



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 November

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:
Jill 01273 621697
19th November

Monthly Collection

15th November
Contact Julian
julianwatmore@gmail.com
07583334740

Monthly Stall's

50th anniversary stall
Brighton Station
2pm to 5pm
16th November 2014
Contact Jill 01273 621697

Write for Rights 2014

6th December
Friends Meeting House
Ship Street

Live reading of Even if we lose our lives

7th March 2015
New Venture Theatre
To be confirmed

WRITE

FOR RIGHTS

2014

Brighton and Hove Amnesty International's Annual Letter Writing Vigil

Saturday 6th December 2014

10-4pm

Friends Meeting House, Ship St, Brighton



**Write a message of hope
to human rights victims worldwide**

*Live music, home-baked refreshments, winter warmers...
and more...*

A simple card or letter brings hope and comfort to those suffering human rights abuses. In December each year we invite you to join us and send a personal message to a selection of individuals and communities that have suffered human rights abuses.

'After reading some of the thousands of letters, cards and messages sent to me by Amnesty supporters, I began to hope that I would soon be free.'

Patrick Okoroafor, May 2012, soon after his release from the prison where he spent 17 years

We invite you to join us on 6th December in the Friends Meeting House, Ship Street, Brighton to send a personal message to one or more of the individuals featured in the Amnesty Write for Rights Campaign 2014. These messages really do make a difference.

If you want to help with this event or can make a cake to donate then please contact Emma on 01273 232397 or email brightonandhoveai@googlemail.com

THE MANSOURA WOMEN OUR PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE

ABRAR AL-ANANY, MENATALIA MOUSTAFA and YOUSRA ELKHATEEB have been imprisoned for protesting peacefully at Mansoura University on 12 November 2013. They are amongst many students who have been arrested for protesting against the Egyptian authorities. The women were found guilty of breaching anti-protest laws, thuggery, belonging to a banned organisation, attacking security forces and destroying public property. Eye witness accounts show that the women did not take part in violent clashes, and were merely protesting peacefully. They are prisoners of conscience jailed purely for exercising their rights to freedom of assembly and freedom of expression.

The Mansoura Criminal Court sentenced 18 year old students Abrar Al-Anany and Menatalia Moustafa to 2 years in prison and sentenced 21 year old teacher Yousra Elkhateeb to 6 years as they said she had been at an earlier demonstration on 29th October as well as the 12th November one; her lawyer provided evidence she had not taken part in the former. The women were not in court to hear the verdict and only found out about it 4 days later when their families visited them in Mansoura Public Prison. They may challenge their convictions before Egypt's highest court, the Court of Cassation.

The clashes at Mansoura University on 12th Novem-



ber 2013 broke out during a protest held during a protest held by student supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood movement, banned by the authorities. They lasted more than 5 hours and 70 protesters were injured. The university president called on the security forces to intervene. They went into the university with armoured vehicles and fired tear gas to disperse the students, arresting at least 23 people including the three women. According to witnesses and their lawyers, the 3 women had not been involved in the clashes. They had taken part in protests peacefully but sought safety in a room at the university's faculty of Pharmacy as soon as clashes began.

Since September 2013 numerous protests on university campuses across Egypt have been held due to the ousting of Mohamed Morsi, Egypt's president. The security forces have used excessive force, including lethal force, to disperse the protests. A law restricting the right to public assembly, signed by president Adly Mansour on 24th November 2013, falls short of inter-

national standards and gives the Interior Ministry wide powers over protests, including the use of firearms. Protesters convicted of breaking the law can face long prison sentences and fines.

Our group's objective is to ask the Egyptian authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Abrar Al-Anany, Menatalia Moustafa and Yousra Elkhateeb and to call on the Egyptian government to repeal the Law regulating the Right to Public Gatherings, Processions and Peaceful Protests or to amend it to bring it in line with international law and standards.

A letter to the Egyptian President is attached protesting at the imprisonment of these 3 young women who are prisoners of conscience. Thank you for signing it.
Celia Stubbs

Stop Torture Campaign Training Day in London 4 October

It is difficult to select from a very full programme, but I have to try.

The UN Optional Protocol against Torture aims to make torture less likely to occur. Subscribing countries agree that the UN Committee may inspect any time, anywhere it wishes, and can speak in confidence to anyone, and are required to set up an independent national preventative mechanism with which the International Committee can work. Confidential reports are produced but most countries are happy to publish them. The approach makes sense because most torture is routine, not the result of dictatorial regimes. This was emphasised throughout the day.

Often police are poor and poorly educated, and programmes are needed to give them skills and training in how to investigate crime and interview suspects, to provide leadership in public order supervision, and provide systems which are human rights compliant, bearing in mind cultural features, such as racism. Problems in some areas arise when the police are not able to touch "important" people, which is frustrating.

Tom Davies, AI's campaign manager, leads this latest campaign to Stop Torture. Many countries have signed agreements, but there is a lot of denial about the practice of torture. There is a need for more effective safeguards, such as availability of independent lawyers, doc-

tors, monitoring of places of detention and more pressure politically. But many governments have no means of exercising control over what goes on in their country, and the Istanbul Protocol standards simply cannot be met, if for example there are no forensic doctors in the country, or lawyers are miles away.

The five countries chosen to spearhead the campaign are not the worst, but all have regional significance. The campaign is building up and the five are beginning to feel the pressure. There is a new strand to the campaign, focusing on Tools of Torture in the EU, and I chose Tools of Torture and how to lobby your MEPs. as my workshop.

In November the EU is due to start a review of a Council Regulation of 2005 which regulates trade in certain goods which could be used for torture and other cruel, inhumane or degrading punishments. Some goods are banned outright, others which may have benign uses can be traded under licence. But there are loopholes; "brokering" allows the trade to take place outside the EU. It is hoped to extend the regulation to cover EU nationals operating anywhere, and to review and update lists of goods, to cover more recent developments, and strengthen the provision around those items that are likely to be used in torture.

AI can influence MEPs

(listed on the website) specially those on the Foreign Affairs Committee and International Trade Committee. There is one MEP for the south east, Nirj Deva, on the Foreign Affairs Committee.

The rest of the workshop was fairly basic and this branch already follows good procedures in relation to its correspondence.

The workshops reported back. Running a stall – one or two ideas such as an enlarged wheel of torture and a companion wheel with good practice for the Philippines campaign. Simple things are eye catching, such as someone in a chair blindfolded. We might put on tableaux or small plays – might need LA permission for street theatre. These can be used for fundraising. Angus had organised the best and funniest performance. Big men with dark glasses, dark clothes and batons. Victim enters swathed in plastic. "Do sit down! What, you can't, because of a beating? O dear! At least the bruises don't show as they used plastic sheeting!" gives some idea of what it was like..

Madeline



Bahrain Human Rights Worker awaits trial

Maryam Al-Khawaja is the co-director of the Gulf Center for Human Rights. Her father is a prisoner of conscience and an opposition activist. She was arrested on 30th August arriving at Bahrain Airport in Manama. Maryam refused to hand over her mobile phone and was accused of 'assaulting police officers while performing their duties'. She has denied the assault and her case has been referred to the High Court beginning in October. We are demanding her charges be dropped immediately.

We used this case for our Urgent Action for this month's stall. It was held on Saturday 11th October outside the Amnesty Bookshop in Sydney Street. To our surprise there

was another stall there also. It was fellow member Maude and the TTIP group campaigning against corporations trading across the Atlantic. It was rather a squeeze but we managed to accommodate each other. I think some people weren't sure which petition they were signing!

On the stall were stalwarts Celia, Julian and Andrew and it was great to see Sue aswell. Despite the threat of rain we collected 111 signatures for our petition. I have sent these to King Shaikah Hamad bin'Issa Al Khalifa of Bahrain and a copy of the petition to the Minister of Justice and Islamic Affairs of Bahrain. We wait to hear what happens in court.

Our next stall will be the 50th Anniversary of our Brighton and Hove Amnesty Group. We are holding it on Sunday 16th November at the train station so that we can reach more members of the public (and escape any weather!) We will be doing a petition for the three Egyptian women who are our new Prisoners of Conscience. From 2 - 5pm we will be handing out balloons, badges and information to the general public and making a collection. Afterwards we are planning to go for a celebratory meal at a local cafe. If you would like to take part please contact me, Jill on 01273 621697

BRIGHTON & HOVE AMNESTY GROUP CONTACTS

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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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Amnesty UK Human Rights Centre - Tel: 0207 0331500

