

# Oct 2023 Updates



## Glasgow West Amnesty International

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We warmly invite you to attend the next meeting of the AI Glasgow West Group. Please come and join in our lively and friendly discussions and help us make a positive difference to supporting Human Rights around the world.

This email includes:

- Details of our forthcoming October 2023 meeting;
- Excerpts from and a link to AIUK’s most recent update for local AI groups;
- Minutes of our local group meeting held last month; and
- A note of all our local Group’s meeting dates for 2023.

## October 2023 Glasgow West AI Group Meeting

*Thursday 12th October, Woodlands International Methodist Church, 7:30pm*

The next Glasgow West Amnesty meeting takes place on **Thursday 12th October 2023 at 7.30pm – 9pm** in Woodlands International Church, Woodlands Road, Glasgow, G3 6LW. Further details on Facebook - <https://fb.me/e/24A3jSi3e>

***We would love to see you there!***

Our activities for the October meeting include:

- Guest Speaker - Iona Fletcher, AIUK’s country coordinator for Russia;
- Planning our annual ‘Write for Rights’ event; and
- Undertaking letter writing in response to recent [Urgent Actions](#) alerts from AIUK.

## Extract Of Local Groups’ Updates From AIUK

Full details of AIUK’s update for local groups can be viewed via this [browser link](#).

This month’s update from AIUK includes the following:

## **Amnesty Christmas Raffle**

Enter the AIUK Christmas Raffle and grab your chance to feel like a winner! How would you spend £5,000? That's what's up for grabs when we draw the raffle in December.

Tickets cost just £2 and with every ticket you buy, you're speaking up for humanity.

**Buy your raffle tickets online** today for your chance to experience that winning feeling, and you could help more people like unfairly imprisoned Taner Kılıç walk free!

## **Anti-racism and human rights course**

### **Launching in October: Anti-racism and human rights course for AI members**

Racism is deeply rooted in the structures of our society. Challenging these structures and the ideologies that support them is key to human rights progress. This short course has been created as a first step for anyone who wants to learn about racism and its relation to and impact on human rights in the UK and around the world. It will help you to understand and confront racism, discrimination, inequality and disempowerment.

Click [here](#) from 2 October to access the course or find the rest of our courses [here](#).

## **School requests for talks on Human Rights & Amnesty**

The Amnesty Speaker programme closed in 2021. We do, however, still get some requests from schools for talks about our work. We have asked that these be directed to local activists who will likely have a more direct and relevant connection to the school and its students. AIUK has a number of useful resources to support this. Find out more [here](#). If you require any other support or have any questions you can contact the education team [here](#).

## Real Lives Autumn 2023



Letter-writing changes lives. A letter from you could help free a prisoner, stop an execution or help a bereaved family receive justice. This edition of Real Lives is produced for those wishing to write more letters in support of individuals at risk. [Download the Real Lives supplement here.](#)

To order more copies, email [sct@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:sct@amnesty.org.uk)

### Letter to editor on refugees rights

Please share this template letter to editor on Refugees and Migrants rights issues with your local media. Thank you, The Media Team [Download the letter](#)

### Upcoming dates

**4 Nov**, 10 am - Acknowledging Israel's Apartheid Conference (in-person), Cardiff. Book [here](#)

**4 Nov \*10am \***- AIUK National Conference 2023 - [Free online tickets here](#)

**10 Dec** - Human Rights Day, 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)

### Further information from AIUK

Full details of AIUK's update for local groups can be viewed via this [browser link](#).

## Freedom From Torture – Comedy Fundraising Event

The organisation ***Freedom From Torture (FfT)*** has asked us to share information on its forthcoming fundraising event Amnesty members. The Comedy event for FfT is being held at The Stand Comedy Club, Glasgow on Sunday 12th November 2023.

Tickets cost £12 / £10. Further information is available from [The Stand website](#).

*(\*Please note, whilst this is not an Amnesty International event, it is a very worthwhile cause!)*



# Updates From September 2023 Meeting

Amnesty International

Glasgow West Local Group

Meeting held on 14th September 2023

Minutes

## Welcome and apologies

*(introductions round table)*

**Attending:** Claire (Chair), Neil, Kirstie, Han, Sophie, Fatma, Chakar, Mal and Jean.

**Apologies:** Merle, Christine, Silvia and Andrew

## Agreement of previous meeting minutes

## Team Updates

### Treasurer

*(£ travel expenses reminder)*

1. No recent donations to PayPal
2. £5 donation in the donation tin last meeting
3. Current balance: £595.37

### Social Media & website

1. Sylvia was absent, no updates

## Actions from previous meeting Minutes

1. **China - Hong Kong/Uighur - Friday 29th September** - Kurt from Scottish HongKongers says they aren't doing anything for mid-autumn festival.
2. **Anti-boycott Bill End Israeli Apartheid** - The AIUK Media team made template letters on the Government's controversial new "anti-boycott bill". Scotland letter [here](#). Please share!
3. No-one has any links/ideas of places to get tote bags made. On hold.

## LiftTheBan's "High Street Challenge" campaign

*Lift the Ban - High Street Challenge Handbook*

Aim of campaign is to overturn ban on asylum seekers working whilst their claim is being considered.

Fatma feedback on LtB's Glasgow contact: Maryhill Integration Network (MIN) did a successful campaign in Maryhill (~9 shops put the LtB poster up in their window, said they support the campaign, and in turn got their shop advertised on MIN/LtB's social media. Plan to do another

in October/November - the Amnesty group agreed we would take part in a joint event, with the aim of learning how to do it and then doing our own event in the West End.

Claire emailed Uni and Daytime groups - no response from Uni group; Daytime interested in joint action

Resources from LtB:

- Common Sense campaign reports (for anyone who is keen to read more detail on the arguments for reform)
- High Street Challenge handbooks (with tips on how to do the HSC, for members of your group)
- A5 leaflets that you can hand out to businesses, asking for their support with the campaign
- A4 posters saying "I'm supporting Lift the Ban"/"We're supporting Lift the Ban"- these can be offered to businesses and will need to be stuck up with either tape or some places use blutack. Some campaigners also use them to pose for photos inside/outside the local business, like this photo and this photo. MIN has a supply of the large A2 placards in those photos (in blue and yellow) - we can borrow.
- Window stickers which can be stuck inside or outside any glass surface (beer mat size).
- Small stickers/badges which can be handed out to individuals to be worn

## Free Bus Travel for Asylum Seekers campaign

*(Maryhill Integration Network action)*

The petition is now with the [Petitions Committee](#).

Sophie gave feedback on her experience with Petitions Committee - the committee will now call for evidence, so MIN needs to have this prepared. Fatma will feedback to MIN and link up with Sophie if MIN would like further advice on the process.

All to sign & share petition: <https://petitions.parliament.scot/petitions/PE2028>

## Proposed AIGW-MEND Collaboration

Daniel Gilius from Muslim Engagement and Development (MEND) wants to do a **joint Amnesty-MEND thing during November (Islamophobia Awareness Month)**.

MEND played a key role in helping to organise and promote the Edinburgh and Glasgow Human Rights Iftars in May. For MEND the focus of Islamophobia Awareness Month will be mainly on the human rights and experiences of Muslims in Scotland and the UK rather than on international issues, but there may be some opportunities to highlight issues of Islamophobia in an international context also (e.g. in Xinjiang).

→ Zoom meeting scheduled Monday 25th Sep at 6pm, with Edinburgh/Perth/Dundee groups - Fatma and Claire to attend; Claire to share Zoom link with Perth/Dundee groups

## Stand Up To Racism Rally

1. Claire highlighted the upcoming Stand Up to Racism Erskine Hotel (Muthu Hotel) rally in support of the asylum seekers held there - Sunday 17.09.23

## Write 4 Rights!

Kirstie is on the ball! Agreed:

- Sunday 10 Dec - Human Rights Day, 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)
- Hillhead Library, 11am-4pm - rota/details to be confirmed in October/Nov meeting. Kirstie has ordered the W4R pack.
- Kirstie to confirm with the library.

## Russia Action

Mal met Iona Fletcher, the new Amnesty UK country coordinator for Russia. She is originally from Russia but now lives in Kirkintilloch. Iona shared actions to support IAR cases including Alexandra Skochilenko (info: <https://youtu.be/S4u-1zvVyvE>)

- The group took a photo of us holding posters to mark Alexandra's (Sasha) birthday and court hearing (14th September) → Mal share and tag Sasha's social media platforms
- Some members took the poster with the action: take a picture of yourself in a supermarket holding this poster up and then post in on any social media with hashtags #FreeSashaSkochilenko #HappyBirthdaySashaSkochilenko. And tag:
  1. Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/skochilenko/>
  2. Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/sasha.skochilenko>
  3. Twitter: <https://twitter.com/Freedomforsasha>
- The group agreed Mal would invite Iona to a future meeting (October/November) - @Mal to liaise.

## Presentation on Balochistan

*(currently a province of Pakistan)*

Group member Chakar gave a presentation on the Balochistan:

1. Background: In 1947 when the UK left the area, they divided Balochistan into 3 parts, across areas of Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran. The population is more than 30 million. The current situation includes cultural and religious persecution. In the last month, 64 people have been abducted in Pakistan and 24 arrested.
2. Chakar shared this book title: <https://www.hurstpublishers.com/book/balochistan-british-great-game>
3. Mal found links to Amnesty's work on abuses in Balochistan.
  - (a) An urgent action from February 2023 on case of Mahal Baloch. <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/urgent-actions/end-arbitrary-detention-mahal-baloch> → an



update (quite a long way down the page) on Mahal's case saying she had been released on bail. <https://www.amnesty.or.th/en/about-us/success/1145/>

- (b) A research report from 2020 on enforced disappearances in Balochistan. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa33/3334/2020/en/>
  - (c) A news story from August 2023 based on a call from Amnesty <https://www.devdiscourse.com/article/international/2570109-amnesty-international-slams-pakistan-for-cases-of-enf>
4. The group discussed what action we could do:
- (a) All to look for any other AI resources we can use as evidence
  - (b) Chakar to link up again with Pakistani Country Coordinator Lucja Jastrzebska and get advice/find out what else has been done (inc. attempts to meet with the Pakistan embassies/consulates around the UK) as well as other Perth Amnesty contacts who had previously worked on the campaign
  - (c) → Build evidence to present to the Pakistani Consulate and ask for comments on/demand clear action. Arrange meeting with Consulate and local MPs, other AI groups,
  - (d) Chakar to also ask Lucja re. current situation with regards AIUK supporting Chakar with his UK asylum claim / including Chakar's evidence/experience in AI campaign materials.
5. Bonding/Planning opportunity with the Perth Amnesty group: Barrie from the Perth group has invited us on a hill walk up Ben Vrachie, Sunday October 8th. Anyone interested to contact Claire/Chakar.

## Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories

AIUK is campaigning for political parties in the UK to commit to banning the import of goods from illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank. [Write to your MP](#) and urge them to support our campaign.

## Upcoming Events

### Amnesty Disabled People's Human Rights Network launch

**23 September**, from 11am to 4pm;

London & online. Celebrating the long history of disabled people's activism in the UK as well as learning about what is meant exactly by disability justice. We will also be setting the agenda for the disabled people's human rights network and sharing thoughts and ideas on what the network should work on for the next year! Book [here](#). \* \*

### Torture Free Trade Treaty

Learn more about the campaign - join AIUK online for a campaign presentation and Q&A on **27 September** 6pm-8.30pm. Register [here](#).

### Amnesty UK National Conference 2023

**10am – 7:30pm, 4 November 2023**

London & livestreamed online. Free! Workshops & speakers. Book [here](#).

## Ongoing: 2023 Calendar & brainstorm activities

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1wB2Ko3rstxFmNqEmeRCfKHjqI9V4ouT5PAYmtNtT\\_Ns/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1wB2Ko3rstxFmNqEmeRCfKHjqI9V4ouT5PAYmtNtT_Ns/edit?usp=sharing)

## Urgent Appeals

- **Real Lives Autumn 2023:** Letter-writing changes lives. A letter from you could help free a prisoner, stop an execution or help a bereaved family receive justice. [This edition of Real Lives](#) is produced for those wishing to write more letters in support of individuals at risk. To order more copies, email [sct@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:sct@amnesty.org.uk)
- **El Salvador:** A state of exception in El Salvador was initiated originally in March 2022 and was due to last 30 days. It has been extended repeatedly and will now run to at least 13 September. During this time over 150 people have died in custody and the number of people who have been arbitrarily detained is well over 60,000. People are being held without a fair trial or means to legally defend themselves. Families are kept in the dark about why and where their loved ones have been detained. Prisons are overcrowded. There is a lack of hygiene, food and drinking water. And people are being subjected to torture and other ill-treatment. The government claims that the measures have been a success and – sadly – they are generally quite popular, as homicide rates have been reduced, at least temporarily. But the underlying issues of poverty and violence are not being addressed. Please sign the petition [here](#) - demand that the Salvadoran government puts an end to the state of exception and respects the human rights of all people in El Salvador.

## Urgent Actions

*(Thanks Merle)*

- Saudi Arabia: Man Sentenced To Death Over Twitter Posts - <https://tinyurl.com/ua-sa1>
- USA: Florida Sets Its Sixth Execution Of The Year - <https://tinyurl.com/ua-usa1>
- Bangladesh: Student Detained For A Year For Hosting webinar - <https://tinyurl.com/ua-bangladesh>
- Argentina: Human Rights Defender Criminalised For Protesting - <https://tinyurl.com/ua-argentina>

## Local Group Updates

*[Local Group Update available [here](#)]*

- **Activists Led-Campaign new (updated) Framework** (the guiding principles for Amnesty activists who want to organise their own human rights campaigns)
- **Ongoing:**
  - **Activism Representatives:** AIUK still looking for voluntary lead activists who co-ordinate and support local Amnesty groups across the UK: <http://email.amnestyuk.org.uk/c/11QSBdvE9V3L9R8P8T3Ke90ywTgv>
  - **2023 Priority Campaigns:** <http://email.amnestyuk.org.uk/c/11QSDqgoyZPaVPobVFNdFf2QCo7Q>

- Amnesty [trainings](#) e.g. [Delivering human rights education](#)
  - \* 25 Sep, 6 pm - AIUK General Election Campaign - Skillshare Share with Activists (online). Contact here.
  - \* 09 Oct, 6 pm - AIUK General Election Campaign - Organising Brainstorming with Activists (online). Contact here.

## AOB

### Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on **Thursday 12th October 2023, 7.30pm - 9pm** @ Woodlands Methodist Church, 229 Woodlands Road, G3 6LW.



## 2023 Meeting Dates

New Members very welcome!

The Group meets every 2nd Thursday at **7.30pm - 9pm**.

The meetings take place at **Woodlands Methodist Church**, 229 Woodlands Road, G3 6LW

For further information contact [mail@glasgowwestamnesty.org.uk](mailto:mail@glasgowwestamnesty.org.uk)

- ~~Thursday 12th January 2023~~
- ~~Thursday 9th February 2023~~
- ~~Thursday 9th March 2023~~
- ~~Thursday 13th April 2023~~
- ~~Thursday 11th May 2023~~
- ~~Thursday 8th June 2023~~
- ~~Thursday 13th July 2023~~
- ~~Thursday 10th August 2023~~
- ~~Thursday 14th September 2023~~
- Thursday 12th October 2023
- Thursday 9th November 2023
- Thursday 14th December 2023

**BETTER TO LIGHT A CANDLE THAN CURSE THE DARKNESS**

