

Action

January/February 2014



THE BRIGHTON AND HOVE AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL GROUP NEWSLETTER

Forthcoming Brighton & Hove Amnesty Group Meetings/Events

Group meetings take place on the first Thursday of each month from 8-10pm at Community Base, Queens Road, Brighton

6th February

Group business meeting

6th March

Guest Speaker Luis Munoz a Chilean exile who survived arrest and torture under the Pinochet regime. Author of *Being Luis: A Chilean Life*.

3rd April

Group Business meeting

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:

27th February

Jill

01273 621697

20th March

Mike and Luke

michaelowenfisher@hotmail.com

Monthly Collection

Contact Catherine : 07759271399 to volunteer

Monthly Stall's 8th February

The Tawergha people of Libya
Contact Jill 01273 621697

Write for Rights 2013



Brighton and Hove Amnesty members are joined by Caroline Lucas mp and Kate Allen to take action for Dr Tun Aung of Burma

On 7th December Brighton and Hove group members gathered in the Friends Meeting House, Ship St Brighton for our annual letter writing vigil. We were joined by members of the public and together sent over 300 messages of solidarity to the 13 cases featured in this years Write for Rights campaign.

We were delighted that The Mayor of Brighton and Hove, Councillor Denise Cobb, Caroline Lucas MP and Kate Allen, Director of Amnesty International UK were

able to join us. A picture of the mayor decorating a dove for COFADEH even made it into the December issue of the Brighton Independent.

Also this year we joined forces with the Amnesty bookshop whose volunteers ran a stall selling Christmas cards and Amnesty merchandise. And of course we had the usual selection of delicious home made cakes and mince pies to keep us going while we were doing all that writing!

Emma

Amnesty International's Young Songwriter Awards



It's not too late to enter this year's competition!

Throughout history, music has played a fundamental role in popular protest. Some famous examples include, Sam Cooke's 'A Change is Gonna Come' (which came to exemplify the Civil Rights Movement in the USA), Edwin Starr's 'War' (a very catchy response to widespread anger about the Vietnam War) and Bob Marley's 'Get Up, Stand Up' (penned after seeing the poverty suffered by the Haitians).

In recognition of the power of music in the struggle for human rights, Amnesty UK has created the 'Young Songwriter Awards' to encourage budding musicians or poets to have a go at creating their own protest music.

Last year's haunting performance competition winner, 'Gypsy Anchor' was inspired by stories of child soldiers fighting in DR Congo.

The competition is split into two categories, which are subsequently divided into two age groups:

**YOU CAN ENTER IF YOU ARE:
Aged 7 to 11 and
A school pupil or further education
student in the UK**

Young Human Rights Lyric Award: You (alone or with your friends) can write lyrics that will inspire people to take action about a human rights issue you care about. No musical expertise is needed: you just need pen, paper and something you want to say.

Young Human Rights Song Performance Award: Turn your words into a recorded musical performance to get your message across and inspire people.

DEADLINE: 5pm Monday 17th February

Submit your entries at: <http://www.amnesty.org.uk/young-songwriter-awards>
Any questions? Email: est@amnesty.org.uk **Phone:** 020 7033 1596

January Stall

This month we were highlighting the plight of Hakamada Iwao from Japan. He has been on death row for 45 years now. He is officially the world's longest serving death row prisoner.

His confession of murder was extracted by torture back in 1968 and he did not have a fair trial. He has been kept in solitary confinement for over 30 years and has subsequently developed mental illness. Despite our campaigning with Amnesty for many years, he has still to

be released.

We were sending letters to Makoto Taki, the Minister of Justice in Japan. Fifty eight people signed a letter and a few more took a letter home to consider. Celia, Julian and I spent a worthwhile couple of hours on Saturday morning on the stall.

Not only were we encouraging people to support the cause of Hakamada in Japan, we were talking about the work of Amnesty for Human Rights to the

general public. Some of them were well informed, others had hardly a clue. I believe this is the underlying work of Amnesty, to educate people about human rights in a world where they are increasingly compromised to make way for big corporations or political 'necessities'.

If you would like to contribute by helping at a stall, please contact Jill (01273 621697)

Monthly Action

PHILIPPINES: TORTURE CASE

Call for justice for the family of Darius Evangelista

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, Margie Evangelista, 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.

Please write to the Chief of Philippine National Police calling for justice for the Evangelista family. You may either use the ready made letter enclosed with this newsletter or write a letter in your own words.

Online action: If you have a Facebook account, you can leave a message on the Philippines Police Chief's Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/messages/100003912557493>

If you have more time please send a solidarity message to the Darius Evangelista family. 5 March is the anniversary of Darius's detention and his birthday is 12 April, so this will be a difficult period for the family. Show your support by sending the family a solidarity message.

Send your letters or cards to:

Margie Evangelista, c/o Center for International Law, Unit 1904 Antel Corporate Center, 121 Valero Street, Salcedo Village, Makati City, Philippines

Suggested message: Be strong. There are people across the world who are thinking of you and trying to make sure the police officers who tortured your husband are punished. I have also written to the Chief of Philippine National Police calling for justice for your husband.

The Gagging Law

The Gagging Law (Transparency Of Lobbying Bill) meeting, (9th Jan; St Mary's Kempton), was packed and vociferous. Caroline Lucas and others spoke very well. NGOs and campaigners of all kinds have grave problems with this bill: which leaves the enormously powerful secret lobbying done by big business untouched and invisible; while imposing serious and "chilling" restrictions on charitable, public interest and environmental

campaigning, and also forcing not-for-profit campaigning and advocacy organisations (such as Amnesty International) to implement new layers of expensive and restrictive bureaucracy. Unfortunately the bill is now to become law, without the amendments voted by the House of Lords.

"(The Bill) has failed to crack down on corporate lobbying and has instead imposed all kinds of

restrictions on legitimate public interest campaigning. The full implications of the Bill will only be truly understood over the coming months." Caroline Lucas.

Gwyneth

12th anniversary of Guantanamo



Brighton and Hove, Lewes and Maidstone Groups join forces at the demonstration in Trafalgar Square

On 11th January thirty members of the Lewes Amnesty Group and the Brighton and Hove Amnesty Group travelled up to London for the 12th Anniversary demonstration to call for the closure of Guantanamo.

Members of our two groups were joined by members of the Maidstone Amnesty Group to hold letters spelling out: BRING HOME SHAKER AAMER.

A statement that was passed to Sara by Lewes MP and Home Office Minister Norman Baker was also read out at the demonstration:

"It is deeply disappointing that Guantánamo Bay remains open, and that large numbers of individuals have been held for years without any proper legal justification, without charge and without trial. Naturally we in the UK are particularly concerned about the continued detention of

Shaker Aamer, a concern only heightened by the state of his health.

As a government minister I can vouch for the fact that our Foreign Office has actively and repeatedly raised the matter with the US authorities but sadly without success.

I congratulate Amnesty and all the many individuals across the party and of no party who keep the spotlight on this case, and call upon Barack Obama, not just to release Shaker Aamer, but to honour his commitment to close Guantánamo Bay and remove this stain from the United States."

Norman Baker

In addition to keeping up the pressure on the US and UK Government it is also very important for our members to continue sending letters and cards

of support to Shaker Aamer in detention to let him know that he has not been forgotten. A previous Guantanamo detainee who has spoken to our group in the past as told us personally how very important it was for him to receive letters. Shaker Aamer's address is as follows:

Shaker Aamer 239
Camp Delta
P.O. Box 160
Washington DC 20053
USA

A full report of the day can be found on <http://londonguantanamocampaign.blogspot.co.uk/2014/01/on-twelfth-anniversary-of-guantanamo.html>



Catherine, Celia and Emma wear orange boiler suits at the demonstration—left

Maude joins London Guantanamo Campaign to hold banner calling for the release of Shaker Aamer—below

A selection of art on display at the demonstration—bottom



Are MI6 and MI5 blocking Shaker Aamer's return to the UK

The save Shaker Aamer Campaign are organising an action on Friday February 14th to commemorate Shaker Aamer's incarceration for 12 years at Guantanamo.

This will take place outside the MI6 building in Vauxhall. There are various actions planned including speaker, an open mic, a balloon release and a caged prisoner on the traffic island.

The time of the event is from 1pm and 3pm, so if you work in London maybe you can pop along in your lunch hour.

All are welcome and please bring an orange suit if you have one.

The campaign web site is : <http://saveshaker.org>



Amnesty International South East Regional Conference

Saturday 22nd February 2014
from 10.00 am to 4.00 pm with registration from 9.30 am
**Dorking Christian Centre, Church St, Dorking,
Surrey RH4 1DW**

Most of the building has full disabled access. Please inform us if you have any special needs, including dietary.

An opportunity for Amnesty International members and supporters in Kent, Sussex and Surrey to meet others and discuss issues of current concern.

The conference will include:

Andrew Feinstein on "The shadow world: Inside the global arms trade". Andrew is an ex- MP from the ANC party in South Africa and now campaigner against corruption in the arms trade.

Patrick Strudwick, award winning journalist, on "Corrective rape: The human rights paradox".

An action consisting of making a picture of an Afghan woman using dye on finger tips.

A play reading called "September 1968" about Hakamada Iwao, a Japanese Individual At Risk who has been on death row since that date followed by a discussion and letter writing.

Hannah Perry, board member, on the recent ICM in Berlin.

Entrance fee of £5 to cover a buffet-style lunch and refreshments. We would like you to pay this at registration or by post if you book and fail to turn up, to ensure that the correct amount of food is prepared.

Please book by contacting Philip Strudwick, Tel: 01483 503876 or e-mail: philynda@btinternet.com

Brighton and Hove Amnesty International Monthly Meeting Thursday 9th January 2014

1. 7.30pm Welcome and apologies

Attendees: Jess, Mike, Maddie, Cat, Emma, Julian, Peter, Maude, Alex, Celia.

Apologies: Gwyneth, Luke, Caroline, Angela, Jill.

2. Approve minutes

Minutes of December meeting approved.

3. Treasurer's report

Current Balance: £265.30

We have a lot of cheques pending including one for Community Base for £120 so the account is running quite low.

Emma suggested holding a silent auction on paper which is relatively easy with no need for a venue or much organisation.

The group volunteered to contact venues around Brighton and bring prize offers to next meeting

Jess – Duke of York/Lush

Mike – Brighton Wheel/Charlston Farm House

Maddie – Pavilion/Moshi Moshi

Cat – Sea-life Centre/ Pier

Emma – The Grand/Thistle

Julian – Courtyard/Komedia

Peter – Bowl plex

Maude – Infinity Foods/ Oddballs/Root 1

Alex – The Body Shop/ Jamie Oliver's Restaurant

Celia – Food for Friends/Terre Terre

4. Film showing and action – The Tawergha People of Libya

The group watched the film 'The Tawergha People of Libya'.

A letter was signed by group to the Libyan Embassy urging the safe return of the Tawarghan people, their protection and justice.

Celia is going to liaise with Jill about contacting our MEP regarding this campaign.

Regular Activities

5. Monthly Action and mailing from head office

No monthly action this month

6. East Africa Action – Maude

Maude prepared a letter re. Oumar Mahamat Saleh, a Chadian opposition party leader arrested at his house 6 years ago by security forces. Repeated requests to the authorities have been made by family/EU/Friends. His whereabouts remain unknown. AI delegates visited Chad in 2008 and 2009 to discuss his whereabouts but no information was given. The investigation has been opened and witnesses called in June 2011 but since then nothing has happened.

A letter to William Hague pointing out he is a victim of disappearance and requesting he writes to the Chadian government to ask them to disclose his whereabouts, inform his family and complete the investigation in to his disappearance was signed by the group.

7. Monthly letter writing evenings

Letter writing to be held on 23rd January 2014 at Emma's house (13 Argyle Rd Brighton)

8. Monthly Stall

Saturday 18th January 11-1pm outside the Amnesty Bookshop for Hakamada Iwao.

9. Lanes Collection

Sat 18th January 11-4pm. Rota was passed around for volunteers to sign up for fundraising.

Forthcoming Actions and Feedback from recent events

10. Write for Rights – 7th December

Nice atmosphere, 300 actions taken.

The event got a mention in source magazine and it was good to see the Mayor, Caroline Lucas and Kate Allen attend at the same time.

Slightly disappointing attendance however.

The group discussed the need for everyone to take responsibility in inviting personal friends/family and also the inclusion of other Amnesty groups.

January minutes continued from page 7

Discussion surrounding organising postage after the event and the possibility of buying stamps before-hand as this is a big job for one person to take on.

11. Guantanamo 12th Anniversary Demonstration on 11th January

A demonstration will be held in Trafalgar Square on Saturday 11th January marking the 12th anniversary of Guantanamo Bay. A bus of Amnesty supporters from Lewes and Brighton will be going, tickets are on sale for £10 return and there is a pick up from both Brighton and Lewes. All were encouraged to attend.

12. Regional Conference

This will be on the 27th February. The agenda has been announced and will include the Author Andrew Feinstein, journalist Patrick Strudwick, workshops and more. Group members put their names down for attendance numbers.

13. AGM – 12th/13th April Edinburgh

It would be great if anyone wants to go to this year's Amnesty International UK Annual General Meeting held in Edinburgh. The group will endeavour to subsidise expenses. Do let Emma know if you are interested.

- Mike will be attending.

Campaign Updates

14. Campaign updates

N/A

15. Meeting Closed –9.30pm

BRIGHTON & HOVE AMNESTY GROUP CONTACTS

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

New Member Secretary: Sue Tel: 07790 755921

Mail Secretary: Volunteer needed

Email Secretary: Emma Tel: 01273 232397 **Group Email:** brightonandhoveai@googlemail.com

Minutes Secretary: Catherine 07759 271399

Treasurer: Catherine 07759 271399

Newsletter editor: - Emma Parker: Tel: 01273 232397

Please email any contributions for the newsletter to brightonandhoveai@googlemail.com

Lanes collection organiser: - Catherine 07759271399

Web Site co-ordinator: Michael Fisher - michaelowenfisher@hotmail.com

Amnesty Stalls co-ordinator—Jill Francis—01273 621697

Campaign Co-ordinators:

Afghanistan—Women's Rights—Gwyneth gwyneth.jones@ntlworld.com

Prisoner of Conscience – The Displaced People of Tawargha (Libya) Jill Francis—

jrfrancis@hotmail.co.uk

Prisoner of Conscience—MOHAMED SAYED IBRAHIM ABDEL LATIF (Egypt)—Celia Stubbs—01273 593833

Security and Human Rights—Michael—michaelowenfisher@hotmail.com

Arms Trade Treaty—Luke lukebeale@hotmail.com

Amnesty Websites: international - www.amnesty.org AI UK -

www.amnesty.org.uk local group – www.amnesty.org.uk/brighton

Follow us on twitter @AmnestyBrighton

See our photos on Flickr—

<http://www.flickr.com/groups/amnestybrighton/pool>

Amnesty UK Human Rights Centre - Tel: 0207 0331500

