



# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL Bromley & Orpington Group October 2015 Newsletter



Our thanks to Rindy Baaker of Sevenoaks for sponsoring this month's Newsletter

## COME TO OUR NEXT MEETINGS

Tuesday 6 October

Speaker Stuart Sweeney: GCHQ Surveillance & Human Rights

Tuesday 10 November

Speaker Bryony Norman: Refugee Support Network

## 'Can You Keep A Secret? GCHQ, Surveillance & Human Rights' Stuart Sweeney Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> October at 7.30pm

### Trafficking – The Unseen

We were delighted to welcome Rebecca Wingate-Saul from Bristol based 'Unseen' to the meeting. Set up in 2008, Unseen provides safe accommodation and on-going support for the survivors of trafficking so they can rebuild their lives. Rebecca reminded us that modern slavery generates \$150bn in illegal profits annually. In the UK official figures found there to be 2,340 victims of trafficking in 2014, but the number is almost certainly higher, with the Government's own estimates exceeding 13,000 victims. 60% are women, and the main originating countries are Albania, Nigeria, Vietnam, Romania, Slovakia and within the UK itself. 671 victims in 2014 were children. The Modern Slavery Act which came into force in March, brings all legislation together in one place to defend the victims of trafficking – however support for those victims is limited to 45 days of financial support, after which they are 'on their own'. Unseen works with victims referred to them to support their future needs. The charity, although only small, also has a commendable record in prevention by working with local agencies including the police. They are one of only three organisations nationally to offer safe accommodation, and have plans to launch a safe house for men later this year, and ultimately a similar program for children. Unseen is a brilliant charity doing quite amazing work. To find out more or to support their safe house work go to [www.unseenuk.org](http://www.unseenuk.org)



### Cudham Fair

Our return to Cudham Fair in August after a year off was met with very poor weather, but this did not stop our highly delicious cakes from selling out! We raised £234.15, one of our best results from the occasion. Our grateful thanks to Margaret for organising the day, and all turned out to help with the stall.

### Westminster Corner



*A couple of months ago we wrote to the Foreign & Commonwealth Secretary about impunity for human rights violations in the Israel-Palestine conflict. We received an unsigned letter from the 'Near East Desk':* The British Government is a strong supporter of international justice and the ICC...the UK judges that Palestinian attempts to seek ICC jurisdiction over the Occupied Territories would make a resumption of negotiations for peace in the region more difficult. It is now for the independent Prosecutor of the ICC to make her own decision on how to proceed. Israel is not a party to the Rome Statute...and has no obligations to respect it". We wrote to the **Secretary of State for Business** calling on the UK Government to close loopholes in the law that allow the export of certain types of equipment that can be used in torture. The EU is reviewing the law and Amnesty is applying pressure.

## Group Finance

Balance brought forward	£552.75
Income	£682.31
Expenditure	£472.74
Balance at 8 <sup>th</sup> September	<b>£762.32</b>
<b>CHANGE</b>	<b>£209.57</b>

Income included receipts from Cudham Fair (£234.15) and Margaret's Open Garden (£397.56). It was agreed that a further £250 would be sent to Amnesty, taking our 2015 donation to £2,572.



## 2016 Fundraising News!

As well as Amnesty Jazz with the Nick Beston Quartet returning in February 2016, we have been promised a charity premiere by **Bromley Little Theatre**. We have submitted our three choices of play and hope to hear soon. Watch this space!

## Monthly Action – El Salvador: My Body My Rights



The criminalisation of abortion in El Salvador makes no allowances even if the woman's life and health is at risk or if the pregnancy is the result of rape or incest. The law also means that women who miscarry or have stillbirths can be charged with murder and can be imprisoned for up to 30 years. This has created an atmosphere of suspicion and led to hundreds of arrests. In many instances insufficient evidence and unfair trials have led to imprisonment. The law is applied so strongly that even doctors and nurses face agonising dilemmas. Amnesty International's 'My Body My Rights' campaign challenges

violence against women and girls in El Salvador, including the criminalisation of abortion in all circumstances. We sent messages of support in the form of ribbons, with a 'key of freedom' attached. These are being collected by Amnesty and will be sent in a massive protest in support of women facing violence or inhumane treatment.

## Monthly Letter: Burundi



Fear stalks Burundi as the human rights situation continues to deteriorate. Torture is routinely used by security services and protests have been met with disappearances and a harsh crackdown on freedom of expression. In a controversial – and unconstitutional – move, President Nkurunziza decided to run for an illegal third term. Up to 100 have been killed in the resulting unrest and over 100,000 have fled the country. Human Rights activist **Pierre Claver Mbonimpa** known as 'Burundi's Nelson Mandela', has been shot and

injured, arrested, intimidated and harassed. He is under house arrest and not allowed to leave the capital, but so far has not been charged. Please sign, address and send the enclosed letter, which will cost £1.00 to post.

**Present on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2015:** Neville White, David Howkins, Vivien Glanz, Waltraut Gilchrist, Patsy Paine, Ted Burke, Wendy Simmons, Margaret Coppard, Vivienne Andrews, Claire Ellis, Patrick McDonnell, Rene Eastwood. We welcomed Gordon Ledgerwood, Elsa and Nicole to the meeting. **Apologies:** Gladys Edmonds, Eleanor Ivens, Joan Williams and Shirley Henderson.

Meetings are held in the Wesley Room, Orpington Methodist Church, Sevenoaks Road, Orpington commencing at 7.30pm. **E-mail website:** [www.amnesty.org.uk/bromley](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/bromley)

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