

# GROUPS NEWS



THE NEWSLETTER FOR AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL UK  
LOCAL, STUDENT AND YOUTH GROUPS

WINTER 2017



Scarborough



Bradford



York

## ALL TOGETHER NOW

Synchronised photo action says: We welcome refugees

At exactly mid-day on 24 June, to celebrate Refugee Week, the **Scarborough** group gathered on the South Cliff to tell refugees in the UK they are welcomed and wanted.

At the same time, 13 other groups around Yorkshire and the North-East took photos with similar messages at their local landmarks.

In a bid to change the tone of discussion around refugees, the groups wanted to celebrate the contributions of refugees.

'The theme of Refugee Week was Our Shared Future. We wanted to encourage

communities to work together to create a more welcoming environment,' said Rod Heath, group secretary and regional rep for North East and Yorkshire. 'We decided to do this action together for maximum impact.'

The **York** group came together at Clifford's Tower. The **Bradford** group gathered outside the Town Hall. Other groups who took part included **Barnsley, Wakefield, Newcastle, Wearside, Sheffield, Wharfedale, Kirkbymoorside, Scunthorpe, Leeds, Hexham and Kirklees.**

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In the 'Good Old Days' there used to be at least two executions a week in this country. There were 200 different capital offences for which the guilty could be legally strangled including spending more than a month in the company of gypsies, picking pockets, the theft of goods worth at least 12 pence and committing a crime with your face blackened.

I was 12 when I went on my first anti-death penalty demo. It was 1953. I stood in the rain with my Mum on a vigil outside Wandsworth Prison (picture). Eighteen-year-old Derek Bentley, who had just learned how to write his name, was about to be hanged for 'mentally aiding' his young friend Chris to shoot dead PC Sidney Miles during a botched burglary on a Croydon rooftop.

I remember the debate in Amnesty at the International Council Meeting in Sweden in 1977 when we first included work against the death penalty in our Mandate. It was two years after the last execution in the UK and only 16 countries had abolished the death penalty.

We had to wait until 1998 before executions were finally removed from Britain's statute book. Today 70 per cent of the world's nations have either abolished it in law or no longer use it in practice, including: Fiji (2015), Republic of the Congo (2015), Madagascar (2015), Suriname (2015), Nauru (2016), Benin (2016) and Mongolia (2017).

However, 58 nations still retain executions in both law and practice, 23 of whom were responsible for at least a thousand executions last year. As I write these words a new Amnesty International UK network against the death penalty is being established in the Section to work alongside our Women's Action Network, the Asylum Justice Project, the LGBT Network and the Children's Network. Join up now!

**Dan Jones**

■ See page 14



Demonstrators outside Wandsworth prison, 1953 © PA



Football welcomes refugees ©Barrington Coombs/EMPICS

## FOOTBALL WELCOMES: NEXT FIXTURE

Football Welcomes 2018 will take place on 21-22 April 2018. We want to build on the success of the project last year by working with more football clubs and refugee organisations, developing community links, and exploring its international potential. There are many opportunities for local groups to get involved and promote our work around refugees.

■ If you're interested, contact: Community Organising Unit, [activism@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:activism@amnesty.org.uk)

## NOMINATIONS FOR BOARD

A reminder that nominations for the 2018-2021 Amnesty International UK Board elections must be received by 5pm on 11 January 2018.

■ Apply for full details and a nomination pack from Selma Shirazi, Director's Office, Amnesty International UK Section, The Human Rights Action Centre, 17-25 New Inn Yard, London EC2A 3EA or call 020 7033 1556 or email [returningofficer@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:returningofficer@amnesty.org.uk).

■ You can also download an Election Pack at [www.amnesty.org.uk/board-elections-2018](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/board-elections-2018)

## CONNECTIONS WITH RAGS

We are currently in discussion with RAGs to secure partnerships – and asking Amnesty student groups to contact their RAG about working together.

■ For details and advice on this, contact [david.blakeley@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:david.blakeley@amnesty.org.uk), 020 7033 1646.

## AGM ROLE VACANCIES

We are looking for people to represent Amnesty at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) 2018. There are four roles up for election:

- AGM Chair (1 vacancy)
- Standing Orders Committee (1 vacancy)
- Members and Directors Appeals Committee (2 vacancies)

Deadline for nominations is 16 February 2018.

■ For more info, visit:

[www.amnesty.org.uk/agmroles](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/agmroles)

■ For queries, email [returningofficer@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:returningofficer@amnesty.org.uk)

## LEARNING ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

Over 60 activists attended the Amnesty skillshare on the Human Rights Defenders (BRAVE) campaign in Manchester on 7 October. Participants heard about the campaign from defenders, activists and experts working in the field. They shared their ideas and knowledge on campaigning, community engagement, media and social media. They took action throughout the day by signing a message of solidarity onto a transgender flag for Sakris Kupila, whose case is highlighted in the campaign and Write for Rights.





# FREEDOM FOR TURKEY'S SILENCED VOICES

## Exhibition in support of journalists and human rights defenders



© Graeme Blackwell

In September, the newly-formed **Kirklees** group held the exhibition *Silenced Voices* in solidarity with jailed and exiled Turkish journalists and human rights activists.

In a powerful and moving spectacle, rows of photographs of journalists detained or persecuted by the Turkish government filled the pews of Huddersfield Parish Church. Alongside them were photos of human rights defenders – including Idil Eser and Taner Kiliç of Amnesty Turkey – who are facing trial on trumped-up charges.

One of the photographs featured Kerim Balci, who attended the exhibition. Kerim, a former columnist with *Zaman Daily* closed down by the Turkish government, fled the country in 2016. Holding his photo, he talked about the dangers his colleagues face and the importance of activism.

'We wanted our exhibition to convey the impact of all these journalists being removed from society and being stopped in their role of telling truth to power and the people they are meant to serve,' says group secretary Paul Cooney.

Over 100 visitors wrote messages of support to the journalists. Photos of the exhibition were retweeted by the Stockholm Centre for Freedom, Violations in Turkey and the European Centre for Press and Media Freedom. Can Dündar, exiled former editor-in-chief of Turkish newspaper *Cumhuriyet* previously jailed for his work, saw the photos and tweeted: 'Thank you for supporting Turkey's jailed and wanted journalists. We appreciate your solidarity.' Other thank-you messages came from Turkish journalists Tarik Toros, Mahmut Akpınar, Turan Gorurtilmaz and Celil Sagir.

'We have been overwhelmed by the response,' says Paul. 'Many visitors were visibly moved by the experience. The project – from idea to implementation – took six weeks and it has all been worth it.'

The group continued their creative work by videoing group members writing solidarity cards to imprisoned journalists and posting them on social media to spread awareness of cases and encourage more support. Watch on YouTube (search 'Kirklees solidarity letters').

Turkey is now the world's biggest jailer of journalists. Since the failed coup in July 2016, over 281 journalists are behind bars and the authorities have closed down more than 180 media outlets.

■ *Silenced Voices* is a mobile exhibition. If any groups would like to share it, please contact [paul.cooney7@ntlworld.com](mailto:paul.cooney7@ntlworld.com)

■ Thank you to Reverend Simon Moor and his team at Huddersfield Parish Church for their support.





# OUR SHARED FUTURE

## A summer spent protecting refugees' rights and celebrating all that unites us

Many groups marked this year's Refugee Week, 19-25 June, with events. On 20 June, the **Southampton** group's *Music for Refugees* concert included performances by the Blue Sky Choir, Salty Sea Dogs and The Southampton Folk Orchestra. The audience signed cards of welcome to refugees and a petition to support reuniting child refugees with their families in the UK.

The **Bournville** group ran a busy stall at CoCoMAD, a community festival in Cotteridge. Children coloured in 70 doves, representing freedom, and sat them in a tree branch. Over 200 people supported the petition to end indefinite detention of asylum seekers. All were sent to the Immigration Minister.

On 7 July, 300 people attended *Refugees: Reflections in Words and Music* organised by the **Colwyn Bay** group and **Ysgol Eirias** youth group at St Asaph Cathedral. The group won the opportunity to use the Cathedral for free in an annual competition open to charities and good

causes. The audience heard from Beatrice Smith of Rwanda, who settled in the UK in the 90s, and recent arrival to Colwyn Bay, Osmar Muslim from Syria, who spoke about losing his brother, how tough refugee journeys are and then of the welcome in Wales. School children sang *Under the Same Sun*, a song written for Amnesty, and Mererid Hopwood read her poetry. Bishop Gregory spoke of his wish to resettle more families in North Wales and Amnesty UK director Kate Allen revealed more about the crisis and how to help. Visitors were also able to view the *I Welcome* exhibition by Magnum photographers detailing the difficulties of refugees from the past 70 years. Action cards were signed supporting family reunion.

The **Kirklees** group held a stall at the local park, where the Hands Off Huddersfield Royal Infirmary campaign group were holding a fun day. The public posed with *I Welcome* placards.

On 24 and 25 July, the **Fylde Coast**

group hosted an interactive, multi-media exhibition *Escape to Safety*. Staged in Blackpool's St John's Church, it offered people a 15-minute opportunity to experience what it is like to be a refugee. Over 168 people visited; some reviewed it: 'Emotional, intense and factual' and 'Harrowing, makes you think – we just aren't doing enough'. Outside, a pair of six-foot long, furry, bright yellow arms proved popular, as did the drumming group, which included member John Morrow.

In July, the **Chester and Wrexham** group ran two *Welcome Refugees* with Open Arms events in Wrexham and Chester town centres to encourage people to support and more understand the refugee situation. People had their photo taken in the giant yellow welcome arms. Meanwhile, the *I Welcome* exhibition was on display at Chester Cathedral. The **Truro and Falmouth** group also put the *I Welcome* exhibition on in Truro Cathedral.

The giant yellow arms made their way to



Southampton



Bournville



Colwyn Bay & Ysgol Eirias



Fylde Coast



Chester and Wrexham



Wakefield



Norwich



Truro and Falmouth



Liverpool



Chelmsford



the Africa Oye! Festival for numerous photo opportunities at the **Liverpool** group's stall. Passers-by made paper chains for a stunt to promote refugee rights.

On 5 June, Dawn Judd gave a talk *Refugees Living in Terror* to the **Fylde Coast** group's meeting. Dawn Judd, a volunteer for Care4Calais, has seen intolerable conditions. She recounted stories of refugees facing constant abuse, threats and violence, including the story of one child refugee who had travelled 12,000 miles and been passed between 25 sets of smugglers. She spoke of her frustration that the government has abandoned the so-called 'Dubs amendment' legislation, expected to lead to the resettlement in Britain of 3,000 unaccompanied children. However, the scheme was closed after only 350 had arrived.

The **Chelmsford** group organised a Sleep Out to raise awareness of the refugee crisis. 'Even though it was mid-summer, many of us found it cold and uncomfortable –

a small reminder of what thousands of refugees have to experience every night,' said the group. It raised £570 for their local charity Side by Side Refugees.

The **Belfast** group held a Great Refugee Week picnic at Ormeau park in Belfast.

The **Norwich** group co-hosted a Welcome Refugees pub social with poetry and music, including Moussa from Sudan who accompanied his singing on a home-made rababa (see photo). Half of the 50 people attending were refugees.

The **Minehead** group marked Refugee Week by screening the award-winning documentary *Fire at Sea*, which contrasts the lives of the desperate thousands landing on the shores of an Italian island with the everyday life of the locals. They also displayed the *I Welcome* photo exhibition.

The **Wakefield** group held a Refugee Week display at Wakefield Cathedral and a stall at the Community Iftar in Thornes Park. The group joined forces with Wakefield District City of Sanctuary to host a refugee event at

The Art House. It included film screenings, a drop-in workshop and the chance to find out about Amnesty's work.

On 20 June, the Scottish Amnesty office and local members took a moment to stand for refugees in Glasgow city centre. A human chain was formed to symbolise their connection to refugees. The SambaYaBamba Youth Street Band performed.

**COVER STORY:** At mid-day on 24 June, 14 groups in the North East and Yorkshire region took part in a joint photo action to support refugees. They took photos (below) at local landmarks to welcome refugees. The stunt was covered by local media. 'We all felt it was a big achievement,' says Rod Heath from the **Scarborough** group. 'It brought all our members together, was simple to arrange and made a powerful point.' Thank you to everyone who took part (see cover for group names).



Kirklees



Wharfedale



Sheffield



Newcastle and Wearside



Wakefield



Kirkbymoorside



Scunthorpe



Hexham



Barnsley



Leeds

# OUR SHARED FUTURE

Tom Davies, Amnesty manager for the I Welcome refugee campaign, spoke at Reading group's stall at the Reading International Festival, on 12 October. The group were joined by Reading Refugee Support Group, Reading's Student Action for Refugees and local faith groups.

## COMMUNITY SPIRIT

In honour of the late Jo Cox MP, groups got behind the Great Get Together, 16-18 June. Jo was a champion of refugee rights and believed that we are a welcoming society that celebrates diversity. In that spirit, the **Guildford** group held a picnic. They were joined by members from **Woking** and **Farnham** groups as well as local groups and clubs. The **Minehead** group spent a 'rewarding morning' handing out flowers and cakes to passers-by who were invited to sign a card for Brendan Cox, Jo's husband. Over 260 signatures were collected. The **Bradford** group held a stall at a community picnic in City Park. The sun shone at Heeley City Farm where the **Sheffield** group held a mini festival in collaboration with local groups Hope Not Hate, Assist and City of Sanctuary. It included music, dancers, poetry, face painting, a speakers' tent and a static-cycle challenge where people pedalled from Sheffield to Batley and Spennings, Jo's constituency. Louise Haigh, MP for Heeley, attended and group member Mike Livingston was interviewed about the event on BBC Radio Sheffield. Meanwhile the **Manchester** group had a stall at the Great Get Together in Crowcroft Park.

## GREAT WALK, GREAT GET TOGETHER

**Salli Martlew of the Wakefield group organised a 35km walk and get together to continue the late Jo Cox's legacy. She tells us about the day.**

22 June. Sunshine made all the difference! We arrived at Heath Common at 6.30am to find gazebos and marquees already being erected. The first of the team of 35km walkers set off at 7am and were next seen sore-footed and sweaty at 3pm.

The 5km walk provided its own delightful surprises. Individuals who came for a stroll to Kirkthorpe and back palled up with groups and individuals and then shared tea, or a beer, at the end of the walk. Conversations obviously unfinished!

Although it was Ramadan, the Imam from Wakefield Central Mosque walked up with a friend to spend time with us before the music began. We started with Eastern music followed by local Merrie City Singers and then Red Shed poets who returned later in the afternoon. A sixth former with guitar and beautiful voice gave way to Skinny Living who had us all bopping.

Meanwhile the fire fighters of White Watch turned up with their fire engine – what a cheerful crew. I found the mayor and mayoress of Normanton tucking into scones, later joined by the mayor and mayoress of Wakefield. On stage, Back Chat Brass, a modern version of the old



Wakefield

brass band, had us clapping, laughing and even dancing, joined by our local MP Yvette Cooper. The bouncy castle bounced all afternoon.

A delightful duo Sarah and Will lifted all spirits, then Jonathan and his Ukulele group lead us through a singalong. Daisy and Glenn who had sorted out the afternoon's music brought the event to a close with their own choices. Nick Martlew, the instigator of it all, stood up in his bright red Great Get Together t-shirt, flat cap and broad smile to echo the appreciation and joy of everyone there.

The Great Get Together, the teamwork, all enjoying ourselves in the sunshine and finally everyone left standing taking down the tents and packing up to leave Heath Common at the end of a still sunny, satisfying, nay joyous occasion, was heartening in the moment. Jo loved a party!



Reading



Guildford



Minehead



Bradford



# INDIVIDUALS AT RISK

**WRITE FOR RIGHTS 2017** was launched on 1 November, see page 14. Shackelia Jackson (see Time for Justice below) features in this year's campaign

## OUT OF THE SILENCE

On 1 October, **Ely City** group's annual Ben Jupp Memorial lecture proved so popular it had to be moved to a bigger space at Ely Cathedral. Over 300 people came to hear Terry Waite's *Out of the Silence* talk.

In 1987, as the envoy of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Terry Waite tried to engineer the release of hostages held in Lebanon, but ended up a hostage of Hezbollah himself. He remained in captivity for almost five years, mainly in solitary confinement.

Terry told the audience in Ely about those years, and how language and memories helped him. He focused on Amnesty – his daughter Clare worked for the International Secretariat for 14 years – and stressed the importance of cards and letters.

'Four years into captivity Terry received his first and only piece of mail – a solidarity postcard from a well-wisher,' says group secretary Sally MacEachern. 'It raised his spirits and gave him hope as he knew then he had not been forgotten.'

The *I Welcome* exhibition was also on display. A collection, split between Amnesty and Hostage UK, raised £680.

## TIME FOR JUSTICE

The **Reading** group raised awareness of unlawful killings by the police in Jamaica. Nakiea Jackson, shot and killed by police in 2014, was the focus. His sister Shackelia Jackson is still fighting for justice. The group ran stalls at the Reading Carnival, East Reading Festival, Reading Waterfest and WOMAD, collecting petition signatures to send to the Jamaican Minister of Justice calling for an end to police violence. At WOMAD, 952 people signed the petition and five new members joined Amnesty. Performers showing their support included poet Benjamin Zephaniah and African dance teacher Rubba.

The group uploaded their solidarity photos on the [@time4justiceja](#) Facebook page and were delighted when Shackelia responded: 'This ... reminded me that together we can speak up for those who no longer have a voice. I am sure these visibility efforts and work will cause the legislative changes that will protect others. You guys are amazing!' The **Henley College** youth group also collected petition signatures for Shackelia.

## FOR AHMED MANSOOR

June marked 100 days of detention for human rights activist and blogger Ahmed

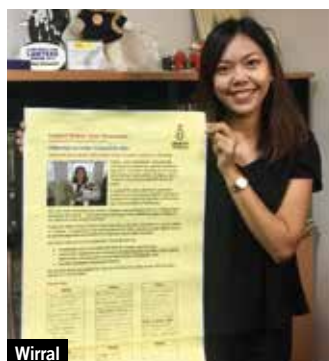
Mansoor arrested by the UAE authorities on charges of spreading sectarianism and hatred on social media. The **Manchester** group is holding vigils outside the Town Hall every fourth Monday to call for his freedom. See events, page 14.

## MISSING OUT ON FAMILY LIFE

Many groups made beautiful origami tulips inscribed with cherished family memories for British-Iranian Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe and Kamal Foroughi, imprisoned in Iran. The **Silsden** group made theirs at an AmnesTea with the help of John Grogan MP. The **Haslemere** group hung Nazanin's image on their tree in the Town Meadow and every week write to her, Alistair Burt and the authorities in Iran.

## LETTER FROM THAILAND

The **Wirral** group were 'humbled and inspired' to receive a letter from human rights lawyer Sirikan 'June' Charoensiri who faces 15 years in prison for her work. The group had sent a petition to the Thai authorities urging them to drop all charges against her – and a copy to June. She replied: 'I truly appreciate your continued support and solidarity. The struggle for better never ends.'





# PRIDE AND JOY

## The freedom to be who you are

Flags were at the ready as Amnesty groups took part in Prides across the UK. On 20 May, the **Harrogate** group supported the town's first ever Pride. Speaking at the event, mayor Nick Brown told the crowds 'the sun always shines on the righteous' and spoke of the importance of celebrating diversity. On 26 May, the **Birmingham** group supported Birmingham Pride with placards, banners and elaborate costumes.

On 10 June, the **York** group went to Pride for the fourth year. Over 200 postcards were signed in support of people who face discrimination or persecution for their sexual orientation or gender identity. Rachael Maskell MP lent her support with the message 'Love is a human right'.

Also that day, the **Canterbury** group marched in the parade through the city. At their stall, over 300 cards were signed calling on the Russian authorities to stop

the persecution of gay men in Chechnya. And the **Fylde Coast** group set off on the Blackpool Pride Parade which laughed, drummed, sang and danced its way to the Winter Gardens where 200 people signed cards for Chechnya.

For a third year, the **Chelmsford** group joined the Essex Pride in Central Park on 24 June. So many people visited their stall, they ran out of action cards and stickers. Photos were taken of supporters holding messages of support for equality in Japan, where LGBTI people face huge discrimination. They also welcomed the deputy mayor of Basildon, David Burton-Sampson.

At Exmouth Pride on 1 July, the **Exeter** group collected 200 signed cards calling for an investigation into the abduction, torture and killing of over 100 men suspected of being gay in Chechnya.

At least 60 people posed behind 'Love is a human right' selfie frames made by the **Bournemouth, Poole and Christchurch** group at BourneFree Pride festival on 1 July. 'We got over 150 cards signed relating to the atrocities in Chechnya and everyone was interested in what we were all about,' said the group.

At Pride in **London** on 8 July around 200 people marched through the city with our Amnesty float holding 'Human rights happen here' and 'We exist' placards. Badges and flags were handed out.

It was a fantastic day for the **Swindon** group at the Swindon and Wiltshire Pride on 29 July. They collected action cards and added new names to their mailing list. The **Sheffield** group had a 'wonderful response' at their city's Pride. Many people took part in their photo campaign asking Japan to bring in measures to protect LGBTI people



Harrogate



Birmingham



York



Canterbury



Fylde Coast



Chelmsford



Exeter



Bournemouth, Poole and Christchurch



London



Swindon



from discrimination, and over 400 action cards were signed for Chechnya.

At the **Norwich** Pride on 29 July, the group joined the parade and held a stall at The Forum. Highlights were a Question Time – putting the politics into Pride – and a huge rainbow cake.

On 1 August, thousands of people on the streets of **Belfast** called for an end to Northern Ireland’s ban on same-sex marriages during the city’s Pride Parade. Irish marriage-equality campaigner and writer Una Mullally delivered the annual Amnesty International Pride Lecture. ‘Marriage equality is not just an issue for lesbian and gay couples, it is not just about weddings, it is not just about extending access to an institution to people who have been excluded from it. It is about recognising that all of us are equal and deserve to be seen and treated as such,’ she said.

The **Manchester** group supported Manchester Pride in August. Led by a member in ‘Love is a human right’ rainbow wings, they were hard to miss, with placards and 200 pink helium balloons. Members of the Greater Manchester Humanist Choir joined them. The group also held a successful stall at Levenshulme Pride: 246 cards were signed for #Chechnya100.

The **Bristol** group took part in Bristol Pride and the **Isle of Wight** group went to their local pride inspired by the coverage created at the Isle of Wight festival.

On the 19 August, the **Glasgow West** group and other supporters took part in the Glasgow Pride parade. It was a good turnout with action cards signed for gay men in Chechnya. On 2 September, the **Reading** group joined the Love United Reading Pride. Ten people joined the LGBTI Network and 264 action cards were signed. Group

members were also out in force at Prides in **Croydon, Hull, Oxford** and **Stockport**.

## EQUAL MARRIAGE

On 1 July, around 20,000 people took to the streets of **Belfast** to demand equal marriage legislation for Northern Ireland, the only part of the UK and Ireland where same-sex marriage is still outlawed. The march and rally were initiated by Amnesty and organised with the Love Equality coalition, NI’s main LGBTI groups, plus the trade union and student union movements. It was strongly supported by local groups and activists with Amnesty’s Love Is A Human Right placards featuring in the march and media coverage. There were solidarity actions in **London, Edinburgh** and **Cardiff**.



Sheffield



Norwich



Belfast



Manchester



Isle of Wight



Reading



Glasgow West © Dustin Hosseini



Croydon



Hull



Stockport



Oxford

# NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

## A NIGHT-IN TO REMEMBER

On 20 September, many groups part in Give a Home for Human Rights – the global music project organised by Amnesty and Sofar Sounds. Over 1,000 musicians performed in over 300 secret locations (including living rooms) in 60 countries to tell their governments #IWelcome refugees. Many group members were involved as speakers, bucket shakers and general Amnesty ambassadors. In **Nottingham**, the group was at Notts Country Football Club. And the **Newcastle** group went to the North of England Institute of Mining and Mechanical Engineers. Many members were squashed into private homes, some bigger than others!

Thank you for making this first-of-a-kind project such a success. It generated huge media coverage and we're delighted with the feedback. We hope the gigs will be the start of some important artist collaborations. For more photos and round-ups of the days, see [www.sofarsounds.com/giveahome](http://www.sofarsounds.com/giveahome)

## MASS ACTION

On 23 September, the **Lambeth** group held their annual embassy crawl to highlight Amnesty's new campaign on human rights defenders. The group marched to seven embassies – Chile, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Iran, Bahrain and Finland – stopping at each for an action to pressure governments to recognise and protect human rights defenders.

## HUMAN RIGHTS CITY

In April, **York** was declared the UK's first Human Rights City. At the group's meeting in September, Heidi Chan of the Centre for Applied Human Rights at the University of York, discussed what that means.

## SILENCED VOICES

On 7 September, the **Manchester** group supported *Silenced Voices: Women in Assad's Prisons* curated by the Rethink, Rebuild Society of Syrian women in Manchester. This powerful exhibition told the stories of 16 women detained in Syrian prisons; most have been tortured and not heard of since 2014. It was visited by Jeff Smith MP, and local councillors, and letters were signed to MPs to help raise awareness.

## ANNIVERSARIES

Choirs celebrated United Nations International Day of Peace on 21 September in Truro. Singing, readings and other activities took place on the steps of the Cathedral. People browsed the **Truro and Falmouth** group's stall, signed action cards and picked up information about the I Welcome and #againsthate campaigns.

In July, groups remembered Srebrenica 22 years on. A film was made by members of the **Hampstead and Belsize, Lambeth, Waltham Forest and Richmond, Twickenham and Kingston** groups. It shows them making a banner naming the 8,372 men and boys who were killed, and people adding messages of peace.

On 26 September, the **Blackheath and Greenwich** group delivered roses to the Mexico embassy to honour the Ayotzinapa students who disappeared three years ago. And the **Newcastle** group celebrated the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture at the Giving Hope event they helped to organise with Freedom from Torture.





# NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

## CANVASSING THE CANDIDATES

In **Manchester**, the local group organised a hustings, quizzing two candidates on a range of human rights issues including the Human Rights Act, welcoming refugees and pulling out of supplying arms to countries with a bad human rights record. The **Cambridge** group put forward questions to their local candidates about refugees at a hustings hosted by the Cambridge Convoy Refugee Action group. Eilidh MacPherson, co-ordinator of Amnesty's Individuals at Risk programme, spoke to the **Watford** group in May about defending human rights and the general election.

## GOOD LUCK BUT NOT GOODBYE

The **Bournville** group held a tea party for Penny and Vernon Batsford to celebrate 40 years of work for Amnesty and the group. The pair successfully campaigned for prisoners of conscience. In 1987, they received a letter from Chen, Ming-Chong for whom they spent over 10 years campaigning for. It worked eventually and his appreciation was palpable: 'I believe no one can understand better the value and

significance of your humanitarian vision and the candle light of human right than a man who spent more than 20 years of his life in the dark.'

## FESTIVAL SEASON

The **Buxton** group used the Buxton Spring Fair to launch their new case: the village of Jayyus in the Occupied West Bank. The security fence/wall has cut off the villagers from two thirds of their farming land. Action postcards were signed to send to the Israeli embassy and head of Israel Defence Forces. The public wrote messages of solidarity and drew pictures of Buxton to introduce themselves to the Jayyus residents. As part of the Festival of Chichester, the **Bognor, Chichester and District** group proudly hosted Aria and Song for Amnesty. Thanks to the musical line-up and generous audience, £688 was raised. The **Hull** group's stall at the Freedom Festival in September featured radical reformer Perronet Thompson who supported universal suffrage. At Celebrating Syria: A Festival of Arts and Culture, the **Manchester** group chatted to festival goers about Amnesty's work.

## OBITUARIES

### Betty Owen

(pictured), a lifelong member of Amnesty, died in November age 91. She served as secretary of the **Portsmouth** group for 10 years until ill health prevented her from active participation. Even then she hosted Write for Rights and meetings at her home. Her support never wavered. She is greatly missed.



**Bridget Russell**, a valued member of the **Canterbury** group, died in April, aged 88. She would listen before quietly making her point, which was always practical and full of common sense. Although she suffered from failing eye-sight she continued campaign work. She is remembered with gratitude and respect.



Buxton



Newcastle



Hampstead and Belsize, Lambeth, Waltham Forest and Richmond, Twickenham and Kingston



Bognor, Chichester and District



Watford

# NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

## STALLS AND STREET COLLECTIONS

**Rotherham** group's stall drew attention to saving the Human Rights Act. Over 100 signatures were collected for a petition to the Minister for Justice, and children coloured in rainbows. **Warrington** group's collection raised £200 for Amnesty. **Manchester** group held their annual collection in the city centre on 30 September. Two street collections run by the **Bolton and Bury** group totalled £213. Meanwhile, the group's stall at Bolton market, selling books, DVDs and CDs, raised £150.

## LABOUR BEHIND THE LABEL

When a student from the University of Exeter group went home to Matlock for the summer holidays, she organised a clothes swap in aid of Amnesty. Molly-May Smith teamed up with the **Wirksworth** group to put on the event. 'As well as rails of clothes, Monkee Genes, a local ethical jeans company, donated 40 pairs of jeans. There was a cake stall and raffle, live soul and disco music, and the group's stall with our mini-campaign #whomademyclothes projected onto a screen,' says Molly. All left-over clothes went to Derbyshire Refugee Solidarity.

## AMNESTEAS AND JAMNESTYS

To celebrate International Women's Week, the **York** group held an AmnesTea in March. People ate cake and sandwiches, and shared stories of brave and courageous women. It proved popular so the group organised another tea party in May, raising £390. The **Croydon** group combined their AmnesTea with a bric-a-brac sale raising £345. A solidarity card was signed for the group's adopted prisoner Ali Aarrass in Morocco. The **Carlisle** group's Jamnesty in August saw local bands Wearequasars, Blind Fiction, Freefall and Bear Claw play for free. In **Minehead**, the group's AmnesTea at a member's home raised £148.

## A SONG AND DANCE AND QUIZ

The **Ely City** group once again brought members of Ronnie Scott's All Stars for a memorable afternoon of brilliant jazz in the stunning gardens of the Old Palace. Heading the line-up was James Pearson, resident pianist and Artistic Director at Ronnie Scotts, and acclaimed singer Polly Gibbons. There was a Pimms stall and raffle. It raised £2,000.

For the 17th year running, the **Hornsey & Wood Green** group held a garden party and

concert in July. Around 100 people came and enjoyed poetry, dancing and the guest star, local comedian Shazia Mirza.

On 17 September, the **Minehead** group's concert, a lecture-recital, in St Michael's Church at Alcombe, raised £700. The theme was the life and music of Paul Robeson. Everyone was moved by the story of his indomitable spirit, his struggles and achievements, not least in human rights. Welsh bass Huw Morgan, accompanied on the piano by Keith Jones, sang some of Robeson's best-loved songs. 'They held the audience in the palms of their hands, making us laugh and, at times, be close to tears,' said the group.

The **North Herts** group held their annual quiz night in October. 'It was a great evening of spectacularly hard and devious questions and ten teams fought it out,' said the group. It raised over £500. Thanks to quiz-master Max Summerhayes, ably assisted by his daughters.

Composer and guitarist Gordon Giltrap expressed delight in joining local guitar maestros Ray Mytton and Paul White to busk for Amnesty, organised by the **Malvern Hills** group. Gordon played on the guitar given to him by The Who's Pete Townsend.



Silsden



Minehead © C Lawson



Cardiff University



Manchester



Rotherham



Blackheath and Greenwich



Malvern Hills



# NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

Passers-by signed a petition calling for a time limit on immigration detention.

In July, the **Manchester** group organised an Acoustic Amnesty evening of music and poetry. The audience signed an appeal letter for Iranian musician Yousef Emadi imprisoned in Iran because of his work.

## BOOKS, CAKES AND CAMPAIGNS

The **Blackheath and Greenwich** group's 43rd annual book sale took place in June. The focus was on freeing British charity worker Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe, wrongly jailed in Iran – and now facing new charges that could add 16 years to her five-year sentence. Her husband Richard Ratcliffe and other members of her family, who live in London, attended, and 114 tulips with messages of support were made to give to them. It raised £10,079.

The **Silsden** group may look like they're relaxing (see picture) but this was a break during their sponsored walk which raised £500. The **Isle of Wight** group completed a walk around the Brading Marsh, a famous RSPB reserve, raising £100.

In September, Amnesty held a stall at the **Brunel University RAG fair**. Students posed with our placards and tweeted Boris

Johnson urging him to talk to Iranian officials about Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe's wrongful imprisonment. The **Anglia Ruskin University RAG Society** chose Amnesty to be one of their three RAG week charities.

Fifteen local yoga teachers ran an 'uplifting' sponsored sun salutation organised by the **North Herts** group. The teachers led enthusiasts through 108 sun salutations (a series of movements and postures designed to be done in the direction of the sun) over two and a half hours at the Yoga Shed. It raised £542.

The **Aberdeen University** student group are running a One World Week in October and a 'run for refugees'. The **Royal Holloway** group held a pub crawl and bake sale. And Rosie Van Sanden is looking to start a group at **University of West England**.

The **Clevedon School** youth group held their fourth annual 24-hour fundraiser, this time on rowing machines set up on Clevedon pier.

## NEW MEMBERS

September and October saw over 50 student groups organise Freshers Fair stalls across the UK, including at

**Aberdeen University, Cardiff University, London Met, Oxford University, Queen Mary London, University of Birmingham, University of Kingston, Exeter University and Belfast University**. New groups were started in **Lincoln, Ulster and Brighton** (who signed up an amazing 260 new members). A huge welcome to you all.

## ORGANISE CAROL SINGING

Last year groups across London stood up for human rights by singing carols in aid of Amnesty. In total, £4,000 was raised. The **Lambeth, Islington & Hackney, Westminster and Bayswater**, and **Richmond and Twickenham** groups have already booked slots in the underground in December.

If any groups would like to hold a Christmas carol singing collection at their local underground or train stations and need advice on how to arrange it, contact Richard Glynn, Community Fundraising Team, 020 7033 1650, [richard.glynn@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:richard.glynn@amnesty.org.uk)



Isle of Wight



University of Lincoln



Oxford University



University of Kingston



North Herts



London Met



Queen Mary London University



University of Birmingham



Clevedon School

# EVENTS

Send upcoming events info to the Community Organising Unit at [activism@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:activism@amnesty.org.uk) by 9 March 2018 to appear in the Spring 2018 issue.

## 28 NOVEMBER

### GREENWICH AND BLACKHEATH

#### Write for Rights card writing

7.30pm, Greenwich Tavern, 1 King William's Walk, SE10.

#### Contact

[aibg.enquiries@googlemail.com](mailto:aibg.enquiries@googlemail.com)

## 2 DECEMBER

### BRIGHTON

#### Write for Rights event

10am-4pm, Friends Meeting House, Ship Street, Brighton BN1 1AF. Creative card making, photo-frame action, live music, tea and cakes.

Contact [brightonandhoveai@googlemail.com](mailto:brightonandhoveai@googlemail.com)

## 6 DECEMBER

### STROUD

#### Card writing session

7-9.30pm, Star Anise Arts Café, 1 Gloucester Street, Stroud GL5 1QG.

Contact **01453 872446** or **07969 505488**

## 6-11 DECEMBER

### BRISTOL

#### Tree festival

St Mary Redcliffe Church, Bristol. The Bristol group display their Amnesty tree at Treefest 2017.

Contact [www.treefest.org.uk](http://www.treefest.org.uk)

## 8 DECEMBER

### MINEHEAD

#### Write for Rights stall

10am-12 noon, Minehead Methodist Church.

Info at [amnesty.org.uk/minehead](http://amnesty.org.uk/minehead)

## 9 DECEMBER

### BIRMINGHAM

#### Concert

10am-1pm, Carrs Lane Church, Carrs Lane, Birmingham B4 7SX, £6, under-16s free.

Contact [john@johndolan.co.uk](mailto:john@johndolan.co.uk)

## 9 DECEMBER

### CHICHESTER

#### Write for Rights table

10am-12 noon, Cathedral Green, Chichester.

More info [amnesty.org.uk/groups/bognor-chichester-and-district](http://amnesty.org.uk/groups/bognor-chichester-and-district)

## 9 DECEMBER

### WESTCLIFF-ON-SEA

#### Write for Rights card writing

10am-1pm, The Balmoral Centre, Salisbury Avenue, Westcliff-on-Sea SS0 7AU.

Contact **Mike Peggall**  
**01702 20478**

## 10 DECEMBER

### SUNDERLAND

#### Human Rights Day event

2.30-3.45pm, Sunderland Minster, Sunderland SR1 3ET. Wearside group talk about their work, hold displays and promote Write for Rights.

Contact **Steve Newman**  
**01915 250093**

## 15 DECEMBER

### READING

#### Concert

7.30pm, Chantry House, Henley-on-Thames RG9 2AU, £13/£8. An evening of classical music in a beautiful setting with mince pies and mulled wine.

Contact [amnesty.reading@gmail.com](mailto:amnesty.reading@gmail.com)

## 26 JANUARY

### HULL

#### Concert

7.30pm, Judi Dench Theatre, Hymers College, Hull HU3 1LW, £15/£10 under-18s and students.

Info/tickets [hullamnestygroup@gmail.com](mailto:hullamnestygroup@gmail.com) or **01482 849443**

## 26 JANUARY

### BOURNVILLE

#### Quiz night

7pm, St Mary's Parish Centre, Vivian Road, Harborne B17 0DN.

Contact [john@johndolan.co.uk](mailto:john@johndolan.co.uk)

## ONLINE COURSE

### Human Rights Defenders:

Amnesty's free short course is available online now until 24 January 2018. You will follow stories of human rights defenders and the threats they face, and learn about ways to take action for them. It will prepare you to take part in the global campaign and connect you to other course participants.

Info and register at [edx.org](http://edx.org) (search for 'human rights defenders')

## SAVE THE DATE 2018

### Amnesty's 2018 National Conference and AGM

7-8 April, Swansea

University

Free to attend. Deadline for resolutions 7 January at [agam@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:agam@amnesty.org.uk)

For info and to book [amnesty.org.uk/agm](http://amnesty.org.uk/agm)

## VIGILS

The Manchester group is holding regular vigils for the release of Ahmed Mansoor, detained by the UAE authorities. All welcome. Every fourth Monday of the month before their meeting. 6.30pm, back entrance of St Peter's Square.

Contact [manchestergroup@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:manchestergroup@amnesty.org.uk)

## WELCOME CINEMA

Regular evenings of food, film and Q&A panel discussions set up by ex-volunteers at the Calais camp to support newly-arrived refugees in the UK. Free for refugees and asylum seekers, tickets start at £17.50 for everyone else. Next event, [www.welcomecinema.org](http://www.welcomecinema.org)

## ANTI-DEATH PENALTY PROJECT

Amnesty's new activist-led Anti Death Penalty Project will drive forward our campaign to end the death penalty. At a workshop on 25 November, staff and activists will set priorities, identify key audiences and select an activist steering committee. The group will meet regularly, host events, workshops and talks, support individuals on death row, and take action to put pressure on governments. There will also be opportunities to work alongside our Women's Action Network, the LGBT Network and the Children's Network.

If you'd like to get involved email [michael.quinn@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:michael.quinn@amnesty.org.uk)

# RESOURCES

## WRITE FOR RIGHTS



**Write for Rights campaign booklet**  
Includes information on all the cases featured in this year's campaign.

Product code: WFR 030



**Write for Rights A2 poster and map**

Product code: WFR 031



**A3 poster: Shackelia Jackson**

Product code: WFR 032

**A3 poster: Istanbul 10**

Product code: WFR 033

**A3 poster: Sakris Kupila**

Product code: WFR 034

**A3 poster: Issa Amro and Farid al-Atrash**

Product code: WFR 035



**Action card: Istanbul 10**

Product code: WFR 036

**Action card: Shackelia Jackson**

Product code: WFR 037



**Write for Rights stickers**  
(20 stickers per sheet)

Product code: WFR 038



# CONTACT US

All campaign materials available to order from MDA: **01788 545 553**

## I WELCOME REFUGEE CAMPAIGN MATERIALS

**Refugees Community Action Pack**  
How to get your community behind this campaign

Product code: REF16/001



**Refugees Welcome stickers**  
(15 stickers per sheet)

Product code: REF16/002



**Refugees Welcome Pledge poster**

Product code: REF16/004



**I Welcome placards**

Product code: REF16/006



**Family reunion action cards**

Product code: REF16/008



**I Welcome exhibition pack**

Includes 30 exhibition panels (A3 size) including images and information and a 12-page guide to staging your own *I Welcome* exhibition

Product code: REF16/005



**I Welcome exhibition poster**

To advertise your event

Product code: REF16/007



**Weatherproof banner**

2 metres x 85cm, comes in a tube

Product code: COU001

## AGAINST HATE



**Against hate stickers**  
(20 stickers per sheet)

Product code: AH001



**Against hate placards**  
Double-sided (pink and green)

Product code: AH002



**Against hate badges**

Product code: AH003 (yellow/pink)

Product code: AH004 (yellow/green)

## BAN ISRAELI SETTLEMENT GOODS

Campaign materials



**Campaign briefing**

Product code: IOPT001



**A5 action cards**

Product code: IOPT002



**Placards**

Product code: IOPT007

## LOCAL, YOUTH AND STUDENT GROUP ENQUIRIES

020 7033 1777

Email [activism@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:activism@amnesty.org.uk)

## FUNDRAISING ENQUIRIES

020 7033 1650

Email [fundraise@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:fundraise@amnesty.org.uk)

## Amnesty International UK

The Human Rights Action Centre

17-25 New Inn Yard

London EC2A 3EA

Telephone 020 7033 1500

Facsimile 020 7033 1503

Textphone 020 7033 1664

[www.amnesty.org.uk](http://www.amnesty.org.uk)

## GROUPS NEWS

### EDITORIAL TEAM

Dan Jones, Farshid Talaghani, Richard Glynn, Anne Montague and James Farndon

### DESIGN

Amnesty International UK

**Copy deadline for next issue**

9 March 2018

## TELL US IF YOU HAVE CHANGED

It is vital that you let us know about any changes to your group's office holders, such as Secretary, President, Campaign Coordinators and Treasurer. This will help us to communicate with the right person in your group. When the office holders or their addresses change, please send us details of name, address, phone and email, as well as details of the outgoing person.

Please send details to Community Organising Team at [activism@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:activism@amnesty.org.uk)

## IF YOU'RE SENDING IN PHOTOS

Photos should be high-resolution jpegs (at least 300KB) and emailed as an attachment or sent on a CD.

# STUDENT CONFERENCE

On 11 and 12 November, 200 students attended the annual Amnesty Student Conference at the Human Rights Action Centre.

The Brave campaign protecting human rights defenders was a focus. Sakris Kupila, a determined trans rights activist from Finland, gave a powerful opening speech sharing his experiences and the importance of solidarity. The 21-year-old trans medical student has faced harassment and threats because of his campaigning to change the gender-recognition law in Finland, and

is featured in this year's Write for Rights campaign.

The students created their own placards and slogans to stand with Sakris, then took them out on the streets of London. They asked people to be photographed behind a selfie frame to demonstrate their support for trans rights.

The conference offered stimulating workshops including workers' rights in Iran, Football Welcomes and the campaign to ban Israeli settlement goods. Students were also trained on lobbying, social

media and fundraising. The global refugee campaign I Welcome was covered with students asked to call on the Home Office to stop separating child refugees from their families. Delegates held their AGM and elected the new Student Action Network Committee (STAN). We'd like to welcome the successful candidates. At the end of the conference, @metallicmoss tweeted: 'Tearing up at the closing remarks cause I just realised how amazing this weekend was. I'm so happy to be a part of it.'



Sakris Kupila



Photos © Marie-Anne Ventoura

If you require this document in an alternative format please contact:  
Tel 020 7033 1777  
Email [sct@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:sct@amnesty.org.uk)

