



THE BRIGHTON AND HOVE AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL GROUP NEWSLETTER

Forthcoming Brighton and Hove Amnesty Group Meetings/Events

Group Business Meeting
Group meetings normally take place on the first Thursday of each month from 8-10pm at Community Base, Queens Road, Brighton
Please note change of venue for October and November meeting

4th October 2012

Guest Speaker

Hugh Sandeman, Amnesty country co ordinator on Arab Spring and aftermath: human rights in North Africa

1st November 2012

Business meeting

October and November Group meetings at Friends Meeting House, Ship St, Brighton
Time 8.00pm to 9.45pm

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:

18th October

Contact Emma 01273 232397

Monthly Lanes Collection

Contact Catherine : 07828 584430 to volunteer

Monthly Stall in Sydney St

13th October 2012

Contact Jill 01273 621697 to volunteer

28th October

Amnestea party and Auction
Details on page 1

8th December 2012

Letter Writing Vigil
Friends Meeting House

Arab Spring and aftermath Human rights in North Africa Talk by Hugh Sandeman



Thursday 4th October 2012—8pm
Friends Meeting House
Ship Street
Brighton

All Welcome



Brighton and Hove Amnesty International's Auction of Promises



At our Annual Amnes-Tea Party
Sunday 28th October, 3-6pm

Phoenix Community Centre Brighton

Have a cuppa, place a bid and stand up for
human rights!

PRIDE 2012



Brighton Pride was on Saturday 1st September this year, one month later than usual so as not to rival the Olympic Games! Celia prepared rainbow coloured ribbons on which to write messages of solidarity for Gay Pride marches in South Africa.

In addition to this we were asking people to sign post-cards to Colonel Petras Shilane at Tsakane Police Sta-

tion in South Africa. This was to urge him to investigate the death of Noxalo Nogwaza, a human rights defender campaigning for the right to equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people. Noxalo was murdered on her way home from a night out with her friends. She was raped, beaten and stabbed before her body was dumped in a ditch. No progress has been

made in the investigation.

We had 7 people helping on the stall including Martin, a volunteer from London, and Celia's granddaughter. All 300 ribbons had messages written on them, like 'Fight Homophobia' and 'In Solidarity with LGBT activists'. These will be parcelled up and sent to South Africa, to be given out by supporters at Gay Pride marches. We had 100 people sign the post-cards on the day.



Mostly people were happy to participate in this campaign as they made their way in good humour along the route of the parade to Preston Park. I asked one person to sign in solidarity with South Africans. He replied that he was from South Africa and that it was all 'nonsense'. Unfortunately he didn't stop to explain. I would have been interested to hear what he had to say on the matter!

Jill



CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITY

Campaign Update October 2012



Vedanta's human rights promises are 'meaningless and hollow'

Amnesty International has accused the UK-registered, FTSE 100-listed mining company, Vedanta, of attempting to 'gloss over' criticisms of its poor human rights record in the East Indian state of Orissa.

In the last few years Vedanta's operations have been under increased scrutiny. In response to the resulting pressure from bank lenders and investors, the company has recently developed a human rights and sustainability policy and published a report entitled 'The Lanjigarh Development Story: Vedanta's Perspective'. Although these recent developments demonstrate the strength of Amnesty's influence (Vedanta directly refers to Amnesty in its report), Amnesty believes that these policies fail to address the persistent human rights concerns associated with the company's operations in Orissa.



Dongria Kondh women with Amnesty International material ©AI

Amnesty's new briefing, 'Vedanta's Perspective Uncovered: Policies cannot mask practices in Orissa', draws upon evidence received from communities affected by those operations and on the findings of non-compliance by India's regulatory authorities and other official bodies from 2010 - 2012.

It particularly focuses on Vedanta's:

- non-recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples,
- inadequate consultation with local communities,
- non-compliance with India's national law,
- failure to address health and pollution concerns,
- involvement in attempts by the police to silence its critics on the ground, and to deter some journalists and researchers from investigating operations and
- general lack of disclosure of information.

Polly Truscott, Deputy Director of Amnesty International's Asia-Pacific Programme, said

'New evidence from the communities in Orissa shows that changes announced by Vedanta have had little positive impact on the livelihoods, rights, and other concerns of the communities on the ground.'

By Freya Lyte

ARMS TREATY NEWS UPDATE



In July UN member states met to try and secure the world's first Arms Trade Treaty. Unfortunately due to delaying tactics by some states, notably the United States and Russia, a draft treaty was not agreed upon. Great progress had been made and a strong draft treaty had been presented, although from Amnesty's point of view several loopholes still remained. Afterwards there were encouraging statements from Jo Adamson, the UK's representative at the UN, and William Hague, who expressed disappointment at the failure to agree a treaty.

All is not lost however. UN states meet again in October where it is likely a majority agreement will secure a treaty (rather than having to use consensus, as was the case in July). In preparation Caroline Lucas, MP for Brighton Pavilion, has been keeping up the pressure on the government to deliver a bullet-proof Arms Trade Treaty. In parliament on 4th September she raised the Arms Treaty negotiations with Alastair Burt, an MP at the Foreign Office. He said that good progress had been made and that the government are "... *recommitted to doing everything we can to see that base built upon, and we hope to make progress as soon as possible towards the treaty, which we hope will be in the next UN session beginning this month.*" Caroline Lucas asked whether he was concerned that ammunition may be subject to fewer restrictions than conventional arms, to which he gave a general answer, ending by saying "...*In company with civil society, non-governmental organisations and other partners, we will look for the process that is most likely to improve it (the draft treaty) and we will work with partners on the best way of taking steps forward.*"

On 17th September two Labour MPs, Douglas Alexander and Jim Murphy, wrote a letter in the Guardian newspaper arguing for more scrutiny by the government prior to agreeing arms exports. This comes in the wake of revelations that Britain approved arms exports to Libya under Gaddafi, Egypt under Mubarak, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia (amongst others). Despite revoking several arms licences after popular revolutions in the middle-east, the UK government has resumed arms sales to Bahrain amid a violent crack-down by the Bahraini government. The two Labour MPs argued that failure to agree on a legally binding Arms Treaty was a "stain on the international community" and echoed calls by Amnesty and other NGOs to do all we can to secure an Arms Treaty when UN states meet again in October.

Luke Beale
Arms Trade Treaty Campaign Co ordinator



Lewes Amnesty International Group Film and discussion



Guantanamo – outside the law!

The US prison at Guantanamo Bay still operates in spite of international condemnation.

Come and see 'Outside the Law: Stories from Guantanamo', a stirring film that shows how the US Government put aside the law and how the UK Government cooperated.



Our speakers:

- Norman Baker, MP for Lewes
- Caroline Lucas, MP for Brighton Pavilion
- Omar Deghayes, previously imprisoned in Guantanamo
- Andy Worthington, journalist and co-director of 'Outside the Law'
- A representative from Reprieve, lawyers working for Guantanamo prisoners

Sunday 21st October – 6:30 for 7:00pm
All Saints Community Centre, Friars Walk, Lewes

Tickets: Free of charge, available from Skylark Bookshop, Needlemakers, Lewes,
Tel: 01273 479418. Also available on the door.

Brighton and Hove Amnesty International Group Meeting Thursday 6th September

1. 8.00pm Welcome and Apologies

Apologies: Jill, Angus, Madeline, Luke B, Ollie

Attendees: Emma, Jessica, Evelina, Liz, Celia, Jess, Mike, Jack, Catherine, Caroline, Charles, Angela

2. Minutes and Matters Arising

Catherine to put together a rota of alternative locations for the monthly lanes collection

3. Treasurers Report

Balance: £188.86

Lanes Collection: £35.95

This is not including the generous response we have received so far from the Annual Street Collection, final amount to follow next month.

4. Monthly Action and Mailing from Head Office

Call to stop the execution of Reggie Clemons in the US. Has been on Death Row for 19 years without trial despite no physical evidence connecting him to the crime, abusive prosecution and inadequate legal representation. www.amnesty.org.uk for more info.

5. South African Action for Pride

Group members sent a message of solidarity to LGBT Rights activists in South Africa on Pride coloured ribbon, following the abuse and murder of Noxolo Nogwaza, a 24 year old South African Lesbian, on 11th April 2011. Her murder remains unsolved; her killers have not been brought to justice.

6. Actions from Newsletter

1. To the Minister of Public Safety, Canada. Re. Omar Khadr's pending request to be transferred out of Guantanamo Bay and back to Canada.

2. To your MP. Re. The extradition case of Talha Ahsan, a 32 year old British Citizen with Aspergers syndrome who has been in high security prisons since July 2006 without trial.

7. WDM – Reciprocal Action Request

Emma received an email from the WDM suggesting a "Reciprocal Action" system where by different organisations with similar values take part in one another's actions, thus increasing awareness and involvement. This was agreed upon by the group.

8. Cost and Priorities Programme - Discussion

Brief explanation of the CPP given by Emma:

AIUK are being asked to increase their financial support to the IS annually from 30 to 40% in order to support the growing international work of Amnesty International in the global South. Despite AIUK's healthy financial state this increase will mean reducing their spending by £2 ½ million p.a. This will mean redundancies. AIUK employees have found it necessary to take strike action. More information can be found at www.amnesty.org.uk/CAPP-updates Questions and opinions can be emailed to capp@amnesty.org.uk The group voiced concerns re. the lack of accountability that IS have with regards to spending, as well as the possible repercussions that CAPP could have on campaigning work here in the UK.

***Group would like to discuss this further next meeting. ***

9. Lanes Collection

Monthly lanes collection will take a break in September for the Annual Street Collection.

10. Annual Street Collection

Rota for the Annual Street Collection sent around and group reminded of this, our biggest fundraiser of the year. Sat 22nd Sept AM Hove (Meet at Hove Library 10am) / Sat 29th Sept PM Brighton (Meet at Friends Meeting House 2pm)

11. Silent Auction and Amnestea Party

Auction of Promises: List of pledges sent round for group members to contribute.

AmnesTea Party and Final Auction: Sunday 28th Oct 3-6pm Phoenix Community Centre.

12. Monthly Stall

Monthly Stall: 13th October 11am-1pm, Books for Amnesty, Sydney Street.

13. Guest Speakers for future meetings

We currently have no guest speakers planned for future meetings. ***Emma to contact Angus re. Syrian Solidarity speaker***

Mike to contact a country coordinator ***Caroline to chase up a speaker on the Arms Trade***

Emma to contact head office re. workshops available

Caroline has agreed to speak at Vardean College on Thursday lunch times as requested by the College.

14. Annual Letter Writing – 8th December

The Friends Meeting House are organising an open meeting on land mines and cluster bombs on the evening of our Letter Writing Vigil on 8th December. The group agreed we would promote this alongside the vigil/publicise it on our literature.

15. Monthly Letter Writing – Next meeting: 19th September at Jill's house

Campaign Feedback

16. Arms Trade Treaty – Luke B was not there to feedback however Emma told group there is set to be another round of talks in October at which the Treaty is hoped to be passed.

17. Middle East and North Africa – Caroline to feedback next month.

18. Forced Evictions – Freya was not there to feedback. There is an update on this campaign in newsletter.

19. Prisoners of Conscience ***Jill still awaiting a response regarding this campaign. ***

20. Stop the Death Penalty***Mike to get hold of the DVD on Guantanamo Bay for a group screening. ***

21. Change of venue for next month's meeting

NEXT MEETING WILL BE HELD UPSTAIRS IN THE FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE, SHIP STREET.

22. AOB

Emma on issue of shaking collecting tins: Amnesty stance is to remain stationary and not to cause annoyance.

23. 10pm Meeting Closed

Local Events Notice Board

SLEEPWALKING INTO GLOBAL FAMINE:

Internationally renowned economist and author Benny Dembitzer will be discussing the oncoming global food crisis at the Friends Meeting House, Ship Street, Brighton on Thursday **4th October**, 7:30-9pm.

The free talk is hosted by Brighton & Hove World Development Movement, who campaign locally - and successfully - on issues such as food speculation by big banks and climate justice. There'll be a chance to find out more about WDM, and the opportunity to get involved.

CONSCIOUS RAISING WALK DHARMA-YATRA FOR SUFFERING ANIMALS.

On **6th October** a walk to raise awareness of the terrible suffering of animals raised in inhumane conditions on farms and then sent to torture houses (know as abattoirs) is taking place in central Brighton. Meeting place is at the Loving Hut Cafe. The Level on the corner of St Peters Place and Lewes Road. Opposite Pheonix Place and just across from the art college.

We will walk through central Brighton for about two hours escorted by police and end with a small social gathering.

Lewes Amnesty Group Fundraising Walk

Fundraising walk from **Lewes** to Glynde on Sunday **14th October** 2013—meet 10am Cliffe Bridge and end at the Trevor Arms in time for lunch. Donations to Amnesty welcome.

Sandpit Arts presents The Far Pavilion

Seven films. Five workshops. Four performances. Three live acts. Two art installations. One marquee. One theme: the Arab Spring.

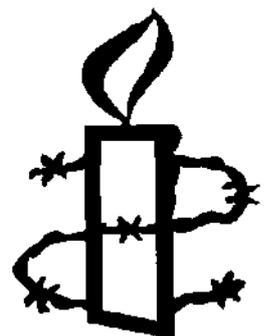
Join us for Brighton's first ever festival of Arabic arts and culture in the Royal Pavilion Gardens, from 5 to 7 October 2012.

We have planned a fantastic line up including: The Turbans, Simo LaGnawi, DJ Couscous, My Big Fat Belly Dance, shadow puppetry workshops, drumming circles, films from Egypt, Syria and Tunisia, Arabic street food, a chai diwan and more!

For more information and a full programme, please visit us at <http://www.thefarpavilion.org.uk>

It is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness

Old Chinese Proverb



Take Action

Please sign the enclosed letter.

**CUBA****Members of The Ladies in White (Damas de Blanco) and other opposition activists in Cuba**

The Ladies in White was formed by a group of female relatives of the 75 prisoners of conscience who were imprisoned in March 2003 for their peaceful expression of critical opinions of the government. The group would attend mass every Sunday in the capital, Havana, dressed in white, to pray for the release of their relatives. Afterwards they would take part in a procession from the church to a nearby park, carrying white flowers.

Members of the Ladies in White have been detained in Havana and several other places in Cuba. Some remain in detention and the authorities have failed to provide reasons for their detention or information on their whereabouts.

From 21 to 24 September the Ladies in White (Damas de Blanco) held several activities, including masses and marches in Havana, to celebrate the feast day of Our Lady of Mercy (Virgin de la Merced) and in memory of former political activists. Since 20 September, various members of the Ladies in White have received intimidating notes aimed at preventing them from taking part in activities. Reports from the group state that the headquarters in Neptune Street, Havana have been surrounded by police officers.

Around 50 members of the group, who travelled from different provinces of Cuba to attend the activities, were arrested on their way to Havana. The majority of them were released and deported back to their provinces, however 19 remain detained and their whereabouts are unknown. On 24 September as the Ladies in White planned to attend mass, an act of repudiation (acto de repudio - see background information) took place at their headquarters. Government supporters and state agents gathered in the street chanting pro-government slogans and intimidating the women. In the early morning of 25 September 18 members of the Ladies in White were arrested at the headquarters.

Amnesty International believes that the repeated use of short term detentions of members of the Ladies in White and other activists in Cuba is a tactic used to silence dissident voices in the country and prevent peaceful activities. Furthermore the systematic arrest of activists travelling from the provinces to Havana represents an excessive limitation to freedom of movement and represents excessive control and harassments of dissidents.

Please send the enclosed letter to the Interior Minister in Havana

BRIGHTON AND 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

Amnesty UK Human Rights Centre - Tel: 0207 0331500.

