

# Action

August 2012



## THE BRIGHTON AND HOVE AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL GROUP NEWSLETTER

### Forthcoming Brighton and Hove Amnesty Group Meetings/Events

**2nd August**  
Group Meeting  
With guest speaker  
Sarah Pailthorpe  
From Gatwick Detainee Welfare Group

**6th September**  
Group Business Meeting  
*Group meetings take place on the first Thursday of each month from 8-10pm at Community Base, Queens Road, Brighton*

**Letter writing evenings**  
An evening once a month to sit and write letters with fellow Amnesty members. These evenings are hosted at member's houses. All welcome, simply contact the host/hostess for details:

**8th August**  
Contact Emma 01273 232397  
**19th September**  
Contact Jill 01273 621697

Monthly Lanes Collection Dates:  
**28th July 2012**  
Contact Catherine : 07828 584430 to volunteer

Monthly Stall in Sydney St  
**12th August 2012**  
**1st September 2012**  
Contact Jill 01273 621697 to volunteer

Annual Street Collection  
**22nd September 2012** (Hove  
10am to 1pm)  
**29th September 2012**  
(Brighton 2pm to 5pm)  
Volunteers needed  
Contact Emma 01273 232397

**9th December 2012**  
Letter Writing Vigil  
Friends Meeting House

### SUCCESS STORY:

#### Romani Families Granted the Right to Water



Following action by Amnesty International activists, five Romani families living in the city of Nis in Serbia, have been fully granted the right to water. During last month's meeting, members of the Brighton and Hove group were among many across the country who wrote to the city authorities of Nis requesting that the Romani families were guaranteed free access to safe and sufficient water, that their temporary living conditions were improved and that adequate alternative housing be provided for them. Amnesty International is still working to ensure the Nis city authorities also respond to adequately to the second and third requests, however Amnesty is happy that the most pressing demand, access to water, has been met.

Since their forced eviction from the informal 'Belvil' settlement in Belgrade on 26 April, five families have been living in an abandoned warehouse in Nis (the entrance to which is pictured below), with no access to running water, sanitation or electricity. Amnesty International has been working alongside other NGOs in Serbia to ensure the authorities guarantee the families the right to water, following a visit to the warehouse by a delegation from the organization in June, when temperatures were beginning to soar above 35 degrees Celsius, making living conditions deteriorate even further.

The Urgent Action was issued on the 4<sup>th</sup> July and on the 18<sup>th</sup> July, the office of the newly elected major of Nis informed Amnesty International that running water had finally been switched on at the warehouse. Amnesty International was able to confirm this in a telephone call to the families, who were extremely pleased to have water after almost three months of waiting.

The Urgent Action Network at Amnesty International sent round a message thanking everyone who sent appeals.

# CONTROL ARMS CAMPAIGN UPDATE



At the time of writing (22nd July) 74 States have drafted a statement agreeing to stand up for a robust Arms Trade Treaty, at the negotiations at the UN in New York. They have said: "*We need this treaty to prevent authorization of transfer of conventional arms where there is a substantial risk that those weapons would be, inter alia: 1) used for, or facilitate, serious violations of international law, including international humanitarian law and human rights law, 2) having a destabilizing effect or exacerbating existing conflicts, 3) diverted to unauthorized end users.*" This is a great step forward after the slow pace of the negotiations up to now. However 5 key names are missing from this list, the 5 permanent members of the UN Security Council - China, France, Russia, the UK and the US.

This is disappointing, especially considering recent positive statements in parliament where the Arms Treaty was discussed on 12th July. Foreign Office Minister for Counter Proliferation Alistair Burt said: "The UK supports an ATT containing a mandatory refusal if there is substantial risk that the export would be used to com-

mit a serious violation of international humanitarian or human rights law. Ministers and senior officials are echoing those sentiments in their bilateral and multilateral meetings on the treaty." He went on to say "One of the purposes for which the UN was founded was to achieve co-operation in solving problems of a humanitarian character and to encourage respect for human rights. An effective, legally binding ATT will help to do that and more, and we are sparing no effort in our pursuit of that aim."

With only a week to go it is crucial that these 5 States use their influence positively and join the other 74 standing up for a robust Treaty. US officials want the Arms Trade Treaty to include an 'escape clause' that allows arms exporters to prioritise national security issues over concerns about human rights. Please urge US President Barack Obama to fight for a better world, by visiting Amnesty's 'urgent actions' page here: <http://www.amnesty.org.uk/actions.asp>

## Pells Pool Summer Social Success!

Not to be put off by the torrential rain the foolhardy members of the Brighton, Hove and Lewes Amnesty groups showed up for an evening of swimming, food, drink and good company.

Thank you to all those who supported our Pells Pool Social Evening held on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> July along with the Lewes Amnesty International Group. Many thanks to all those who came along on the night, donated raffle prizes, ***and lent us gazebos*** - which literally saved the event.

Despite torrential rain it seemed that everyone enjoyed themselves as they huddled under the gazebos! There was plenty of food on the barbecue, a number of swimmers, a busy bar and an exciting raffle.

And after covering all of our expenses we raised £57 for Amnesty!



*Brighton and Hove Amnesty members sheltering from the rain and enjoying a drink at the Summer Social.*

## **Minutes for the Brighton and Hove Amnesty International Monthly meeting 5<sup>th</sup> July 2012**

### Attendees

Emma, John, Mike, Luke, Ollie, Jonny, Jill, Celia, Angela, Alex, Catherine, Freya, Samantha, Anna

### Apologies

Liz, Sue, Madeline, Angus, Luke G, Jess, Ester

### Matters arising from Minutes

\*\*\*Luke B working on contacting the pub chain re. Amnesty collecting tins to put by tills\*\*\*

Cat to keep track of collecting tins in businesses and organise a database / letters.

There has been no response to getting contacts for the restaurant evening fundraiser. The group will keep this in mind and carry on looking, however will look in to an alternative fundraiser for the time being.

After a visit to the railwayman's club venue the group decided that it was unsuitable so we are to carry on at Community Base for the foreseeable future.

Future speakers to include the Gatwick Detainee Welfare group (2<sup>nd</sup> Aug 2012) and Syrian Solidarity movement.

### Monthly Action

The group signed a letter calling for the release of Burmese Prisoners of Conscience.

### Fundraising

Ollie to undertake the Hell Runner in aid of Amnesty International

Mike to undertake the London Triathlon in aid of Amnesty International

\*\*\*Freya, Samantha and Cat to organise an Auction of Promises to be promoted in the newsletter and to take place at an Amnes-Tea Party\*\*\*

It was noted that our Group Anniversary is approaching possibly this year. An idea put forward was to tie celebrations for this in with the Amnes-Tea Party.

\*\*\*Annual Street Collection – Emma and Cat to organise\*\*\*

### Stalls

- 7<sup>th</sup> July outside Books for Amnesty, Sydney Street (focus on Human Rights in Kyrgyzstan)

12<sup>th</sup> August outside Books for Amnesty, Sydney Street (focus on the Death Penalty)

1<sup>st</sup> September (Pride Stall)

### Letter Writing Group

To be held on 17<sup>th</sup> July, 7.30pm. Contact Jill for details (01273 621697).

### Group Planning Evaluation

The group was split in to small groups to discuss how we feel about the way monthly meetings and the group in general are organised, our priorities and our activities.

Questions explored included – What were the best things the group achieved in the last year?

What makes a good meeting?

What should we do less of?

What should we do more of?

What could we change?

\*\*\*Emma to summarise all ideas and circulate / follow up\*\*\*

### Campaign Feedback

#### *Middle East and North Africa*

Ollie and Caroline talked about the crisis of transition within Tunisia, Libya, Syria and Egypt. Included in the discussion were women rights in Egypt, US/UK links to the conflict in Syria, executions as well as food refusal to illegal immigrants in Iran and Israel impeding development within Palestine.

\*\*\*Campaign coordinators to organise an action for next months newsletter\*\*\*

### Forced Evictions

Freya explained how campaigns against forced evictions are sent out urgently requiring a quick response from campaigners. The current campaign was for 5 Romani families evicted and relocated to a warehouse with no running water in Serbia. Freya had prepared a letter that the group signed.

### Arms Trade

The group watched the video that Neal had kindly produced from the Arms Trade Treaty Creative Action 'Die-In'. 150 signatures were collected at the event, adding to around 600, 000 collected so far for the whole campaign. The ATT Conference was happening as the meeting took place.

\*\*\*Luke to feedback on the outcome of the conference next month\*\*\*

### Prisoners of Conscience

\*\*\*Jill to feedback next meeting on whether the campaign for two Pakistani men who have not been heard from for some years is continuing\*\*\*

### AOB

Event: 12<sup>th</sup> July "4 Days inside Guantanamo" film screening and panel discussion. Human Rights Action Centre, London. 7pm.

Luke B – Amnesty Twitter account has been set up for members of the local group to share ideas, photos, events and news. This can be followed @AmnestyBrighton. If you're not on Twitter, you can still see what's been posted here: <http://twitter.com/#!/AmnestyBrighton>.

Mike – Website to be back in action by Sunday (8<sup>th</sup> July). More interactive, connected to Facebook and Twitter accounts. Will notify by email if the site address is changed.

**Take Action**

Please sign the enclosed letter about the abduction of three members of the OROZCO MEDINA family and a programme of harassment involving the municipal police since 2007.

## Human Rights Defender Jailed for life

On Saturday 7th July Celia and I ran a stall in front of the Amnesty Bookshop in Sydney Street despite the rain ! We were collecting signatures for a petition about Azimjan Askarov from Kyrgyzstan (a bit of a tongue twister.) Azimjan is serving a life sentence for his human rights work documenting ethnic violence in southern Kyrgyzstan. He was arrested and charged with murder and other crimes which he did not commit. He was beaten for three days until he confessed. He is now in poor health and is not receiving adequate medical treatment.

The petition calls for the unconditional release of Azimjan and was sent to the President of Kyrgyzstan. Also a copy of the petition was sent to the Embassy of the Kyrgyz Republic in London.

We collected 82 signatures including some at the Pells Pool Social Evening.

If you would like to help us with the monthly stall, please contact me, Jill Francis (tel. 01273 621697) It is an important part of our campaigning work. Not only do we send letters and petitions on behalf of our prisoners of conscience, we tell people about our group and invite them to our meetings if they are interested. Most importantly we are informing the public about our work fighting injustice throughout the World

*Jill—Stalls co ordinator*

### **BRIGHTON AND HOVE AMNESTY GROUP CONTACTS**

**Chair** – Emma brightonandhoveai@googlemail.com Tel: 01273 232397

**New Member Secretary**: Sue Tel: 07790 755921

**Mail Secretary**: Liz Tel: 07598 467568

**Email Secretary**: Emma Tel: 01273 232397 **Group Email**: [brightonandhoveai@googlemail.com](mailto:brightonandhoveai@googlemail.com)

**Minutes Secretary**: Catherine 07828 584430

**Treasurer**: Catherine 07828 584430

**Newsletter editor**: - Emma Parker: Tel: 01273 232397

Please email any contributions for the newsletter to [brightonandhoveai@googlemail.com](mailto:brightonandhoveai@googlemail.com)

**Lanes collection organiser**: - Catherine 07828 584430

**Web Site co-ordinator**: Michael Fisher - [michaelowenfisher@hotmail.com](mailto:michaelowenfisher@hotmail.com)

**Amnesty Stalls co-ordinator**—Jill Francis—01273 621697

### **Campaign Co-Ordinators:**

**Prisoner of Conscience** – Jill Francis—[jrfrancis@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:jrfrancis@hotmail.co.uk)

**Death Penalty**— Ester Zanetti —[esterfederica@gmail.com](mailto:esterfederica@gmail.com)

**Control Arms; securing the Arms Trade Treaty** —Luke Beale—[lukebeale@hotmail.com](mailto:lukebeale@hotmail.com)

**End Forced Evictions: Poverty and Human Rights**—Freya — [freya\\_lyte@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:freya_lyte@hotmail.co.uk)

**Middle East and North Africa (MENA)** - Caroline—[carolineoreilly@scola.ac.uk](mailto:carolineoreilly@scola.ac.uk)

**Security and Human Rights**—Michael and Jess—[michaelowenfisher@hotmail.com](mailto:michaelowenfisher@hotmail.com)

**Amnesty Websites**: international - [www.amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org) AI UK - [www.amnesty.org.uk](http://www.amnesty.org.uk) local group – [www.amnesty.org.uk/brighton](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/brighton)

**Amnesty UK Human Rights Centre** - Tel: 0207 0331500

