



News from the Minehead Group

www.amnesty.org.uk/minehead www.facebook.com/amnestyminehead Instagram: @amnestyminehead

Actions you can take this month:

- ✓ **Take action** to stop the **UK** from transferring **all arms to Israel**. The International Court of Justice has warned of a plausible risk of genocide against Palestinians by the Israeli authorities. Continuing to allow some arms transfers is not in line with international legal standards and demonstrates a dire need for accountability in arms transfers. **Take action by asking your MP** to call for an immediate halt to all transfer of weapons to Israel, and ask them to do all they can to champion human rights. You can write your own letter or use this link to send an email: <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/actions/suspend-arms-transfers-now>
- ✓ **Take action** on the **World Day against the Death Penalty** (10 October). Amnesty is targeting the Governors of every US State that retains the death penalty with the aim of persuading them that the death penalty is wrong and to urge them to take the next step in abolishing it for good. Look out for materials linked with this campaign nearer the date: www.amnesty.org.uk
- ✓ **Share this tweet** on social media to draw attention to the Taliban's latest outrageous attack on women's rights in **Afghanistan**: <https://x.com/amnestysasia/status/1828458973193765261>

News from our group

It's been a busy summer for the Minehead Amnesty Group. After our successful **AmnesTea** in July, which we reported on in our last newsletter, we had a **stall** at the **Roadwater Fete** on 27 July, a **vigil** on Minehead Quay on 1 August and the **harp concert and tea** on 14 September. Here are some



pictures of our stall at the fete and of our vigil, when we remembered the people of Jammu & Kashmir.

Here is Alison's report on the concert in Roadwater

Village Hall: **Hazel Prior**, local musician and novelist, played and sang in support of human rights. She played a custom-built Scottish harp, and explained the differences between the large concert harps one usually sees, and small ones like hers. The microphones and speakers were carefully positioned to capture her delicate and sensitive playing, and it was interesting to learn how changing key on the small harp involved the careful adjustment of a number of metal keys across the range of strings. There was great variety in her performance as she played harp on its own, played and sang, and played and read extracts from her



novels. This is the fourth time Hazel has made time to support the work of Amnesty International, and we are very grateful to her. She had an appreciative audience of 34, all of whom stayed for tea and cake, and the sum of £310 was raised.



Diary Dates

The Minehead Group aims to meet or take action together approximately once a month. All Amnesty supporters are welcome to join us.

Thursday 10 Oct
World Day against the Death Penalty Take part in AIUK's actions re the DP in the USA.

1 November
Launch of the 2024 global Write for Rights Campaign

Tuesday 5 Nov
Letter writing session focusing on Write for Rights. 1430 to 1600 at the Beach Hotel in Minehead. Case details and materials provided.

Friday 6 December
Write for Rights Signing of solidarity cards and letters at the Quaker Meeting House at 1345. (This follows the Quakers' monthly quiet half hour & soup lunch to which all are welcome.)

Thurs 14 Feb 2025 (tbc) Group AGM at the QMH at 1430.

Saturday 22 March
South-West Regional Conference in Exeter.

News from the West Somerset Refugee Support Group

Jenny Gateau sent this message about the holidays that some Amnesty members were able to help with. *'Well, we did it! Five families came for a lovely holiday here, and you all contributed your friendship and expertise to enhance their weeks and keep them all safe and very happy. Unbelievably, we somehow had fine*



weather, both for their preholiday visits and for the actual holidays.' Thought is now being given to what the group can do to support the refugee families in the future as the Baptist Holiday Apartments where they have been staying, will sadly be closing in November.



Campaign News

INDIA and KASHMIR *Cherry writes:* On 18 September state elections were starting in Indian administered Kashmir, the first in 10 years, with results expected on 8 October. The situation is particularly tense as August this year marked the fifth anniversary of the downgrading of Kashmir from a state to union territories ruled directly from Delhi. While there is little hope of major change, at least there is a chance of Kashmiris having some local voices in their government, as local parties are openly contesting against Modi's BJP. However, ultimate power will still lie with the Lord Lieutenant appointed by Delhi. Amnesty is taking this opportunity to highlight the climate of fear that has been created through arbitrary detentions and travel bans to intimidate critical voices from speaking out. This contradicts the message given out by Modi's government that all is peaceful in Kashmir. Modi says BJP policies have changed it from a 'terrorist hotspot to a tourist spot'. If you use social media, you could take action by posting the following messages:



1. Jammu and Kashmir is voting in state elections for the first time since 2014. Amnesty International urges Indian authorities to stop using travel bans and arbitrary detentions under stringent anti-terror laws to intimidate critical voices.
2. Indian authorities are using arbitrary restrictions and punitive actions to create a climate of fear. Anyone daring to speak out faces a clampdown on their rights to freedom of expression and are unable to move freely within and outside the country.
3. Indian authorities must end their campaign of harassment and intimidation against dissenting voices. The people of Jammu and Kashmir must be able to exercise their right to fully participate in the decision-making about their future in the run up to, during, and after elections.

AFGHANISTAN: Things have just got worse for women in Afghanistan, as the Taliban has brought in a set of new Vice and Virtue laws. These laws ban women from raising their voices in public, reciting the Quran, or making eye contact with men outside their immediate family. Taliban officers patrol bus stops and markets, punishing women for dress code violations or speaking too loudly. The intensifying crackdown has erased women from Afghan media and public life, leaving many in a state of deep despair as their freedoms vanish. Amnesty International issued a statement on the Vice and Virtue laws, calling them 'a brazen attack on human rights that must be immediately revoked'.

To make matters worse, there is also a severe malnutrition crisis affecting 2.9 million Afghan children under the age of five. Among these, 850,000 are suffering from acute malnutrition, as food insecurity escalates across the country. The scale of the problem is enormous.

How to contact the Minehead Amnesty International Local Group:

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