**AMNESTY UK KENT NETWORK NEWSLETTER: JANUARY 2025**

**HIGHLIGHTS**

Our best wishes to you all for the coming year. Welcome to our first newsletter of 2025. This month you can:

**Join our speaker meeting this Tuesday** to learn about the **Right to Food** Campaign, led by Amnesty UK’s Student Action Network.

**Volunteer to help us** with a stall at the **Chinese New Year** celebrations in **Chatham on 8 February**.

**Attend** the **Medway Human Rights Network’s** Magna Carta event in **Gillingham on 15 February** and **support our stall** there.

**Learn** how to talk about the **Prevent Duty** at a free webinar on **11 February**.

**Ask your local MP** to support Amnesty’s 5-point proposal for a **fair and efficient process for making asylum decisions**.

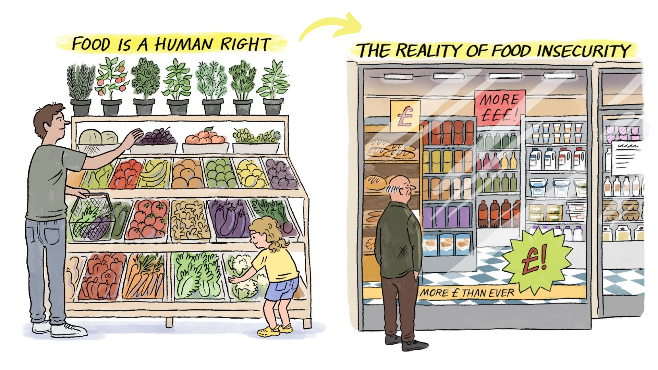
**Read** Amnesty’s public statement on **Gaza** following reports of an imminent ceasefire.

**Buy tickets** for a classical concert in **Lewes on 25 January** in support of **Freedom from Torture**.

**Visit** the **Guantanamo Bay art exhibition** at Rich Mix, Shoreditch, before it closes.

**Participate** in the monthly **Close Guantanamo vigil** in **Parliament Square on 5 February**.

**SPEAKER MEETING THIS TUESDAY AT 7PM: THE RIGHT TO FOOD**

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For this month’s speaker meeting, **Rose and Abi from the STAN Committee** (Amnesty Student Action Network, a network for Student Activists) will talk about the student-led campaign **Right to Food**, which is rolling out in different Universities with the help of Amnesty Student groups. Email [arianna.pisetti@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:arianna.pisetti@amnesty.org.uk) for a link.

<https://www.amnesty.org.uk/contact-our-student-action-network>

**CHINESE NEW YEAR IN CHATHAM**

A poster with a colorful snake

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**Can you help us in Chatham on 8 February?** The Chinese New Year festival in Chatham is the largest in the UK outside London with thousands of people attending to celebrate the lunar new year. The event will consist of a parade at midday and stalls (community, food and craft), as well as displays from professional acrobats and dancers. We have been invited to have a stall in the High Street. This is a great opportunity to raise our profile in the Medway towns, but we need at least a couple more volunteers to make it viable. **If you can help, please email** [**charlottegemmell@hotmail.co.uk**](mailto:charlottegemmell@hotmail.co.uk)**, copied to me.**

**RAISING HUMAN RIGHTS AWARENESS IN MEDWAY**

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**On 15 February from 10am to 4pm**, **the Medway Human Rights Network are holding an event at the Sunlight Centre in Gillingham to celebrate the 800th anniversary of the Magna Carta mark 2.** With the title “The Rule of Law, Democracy & Human Rights: Magna Carta 800 Years”, the event will feature speakers from the Magna Carta Trust, the Medway Human Rights Office and the Sunlight Centre. There will be plenty of fun and games, with activities and stalls, including an Amnesty one. **If you can help on our stall, please email** [**charlottegemmell@hotmail.co.uk**](mailto:charlottegemmell@hotmail.co.uk)**.**

**PREVENT DUTY**

A person standing in front of a blue background

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Amnesty have been working with New Economy Organisers Network (NEON) to create **a messaging guide on the Prevent Duty**, so that everyone can feel empowered to talk about it in an informed and accessible way. On **Tuesday 11 February at 1-2pm**, NEON will be hosting a free webinar to talk through this messaging guide and answer any questions you may have. You’ll also be able to have access to the guide for your own use. **Register** [**here**](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/webinar-how-to-talk-about-the-prevent-duty-tickets-1146036438839?aff=oddtdtcreator).

For more about Amnesty’s campaign work on Prevent, **click** [**here**](https://www.amnesty.org.uk/prevent).

**REFUGEES**

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[In a landmark ruling](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/jan/07/greece-guilty-of-systematic-pushback-of-asylum-seekers-echr-rules) brought by the Greek Council of Refugees, the **European Court of Human Rights** has found that Greece's practices of forcing people back across the Greek-Turkish borders, often putting lives at risk, have **violated the prohibition of torture, inhuman and degrading treatment, the right to personal liberty and security, and the right to an effective remedy**. Pushbacks are a systematic practice that forcibly remove refugees from a state’s territory, putting their safety at risk and denying their right to seek asylum.   The Greek Council of Refugees have described the ruling as “gamechanging”.

We encourage you to **share with your** **local MP Amnesty’s 5-point proposal for a fair and efficient process for making asylum decisions** – **and ask them to support it**. **The briefing is** [**here**](https://www.amnesty.org.uk/files/2024-10/Asylum%20decision-making%20process%20FINAL.pdf?VersionId=zhhCvqg0427eeIpPIxbBAY_nNOeZDTkk)**.**

**GAZA**

**A large explosion in a city

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Following agreement on a ceasefire deal by Israel and Hamas negotiators this week, there is optimism that a ceasefire will be confirmed on Monday, a welcome step towards ending Gaza’s suffering.  Amnesty will continue to demand **that the Israeli authorities be held accountable** for the crimes committed over the course of the past 15 months. It will continue to campaign for an **end to the Israeli authorities’ racist system of apartheid** against Palestinians and to the illegal occupation. **Read Amnesty’s public statement** [**here**](https://www.amnesty.org.uk/press-releases/israelopt-bitterly-overdue-ceasefire-will-not-repair-lives-palestinians-shattered).

**CONCERT IN LEWES TO SUPPORT FREEDOM FROM TORTURE**

A destroyed city with many buildings

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**A charity classical concert with poetry readings will take place at St Anne’s Church, Lewes, on 25 January at 3pm in support of Freedom From Torture.** The concert will feature celebrated tenor Mark Padmore, Lewes classical pianist Nancy Cooley and friends performing music by Bach, Tippett, Debussy, Schubert, Holst, Macmillan, Messiaen and a piano work by Mahmoud Abuwarda, a heartfelt reflection on the destruction in his home town of Gaza City. Tickets are £15 per person. You can book [here](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/out-of-the-rubble-tickets-1072899073009).

**GUANTANAMO BAY ART EXHIBITION: DON’T FORGET US HERE**

**A framed picture of a person kneeling

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This exhibition, organised by the UK Guantánamo Network, has been so successful that Rich Mix **have decided to extend it beyond the original date of 5 January**. It includes photographs of 50 pieces of art from ex- or current detainees of Guantanamo Bay. Rich Mix is at 35-47 Bethnal Green Road, Shoreditch, London, E1 6LA, but **we recommend that you call them first to make sure that the photographs are still on display**.

**CLOSE GUANTANAMO CAMPAIGN**

A group of people holding signs

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The number of detainees still in Guantanamo has been reduced to 15. On 11 January, Kent Network members participated in the annual Close Guantanamo march, marking 22 years since the first detainees were transferred there. **The next monthly vigil will take place in Parliament Square on 5 February from 1pm to 3pm.** All are welcome. Email [Mark.clixby@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:Mark.clixby@amnesty.org.uk) for more details.



**Continuing. Guantanamo exhibition at Rich Mix, 35-47 Bethnal Green Road, London E1 6LA. Phone 020 7613 7498 first as end date not certain.**

**Tuesday 21 January online at 7:30pm to 8:30pm. Kent Network speaker meeting about the Right to Good campaign. Email** [**arianna.pisetti@amnesty.org.uk**](mailto:arianna.pisetti@amnesty.org.uk) **for a link.**

**Saturday 25 January at 3:00pm at St Anne’s Church, Lewes (Sussex). Classical concert with poetry readings in support of Freedom From Torture. Book** [**here**](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/out-of-the-rubble-tickets-1072899073009)**.**

**Monday 3 February at 7:30pm. Maidstone, Medway and Swale Group meeting at The Chiltern Hundreds,** **Penenden Heath Road, Maidstone, ME14 2DG. Email** [**mmands.amnestygroup@gmail.com**](mailto:mmands.amnestygroup@gmail.com) **for details.**

**Wednesday 5 February at 1pm to 3pm at Parliament Square, London. Monthly Guantanamo Vigil. All welcome. Email** [**Mark.clixby@amnesty.org.uk**](mailto:Mark.clixby@amnesty.org.uk) **for more details.**

**Saturday 8 February at 11:00am to 3:00pm. Possible Amnesty stall at Chinese New Year festival in Chatham. Email** [**charlottegemmell@hotmail.co.uk**](mailto:charlottegemmell@hotmail.co.uk) **for details.**

**Tuesday 11 February at 1pm to 2pm: webinar on how to talk about Prevent. Register** [**here**](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/webinar-how-to-talk-about-the-prevent-duty-tickets-1146036438839?aff=oddtdtcreator)**.**

**Saturday 15 February from 10am to 4pm: Amnesty stall at Medway Human Rights Network event to celebrate the 800th anniversary of the Magna Carta mark 2, at the Sunlight Centre in Gillingham.** **Email** [**charlottegemmell@hotmail.co.uk**](mailto:charlottegemmell@hotmail.co.uk) **for details.**

All the best

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