



## News from the Minehead Group

[www.amnesty.org.uk/minehead](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/minehead)

[www.facebook.com/amnestyminehead](https://www.facebook.com/amnestyminehead)

### Actions you can take this month:

- ✓ **Send a letter** to the Prime Minister of **Ethiopia** and/or the Ambassador in London concerning the situation in **Oromia**, where peaceful protesters have been arrested for their opposition to the clearing of natural forests in the area and transfer of ownership of public property to private investors. *[Letters attached to this newsletter.]*
- ✓ **Sign the petition** on behalf of **Kamal Foroughi**, a 76-year-old British-Iranian man serving an eight-year prison sentence in Iran's Evin prison for charges of espionage and alcohol possession after an unfair trial. Go to [www.amnesty.org.uk](http://www.amnesty.org.uk) to find the action.
- ✓ **Make a date** in your diary for some future group events just added to the calendar – **letter writing** on 26 May and an **AmnesTEA** on 2 July.

### Round up of March group news



Our **annual quiz** on 4 March, once again organised brilliantly by the Humber family (see photo on the left), was a great success. Sixteen teams took part and rose to the challenge of the Humber's cunningly constructed questions around the theme of book titles. We raised the good sum of £422, including £103 from the raffle, which was an increase on the previous year. A big thank you to everyone who donated prizes and who came along on the night.

Our **stall** on 8 March, **International Women's Day**, met a good response from the public. This was the first year we had held the stall actually on the day and despite it being a weekday, we were pleased with the results. Passers-by were very willing to undertake the relatively easy task of writing a solidarity message to young women in **Burkina Faso** who are fleeing from violent and abusive forced marriages. Messages were written on over 100 pieces of cloth to form strings of bunting and these have been sent to AIUK where they will be put together with others and sent to women's refuges in Burkina Faso.



At our **March group meeting**, we completed the bunting (see left). We also had an interesting discussion on some of the resolutions being put to the **AIUK AGM** in April. There is a brief outline of our conclusions in the meeting notes circulated with this newsletter. Don't forget that AI members can **vote on-line** on the AGM resolutions – check this out on the AGM pages of the AIUK website.

### Diary Dates

#### Monthly meetings:

We meet on the fourth Tuesday of the month (except August and December) at 1930, at the Quaker Meeting House on Bancks Street, Minehead. The first part of the meeting is open to all and features a speaker, film or workshop. After a tea break, AI members are invited to stay for a short business meeting which will end by 2130.

**Sat/Sun 9-10 April**  
AIUK AGM & annual conference.

**Tuesday 26 April**  
Group meeting: report back from AGM.

**Tuesday 24 May**  
Group meeting: speaker from the Children's Human Rights network.

**Thursday 26 May**  
Letter writing afternoon at the Reading Room, Minehead from 1400-1530

**Tuesday 28 June**  
Group meeting: special topic to be agreed.

**Saturday 2 July**  
AmnesTEA at Karen's home in Porlock.

**Saturday 23 July**  
Stall at Roadwater Fete focusing on refugees.

Everyone will be pleased to hear that we have at last found someone to manage our **Facebook** page. Our new member, Karen Mills, has agreed to take this on and has already been updating the page. Do have a look at [www.facebook.com/amnestyminehead](http://www.facebook.com/amnestyminehead)

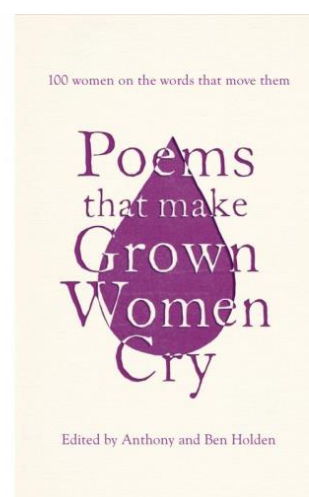
## Campaign News

### Women's Rights

*Cherry Bird writes:* The bunting produced at our stall on 8 March and at our group meeting looked striking strung across the stall. It has been sent to AIUK to be joined up with those from other groups and sent to five shelters in Burkina Faso for girls who are escaping from **forced early marriage** and have nowhere else to go. Many of these are only in their early teens and married to much older men. The resulting early pregnancies can lead to permanent damage to their health. Human rights work is targeting youth education, to begin shifting traditional cultural attitudes towards women and their reproductive health. If you haven't already done so, **sign the online petition** to support women's human rights in Burkina Faso at <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/issues/My-Body-My-Rights>

Amnesty launched a book of **Poems that make Grown Women Cry** at the National Theatre on 4 March. Go online to see a video clip of noteworthy women reading out their selected poems, and order a copy (£13.99). <http://amnestystop.org.uk/poems-that-make-grown-women-cry.html>

This is what it says on the AIUK shop web page about the book:  
*'Following the success of their anthology Poems That Make Grown Men Cry, father-and-son team Anthony and Ben Holden, working with AI, have asked the same revealing question of 100 remarkable women. Which poem has moved you to tears? From Yoko Ono to Judi Dench, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie to Elena Ferrante, Carol Ann Duffy to Kauai Hart Hemmings, and Joan Baez to Nikki Giovanni, this unique collection delivers private insights into the minds of women whose writing, acting, and thinking are admired around the world.'*



**Ethiopia:** This month's letter actions are in support of the rights of the **Oromo people**, who are protesting against the government clearing of natural forests in the Oromia area and transfer of ownership of the land to private investors. The authorities used violent methods to suppress opposition and many of the protesters have been arrested and imprisoned.

**Stop Torture:** this global campaign will be concluding at the end of May 2016. However, it is very likely that we still be asked to take action about torture cases, through the Individuals at Risk programme.

*Jill Walmsley has summarised the campaign actions taken over the past year:*

This last year I have continued to respond on behalf of the group with letters and online petitions for a number of Urgent Actions, including cases from Pakistan, Iran and Saudi Arabia, eg for Raif Badawi the blogger at risk of public floggings and continued imprisonment. I have also written to the UK Government regarding the trade in torture tools.

As a group, we have continued to campaign for the five cases highlighted by AIUK, and there have been successes. Moses Akatugba from Nigeria was pardoned and released in May; the authorities opened an investigation into the case of Alfredo Disbarro in the Phillipines; and charges against Claudia Medini in Mexico have been dropped. The families of Dilorum Abdukadirova from Uzbekistan and Ali Aarrass in Morocco have written to AIUK thanking members for their support. Shaker Aamer was released from Guantanamo in November. These cases were featured in our letter writing sessions and at our vigil on June 26th, the Global Day of Action.

### **How to contact the Minehead Amnesty International Local Group:**

**Website:** [www.amnesty.org.uk/minehead](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/minehead)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/amnestyminehead](http://www.facebook.com/amnestyminehead)

**Chair & group contact:** Alison Dietz: Tel. 01984 641603 Email: [dietz@btinternet.com](mailto:dietz@btinternet.com)

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