



MANCHESTER AMNESTY GROUP NEWSLETTER

October 2015

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

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Campaigning

SAVE THE HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

The Human Rights Act protects the fundamental rights we all have as human beings, and allows us to challenge authorities if they violate them. You might not have used it, but it's there if you need it. It is now under threat.

BIHR meeting – October 11th!



We have joined up with the British Institute of Human Rights to be part of their “15 Days of Action” roadshow this month. Come along to the evening event on Sunday October 11th at 6.30pm, Cross Street Chapel, to celebrate 15 years of the UK Human Rights Act. Get fully briefed on how the Human Rights Act works and why it is a vital piece of UK legislation and should be kept.

Flyer attached – please circulate/share to all your contacts.

Book yourself a place (free!) at:

<https://www.bihr.org.uk/Event/15-days-of-action-evening-talk-manchester>

Anne needs help to set the room up (from 5.30) and then to man the Amnesty stall, serve tea and coffee etc. If you can help, please drop her an email now – anne.walker9@ntlworld.com.

Coming to Manchester on behalf of BIHR will be:

Sanchita Hosali (Deputy Director)

Sanchita is a recognised expert in human rights and equalities law, policy and practice, with over fifteen years of working both in the UK and internationally. As Deputy Director at BIHR Sanchita oversees operations and manages the delivery of BIHR's education, outreach and information services, with a lead role in policy and campaigning. Sanchita has a particular expertise in addressing violence against women from a human rights perspective. She has been an academic researcher, worked as a freelance researcher, and lead policy and strategy development at other organisations. Sanchita holds an LLM Human Rights Law and an LLB in Law.

Stephanie Davies (Human Rights Officer)

Stephanie is a Qualified Social Worker who has over 9 years' experience of delivering health and social care services mainly for the statutory sector before joining BIHR in Autumn 2014. She has first-hand experience of many areas of care delivery including personal care, medication, risk management and complex care planning. Stephanie brings a practitioner perspective to BIHR's knowledge of how health and social law and policy are implemented in frontline practice. Stephanie holds a BA in Social Work and an MA in Rhetoric.

Amina Hussain (Assistant Human Rights Officer)

Amina joined BIHR in 2015 as an Assistant Human Rights Officer. She works across BIHR's policy and practice work, with particular focus on the delivery of the CQC programme. She previously worked as a Research Assistant for the Law Commission. Prior to this, she graduated from Queen Mary University of London with an LLM in Human Rights Law where she focussed her studies on children's rights. During this time, she was also an intern at BIHR and Kids Company, working on a project looking at the child protection and mental health systems,

Petition

If you haven't already signed the AI petition to Michael Gove
DO IT NOW:

<http://savetheact.uk/#signup-form>

Council vote

Manchester City Council unanimously voted for a motion in support of the Human Rights Act after we had sent a copy of the AIUK briefing to all councillors. If you fancy watching it, go to <http://www.manchester.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/2360/council>. Our bit is towards the end of the meeting.

Skill Share Day

There will be a skill share day at AIUK in London on November 28th with a chance for activists to come together for an informative day on the Human Rights Act, and AIUK's next plans for the campaign to save it. It would be good to have a Manchester representative. If you are interested in going, email Anne anne.walker9@ntlworld.com.

Refugee Rights

Rallies

A few of us attended the Refugees are Welcome on 12th September in Picadilly Gardens. Heather gave a brilliant off the cuff speech to the gathering.



This Tuesday, we also joined the rally outside the Conservative Party conference with our Amnesty placards.

Urgent Action

Our Asylum Justice Project subgroup has forwarded an Urgent Action from the Regional Asylum Activism Project – see attached. The Immigration Bill will be debated at **Second Reading on Tuesday 13 October**. Make sure your local MP is fully aware of your concerns and commits to raising these during the debate!

Find out more about the Regional Asylum Activism Project:

<http://regionalasylumactivism.org/about/>

Email your MP now!

City of Sanctuary Speaker

City of Sanctuary is a movement committed to building a culture of hospitality and welcome, especially for refugees seeking sanctuary from war and persecution. Their network of local groups includes boroughs, towns and cities across the UK and Ireland, and includes Manchester.



Richard Owen will be coming to our October meeting to tell us about his work with the City of Sanctuary and take part in a discussion about refugees/the current crisis and what activists like us can do.

Individuals at Risk

Seven people attended our September letter-writing session and wrote 27 letters on behalf of individuals in Japan, Russian Federation, Brazil, USA, Morocco, Iran, China, Kenya and Ethiopia. The next letter-writing session will be Sat 28th Nov when we'll be writing on behalf of the Write for Rights cases.

Next Letter Writing Session

Saturday 28th November 2-4pm
The Eighth Day Café, Oxford Road
Case sheets, pen and paper provided.

All Welcome.

Stop Torture.

Shaker Aamer to be released from Guantanamo!

After being held for more than 13 years, without charge or trial, Shaker Aamer's reportedly imminent return to the UK is long overdue, and very welcome news. Tens of thousands of Amnesty supporters have campaigned for his release over the years and many activists have worked tirelessly for this day.

www.amnesty.org.uk/shaker

EU tools of torture progress

In September MEPs on the Trade committee voted through an amended version of the EU law prohibiting the trade in torture equipment, which addressed the majority of our concerns around loopholes. This puts us in a strong position ahead of the plenary vote in the European Parliament in November.

London Arms Fair campaign

More than half a million people have viewed the spoof advert AIUK produced for the London Arms Fair in September, which highlighted the illegal advertising of torture equipment at past fairs. www.amnesty.org.uk/armsfair

Women's Rights

We are still needing someone to jointly lead this vital work. Email: laura.barsby@yahoo.co.uk to volunteer and to find out more.

TAKE ACTION!

FREE IRANIAN HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST
NARGES MOHAMMADI!

Narges is a well-known human rights activist in Iran. She has been imprisoned since May under the guise of 'security' charges; in fact she is being punished for peacefully defending human rights and campaigning against the death penalty in Iran. Narges is a prisoner of conscience. She needs urgent medical care. Ask Iranian authorities to free her now:

<https://amnesty.org.uk/actions/iran-narges-mohammadi-prison-human-rights-activist>

Burma (Myanmar)

Jean Mary spotted an article on Women's Rights in Burma. Recently the Burmese parliament have signed a new law, 'The Buddhist Women's Marriage Law', stating that a woman who wishes to marry a man of another faith must obtain approval from the local authority. It is claimed this will help to protect their property rights. It also limits women's freedom.

The article also pointed out that there is a general election in Burma on Nov. 8th, and wonders what effect the results of this will have on Women's Rights.

The AIUK country coordinator for Burma recently stood down. A new volunteer has stepped in but is still getting to grips with the job – hence the lack of information at the moment.

Southern Africa, South America, Children's Human Rights

No updates this month

Group News

Manchester Literature Festival

Final call to buy your tickets from 0843 208 5502 or <http://manchesterliteraturefestival.co.uk/>

Tickets are selling fast with less than 30 remaining, so don't miss out. It promises to be a fascinating and inspiring event, as well as a great fundraiser for Manchester Amnesty.

This year we are hosting to an afternoon with two inspiring writers on the theme of asylum and exile. We are pleased to welcome back journalist, critic and broadcaster Bidisha, who will introduce her 5th book, *Asylum and Exile: The Hidden Voices of London*, based on her outreach work with refugees, asylum seekers and undocumented people. She will be joined by Gulwali Passarlay, whose first book, *The Lightless Sky: An Afghan Refugee Boy's Journey*, documents his passage from his homeland via Iran and the Mediterranean to Lancashire. Gulwali is about to graduate with a degree in Philosophy and Politics from The University of Manchester. Their talk will be followed by a Q&A and book signing.

Street Collection

We held our annual street collection in the centre of Manchester last month. We had 15 collectors out and collected £280 yesterday - down by about £50 compared to last year.



Many thanks to all the collectors!

Christmas Cards

Send Amnesty Christmas cards this year. We will have them available for sale at our November meeting and at our events in the run up to Christmas.

Acoustic Amnesty

The next Acoustic Amnesty gig will be another all female set in aid of Manchester Women's aid and Manchester Amnesty. Date confirmed as Friday December 11th. More details in November newsletter.

Tickets are now on sale from

<http://www.wegotickets.com/event/334698>

Next Group Meeting

Normally held 2nd Wednesday each month - Cross Street Chapel 7.30pm

14th October –Speaker: Richard Owen from the Manchester City of Sanctuary

Why not join a few of us for a pre-meeting drink/meal just after 6pm, this month we will be back at the Grinch on Chapel Walks – right next to Cross St Chapel

Other News

North West Conference

Amnesty International UK North West Conference 2015

Bank Top Neighbourhood Learning Centre,
Arthur Way, Blackburn, BB2 1QP
Saturday 24th October 2015, 10am - 4pm

ASYLUM JUSTICE

Eman Mashehor (Yemen)
hosts "Work with Women
and Their Human Rights"

Dr Charles Raymond
Dotou (Senegal) on the
experience of asylum

Speaker from Asylum
Justice Project

Workshops include
"Working Effectively" and
"My Body, My Rights"

Updates from the AIUK
Board

Action stalls for
Guatemala, Morocco,
and East Africa

Street Action through
Blackburn

Lunch included

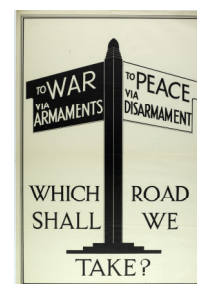
Register online at <http://aiuknw2015.eventbrite.com>
Or, e-mail sameenadk@yahoo.com to reserve your place and mail this form
to: Sameena Mattheissen, 22 Leaf Street, Manchester, M15 5LE. Tel: 07904 899599
Please send _____ tickets @ £8 each / unwaived £5 each
I enclose a cheque for £____ payable to "Manchester Amnesty International"
Tickets in the name(s) of: _____
Address: _____ E-mail: _____ Age if under 18: _____
Phone: _____
Do you belong to an AI group or network? If so, which? _____
Do you have any dietary or access requirements? _____

Human Rights Course On Freedom Of Expression

Amnesty International will be running their first free massive open online course (MOOC) on human rights. This will be taking place from 17 November to 8 December 2015. Relevant cases from Write for Rights will be used to bring alive the right to Freedom of Expression through this short online course running for three weeks. You can take part & register here <https://www.edx.org/course/human-rights-right-freedom-expression-amnesty-internationalx-rights1x>

Peace History Conference

Campaign Against Arms Trade are pleased to be taking part in the Peace History Conference in Manchester on the 9th, 10th and 11th of October. The Peace History conference will bring together drama, discussion, talks and guided tours of Manchester to explore this year's theme- 'Peace History: an International Perspective'.



There's a fantastic weekend of events planned, including:

- An afternoon **walking tour of Manchester Peace Trail** on Friday 9th October, covering sites connected with the growth of Manchester as the world's first industrial city and its importance as a centre for radical political activities
- An evening **performance of 'Eloquent Protest'**, a powerful piece of theatre fusing music, poetry and drama, on Friday 9th October
- A **full day conference of talks, workshops and film screenings** on Saturday 10th October at Manchester Friend's house. Dr Jenny Clegg shines a light on the treatment of the Chinese Labour Corps, hear the story of women's activism through the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, find out how Hawaiian women are resisting US Naval bases, and join CAAT to find out what arms dealers and activists were up to during the WW1 period!
- A **guided cycle tour** on 11th October, telling the story of suffragist Margaret Ashton, Manchester's first woman councillor who was ousted in 1917 because of her pacifism.

You can see a full programme for the weekend at

<https://crm.caat.org.uk/sites/all/modules/civCRM/extern/url.php?url=1173&qid=390365>