



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

3rd July

Hugh Sandeman, Country Co ordinator to talk about and co ordinate action on the Displaced People of Tawargha and
Group Business Meeting

7th August

Speaker from Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group

4th September

Group business meeting

2nd October

Guest speaker
Lesley Burges
Philippines' country co ordinator

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:

17th July
Emma 01273 232397

Monthly Collection

19th July & 16th August
Contact Julian
julianwatmore@gmail.com

Monthly Stall's

Contact Jill 01273 621697
Next stall 5th July
2nd August (Pride)
Sydney St

Write for Rights 2014

6th December
Friends Meeting House
Ship Street

Afghan Women's rights group meets Caroline Lucas mp



On 6th June the Afghan Women's Rights Campaign Group had a second meeting with Caroline Lucas MP, who signed the "purple finger pledge" with us last year, and agreed to champion Afghan Women's Rights in parliament. We took photos of Caroline, and of ourselves, to be added to Amnesty UK's current photo action, expressing solidarity with the women in public life in Afghanistan, who have lost their lives, asserting their rights as citizens and defending the rights of all women of their country. We talked to Caroline about Justine Greening's pledge to Amnesty last March: that UK Development Aid in the Transition would be targeted to combat violence against women. Caroline took notes and will consider asking a question in the House, on the progress of this issue, especially in the light of the Australian Government's recent decision to deliver aid funds directly to Afghan Women's grassroots organisations. It was a successful meeting, despite some confusion on my part about the time of the appointment! Many thanks to everyone who took part.

Gwyneth

See page 6 for more photos and response from Caroline Lucas mp



Brazil: World Cup for Whom?



When Brazil won bids for the football World Cup in 2014 and the Olympic Games in 2016, Brazilian sports fans may have been celebrating nationwide. However those with an eye on the other latest hosts (e.g. London, Beijing, & Qatar) may have been more apprehensive. If there's one theme uniting these competitions, it's that the poorest and most vulnerable people in the host countries suffer at the expense of wealthy foreign investors.

Construction, Destruction, Eviction



The stadium in Manaus, where England played Italy, holds 44,000 people and cost R\$650 million (£170 million) to build - in a city where the largest football team has average attendance of less than 1,000. In fact the government's own audit predicts that 4 of the 12 stadiums will become 'white elephants' after the tournament. Following the last World Cup in South Africa, 9 out of 10 stadiums became white elephants; a waste in public money. The majority of money for stadiums in Brazil came from the public treasury, despite promises to the contrary beforehand. The newly built stadiums were handed to private firms after construction, keeping any profits away from the ordinary Brazilians who have unwillingly financed them.

At least nine construction workers have died in projects related to the World Cup. The latest on 8th May 2014 was 32-year-old Mohamed Ali Maciel Afonso while working on the Arena Pantanal in Cuiaba, reportedly due to an electric shock. While there have been nowhere near the number of deaths reported from the Qatari World Cup construction, it is still unacceptable.

Activists in Brazil have claimed there could be over 250,000 forced evictions in preparation for the World Cup and Olympics. One example is the eviction of 700 families living in Favela do Metro, 5 minutes walk from Rio's Maracanã stadium, location for the World Cup final. The first 100 families were hurriedly forced out at gunpoint in Nov 2010, and resettled 2 hours from their original homes. The remaining 600 families organised a resistance, including protests and suing the city, which eventually led to them being rehoused only a few minutes away - showing that resistance can be effective. This was still a painful process however, as the city knocked down homes before everyone had moved out, leaving behind piles of rubbish which quickly became infested with rats. The favela was earmarked for destruction to make way for additional car parking space for the Maracanã arena, but as of 13th June the site was still mostly rubble.

Beer, Brands & Blackwater



Brazil led the world in football-related deaths from 1998 to 2008, with 42 recorded deaths. In a measure to try and halt this trend, in 2003 a bill was passed banning alcohol in stadiums, which has had limited success. However the country has since been forced to water-down their alcohol ban by FIFA, who have a deal with the multinational Anheuser-Busch InBev that their brand Budweiser is once again the official beer of the World Cup (it has been since 1986). Anheuser-Busch InBev is the world's largest brewer with 25% global market share.

Other official sponsors include Coca-Cola, Castrol, Adidas, McDonalds and Emirates Airlines. As with the World Cup in South Africa and the London Olympics, an 'area of exclusivity' has been enforced 2km around each stadium where only brands authorised by FIFA can be sold, distributed or advertised. As in South Africa, many local traders are reliant on informal economies and will suffer as a result of these exclusion zones.

The security forces guarding these areas of exclusivity have been trained by the American group Academi. You may remember them under their previous moniker Blackwater, the private security firm responsible for so much carnage in Iraq. The security is supposedly there to protect against terrorism, the threat of which seems small in a country with no history of attacks. It's more likely that the government perceive the people themselves as a threat to the country's stability - people who angered by the misuse of public funds, forced evictions and austerity, have been carrying out massive and ongoing protests throughout the tournament.

*Luke
Tactical Campaigns Co-ordinator*



Basic freedoms are under threat in Brazil. Police brutality is increasing and a new law could make peaceful protest a crime.

Mass protests have led to ill equipped police using unnecessary force on civilians. Ask Brazil to respect human rights for all and sign the petition on :

<https://www.amnesty.org.uk/actions/brazil-protests-world-cup-rio-2014>

They are Human Beings

At the Amnesty meeting in June we watched the moving documentary, They are Human Beings, about asylum seekers in Calais. Several members of the Amnesty group also volunteer with Gatwick Detainee Welfare Group and we shall be having a talk from them at our August meeting about their work. The enclosed letter has been compiled by the Gatwick Detainee Welfare group calling for a time limit on Immigration Detention. Please sign it and send to your mp.

Below is an update on the latest situation from the hunger strike in Calais which began on 11th June:

As agreed, the exiles occupying the place of food distribution took breakfast together this morning. They formed two groups, those who will continue to eat and those who are fasting. Those fasting had slightly bigger portions. They sat in the middle of the courtyard. Yesterday they had a list of 53 people willing to get involved. By late morning they were a large thirty or so, and were waiting for those to join them who have tried to cross that night – which they will no longer be able to do during the fast. We should know more in the afternoon how many are on hunger strike.

Their spokesperson can be reached at 07 53 93 21 53 (he speaks English).

Here is the text of the call out on which they agreed:

FROM THE MIGRANTS OF CALAIS
TO THE FRENCH AND BRITISH AUTHORITIES

After the destruction of our camps and our occupation of the food distribution place, French authorities came two times to meet us. They announced us they will come again to meet us Thursday June 3. Nobody came and we are without any news from them.

Today Wednesday June 11, a part of us, with the support of all of us, begins a hunger strike. We ask the French and British authorities to resume the interrupted dialogue and meet with us without delay.

We remind them our revendications :

- Houses in Calais for all the migrants who wish to go to England and the asylum seekers forced to live in the street ;
- Houses with proper hygienic conditions : toilets, showers, garbages ;
- Houses where we can come and go at anytime to be able to keep trying to cross to England ;
- Houses safe from the police controls and mistreatments and from evictions ;
- To have acces to three meals a day ;
- To open negotiations between France and the United Kingdom in order that people can access the British territory."

originally published on <http://passeursdhospitalites.wordpress.com>



Brighton and Hove Amnesty are proud to have the Amnesty logo, showing our support, on this beautiful quilt made by Assylum Seekers at Gatwick. The quilt, made with the help of Gatwick Detainee Welfare Group, shows the stories of the asylum seekers.

Sudanese Woman gives birth in chains

Meriam Yehya Ibrahim, a Sudanese woman, is sentenced to death for 'apostacy' as she refused to renounce her Christian faith. She was brought up as a Christian in Islamic Sudan and married a Christian man. In prison, she gave birth in shackles, to her second child. She is now on death row with her newborn baby girl and 20 month old son.

This case has been in the newspapers recently and some members of the public are aware of it. At our stall on 7th June we were giving out flyers with the website for an on line global petition asking for her and her children to be released.

We had a varied response from people in the street. Some were enthusiastic and some were not at all interested and all shades in between! Pretty much the same as usual. At least we are getting the information out into the arena. Don't only think about your shopping trip, think about human rights for a while and reflect on its meaning to you.

If you want to sign the on line petition, here is the website. amnesty.org.uk/meriam
To volunteer for the next stall on 5th July contact Jill 01273 621697

Afghan Women's rights group meets Caroline Lucas mp (Continued from page 1)

Following the meeting on 6th June, Gwyneth, our campaign co ordinator, emailed Caroline Lucas to thank her for her support. This is her response:

Dear Gwyneth,

A belated thank you for your message and for sharing these notes, which are incredibly compelling.

Amnesty International has a photo call in Parliament next week and I hope to blog about it so may well draw on the case you highlighted. It will also hopefully be an opportunity to lobby the Minister so I'll keep up the pressure on the points you raise and which, as you know, I have written to the FCO about previously.

It's incredibly encouraging to hear that Australia is investing directly in Afghan women's grassroots organisations and I agree this is something we should be asking the UK to do too. I may try to table a parliamentary question, following on from this recent one:

Caroline Lucas: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will take steps to improve support and protection for women human rights defenders in Afghanistan; and if he will make a statement. [200430]

Hugh Robertson: The UK takes this issue very seriously. Our primary approach to supporting human rights defenders is to work with and through multilateral institutions such as the EU and the UN to support national efforts. These bodies have the expertise and resources to fulfil this important role in country. The UK played a significant part in the EU's recent decision to increase support to human rights defenders in Afghanistan, including plans to refresh the 2010 EU Strategy on Human Rights Defenders. The UK will work with the EU and other member states to ensure that the refreshed strategy recognises the specific challenges that women human rights defenders face. We are also working to ensure that human rights, including the protection of human rights defenders, are a top priority for the EU's proposed post-2014 country strategy for Afghanistan.

Best wishes, Caroline

Caroline Lucas, MP for Brighton Pavilion
House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA



Group members show their solidarity with Afghan Women at meeting with Caroline Lucas



Good News for Dr Tun Aung



Caroline Lucas mp and Kate Allen join the Brighton and Hove Amnesty Group at our Write for Rights event 2013 in support of Dr Tun Aung.

Dear friends and roadside hooligans (explanation below),

Here is good news from Myanmar (Burma). Dr Tun Aung has had his prison sentence - at one time, 17 years - reduced by more than 10 years, so that he has only 13 months left. The extra-pleasant surprise is that the news came in a letter from the Myanmar authorities, hitherto stonily silent.

Jim Roberts, Myanmar coordinator for Amnesty International USA, comments that "To my knowledge this is the first written response we've had from Myanmar authorities about a prisoner of conscience in my 20+ years experience and the fact that it contained good news makes it doubly surprising and gratifying."

The Brighton and Hove Amnesty group took action for Dr Tun Aung at our 2013 Write for Rights event..Dr Tun Aung was sentenced for stirring up trouble, though he had actually been trying to calm a protest demonstration. He was, like so many political prisoners, sent to a prison remotely up-country from his family.

An Amnesty member has received a letter from the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission (MNHRC), dated 20 May 2014 and signed by Commissioner Secretary Sit Myaing. "Letters from various chapters of Amnesty International requesting, among others, the immediate release of Dr Tun Aung without conditions were received by the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission. The Commission after proper examination of these letters conveyed them to the authorities in order that the concerns expressed in the letters received careful consideration. With a view to obtaining first-hand information of Dr. Tun Aung, a team from the MNHRC visited Sittwe Prison on 11 November 2013 and interviewed him exclusively to find out the situation." The letter reveals that he was granted a nine year reduction to his sentence as a result of the December 2013 Presidential pardon and a further one year reduction as a result of a Presidential order of 20 January 2014; that he received other reductions under the terms of the Prison Manual; that in February he was moved from the remote prison to Insein Prison; in Yangon (Rangoon); that he is receiving regular medical attention, including specialist treatment; and that his family can visit him.

It appears that the authorities listen to us Roadside Hooligans after all. A 2001 book entitled "The Truth", by a colonel of the Myanmar military regime, explained that the letters and postcards seeming to pour from Amnesty International members were "found to be written by roadside hooligans hiding behind the mask of human rights."

Some Hooligans are already writing to express appreciation to the authorities and to continue the suggestion that Dr Tun Aung deserves to be released immediately.

Guy Ottewell, Lyme Regis Group

Local events notice board

How come we didn't know? – a powerful exhibition about the accelerating privatisation of the NHS in the BRIGHTHELM centre cafe from Tuesday 24th June 11am (to 7 30) to Thursday 26th June from 11 am to 9 30.

Public meeting – **Who are the Fat cats of health and who is paying the price?** – in the BRIGHTHELM auditorium Thursday 26th June 7 30 to 9pm with expert speakers in various fields.

Organised by Sussex Defend the NHS and Brighton Keep our NHS public.

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

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

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