



A trip down memory lane – Manchester Amnesty in the 1980s

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This newsletter is compiled by the Group Communications Secretary, Alison Wearden (alison.wearden@gmail.com). If you have any ideas for short or more in-depth articles for the newsletter, please feel free to contact her. We would welcome pieces on any area of Amnesty's work, and also human-interest stories. If you would prefer to stop receiving this newsletter, please let Alison know.

From our archives

The Eighties.

Although I wasn't able to take a prominent role in the group at the beginning of the eighties due to being hampered by small children, I remember this decade as being a very active period for the Manchester group. We continued working on 'adopted' prisoners and the Urgent Action scheme but British Section (now known as AIUK) also encouraged groups to take part in short term country focussed campaigns as well as longer campaigns on specific issues.

At the start of the decade, we were still meeting in people's houses which must have been a squash as we regularly got more than 20 at a meeting. Eventually we moved to Withington Methodist Church and from 1985 met at the Bahá'í Centre on Wilmslow Road. This was a great meeting place with a large meeting room on the ground floor and a coffee area downstairs; made even better by the Bahá'í allowing us to use it for free as Amnesty campaigned for freedom from persecution of the Bahá'í in Iran.

From our 1981 and 1982 newsletters, I gather that there was a major upheaval in the British Section Offices with the then director being dismissed, Council resigning *en masse* and a commission of enquiry being set up. British Section finances were in a dire state, with mention that they were nearly bankrupt which led to an emergency whip round at the national AGM. Jeremy Thorpe was appointed as the new director (what were they thinking!) but this was quickly rectified and finally some semblance of order seems to have been restored.

Throughout this period the Manchester City Council were very supportive, holding a major festival in the Town Hall to mark the 40th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and allowing us to plant a memorial tree for Prisoners of Conscience in the then Peace Garden (now unfortunately under the Metrolink platforms in St Peter's Square).



Keith Bradley MP (far right) and Helen Snowdon (far left, then Chair of Manchester Group, now Helen Robertshaw, chair of Stockport Group) planting a tree in memory of Prisoners of Conscience.

Case Work

At the beginning of 1980 we were working on behalf of a prisoner of conscience in the USSR, Vladislav Bebko, and we managed to have some correspondence with his wife and to send him food parcels. We heard of his release 2 years later and we were then allocated a Yugoslavian prisoner, Qerim Sopi, who was sentenced to 8 years in prison accused of 'undermining territorial integrity' We worked on his behalf until his release in 1989. Qerim was an ethnic Albanian in Kosovo, a somewhat troubled area then under the thumb of the central Yugoslavian government. Peter Banks and Jo Brunt ensured that we sent appeals on his behalf every month until his eventual release in 1989. As now, the International Secretariat had difficulty supplying well researched case files to all the groups who wanted one. Apart from Qerim, we were allocated a range of short term investigation cases but made little headway in finding out more information.

My main contribution to the group from 1981 to 1984 was to lead our Urgent Action work. I received case sheets and sent them on to group members by post to action. The group regularly sent 20-30 appeals per month but as this was inevitably a rather slow process, I also started sending a couple of telegrams per month using group funds. This certainly speeded things up and was also thought to make a bigger impression on the government officials receiving the telegrams. At the end of the decade the British Section started sending Urgent Actions directly to the scheme participants and the role of the group UA coordinator disappeared.

Campaigning

We participated in most of the campaigns initiated by British Section and the International Secretariat. There were many short country-focussed campaigns: South Korea, Poland, Philippines, Cambodia, Syria, Columbia, Haiti to name but a few. These regularly featured at our public stalls, both outside Cross St Chapel (the old chapel had a grassed area which they let us use) and at local festivals.

Of particular note were repeated campaigns featuring Chile, then suffering under the Pinochet regime with public meetings, cultural events and a demonstration in St Ann's Square.

In 1984/85 we organised an art competition as part of an international campaign against torture, inviting schools to participate and with an exhibition of the work in Central Library at which the Lord Mayor presented the prizes.



There were also major thematic campaigns such as Murder by Governments in 1983 when we took part in a demonstration in the city centre with the Stockport group and paraded through Disbury as part of the Didsbury festival (see picture, left, featuring Peter Banks and Robin Smith), the Disappeared (primarily featuring South American countries) and a campaign on refugee rights in the UK. The refugee campaign was 'highlighting the arbitrariness and

injustice of present Home Office procedures in dealing with asylum seekers’ – does anything ever change!

In addition, we regularly worked on death penalty issues, in particular in the US, and organised a film festival at the Cornerhouse as well as lobbying our MPs at the time of votes on the death penalty in the UK parliament (heavily defeated).

Fundraising

It was during this period that we received permission to hold an annual collection in the city centre and this became one of our main sources of income until the Covid epidemic meant the 2020 collection had to be cancelled. Each year we also had a range of small fundraising activities from jumble sales, buffet supper at our chair’s house, Stockport market stall, sponsored fasts and pub crawls.

Bigger events included a repeat of the successful concert with the Hallé Occasional Players in 1981 and we held a party in Brahms and Liszt to mark Amnesty’s 21st birthday in 1982. In 1986 we were involved in a rock concert at the Ritz featuring Pete Shelley amongst others. My main memory of the concert is that the Amnesty members huddled in the entrance hall to escape the very loud discordant music.

We also started having a regular stall at Didsbury Festival featuring the ‘Egg Game’, much loved by children and a great way to lure their parents to the stall to do a campaigning action.

Unfortunately, we have very few photographs from this period so if you have any old records, especially photos, I’d love to add them to our archive.

Anne Walker anne.walker9@ntlworld.com

News from our campaigns

Anti-Racism and Prevent

Manchester 10 Appeals; Royal Courts of Justice (December 19th & 20th)



Three members of Manchester Amnesty group joined supporters mobilised by [Kids of Colour](https://kidsocolour.com/) <https://kidsocolour.com/> at the two-day appeal hearings for seven of the Manchester 10 boys. Many of the boys’ family members were present in court supported by the Kids of Colour team. We took a specially prepared banner (thank you Kathryn!) which we held outside the courts both mornings as a solidarity action for the boys’ families and publicity for the Manchester 10.

Along with many other supporters, we filled every free seat in the court room throughout both days. The seven boys themselves watched the proceedings via a live stream in their prisons. Listening to the defence barristers, we felt hopeful that the boys could be acquitted or at least have their sentences reduced. However, during the second day of the appeals, the prosecution barrister spoke and repeated the racist gang narratives that had led to the original injustices suffered by the boys at their initial trial. It was at this point that several of the boys' family members left the court room, too upset to listen further to the way in which their sons were being portrayed incorrectly as gang members.

The appeal hearings took place in the final court sessions before the Christmas and New Year holiday so the outcomes were delayed until 15th January – another agonising wait for the boys and their loved ones. When the outcomes were finally published, only one of the boys, Ademola Adediji, was acquitted and released from prison the next day. Two boys had their sentences reduced and were released several days later. The other four boys were unsuccessful with their appeals and remain in prison. Their legal teams are currently preparing to take their cases to the Supreme Court.

Once again, we are hugely grateful to Kids of Colour, (a Manchester anti-racist youth work organisation that has supported the boys and their families) for keeping us updated on the appeals and for mobilising support for the Manchester 10. You can find out more about the work of Kids of Colour with young people of colour in Greater Manchester on their [website](#) where you can also make a donation towards their work with and on behalf of young people of colour in Manchester.

We will continue with our campaigning work for the Manchester 10 and have recently discussed the possibility of creating an information and awareness-raising flyer that we could distribute on stalls or at events during the coming months.

Scrap Prevent campaign

Unfortunately, Councillor Beverly Craig (leader of Manchester City Council) has not responded in any way to our letter delivered to her by hand in December 2024 about this campaign. In our letter we raised our concerns about the Prevent Duty and enclosed a copy of Amnesty's report. We have recently followed this up with an email making use of a new Amnesty messaging guide: How to Talk about the Prevent Duty. This is a very useful guide produced in collaboration with [New Economy Organisers Network](#) (NEON). It aims to help us talk about the Prevent Duty in a meaningful and accessible way with the general public or when supporting communities impacted by the Prevent Duty. The messaging guide can be found [here](#).

We are planning to review our actions for this campaign at our April group meeting as we feel that we need to explore some other possible ways forward as well as attempting to engage with Manchester City Council.

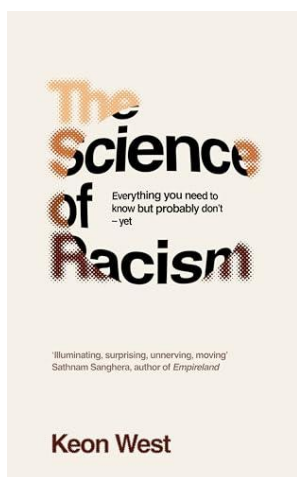
Automated Racism: How police data and algorithms code discrimination into policing



This is the title of a [new report](#) published by Amnesty International UK in February 2025. It exposes the way in which almost three-quarters of UK police forces are using technology to try to 'predict crime', with little regard for our human rights. It is known as 'predictive policing'. The technology involves racial profiling and as such is automated racism. Amnesty International UK held a webinar to launch the report and we plan to

familiarise ourselves with the report over the coming months and explore possible campaigning actions that we can take.

We are reading...



The next book we have chosen to read and discuss during our meetings is 'The Science of Racism' by Keon West. We will be discussing a chapter or section of the book at each of our meetings as part of our on-going self-education. The sub-group continues to meet online for an hour every 6 weeks. Please get in touch if you'd like to join us!

Individuals at Risk – Appeal writing drop ins at Central Library.



We are very pleased to say that a couple of people have come forward to help organise these sessions. Hence, Anne decided to go ahead with the January date and has also booked the dates with the library for the rest of the year!

At the January session, 9 group members came along and a couple of members of the public showed interest. All told, 21 letters and 8 emails were written for Urgent Actions from UAs on Israel, China, Azerbaijan and Iran with a couple of online actions for a prisoner of conscience in Egypt.

These sessions are held every two months, on the fourth Saturday. It's a good way to become familiar with Amnesty work for individuals around the world who are suffering abuse of their human rights. It's also a nice friendly meet-up with other group members. You can just drop in for 10 mins and write one appeal or stay for the whole time and do them all. Whatever time you can spare is appreciated.

The next Drop-in will be on Saturday March 22nd, 2-4pm, next to the Café in Central Library. Hope to see you there!

Israel and Palestine



News from Israel-Palestine

In recent months Israel has continued and intensified its measures against Palestinians, using censorship, forced displacement, and a ban on international aid, in addition to the tactics of armed attacks, destruction of homes and communities, and widespread killing of civilians.

In September Israel shutdown the Al Jazeera office in Ramallah, causing a blow to press freedom. Al Jazeera serves as a leading independent press service operating in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. See this report from [Amnesty International](#)

In October, the Israeli parliament passed a law to ban UNRWA (the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees) from operating inside Israel. Amnesty International [said](#): "This is an outright attack on the rights of Palestinian refugees. It amounts to the criminalization of humanitarian aid and will worsen an already catastrophic humanitarian

crisis. This law flies in the face of the International Court of Justice order to Israel to ensure sufficient humanitarian assistance and facilitate basic services.”

In January Israel mounted assaults on the Jenin refugee camp and surrounding areas in the West Bank. Many hundreds of people were forced to flee for their safety. In February, Israel expelled the residents of three refugee camps in the occupied West Bank with 40,000 Palestinians forcibly evacuated. Israel's Defence Minister said the camps would be occupied by the Israeli military for the coming year and residents would be prevented from returning. The Israel Defence Forces (IDF) deployed a tank division around the city of Jenin for the first time since 2002.

In February, Israel raided the Educational Bookstore in East Jerusalem and detained the owners. The police ransacked the shops. They had no Arabic speakers, so they used Google Translate to find evidence of incitement in the books. They took away about 300 books, including a children's colouring book, and a guide to climbing in the Palestinian Territories. The Educational Bookstore is a respected institution, selling academic, historical and political works and fiction, alongside coffee and tea to students, tourists, journalists and diplomats. The raid triggered international outrage. Israeli journalist Noa Simone called it a fascist act that “evokes frightening historical associations with which every Jew is very familiar”.

News from around the world

In January, Donald Trump took office as president of the USA and issued a number of sweeping executive orders and statements. He threatened that the ceasefire with Hamas could end and said "all hell is going to break out" if all the hostages were not freed by his deadline. This new demand ignored the agreed terms and progress of the fragile ceasefire and risked it being wrecked. Trump also announced a proposal to remove all Palestinians from Gaza. This would be forced displacement amounting to an act of ethnic cleansing, which is a blatant breach of international law. He announced sanctions against leading members of the International Criminal Court, causing great risk and uncertainty to their brave work, as well as placing their lives in danger. Fortunately there has been a chorus of strong support for the ICC following Trump's announcement.

These and other assaults on international law have caused many leaders and commentators to warn of the breakdown of the “international rules-based order”. Others say that the “rules-based order” was always used to promote only the interests of western states. There have been calls for sanctions against Putin for the invasion of Ukraine, but none against Israel for its genocide in Gaza and its ongoing occupation of the West Bank. It seems that the west is determined never to point the finger at Israel, let alone to bring Israel to account. The west has allowed Israel to commit breaches of international law and human rights conventions for decades with total impunity.

In recent times western states have ignored their obligation to recognise and act upon the declarations of the UN, the ICJ and the ICC. These include:

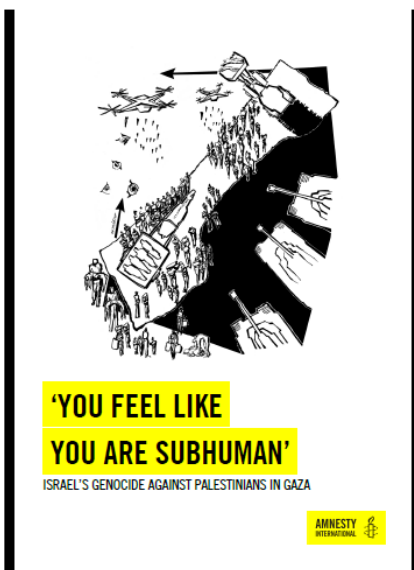
- The UN report showing that Israel is in breach of the Apartheid Convention
- The report by the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in the occupied Palestinian territories (Feb 2022)
- The UN Fact Finding Mission which found evidence of war crimes and crimes against humanity during the attacks on Gaza back in 2009
- The International Court of Justice order to Israel to adopt measures to prevent genocide and incitement to genocide

- The arrest warrants for Netanyahu and Gallant, as well as leaders of Hamas, issued by the International Criminal Court
- The International Court of Justice determination that Israel's occupation of the West bank is illegal.

Western governments also failed to denounce the many racist and genocidal statements by Israel's leaders such as Defence Minister, Yoav Gallant, who threatened: "No electricity, no food, no water, no gas... We are fighting animals and are acting accordingly."

News from Amnesty International

Genocide Report



Many western states also ignore the evidence presented by Amnesty International. Three years ago our government dismissed Amnesty's major report on Israeli apartheid; despite the masses of evidence, the years of rigorous research, and the serious scrutiny of the apartheid in international law. Now they are doing nothing in response to Amnesty's major report on Israel's genocide in Gaza published in December 2024. This lack of action is shocking in the light of the weight of evidence and the responsibility of all states to take steps to prevent genocide.

Amnesty's report is 300 pages long, but you can read the 32 page executive summary [here](#) or the much briefer AI news report [here](#).

The report documents Israel's actions during its offensive on Gaza from October 2023. It examines the killing of civilians, destruction of civilian infrastructure, forcible displacement, the obstruction of life-saving goods and humanitarian aid, and the restriction of power supplies. It analyses Israel's intent through this pattern of conduct and statements by Israeli decision-makers. It concludes that Israel has committed genocide against Palestinians in Gaza. "Our damning findings must serve as a wake-up call to the international community: this is genocide. It must stop now."

AIUK Campaign Actions

Amnesty UK calls on activists to focus on our country's legal obligations. These include calls to end the occupation of the West Bank; holding Israel to account; respecting the arrest warrants; and supporting the ICJ and the ICC.

Amnesty UK is planning to launch a new campaign initiative which will call for the banning of Settlement Goods, ie goods supplied from the illegal Israeli settlements in the Occupied West Bank. The focus will be on local authorities and companies who are complicit in this trade in illegal goods. There will be a campaign pack, advice and support from Amnesty staff, and funding available for Amnesty Group projects.

AI Manchester Campaign Actions



Manchester Amnesty group has pledged to continue the weekly vigil. This is held every Friday from 5-6pm in St Peter's Square. All are welcome. We will vary the vigil format, with less materials used on some occasions. And we will devise a new means of engaging the public and passers-by at the vigil. We are considering ideas such as a handout with a QR code link to an online message board; or an invitation to take selfies by the hearts banner. We will once again promote the vigil to recruit more participants.

In November of last year, we were put in touch with Lara Abu Ayyash and a group of her colleagues who had been working on a project to address the absence of water in the Palestinian village of Zaatra, and had been invited to take part in the English Language Olympiad in Jordan, where they would be eligible to win further funding towards their project. We were happy to provide our support in the form of a written statement together with a small donation, and also to tell AIUK and Amnesty UK Student Action Network about the project. Deservedly, the project came second in the Olympiad competition and won funds to further the work. On 27th February, on a zoom call, members of Manchester Amnesty, Hannah Stokes from AIUK, Shannon Smith from the University of Manchester and invited others met with Lara and Taheem from the Palestinian student group to hear a presentation about their project, and also a little about their daily lives in Palestine. We learned how the absence of water has far-reaching effects on the lives of the people living in Zaatar. We were humbled and inspired by the magnificent work that these young people are doing under unimaginably difficult conditions and hope to continue an ongoing relationship with them.



Looking ahead, we plan to offer talks on Amnesty's report on Israel's genocide. We also hope to develop a talk setting out the history and background to Israel-Palestine which might appeal to audiences and groups who are not activists, but are deeply concerned. We continue to promote actions by other groups such as Greater Manchester Friends of Palestine, and the many webinars and other resources provided by groups such as the Balfour Project, The Green Olive Collective and others. Details of these are available on request. We hope to arrange a screening of the Film Israelism, an American documentary about the portrayal of the Israel-Palestine situation in American Jewish institutions. We are considering holding discussion sessions for activists and more relaxed gatherings where we can come together to offer mutual support during this distressing period.

News from elsewhere

In October the acclaimed writer Arundhati Roy (author of *The God of Small Things*) used her acceptance speech for the PEN Pinter Prize to speak on behalf of Palestinians. Here are some extracts.

"I ask you, which of us sitting in this hall would willingly submit to the indignity that Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank have been subjected to for decades?"

"Israel has displaced the majority of Gaza's population, many times over. It has bombed hospitals. It has deliberately targeted and killed doctors, aid workers and journalists. A whole population is being starved – their history is sought to be erased. All this is supported both morally and materially by the wealthiest, most powerful governments in the world."

"Like every state that has carried out ethnic cleansing and genocide in history, Zionists in Israel began by dehumanising Palestinians before driving them off their land and murdering them."

"Not all the power and money, not all the weapons and propaganda on earth can any longer hide the wound that is Palestine. The wound through which the whole world, including Israel, bleeds."

Read the full speech [here](#).

The winner of this year's Turner Prize, Jasleen Kaur, also used her acceptance speech to stand in solidarity with the Palestinian people.

In February, BBC television broadcast a documentary, *Life in a War Zone* only to receive a massive backlash of complaints because the film's 13 year old narrator is the son of a Hamas government Minister. This was explained at the outset of the programme. The protestors did not make clear whether they would protest about the broadcast of material from Netenhyahu and Gallant, who are both subject to arrest warrants issued by the International Criminal Court. DVD copies of the BBC documentary are available from Mike Reed . **Palestine Solidarity Campaign have this [action](#) which you can take by clicking the link. This will generate a letter to the BBC demanding that they stop censoring Palestine.**

A poem to end

If I Must Die by Refaat Alareer

If I must die,
you must live
to tell my story
to sell my things
to buy a piece of cloth
and some strings,
(make it white with a long tail)
so that a child, somewhere in Gaza
while looking heaven in the eye
awaiting his dad who left in a blaze —
and bid no one farewell
not even to his flesh
not even to himself —
sees the kite, my kite you made, flying up above
and thinks for a moment an angel is there
bringing back love
If I must die
let it bring hope
let it be a tale

Refaat Alareer was a writer, poet and academic. He was killed in an Israeli airstrike on 6 December 2023 along with his brother, sister, and four nephews. Shortly before his death he wrote this poem for his daughter, Shaima. Just a few months later, in April 2024, she too was killed by an Israeli airstrike, along with her husband and newborn son. An anthology of Refaat Alareer's writing, published on the first anniversary of his death, is available [here](#).

For further information contact Mike Reed: mikewreed101@gmail.com

Refugee Rights



Over the past couple of months, we have been collecting signatures for a petition to local MPs, calling on them to sign the *Together with Refugees* 'Fair Begins Here' Parliamentary Promise. We've been doing this with Manchester City of Sanctuary and Rethink Rebuild Society, the Syrian community's organisation in Manchester. In March, we will write to those MPs with the letter shown on the next page.

At our February group meeting, we supported *Together with Refugees* annual Valentine's day action by taking a photo

(left), which was then posted on our social media sites.

We are writing to you as members of Manchester Amnesty International, Manchester City of Sanctuary and Rethink Rebuild Society. Over the past few weeks our members and supporters have been discussing with growing concern the legislation and systems that continue to deny asylum-seekers and refugees their basic human rights. These policies, and the accompanying hostile rhetoric, also create immense barriers to refugees' endeavours to rebuild their lives in the UK and make a positive contribution to our society.

You will of course be aware that:

the UK has continuing obligations under international humanitarian agreements to offer sanctuary to those at risk of serious human rights violations and persecution

a majority of the UK population (including almost 2/3 of Labour voters) want an asylum system that is fair, well-managed and compassionate

We are proud of all the work being done [in Manchester/your constituency] to support asylum-seekers and refugees – people opening their homes, speaking up, volunteering, donating. However the system is broken. It is not working for refugees and it is not working for local communities – in particular, the current system does nothing to promote the 'culture of cohesion, trust and mutual respect', which the Government is committed to building.

We therefore call on you to sign the Fair Begins Here Parliamentary Promise, to secure a fair new plan for refugees, that:

Ensures protection for people fleeing war and persecution by upholding the UK's commitment under international law to the right to claim asylum.

Provides a proper strategy for welcoming refugees, who do so much to enrich our society, by ensuring fair, rapid decisions on their application for asylum, and the chance to rebuild their lives through settling in a community.

Forges stronger global cooperation to tackle the root causes that force people to flee their homes and provides positive solutions when they do, including through safe routes to refugee protection.

Signing the Promise shows you are standing together with refugees, offering to support local groups in your community and committing to take action to secure a fair new plan for refugees.

Letter to MPs about the Fair Begins Here Promise.

The new Border Security Bill introduced recently into the House of Commons, simply increases the 'hostile environment' experienced by so many asylum-seekers and refugees. Significantly, it does nothing to create more 'safe routes' for asylum-seekers to come to the UK - only the repeal of the 2023 Illegal Migration Act will achieve this. It has been followed up by a disgraceful campaign "boasting" about the number of people the government has been deporting recently, coupled with a change to Home Office guidelines so that people who are deemed to have arrived here by irregular means (e.g. on a boat, in a lorry) cannot become British citizens, even after years of living and working here. Thankfully this latest initiative has been [roundly criticised](#) and current court cases will test its legality.

Quarterly statistics (Oct-Dec 2024) released by the Home Office on 27th February 2025 show that while asylum claims are now being processed more quickly than previously, the rate of success of these claims has fallen. This is particularly true for refugees from Afghanistan, whom the Home Office accepts cannot be returned home, thereby leaving them in a state of complete uncertainty as to their future.

Amnesty International UK, the Refugee Council and Asylum Matters have condemned the development, with [AIUK saying](#) that the government has little or no regard for people fleeing conflict and persecution.

“...thousands of people, including Afghans, Iranians and Eritreans, are being refused asylum with the risk of creating a new backlog of people wrongly placed in limbo – albeit at the end of a badly functioning system rather than at the start of a system that wasn’t functioning at all.”

Steve Valdez-Symonds, AIUK Refugee and Migrant Rights Director

Currently, we are discussing with other local refugee support organisations possible future joint campaigns on this and other issues that fail to safeguard the human right to seek asylum and sanctuary.



The flyer is for a 'Manchester Information Session Hosting Refugees' on Wednesday 19th March 2025 from 7-8 PM. It features a red background with white and yellow text. A circular photo shows two women, one with her arm around the other. At the bottom, there is a QR code and the 'Refugees at Home' logo.

MANCHESTER INFORMATION SESSION
HOSTING REFUGEES

• • • • •

WEDNESDAY 19TH MARCH 2025 | 7-8 PM

Join us online to find out about hosting refugees and hear from active hosts in Manchester

REFUGEES @HOME

Scan QR for registration link

Despite the fall in the proportion of people being granted asylum, there is still a very severe shortage of accommodation for those granted refugee status. We have been approached by the charity Refugees At Home, which facilitates temporary placements for refugees. Please see the flyer and follow this [link](#) to register for an online information session if you are interested in learning more.

Syria

As readers will be aware, on 8th December, the Assad regime in Syria fell and the country now has an interim government. Manchester Amnesty sent a message of solidarity and support to our friends at Rethink Rebuild Society (the Manchester-based charity which works for Syrian and other refugees) and were delighted when their manager Haytham Alhamwi agreed to come to our February group meeting to talk to us about the developments in Syria and his hopes for the future.

We learned that Syria is still subject to sanctions by Western countries, and that these severely hamper the efforts to rebuild the country. Please consider writing to your MP, asking for sanctions to be lifted. Lifting sanctions on Syria is both a humanitarian necessity and a strategic opportunity to foster collaboration and shared prosperity. If you would like a copy of a template letter produced by the British Syrian Consortium, please contact alison.wearden@gmail.com who will send it to you.

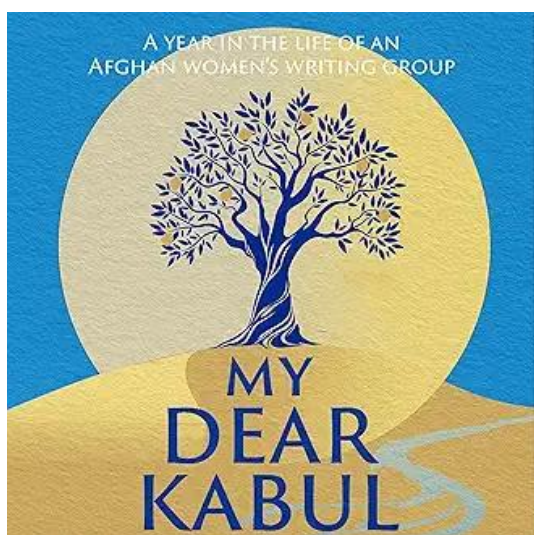
Trailblazers



We were delighted to be asked back to the annual Margaret Ashton lecture organised by Trailblazers, a group which works to raise the profile of forgotten women from across Greater Manchester, via craft activities, walks, and public events. Their latest banner, celebrating the role of women in trades in Manchester is shown in the picture.

This year the Margaret Ashton lecture, delivered by Dr Charlotte Wildman from the University of Manchester, was about the feminist, housing activist, CND supporter and educationalist, Shena Simon. We had a Manchester Amnesty stall at the event, on which we focused on the human rights violations suffered by women in Afghanistan, with extracts from the book "My dear Kabul" (currently being serialised on Radio 4) on display. We also took the opportunity to display our vigil hearts banner, which was

well received and attracted many comments.



Save the date!

Human Rights Festival, June 7th 2025, Sefton Park Liverpool

This day-long festival is being organised jointly by our North West regional reps in conjunction with volunteers from North West local groups. Please keep the day free. As soon as we have more information about the many stalls and activities that are being planned we will let you have it.