



MANCHESTER AMNESTY GROUP NEWSLETTER

November 2016

<http://manchester.amnesty.org.uk/>

- find us on Facebook as Manchester Amnesty
- follow us on twitter @amnestymanc

Campaigning

United Arab Emirates

Acoustic Amnesty at Manchester Food and Drink Festival

The Amnesty Manchester group supported the Acoustic Amnesty event on the 7th October in Albert Square for Manchester Food and Drink Festival. Besides amazing music, the group collected money and signatures on behalf of the Emirates human rights lawyer Dr. Mohammad al-Roken, who is imprisoned since 4 years. In total the Amnesty members collected 93 signatures on behalf of Dr. al-Roken, which have been sent to the president of the UAE.



Manchester Half Marathon

In collaboration with the International Campaign for Freedom in the UAE (ICF UAE) three runners (including our very own energetic Henrike Greuel) ran on behalf of Dr. al-Roken and the imprisoned human rights activists, that have been prosecuted in the grossly unfair "UAE 94" mass trial. The Manchester Amnesty group and volunteers of ICF UAE collected signatures and raised the awareness on the human rights situation in the UAE along the running track and the finishing line.



Subgroup

We are still very short of people to help Henrike and Heather plan our campaigning on the UAE. Drop Henrike an email if you can help (henrikegreuel@gmx.de).

Refugee Campaign

'I Welcome' campaign report

Amnesty has released a new global report for the 'I Welcome' refugees campaign. The report '*Tackling the Global Refugee Crisis: From Shirking to Sharing Responsibility*' provides a comprehensive assessment of the global refugee crisis and documents the precarious situation faced by many of the world's 21 million refugees. It also shows that of the 193 countries in the world the majority of the wealthiest have shown a near absence of leadership and responsibility while a global refugee crisis continues to escalate. This has left just 10 countries – each bordering conflict zones and accounting for less than 2.5% of



world GDP – to take in 56% of the global refugee population. The UK hosts less than one per cent of the world's refugees.

To find out more: <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/world-leaders-are-spectacularly-failing-refugees>

To read the report:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/po140/4905/2016/en/>

The Manchester group will begin to plan our involvement in this campaign as more information becomes available. If you would like to be more involved, join the subgroup by emailing laurahelengibbons@gmail.com. In the meantime, here are a few things that you could take action on.

Help young refugees and asylum seekers get to university!

Young people who are waiting for a decision on their asylum application or who have been granted Discretionary Leave to Remain in the UK as a result of an asylum claim face barriers to getting a university education.



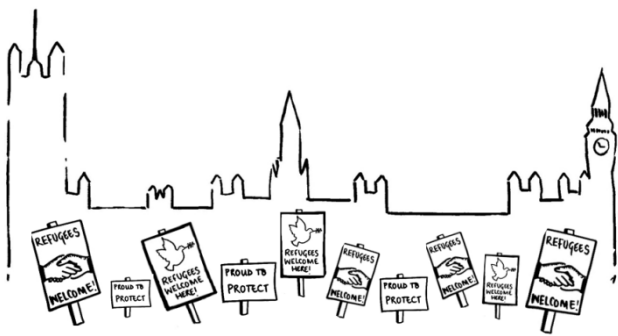
They must pay the same fees as international students and have no access to student loans and grants. This means that most miss out on furthering their education. Student Action for Refugees (STAR) have been running Equal Access Campaigns at universities across the country. MANCHESTER is one of 40 universities to have opened scholarships and bursaries to refugees and asylum seekers so far!

Students are applying to UCAS for their university choices now! It is vital that sixth form teachers know of the opportunities open to young asylum seekers and refugees so that they can help them make informed choices. **You can help! Contact your local school or college, and make sure they have information about which universities are offering support.** You can access campaign resources and updates at http://www.star-network.org.uk/index.php/campaigns/equal_access or on STAR's Facebook page.

Sanctuary in Parliament 2016

On Tuesday 29th November, the third Sanctuary in Parliament event organised by the City of Sanctuary movement will take place at the heart of Westminster, following successful events in 2015 and 2014. Refugees, asylum seekers and the people who support them will be meeting directly with MPs and raising awareness of the importance of this year's themes: "Standing Up for the Right to Asylum" and the expansion of "Safe and Legal Routes to the UK".

This is a great opportunity for asylum seekers and refugees to take their concerns right to decision makers in Parliament.



Details on how to book a place for the event are [at https://cityofsanctuary.org/events/sanctuary-in-parliament-standing-up-for-the-right-to-asylum/](https://cityofsanctuary.org/events/sanctuary-in-parliament-standing-up-for-the-right-to-asylum/)

Even if you can't attend, let your MP know that they should be there! You can write to them, or ask them via social media #SanctuaryinParliament.

APPG on Refugees

The call for written evidence for the All Party Parliamentary Group on Refugees' Inquiry "Refugees Welcome?" closed on 1 October, and had a great response! Lots of refugees and the people who work with them submitted evidence to tell this cross-party group about refugees' experiences of integration after a grant of asylum or other form of protection. The next steps will be

oral evidence sessions before the panel. If your MP is not a member of this cross-party group - ask them to join! You can see the membership list at

http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/policy_research/parliamentary_work/appg_on_refugees

Events and courses:

Amnesty International are running their second free massive open online course (MOOC) entitled "**Human Rights - the Rights of Refugees**", which will be available from 16 November. Register at

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/education/2016/09/register-now-for-amnestys-free-online-course-on-refugee-rights/>

On **18 November**, City of Sanctuary Maternity Stream in collaboration with the University of Salford are organising a free study day "**Striving for Excellence in Maternity Care in Manchester: a Focus on Asylum Seeking and Refugee Women**" at **Salford University**. All are welcome. Book on [Eventbrite](#) or follow the event on [facebook](#) or Twitter @MatRe

Individuals at Risk

Hazel is organising a Greeting Card Campaign stall at Unicorn in December. If you have any ideas for other venues or want to help Hazel and Rosemary plan our involvement in this campaign, email hazelerrey@gmail.com.

The Whalley Range Peace and Justice Group will be running their brilliant annual event at St Margaret's church on Saturday 3rd Dec 2pm - 5pm. As well as sending cards for the write for Rights cases there will be stalls, live music and food. We will have a stall, selling cards and featuring one of our campaigns.

Next Letter Writing Session

Saturday 26th November 2-4pm

The Eighth Day Café, Oxford Road
We will be writing on behalf of this year's Write for Rights cases.
Case sheets, pen and paper provided.

All Welcome.

Northern Africa,

EGYPT: 14-YEAR OLD TORTURED INTO CONFESSION

In August 16 Aser Mohamed, a 14-year old boy, was arrested and disappeared for 34 days (illegal for a minor) and tortured into confessing having attacked the 3 Pyramids Hotel in Cairo with 25 others.

At the letter writing in Sep 16 we wrote to the Egyptian authorities about this case.

His hearing is set for 16 November and he could, if convicted, face up to 15 years imprisonment. All requests for an investigation into both the disappearance and torture have so far been ignored.

Due to the short time available Simona will prepare a letter and send it on behalf of the group by e-mail to the Egyptian authorities. We will also organise for messages to be posted on Twitter and Facebook.

TUNISIA: PUBLIC OUTRAGE ON COMMENTS TO VICTIM OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

On 14 October, 17-year-old Hajar told the TV host that she had been raped by three members of her family since the age of 14, and that she was pregnant by one of her abusers. Ashamed at his daughter's pregnancy, Hajar's father forced her out of the family home.

When Hajar's father joined the talk show, the TV reporter suggested to him, "Whoever did it should marry her to close the case" and "contain the situation".

Ala Chebbi, the TV host, then chided the young woman for not reporting any of her abusers, and urged her to ask her father for forgiveness for being pregnant out of wedlock. "Admit that you are at fault," he said.

Following the TV show, the offensive remarks of the TV reporter have caused outrage across Tunisia. Thousands showed their anger on social media and hundreds signed an open letter addressed to the Minister for Women, Family and Childhood, Naziha Laabidi, calling for action to end violence against women and children.

Following the public outcry, the independent Tunisian media regulator, HAICA (*Haute autorité indépendante de la communication audiovisuelle*), suspended the programme for three months deciding the talk show had "violated human dignity".

AI have asked us to organise an action via Twitter and Facebook.

Southern Africa

SOUTH AFRICA WANTS TO LEAVE THE ICC

In October 2016 the South African government has filed a notification of withdrawal from the International Criminal Court (ICC) with the United Nations.

The notice follows non-cooperation procedures against South Africa at the ICC after the country failed to institute a warrant of arrest against Sudanese president Omar Al-Bashir when he visited the country in June 2015 to attend the AU Summit.

The South African government has argued that it was treated unfairly following its refusal to arrest President Omar Al-Bashir.

Amnesty International has stated that the South African Parliament must urgently convene to reconsider the government's decision.

Netsanet Belay Amnesty International's Research and Advocacy Director for Africa, declared that "South Africa must not abandon its role as a champion of human rights and justice. The Rome Statute [the founding instrument of the ICC] is a covenant between countries that they will no longer allow crimes under international law, including apartheid, to be committed with impunity. In making this move, the country is betraying millions of victims of the gravest human rights violations and undermining the international justice system,"

ZAMBIA: OPPOSITION QUASHED THROUGH 'FICTICIOUS' CRIMINAL CHARGES

On 5th October 2016 Hakainde Hichilema and Geoffrey Bwalya Mwamba were arrested on their way to visit their supporters in prison.

Hakainde and Geoffrey are respectively the president and vice-president of the United Party for National Development and the main opponents to the Patriotic Front, which won the elections in August 16.

The pair have appeared at the Luanshya Magistrate court on charges of "seditious practices" and "unlawful assembly". This comes after they publicly stated that they don't recognise current President Edgar Lungu as a legitimately elected leader of Zambia and are therefore challenging his election in court. The country has since been rocked by post-election violence.

"The charges against Hakainde Hichilema and Geoffrey Bwalya Mwamba are a ploy to intimidate and silence political opponents," said Deprese Muchena, Amnesty International's Director for Southern Africa. "The authorities must drop the charges against them and stop misusing the criminal justice system to harass political opposition."

Hakainde Hichilema has alleged that the police denied them food, water, and bedding during their detention. Deprese Muchena asked for a prompt, impartial and effective investigations of the alleged ill treatment.

ZIMBABWE: BAN ON PROTESTS

In response to the ruling by the High Court in Zimbabwe in October 16 upholding a 30-day police ban on protests in the capital Harare, Amnesty International's Deputy Director for Southern Africa, Muleya Mwananyanda, said:

"The ruling must be rescinded and the ban lifted as it infringes the fundamental right to freedom of assembly. Police must not be given carte blanche to impose a blanket ban on protests which are protected by the country's constitution, and Zimbabwe's international human rights commitments. Instead of outlawing peaceful assemblies, the government would do well to ensure the safety of people who choose to peacefully exercise their right to protest."

The ruling by Justice George Chiweshe invalidated a previous court order that had found the ban to be unconstitutional.

Burma, Women's Rights and Children's Human Rights,

No updates this month

Group News

Acoustic Amnesty

Thursday 24th November

We have yet another Acoustic Amnesty fundraiser coming up, organised by the marvellous Steven Lindsay. It will again be at the beautiful Sacred Trinity church with a 7.30pm start. This time we are fundraising for the excellent Greater Manchester Winter Night Shelter as well as Manchester Amnesty. The gig will be seated and totally silent for performances with the (well stocked!) bar in a separate room. There will be no sound system whatsoever - totally acoustic using the natural acoustics of the venue.



If you want to see how fantastic the format of the evening is here's a video of one:

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/grhhGT0Vzlw?list=UU32opSiZu-iUSHLgSdSkZZg>

The acts are: Tracey Browne, Leonie Kate Higgins, Chris Flynn, James Carson, Iain Till, Nolan Watkinson, Hawker Reunion.

Tickets - <https://www.wegotickets.com/event/379719>

Free on-street car parking is available and the venue is a stone's throw from Deansgate/Market Street in Manchester city centre.

Didsbury Lantern Parade

November 12th

As this clashes with the Regional Conference which key members of the group are attending, we have decided to pull out of this event.

Christmas Cards



We have a stock of Amnesty Christmas cards for sale – 20% of the sale price goes to the group.

We have made a good start, with over £200 worth sold at St Paul's Church Card Sale in Heaton Moor and at our Literature

Festival event. We still have quite a lot in stock and will be selling them at all events up until Christmas.

Come along and stock up at our next meeting!

If you know of anywhere that we can sell them, let anne.walker9@ntlworld.com know.

November Group Meeting

Normally held 2nd Wednesday each month - 7.30pm.

Wednesday 9th November: Roisin Jacklin, UAE country Coordinator

The group is committed to working on behalf of Mohammad al-Roken, a human rights lawyer imprisoned in the UAE. Roisin is the AIUK country coordinator for the UAE and is coming to talk to us about the grave human rights situation in that country.

at MadLab Salford (218 Chapel St, Salford M3 6BY – <https://madlab.org.uk/madlab-salford/>)

MadLab is just a short walk from Deansgate, very close to Salford Central train station and on many bus routes. There is also plenty of on street parking in the streets behind.

Some of us will meet beforehand (at about 6pm) in the Deli Lama café next door to MadLab for a bite to eat.

All welcome

Other News

North West Regional Conference

Saturday 12th November Liverpool

As Home Secretary, Theresa May stated that: 'The more we understand about modern slavery, the more we realise how great the challenge is that we face. But the enormity and the complexity of slavery must never be an excuse to think that it cannot be beaten. We must take the fight to the slave drivers and traffickers, catch them, prosecute them and lock them up.'

'We must work to raise awareness and spot the signs that people may be victims. We must work together across communities, religions and international boundaries to ensure that the victims of this appalling crime can go free.'

Although slavery was abolished, it still continues today - human trafficking, women forced into prostitution and the exploitation of migrant workers are some of the examples we find today. According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) around 21 million men, women and children around the world are in a form of slavery.

Join the North West Regional Conference on **Saturday 12 November** in Liverpool, a city with a strong historical connection to the slave trade, to find out more about the slave trade today and how we can work together to fight it. Hear our key note speakers, Alex Balch, a Senior Lecturer in Politics and International Relations from the University of Liverpool, who is working on how to combat forced labour and human trafficking and Anette Maudsley from Stop the Traffik. Our panel of speakers from Liverpool John Moores University, Dalit Freedom Network and Amnesty International will discuss the challenges of modern slavery today.

A network lunch, workshops (Death Penalty and Syria) stalls with information and Amnesty goods will provide an opportunity for you to meet with other campaigners, your local regional representative, media officer and trainers.

You will also be able to take part in a street action in the centre of Liverpool.

Registration costs £10 (£5 unwaged) which includes lunch and refreshments. For more details and how to book a ticket, please go to <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/amnesty-international-uk-north-west-conference-2016-tickets-26756355981>

Leaflet attached with this newsletter – Please promote!

Voices of Resistance: Caste, Exclusion and Race

Benzie Building, Manchester School of Art, 9 November 2016 at 4pm

You are warmly invited to this FREE event as part of the ESRC Festival of Social Science 2016 hosted by Dr Annapurna Waughray (Manchester Law School), the Department of History, Politics and Philosophy at Manchester Met and the University of Manchester

Keynote: Professor David Mosse (Professor of Social Anthropology, University of London)

The event will aim to highlight and explore diverse responses to caste discrimination in contemporary life by drawing on different perspectives from law, religion and community activism. It places caste within the broader context of how attitudes towards migrant groups and communities have changed over time and how racism, discrimination and exclusion have been expressed and resisted.

For further information on guest speakers and to book a place please follow the link below:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/voices-of-resistance-caste-exclusion-and-race-tickets-28333195350>