

## March 2020 Minutes



# Glasgow West Amnesty International

Apologies: CA, Jge, JG

Attendees: FL, CCa, RT, MDS, MR, R, CC, C, M, AS

### **Speaker: Rebecca, Crisis and Tactical Campaigner, AIUK**

Unfortunately, Rebecca had to cancel her talk because of travel restrictions due to COVID 19. However, we plan to rearrange this talk ASAP. She suggested some links to relevant short films to watch instead (see below).

### **Treasurer's Report (JG)**

£430.89 in bank.

### **Secretary's Report (FL)**

#### **Double donations for next two months!**

Thanks to a group of major donors, donations from Amnesty groups will be doubled for a limited time. These matched funds will be supporting Amnesty's work exposing human rights abuses in Syria with our donations going towards the Amnesty International UK Section.

## **Marielle Franco action**

Marielle Franco was murdered in a drive-by shooting in March 2018. Her killers and those behind the plot to assassinate her have still not been brought to justice, nearly two years later. Marielle dedicated her life to speaking out for LGBTI, black and women's rights in Brazil. She paid the ultimate price for defending human rights. As a group, we have campaigned for justice for Marielle before, including at our Pride stalls.

Email authorities in Rio de Janeiro demanding that her killers are found and brought to justice: [information on how to do so is available on the Amnesty UK website](#).

## **Yulia Tsvetkova action**

Yulia Tsvetkova is a Russian LGBTI and women's rights activist currently facing charges of creating and sharing "pornographic materials", for sharing body positive drawings of women's bodies on social media.

Yulia was also fined approximately 600 GBP in 2019, for acting as the administrator of two 18+ LGBTI communities on the Russian social media site, Vkontakte. During her most recent arrest, she said officers called her a "lesbian, sex trainer and propagandist leader". She is facing up to six years in prison if convicted.

Yulia Tsvetkova is a prisoner of conscience, ask for her immediately release: <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/actions/yulia-tsvetkova-russia-lgbt-activist-drawing-female-body>

## **Israel/Occupied Palestinian Territory: campaign win!**

Good news: on the 13th of February, the UN finally released the long-awaited database of businesses involved in illegal Israeli settlements.

The list includes 3 UK based companies, such as construction firm JCB, as well as all the major tourism companies Amnesty has campaigned on, such as TripAdvisor and Airbnb. This is a major step towards accountability in the occupied Palestinian territory.

## **Free e-learning course: The impact of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights**

In partnership with FutureLearn Amnesty have developed this online course "Defending Dignity: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights" (perfect for self-isolation!)

On the course you will learn:

- Dignity and Human Rights

- Promoting Equality and Non-Discrimination in your community
- Shaping a Society based on Human Rights principles

The course starts on **13 April 2020** and is completely free. You can access it here: <https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/the-universal-declaration-of-human-rights/2>

## **National Conference & AGM 20-21 June**

**Update: The National Conference and AGM has now been cancelled.**

Amnesty's next Annual General Meeting takes place 20-21 June 2020 at the East Midlands Conference Centre in Nottingham. You can find more information on [Amnesty's website](#).

Entry is free for all Amnesty members!

## **New individual at risk case allocation**

I have applied for a new case for the group. I will let the group know once we have one allocated.

## **Possible events**

### **Turkey photo exhibition**

Planned for end of April. Hoping to have mini exhibitions at the City Chambers and Milk Cafe and the full exhibition in a larger community venue.

**Update: this has now been postponed for later in the year (possibly end of Summer/ start of Autumn)**

### **Ceilidh**

Several members of the group attended a really successful ceilidh organised by the Edinburgh Amnesty groups on the 7<sup>th</sup> March. We would like to organise a similar Amnesty fundraiser here in Glasgow. We're in the process of looking for suitable venues and ceilidh bands. If you are interested in helping with the organisation, please let us know. We are currently thinking of holding this at some point in July.

### **Walk from Strathaven to Dungavel**

A member of the group has suggested a sponsored walk from Strathaven to Dungavel (the immigration detention centre) to tie in with one of the next vigils organised by the organisation Scottish Detainee Visitors. We will keep the group updated on when this will be.

## **Pub Quiz**

We are planning another pub quiz and raffle fundraiser at the Dram in May. Keep an eye on social media for updates.

**Update:** Although it will not be possible to have a physical pub quiz in May, we are looking at the possibilities of a virtual one.

## **Future speakers at our Amnesty meetings**

- Anna from the Amnesty Children's Rights Network (April?)
- Lynnda from The Weekend Club (June)
- Rebecca from Amnesty UK (an upcoming Spring/Summer meeting)

**Update:** We will not be having face to face meetings until the government guidance changes. However, we intend to have virtual meetings and will be circulating information regarding these via our mailing list and social media.

## **Letters to MPs (FL)**

Amnesty UK is encouraging local groups to engage with MPs on a variety of issues this year, including:

- the position of human rights defenders in UK Government foreign policy
- reforms to refugee policy to enable families to be together
- UK arms trade, especially sales of arms to Saudi Arabia
- proposed new Domestic Abuse Bill
- possible constitutional review of the Human Rights Act

FL brought a template letter for attendees to use to write to their own MPs inviting them to attend an upcoming Amnesty meeting.

**Update:** We will postpone inviting our MPs to our meetings until face-to-face meetings resume.

## **Saudi Arabia Campaign Update (CC)**

CC shared the latest newsletter on Saudi Arabia.

This consisted of details of a new campaign focusing on the Specialized Criminal Court plus some other updates.

## **Anti-Death Penalty Campaign: #RunForMagai (CC)**

Magai Matiop Ngong was just fifteen when he was sentenced to death in South Sudan. Before his life changed forever, Magai loved running. That's why, to draw attention to his case, Amnesty UK's Anti-Death Penalty Project is asking people to #RunForMagai. According to his testimony in court, Magai fired his father's gun at the ground to warn off his cousin who was trying to stop him fighting with another boy in his neighbourhood. The bullet ricocheted and hit his cousin, who later died in hospital. Magai faced trial for murder without a lawyer. He was convicted and sentenced to death. Our research shows that the death penalty is disproportionately used against poor and disadvantaged people. According to international law, and South Sudanese law, sentencing a child to death is illegal. Last year Magai was finally given access to a lawyer who has helped him file an appeal. He finally has a chance to turn things around.

If you enjoy running, print a #RunForMagai [running number from the website](#) and take a photo of yourself on your next run. Then tweet pictures of your #RunForMagai - including @AmnestyUK and @RepSouthSudan - urging Sudan not to execute a child.

## **Urgent Actions (MR)**

### **Three men at risk of execution**

Amirhossein Moradi, Mohammad Rajabi and Saeed Tamjidi have been sentenced to death in connection with acts of arson that took place during protests in November 2019. Their trial was grossly unfair. They were denied access to lawyers during the investigation phase and say they were tortured. Amirhossein Moradi says he was coerced into giving a "confession" that was broadcast on state television and used as evidence to convict them.

[More information and how to help on the Amnesty UK website.](#)

### **Prisoner of conscience in critical condition**

The physical and psychological condition of human rights defender and prisoner of conscience, Ahmed Mansoor, has significantly deteriorated, following three months of him being on continuous hunger strike to protest his detention conditions. He is no longer able to walk unattended. He has been detained in dire conditions and in solitary confinement since his arrest on 20 March 2017.

[More information and how to help on the Amnesty UK website.](#)

## **Human rights defender detained and tortured**

On 7 February 2019, airport immigration officers arbitrarily arrested and tortured human rights defender Patrick Zaki George at 4:30 am upon his arrival at Cairo Airport on charges including “disseminating false news”, “inciting to protest” and “incitement to violence and terrorist crimes”. In detention, National Security Agency officers questioned and tortured him before he appeared in front of the prosecutor the following day.

[More information and how to help on the Amnesty UK website.](#)

## **Uyghur academic jailed for “inciting extremism”**

Prominent Uyghur historian and publisher, Iminjan Seydin, was convicted of “inciting extremism” after a secret and grossly unfair trial in February 2019. His daughter only learned about his conviction in recent months through word of mouth. Missing since May 2017, he has been sentenced to 15 years in prison. No evidence against him has been made public.

[More information and how to help on the Amnesty UK website.](#)

## **Film Showing: Bedouin Women**

Unfortunately, due to technical issues we were unable to show the short films at the meeting. However, you can watch them from home here:

This short movie is a good intro about Bedouin women (it also mentions an exhibition in NY which is now outdated but gives some context for the work): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xskZ0EniMvA>

This 20 minute film was made by Sabach, a Palestinian woman from the Bedouin village of Al-Araqib, which is located in the Naqab in Israel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=otv0nDeW9Qg> She recorded her daily life and interactions with Israeli police and soldiers. Al-Araqib has been destroyed 174 times. The last times was just two days before Amnesty visited in February 2020. They spent the day with these women, listening to their stories. Although Amnesty have so far mainly focused our work on illegal settlements, Amnesty are planning on doing more work on Palestinian who are citizens of Israel (and represent about 20% of the Israeli population). They face a wide range of discriminatory practices and are treated as second class citizens. This is true of the Bedouin population in Israel, who are particularly vulnerable, but also of Palestinian parliamentarians who sit in the Israeli parliament. Amnesty published a report on their situation back in September: [read it online.](#)

## **AOB**

Human rights related events at Aye Write festival:

<https://www.ayewrite.com/pages/event-details.aspx?event=1/zeba-talkhani-and-hashimohamed-finding-a-home-finding-yourself>

<https://www.ayewrite.com/pages/event-details.aspx?event=1/azadeh-moaveni-among-the-women-of-isis>

<https://www.ayewrite.com/pages/event-details.aspx?event=1/christy-lefter-the-beekeeper-of-aleppo>

Update: Unfortunately Aye Write was cancelled, although some of their events are being held online. See the Aye Write website for details.

## Next meeting

Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> April – we are hoping to organise an online meeting. Details will be circulated via this mailing list and our social media.