November 2024 Updates

Glasgow West Amnesty International

Contents

We warmly invite you to attend the next meeting of the Amnesty International 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 November 2024 meeting;
- Information on current AIUK activities;
- The minutes from our Group's October 2024 meeting; and
- A note of our local Group's remaining meeting dates for 2024.

November 2024 Glasgow West AI Group Meeting

Thursday 14th November, Woodlands International Methodist Church, 7:30pm

The next Glasgow West Amnesty meeting takes place on **Thursday 14th November 2024 at 7.30pm – 9pm** in Woodlands International Church, Woodlands Road, Glasgow, G3 6LW.

We would love to see you there!

Our next meeting will include:

- Planning our forthcoming **Write for Rights event**, playing our part in the world's largest human rights campaign;
- Discussion of the **St Andrew's Day anti-racism event,** organised jointly by Stand-Up To Racism and the STUC, and which will take place on 30th November.
- A visit from a colleague from the **Freedom From Torture Group,** who will be selling Xmas cards to raise funds for FFT's work.
- Updates from our **local group co-ordinators** on their activities; and

Undertaking **letter writing** in response to recent Urgent Action alerts from AIUK.

Write for Rights

Amnesty International's Write for Rights 2024 campaign will be taking place over the next couple of months.

The Glasgow Daytime Amnesty Group is planning to hold a Write for Rights event on **Saturday 7th December** in Langside Library, Sinclair Drive, Glasgow. That event is provisionally scheduled for 11am – 3pm, with confirmation to follow nearer the time.

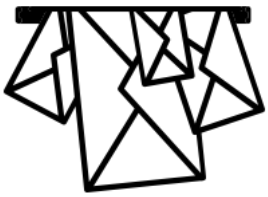
Glasgow West Amnesty Group will be running two events on **Sunday 8th December**. The first will take place at the Sunday Assembly, Partickhill Bowling Club at 11am – 12noon. There will then be an event at Hillhead Library, Byres Road, Glasgow from 12noon – 4pm.

All members of the public are welcome to come along and help us write letters to support individuals around the world who have been unjustly treated for their work in promoting human rights.

How Write for Rights Works

People in more than 200 countries and territories write millions of letters, emails, tweets and petitions...

...for people who've been harassed, threatened and locked up, just for who they are ...



...and put pressure on governments, leaders and decision-makers...

...to make change happen – releasing activists and protecting people who champion what's right.

JOIN WRITE FOR RIGHTS TODAY

When we all act together, we are more powerful. That is the driving force behind Write for Rights. Take action now and change a life forever via this link.

AIUK Local Updates

The latest updates for Local AI Groups produced by AIUK can be found via the following .

A fair and efficient asylum process for people seeking safety

For years, Amnesty International UK has been urging the UK government to reform the asylum system. Bureaucratic delays, backlogs and a refusal to process claims have turned an already difficult journey for people seeking asylum into an impossible maze. Previous governments have passed the buck on their responsibility, hoping someone else will pick up the pieces. But now, the UK is at a crossroads.

The current government has taken a step in the right direction, scrapping the disastrous and cruel Rwanda scheme and committing to clear the backlog of asylum claims. Yet we must urge them to do more. More than 100,000 asylum claims have been left in limbo, some dating back years. The question remains - will the UK build an asylum system that is both fair and efficient? Or will the Home Office continue down the same disastrous path?

We are urging the government to do the former. This month, we have released a five-step proposal illustrating how a fair system for deciding asylum claims – that respects the rights and dignity of those seeking safety - goes hand-in-hand with an efficient one. When people are treated fairly, they can engage better with the system and decision-making processes, and this saves time, money and resources.

To read about the five steps the government must take in order to create an asylum system that is both fair and efficient, read our blog *here *and download the proposal **here**.

Legacy Giving

Legacy giving plays a crucial role in sustaining our human rights work at Amnesty International UK. Gifts left in wills provide vital funding that helps us plan for the future, respond to crises, challenge injustice, and create long-term change.

This is a powerful way to ensure their values live on and that their contributions ensure that we can continue making a difference for generations to come. For further details, please contact the AI Legacy Team:

Email: **legacy@amnesty.org.uk** Website: **amnesty.org.ukwriteyourwill**

2024 AGM Decisions Update

At the 2024 AGM in June one Special Resolution, ten Ordinary Resolutions and one Emergency Resolution were passed by the membership. These are now known as AGM Decisions and can be found at **2024 AGM Decisions**.

It is the Board's intention to regularly update members, groups and networks on progress towards the implementation of these decisions. We will do this through the Groups Newsletter and other regular Amnesty communications.

New Amnesty Shop catalogue out now!

This year, we are pleased to be able to offer local groups 10% off everything at the **Amnesty Shop**, as well as FREE P&P, on orders over £75. We know that Local Groups and Student activists do amazing work for Amnesty. Buying and sending out cards and gifts from the Amnesty Shop is another way in which you can get involved and help spread our message. As always, we really appreciate your on-going support.

Amnesty Shop Catalogue Many groups also buy cards and gifts at the discounted rate, to sell at your stalls or Write for Rights events. All the money you make goes straight to your group fundraising efforts. Christmas cards are always very popular, so make sure to stock up on those for your stalls!

Order online **here** and set yourself up with an account and log-on. Enter the code **10AMNGRP** into the Gift & Promo Codes box on the Payment Options stage of the checkout to receive your 10% off and FREE P&P (minimum spend: £75). **Email SCT** to a request a copy of our new catalogue

Perth AI Group Blueberry Picking Fundraiser

This has been the third year in a row where the **Perth Amnesty group** has held fundraising stalls at the Perthshire fruit farm. This year, one of the Glasgow West members and family joined in on this fundraising activity. The Perth AI Group stated that they were most grateful for the generosity of the farmer, who has allowed people to pick as many blueberries as they want, so long as they make a charitable contribution. Last year's activities were adversely affected by storms that battered Perthshire but, this year, better weather meant that the Perth AI Group raised over £500. It is hoped that there will be a similar event in 2025.

For further details of the most recent AIUK Local Groups' Update, click on this .

Upcoming Dates events

For updates on planned AIUK training and events, Click on link.

Updates on AIUK Campaigns

For updates on current AIUK Priority Campaigns Click on link.

Updates: AI Glasgow West Group Meeting Thurs 10th October 2024

Minutes of Meeting

1. **Welcome and apologies** (introductions round table)

   Attending - Claire (Chair), Neil, Cait, Carol, Mal, Christine, Kirstie, Andrew, Susan and Omar. (Emma also joined the meeting briefly via phone, but ended the call due to a poor connection).

   Apologies - Merle and Tim.

   Susan was attending her first meeting of our Group, having previously been involved with AI in Orkney and Birmingham. It was noted that she may wish to attend the Daytime Group's meetings, as they were held much closer to her home. Carol will liaise with Susan on that option. Susan will also remain on our Group's mailing list and will, of course, be welcome to attend our meetings too. **Action - Carol**

   Omar was welcomed as our Guest Speaker, in his capacity as AIUK Student Action Network (STAN) Chair and Scotland student representative

2. **Agreement of previous meeting minutes here**

   The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed with no changes.

   Cait had hadn't yet managed to carry out her offer of undertaking research relating to some of the issues that Clara had referred to during last month's presentation.

3. **Team Updates** (list of roles here):

   a. **Treasurer** (Kirstie) £704.09 in the bank.

   Following discussion at the previous meeting, Kirstie suggested that the Group could be in a position to offer c.£200 funding to assist with a Scotland conference. However, it was noted that the conference was now not going to proceed in the timescale initially suggested. It was also noted that obtaining volunteers to help organise the conference seemed to be a much bigger constraint than the funding issue.

   Outgoings scheduled over the next few months include the quarterly hall rental fee and the AIUK affiliation fee.

   Discussion took place as to whether we ought to offer to pay AI membership fees for anyone in joining our group who had difficulties in covering the cost. However, it was noted that this may have some complications due to the ongoing nature of a membership direct debit. No conclusive agreement was reached on this matter.

   It was noted that postage costs had risen again quite considerably.

   b. **Social Media & website** (MalCait)

   Mal had provided a few updates on the Group's social media channels over the past month, including advertising the FFT event (see item 6 below).

   c. **Local Political Outreach** (Neil)

   Neil stated that he had been in touch recently with two local MPs.

There is a potential opportunity to engage a range of politicians in the forthcoming Write for Rights event. **Action - Neil**

d. **Regional Country focus – South East Asia Myanmar** (Mal); **Korea** (Clara)

- Chakar (Pakistan updates) has now moved to Aberdeen to study - all the best for your degree Chakar!
- Mal updated the Group on a former Myanmar Write4Rights case who has been re-arrested, with allegations of also being tortured.

e. **Prisoner of ConscienceIndividual At Risk Update** (Han) (Cait)

No update provided.

4. **Actions from previous meeting Minutes:**

   a. Continuing action: emailing MPs asking them to sign **EDM** on Balochistan.

   b. 29.09.24 Perthshire (Blairgowrie) blueberry picking AI PerthDundee fundraiser. Claire had attended this event, along with some family members. The event had raised over £300 for the Perth AI Group.

   c. Korea disability rights - ClaraCait; 3rd December is the UN's International Day of People with Disabilities

   d. Merle had received a response from the Mitchell Library, indicating that they may be able to take our Group's archive (thanks Merle!). The Mitchell archivist has asked us to confirm, firstly, that neither AIUK nor AI Scotland office wish to take our archive material. Andrew will follow up with AIUK and AI Scotland Office to check this. **Action - Andrew**

5. **NB today is World Homelessness Day:**

   The UK has the highest rate of homelessness among high-income countries. And it's only getting worse. The figures reveal there's been a staggering 12.3% increase in homelessness this year alone.

   Nearly half of young adults (47%) aged 16-34 are worried that they or someone they know could become homeless within the next 12 months.

   Action: Prime Minister: End the Homelessness Crisis

6. **FfT is having a benefit at The Stand on Sunday 20 October**

   We will continue to advertise this event on our social media. Glasgow University AI Group has also done likewise. It was noted that a number of members of our Group plan to attend the event.

7. **Scotland-wide Conference update:** Claire attended 2 planning meetings (minutes for both here), both attended by only 45 people - concerns about capacity to organise an event without Scotland AIUK staff involvement → event postponed until further capacity is found.

Action - Omar will link up with Joseph Patemba

8. **Email from AI Scotland office (scotland@amnesty.org.uk) re. online meeting Wednesday 30.10.24, 6.30pm:**

We would like to invite you to an **online update on our recent work in Scotland.** Since our webinar earlier this year on the Scottish Government's proposed Human Rights Bill there have been significant developments with the First Minister choosing to shelve the Bill rather than include it in his legislative programme. Amnesty has made clear to the Scottish Government that abandoning its commitment to the Bill is the wrong choice and a huge missed opportunity to tackle the root causes of poverty and inequality in Scotland. We would welcome the chance to explore how we can work together on this and brief on some of the other areas we will be focusing on in the coming weeks and months. If you can please join us on Wednesday October 30th at 6.30pm, register here: Microsoft Teams Link

1. NB An informal email from Neil Cowan AI Scotland Director to Amanda, Chair of Perth group last month:

   "Re: the Human Rights Bill, we are all deeply disappointed. It's clear the Scottish Government have simply decided it's not a priority and, despite them saying they are still committed to it, it has clearly been kicked into the long grass. We are regrouping with others in the sector at the moment to plot the way forward, but regardless it will remain a key priority for us moving into the next Scottish Parliament election.

   We co-signed this letter to the First Minister yesterday which is calling on him to reconsider the decision: 100+ Organisations Write to the First Minister to Reverse Delaying Scottish Human Rights Bill News.

   It's unlikely he will reverse the decision but we are making the point nonetheless. We will also be giving evidence to the Scottish Parliament on this in a few weeks, and you can expect some more media activity on it too.

   What could be helpful at this point is writing to the First Minister (either as individuals or as a group) to mirror the arguments and language set out in the letter above. If this is something you'd like to do and you'd like some suggested wording then we can help with that – just let me know." **Action - All** to consider tuning in to the webinar on 30th October via link above

9. **Claire is meeting Thea (Local Activism Team) 15.10.24 as part of AIUK "Local Group Audit"** (online, 1:1, 30mins). There will also be a follow-up survey.

   (a) What do you want Claire to tellask Thea? **Action - All** to send any points to Claire that they wish to be raised

10. **Guest Speaker** - Omar, this year's AIUK Student Action Network (STAN) Chair and Scotland student representative, provided an overview of his role and noted that he was keen to encourage and support links between AI Groups.

    Omar is looking to encourage new AI Groups to be established at other Colleges and Universities in Glasgow. **Action - All** - Get in touch with Omar if you have contacts with anyone in Glasgow colleges Strathclyde University, etc that may be able to assist

11. **Potential future guest!:** Neil Cowan AI Scotland Director - Neil said he was keen to attend a future meeting of our Group. It was agreed to invite him to attend a meeting early in the new year - potentially January. We will also invite other AI Groups in the area to attend once we have a date confirmed. **Action - Andrew** to contact Neil re invitation.

12. **2024 Write for Rights Campaign**

Initial discussion took place on planning for the 2024 Write for Rights campaign.

Kirstie has already booked **Hillhead Library** for *Sunday 8.12.24 @ 12noon - 4pm. *

Kirstie has also arranged for a Write for Rights discussion to take place on the same day at the monthly '*Sunday Assembly' event* and she will co-ordinate input into that. **Action - Kirstie**

Omar reckons he should be able to recruit 23 uni students to support. **Action - Omar**

All members are encouraged to email organisations with specific cases e.g. environmental case (Vietnam) share with Green party. **Action - All**

Contact AIUK asking for 12 booklets & posters - **Action - Andrew**

Create QR code poster for people to sign up to AI - **Action - Mal**

13. **Film Screening Suggestion:** Group member Mhairi has a link with an organisation in Jordan - "Seenaryo". They have produced a 1 hr feature length doc called Tilka, featuring several women refugees in Lebanon. Mhairi would like to organise screening of the doc in Glasgow. She says she could lead a discussiondo a Q&A about the film afterwards.

Group to confirm:

1. It was agreed that the Group was happy for Mhairi to move ahead and organise the screening. **Action - Mhairi** to organise.
2. Also agreed to undertake a fundraiser at the screening (buckets) and split the donations 5050 Seenaryoour local group. **Action** - tbc following Mhairi's action above.
3. Any blockers volunteers suggestions of venues (Mhairi is going to try GFT) Action - **Action - Mhairi**
4. Omar indicated that the Glasgow University group would be interested to do a screening on campus and he stated that he could easily book a room with projector and be involved in a panel discussion. **Action - Mhairi** to liaise with Omar
5. Would anyone like to be on a discussion panel after the film? e.g. on topic of refugeeshuman rights
   (a) suggestion: uni lecturer (Omar link)
   (b) Neil from Scotland office might agree to be on the panel - but need to decide focus of panel discussion firstly. A FfT guest speaker is another possibility
   (c) Omar & Glasgow University Group are interested in helping. This semester ends 4.12.24. A screening before 20.11 is best, or, alternatively, in the first 2 weeks of January. We should avoid an event that is too close to our Stand Fundraiser in February. **Action - Mhairi** to liaise with Omar
   (d) Mal indicated that he would also be happy to help. **Action - Mhairi** to liaise with Mal

14. **Reminder: our group's AGM takes place in January.** Please can people start considering roles (see list here) and ask current role holders for more info on the role responsibilities if you are at all interested!

Kirstie indicated she was ok to continue as treasurer.

Andrew & Claire indicated they would love for others to take over the roles of Chair and Secretary respectively.

15. **Urgent Appeals** - Merle

Thanks to Merle for forwarding this month's Urgent Actions (UAs)via Christine and via our Signal Group.

Action - All to consider responding to the undernote UAs:

Iran: Kurdish Woman Activist Sentenced To Death

Read: https://tinyurl.com/2024iran

Angola: Release Activists From Arbitrary Detention

Read: https://tinyurl.com/angola-24

Turkey: Eritreans At Imminent Risk Of Forced Return

Read: https://tinyurl.com/turkey-24

Noted that today (10th October) is World Day Against the Death Penalty

Mal went to US Death penalty talk. The team is looking for local groups to "adopt" a US state and send letters asking them to cease applying the death penalty or to encourage those states that have ended it to continue their opposition to the death penalty..

Group agreed that we should agreed to adopt a state and commence communications with them. **Action - Mal** - Further discussion to take place at our next meeting to follow up on this.

16. **AIUK Local Group Updates – September link**
    - Demand the UK suspend all arms transfers to Israel now - petition here
    - Write to your MP - **General Letter**; **Lib Dem, SNP, Greens Letter**; **Sinn Féin Letter**
    - Protect UK nationals arbitrarily detained abroad
    - - 7 December 2024, Woolwich Works, London, SE18 6HD
        - **AIUK 2024 Priority Campaigns** here; **Amnesty training courses**: **Activist Education**; & Updates from various local AI Groups across the UK
17. **Other interesting article/news** members have shared over the past month in our Signal chat (open to all members, contact mail@glasgowwestamnesty.org.uk to join!)
    (a) Email from AIUK re. housing: Our Everyday Rights
    (b) Email from AIUK: Demand the UK suspend all arms transfers to Israel now
    (c) AIUK press release about the PM's meeting with the Italian Govt: UK: Government must stop doing deals to offload asylum responsibilities
        i. Podcast interview with released political prisoner Sasha Skochilenko: BBC News - Ukrainecast, Inside the biggest prisoner exchange since the Cold War
        ii. Article about Vladimir Kara-Murza, an Amnesty campaign case who was recently freed in the Prisoner Exchange programme with Russia: Putin regime will collapse without warning, says freed gulag dissident Vladimir Putin The Guardian

18. **Next meeting** – Thurs 14th November 7.30pm - 9pm
    - St Andrew's Day, 30th November 2024 - anti-racism event organised by Stand-Up To Racism and the STUC.
    - Nov meeting: Planning for next annual Comedy Night fundraiser for Amnesty International, held at The Stand Comedy Club - Thursday 20th February 2025

2024 Meeting Dates

New Members very welcome - Just turn up!

The Group meets every second Thursday of the month 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**

- ~~Thursday 11th January 2024~~
- ~~Thursday 8th February 2024~~
- ~~Thursday 14th March 2024~~
- ~~Thursday 11th April 2024~~
- ~~Thursday 9th May 2024~~
- ~~Thursday 13th June 2024~~
- ~~Thursday 11th July 2024~~
- ~~Thursday 8th August 2024~~
- ~~Thursday 12th September 2024~~
- ~~Thursday 10th October 2024~~
- Thursday 14th November 2024
- Thursday 12th December 2024

BETTER TO LIGHT A CANDLE THAN CURSE THE DARKNESS