state secret, but almost certainly run into the thousands. 1,925 death sentences were passed in 57 countries – again up on 2012. Over 23,000 people languish on death rows around

the world. There has been a **shock rise** in the number of executions carried out in Iran and Iraq rising to 'at least' 704 in Iran alone. In Africa, at least 64 executions took place in five countries – a 50% rise on 2012. Nigeria carried out its first executions for eight years. 41% of all US executions in 2013 took place in just one state – Texas. Europe remained execution free in 2013, although Belarus sentenced four people to death. Four countries that had not executed for a long time carried out executions: Indonesia, Kuwait, Nigeria, and Vietnam. The one positive outcome – three countries that executed in 2012 did not do so last year, including Pakistan and the UAE.

Please note postage costs increased in April. International letters up to 10g are now **97p**, up to 20g will cost **97p** in Europe and **£1.28** for the rest of the world



Find us on Facebook and on the web.

Present on 8th April: David Howkins, Neville White, Vivien Glanz, Shirley Henderson, Ted Burke, Patsy Paine, Margaret Coppard, Waltraut Gilchrist, Wendy Simmons, Vivienne Andrews, Simon Nash, Eleanor Ivens, Rene Eastwood, Peter Martin, Gladys Edmonds. Apologies: Mariela Quaranta, Joan Williams.

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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