



Southampton Group

AMNESTY NEWS

www.amnesty-volunteer.org/uk/southampton-city

If you would like more information about the Group or would like to take part in any activities please get in touch by e-mailing:

AmnestySouthampton@yahoo.co.uk

September 2020

Campaigning in times of Covid-19

Dear Group Members and Supporters,

It is tradition for the chair of the Group to write a short piece in the September issue of the Group Newsletter to highlight all the wonderful events we plan to organise from now until next summer.

As you may guess, this year our story is rather different. We cannot meet in person for the time being so our meetings will be online. It will be difficult to organise a range of fundraising events and a challenging to organise cultural activities. Is this the end? The answer is a resounding **“NO!”**. We will continue to campaign for Human Rights and raise their profile in Southampton. We will write letters, invite speakers, campaign locally, nationally and internationally for human rights. Torturers are not stopped by Covid-19. Neither will we be. Giampaolo D’Alessandro, Southampton Group Chair.

ART as ACTIVISM

Whilst we were unable to meet as a Group over the spring and summer it did not stop us campaigning altogether. Group members collected photos on their daily walks and built three mosaics of Marielle Franco. She was a courageous human rights defender, who worked tirelessly to defend people’s dignity, especially that of the most marginalized. She was murdered in 2018. Amnesty is campaigning for an investigation to be carried out fully and transparently. The mosaics have been deposited in the “Covid-19 Stories” collection of Southampton’s SeaCity Museum.

AI’s VISION

is of a world in which every person enjoys all of the human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international standards

AI’s MISSION

is to undertake research and action focused on preventing and ending grave abuses of the rights to physical and mental integrity, freedom and conscience and expression and freedom from discrimination, within the context of its work to promote all human rights

AI’s CORE VALUES

remain those of international solidarity, effective action for the individual victim, global coverage, the universality and indivisibility of human rights, impartiality and independence, and democracy and mutual respect

A Summary of Last Year's Group Activities

September 2019: Group Mtg: "Erosion of Freedoms in South Asia", Peter Murray

October 2019: Joint Mtg with Romsey Gp: President Trump's Effect on Human Rights", Lisa Rossi (AI Country Coordinator North America and Canada)

November 2019: Write for Rights, Shirley Library (9th Nov), October Books, Portswood (30th Nov) & with the Quakers.

Group Mtg.: "Environmental Issues in Brazil", David Lee (AI Country Coordinator for Brazil)

December 2019: Group Mtg: "Write for Rights"

Annual HR Lecture (12th Dec); "Britain & Human Rights: we talk the talk but do we walk the walk?" Martyn Day

Phoenix Film Club: Write for Rights following the film "STYX"

January 2020: Group Mtg: Planning

February 2010: Poster display in Central Library 17th to 29th Feb. of disappeared Eritrean writers and journalists. This included a photo of local councillors with the exhibition.

Group Mtg: Summary of Recent Report "Without my Families", John Williams

March 2010: Group Mtg: "Israel & Occupied Palestinian Territories", Rebecca van Thuy (a volunteer at AIUK who coordinates campaigns in Occupied territories.

There were no further Group Meetings due to Covid-19 lock down and social distancing rules.

AGM June 2020

We agreed the following:

1. Unlikely that we will be able to run face-to-face Group meetings for foreseeable future.
2. Will concentrate on virtual meetings.
3. Explore safe/secure platforms for meetings, and send link to members and supporters not general public.
4. Work with Romsey Group to develop joint virtual meetings see panel back page.
5. Possible speakers include: Barrie Hey (AI Coordinator for Russia) possibly for September, Alex Jackson (Country Coordinator Eritrea) possibly for November.
6. No real point in trying to organise indoor fundraising events at the moment.
7. Mary to explore "Walk around Historical Eling" for September.
8. We will adopt a rolling membership across the two years. We will ask for a donation in January 2021.
9. Have sent £500 to Amnesty this year and will confirm that in October.
10. All officers agreed to stay on in post, see back page "Southampton Group Who's Who"

You can still campaign
Write a letter on behalf of
Muhammad Idris Khattak
Pakistan

Human rights defender in prison

Human rights defender Muhammad Idris Khattak was forcibly disappeared by men in plain clothes on 13 November 2019. His family received no news of him until 16 June 2020, when the authorities finally admitted that he was in state custody. They said he would be charged under 1923 Official Secrets Act, which provides for up to 14 years in prison or even the death penalty.

Idris, an independent researcher, is a former consultant for Amnesty International and other human rights NGO's. He documented human rights violations faced by people in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the former Federally Administered Tribal Areas in Pakistan.

He is diabetic and requires daily medication, and is therefore at greater risk in detention during Covid-19.

APPEAL: Urge the authorities to tell the family of Muhammad Idris Khattak where he is, and to release him immediately. If there is sufficient credible evidence that he is committed an internationally recognised crime, he should be remanded by an independent court and receive a fair trial.

Send letters to: His Excellency Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Office, Constitution Avenue, Islamabad, Pakistan.

Or email: spokesperson.office@mofa.gov.pk

Salutation: Your Excellency

Postage: World

Or write or email the Pakistan High Commission:

Send letters to: His Excellency Mr Mohammad Nafees Zakaria, Pakistan High Commission, 35-36 Lowndes Square, London SW1X 9JN

Email: phclondon@phclondon.org

Salutation: Your Excellency.

IRAN: TRAMPLING HUMANITY

Detainees flogged, sexually abused and given electric shocks in gruesome post-protest crackdown – new report

Amnesty have just published a new report (2 September 2020) on widespread abuses in Iran including:

- *Widespread torture including beatings, floggings, electric shocks, stress positions, mock executions, waterboarding, sexual violence, forced administration of chemical substances, and deprivation of medical care*
- *Hundreds subjected to grossly unfair trials on baseless national security charges*
- *Death sentences issued based on torture-tainted “confessions”.*

See “[amnesty.org](https://www.amnesty.org)” for full details of the report.

CORONA VIRUS

For the foreseeable future the Southampton Group will not be holding face-to-face meetings. However, we will be arranging virtual meetings see DIARY box. And if possible some external fundraising events

We plan to continue to produce a monthly News Letter.

Each month we will include at least one letter or action, which you will either be able to copy or email, any update we may receive about cases we are working on and news from the web.

DIARY

For details of how to join any of the events/meetings outlined below please contact our secretary, Valerie at our email address: AmnestySouthampton@yahoo.co.uk

SEPTEMBER 2020

5th: Guided walk around historical Eling led by Mary Brown

14th: Virtual Planning Mtg

21st: Virtual Meeting jointly with Romsey Group “Barie HEY, AI Country Coordinator for Russia.

SOUTHAMPTON GROUP WHO’S WHO

Group Officers:

Chair: Giampaolo D’Alessandro

Secretary: Valerie Oswald

Treasurer: Gareth Davies

**Outreach and Parliamentary Officer:
Veronica Tippetts**

Newsletter: John Williams

Campaigning Activity:

People on the move

**Protecting the space for human rights
defenders**

Death Penalty

HR Act

Snoopers Charter

South Asia

Case file: Marielle Franco, Brazil

**Individual at Risk: Aster Fissehatsion
and Dawit Isaak, Eritea**

Issues on the Web

amnesty.org.uk

Includes:

Nigeria: Government failings leave rural communities at the mercy of gunmen

Thailand: More peaceful activists arrested and charged amidst pro-democracy protests.

Russia: Alleged poisoning of opposition leader Aleksei Navalny must be thoroughly investigated.

Egypt: Survivors of sexual violence and online abuse among prosecuted women TikTok influencers

NB the views expressed in this News Letter may not necessarily be those of Amnesty International. John Williams editor