

March 2026 Updates



Glasgow West Amnesty International

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At a time when fundamental rights are under threat across the globe, [join](#) Amnesty International, get involved with our local Amnesty Group and play your part in helping to promote and defend vital human rights across the world.

We warmly invite both newcomers and familiar faces alike to attend the next meeting of the Amnesty International Glasgow West Group.

This update includes:

- Details of our forthcoming March 2026 meeting;
- An article published in the latest Amnesty UK magazine on fifty years of Amnesty in Glasgow;
- Updates from AIUK's latest Local Group updates;
- The minutes from our local Group's February meeting; and
- A note of all our monthly meeting dates for 2026.

March 2026 Glasgow West AI Group Meeting

Thursday 12th March, Woodlands International Methodist Church, 7:30pm – 9pm

The Glasgow West Amnesty Group's next meeting will take place on **Thursday 12th March 2026 at 7.30pm – 9pm** in Woodlands International Church, Woodlands Road, Glasgow, G3 6LW.

Anyone curious about Amnesty International is most welcome to just turn up and join our meetings. We would love to see you there!

Our next meeting will include:

- Planning for our Group's next major event – a Community Meal to raise funds for and awareness of the ongoing plight of Palestinians;
- A brief review of our recent Comedy Fundraiser event; and
- Undertaking **letter writing** on recent [Urgent Action](#) alerts from AIUK.

Join our Meetings Online

Anyone unable / unavailable to physically come along, is welcome to join our monthly meetings online via this [Teams link](#).

(It will be the same link for all subsequent meetings).

A Community Meal for Palestine

Our Group is organising a local community meal on **Sunday 22nd March** to raise awareness of the ongoing issues affecting Palestine and to raise funds for [Ele Etna Etnak](#), an organisation that is helping provide essential aid in Gaza.



The event will take place in Woodside Halls, in the North of Glasgow. It will include displays, speakers on Palestine, food and an opportunity to hear more about the current situation and how we can help.

Join us to enjoy tasty vegetarian food, meet like-minded people in a safe, welcoming environment, hear from interesting international speakers, and help raise money for human rights.

This event is for anyone interested in learning more about human rights, particularly in Palestine, and Amnesty Scotland's campaign on a Human Rights manifesto.

Please arrive by 11.15 to enter our raffle!

Everyone's welcome – let's eat, learn, and fundraise together!

This is an inclusive event for all. We particularly welcome our LGBTQIA+ friends and people with experience of forced migration.

For further information on the event including details of venue, times, speakers, etc please click on this [link](#). That page also includes the [Eventbrite link](#) where you can register to attend. The community meal is a 'pay what you can on the day' event.

Fifty Years of Amnesty in Glasgow

The spring edition of the Amnesty Magazine includes a piece covering fifty years of Amnesty International in Glasgow, reproduced here with permission.



WHAT HUMAN RIGHTS MEAN TO ME



© Ashraf Hamzah/AI

Glasgow West group members **Christine Alison** and **Andrew McGuire** reflect on a remarkable five decades of Amnesty activism in the city.

Tree-planting ceremony to mark 50 years of Amnesty in Glasgow, officiated by the City Council's Deputy Lord Provost Baillie Christy Meams (front), 21 November 2025
Below: Former political prisoner Jack Mapanje (centre) visits Glasgow.



'Glasgow's first local Amnesty group, Glasgow West, was started in 1975 by members of St Mary's Episcopalian Cathedral, where meetings were held for many years,' says Christine Alison, who joined the group in 1983.

'I was just out of university when I stopped at an Amnesty stall and learned about the campaign against torture. I was horrified and felt so naïve about the world. The start of my Amnesty career was stuffing envelopes with Urgent Action appeals and posting them to volunteers.'

'Across the city several other groups grew: Glasgow City, Glasgow Central, South Side, East End, Milngavie and Bearsden and Paisley. Today there are three: Glasgow West, Glasgow University and Glasgow Daytime. At the time Amnesty's main objective was securing the release of prisoners of conscience (POCs) – to receive letters or visits from them reaffirmed the importance of our work.'

'An important strand to our work was

– and is – fundraising. Immense book sales, pub quizzes and ceilidhs, dancing til all hours. Our comedy night has taken place annually for over 20 years.

'Two particularly impressive campaigns stand out. In 1990, when Glasgow was European Capital of Culture, we worked for the release of Malawian poet Jack Mapanje, South Korean artist Hong Song-dam and Vietnamese poet Nguyen Chi Thien, all eventually released. In 1995, the Freedom Festival launched with a spectacular gala concert followed by over 100 events in the city linked to freedom.'

'I value the sense of personal solidarity. To hear POCs speak so full of forgiveness and with great dignity inspires me. I remember the news of the Tiananmen Square massacre in 1989, and the day after throwing red roses into the River Clyde in memory of those who died. Fifty years holds a lot of stories.'

To celebrate the 50th anniversary, the Deputy Lord Provost of Glasgow

City Council hosted a civic reception on 28 October 2025, with speeches and an archive display, followed by a tree-planting ceremony on 21 November.

Says Andrew McGuire, who helped compile the display: 'The archive material is a testament to the countless hours of work the volunteers have put in. One letter from Peruvian teacher and trade unionist Elmer Vasquez particularly hit home. He'd been arbitrarily detained, accused of treason, tortured and sentenced to life imprisonment. He spoke of the "joy and comfort" he'd felt on realising people cared about the injustice.'

'Glasgow City Council has also played its part, with joint events and hosting former POCs. The anniversary has provided pause for reflection on all that still needs to be done. All around the world, including on our own doorstep, new human rights challenges arise. We cannot be complacent.'

Another Successful Comedy Fundraiser for Amnesty International

Our local Group's annual Comedy night fundraiser took place at The Stand Comedy Club, Glasgow's on 19th February 2026, raising over £2,100 for Amnesty.



A star-studded line-up was hosted by Gareth Mutch (photo: centre right), who was accompanied by Rosco McClelland (top left), Ifrah Qureshi (top right), Karen Dunbar (bottom left) and headliner Fred MacAulay (bottom right). Photo credit: Paolo Grifa.

Each of the performers generously gave their input free of charge, as did the Stand management who provided the venue and organisation for the event.

£1,688 was raised from ticket sales, which went directly to Amnesty UK's Charitable Trust. A further £425 was raised through the raffle and collection tin donations. This will be used by the local Glasgow West Amnesty group for our local campaigning and running expenses.

We would like to thank the staff at The Stand, the performers and everyone that bought a ticket to make it such a successful and fun-filled evening.

Amnesty UK Local Updates

Below is a selection of some of the issues featured in the latest monthly update for Local Groups from Amnesty UK. The full updates can be [read on our local archive](#).

Palantir - Get Involved!



No Palantir in the NHS campaign

You might have seen Palantir - a US Artificial Intelligence company co-founded by controversial Trump donor Peter Thiel - in the news recently.

Last year, Amnesty published [this briefing](#) naming 15 corporations actively enabling Israel's genocide, unlawful occupation, and other crimes under international law. It called for immediate divestment from these companies, and for civil society and activists globally to campaign for their government to do so.

Palantir was one of them, as in January 2024, the company signed a deal with the Israeli Occupation Forces to supply additional tools and increase its "advanced technology provision" and warfare tools to Israel, facilitating the ongoing genocide in Gaza.

Palantir is also [entrenched in Trump's US Government](#), supplying products and services for the Department of Homeland Security and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), to enable the tracking and surveillance of those being targeted for unlawful deportations and detentions.

In November 2023, NHS England signed a [£330 million contract with Palantir](#) to run the Federated Data Platform (FDP).

We object to Palantir's military and surveillance technology, currently used to commit genocide in Gaza, being used to handle NHS data.

So – on 19 March, Amnesty UK are launching a new campaign demanding that this contract is terminated.

As the success of the FDP depends on local adoption, with enough dissent and resistance from Trusts, we can pressure NHS England to cancel the contract altogether – but this can only be done by building strong local campaigns and power in communities.

Amnesty’s local groups will be crucial in this campaign, so please get involved! If you or your group are interested, please reach out to me directly [Amika George](#) to set up a chat or if you have any questions or [express your interest](#) in getting involved in the campaign.

In solidarity, [Amika](#) – Community Organiser, Local Activism

[Expression of Interest Form](#)

Individual Giving - Help Women And Girls In Sudan Fight Back



Sudan is facing a catastrophic humanitarian collapse. As rival factions fight, civilians are being shot and tortured, and women and girls are suffering the most. Please help stop sexual violence being used as a weapon of war.

Every day in Sudan, as women and girls are used by armed fighters as weapons of war, Amnesty International researchers are interviewing survivors who speak out because they desperately want their stories to be told on the world stage to enable justice.

Amnesty International is helping them fight back and you could help too. Donations could help fund evidence gathering and investigations in Sudan and other countries around the world where human rights are being violated. With your support, women in Sudan that share their experiences with our investigators can feel some hope that the justice and accountability they seek will be served. Please give what you can today.

[GIVE TODAY](#)

Political Organising Training



Make human rights count. Join Amnesty UK's new Political Organising Training Programme

Across the UK, human rights are under attack. They are treated by many political leaders as optional, inconvenient, or too risky to defend, while anti rights movements grow more organised and confident. Amnesty UK's Political Organising Training Programme helps activists build the skills this moment demands.

Through practical online sessions, you will learn how to connect with your community, hold persuasive and non polarising conversations, grow a team of local leaders, and develop a strategy to make human rights count before, during and after elections.

This programme is for both new and experienced activists who want to act with purpose and confidence. Whether you want to prepare for the Scottish, Welsh, or local elections this May, strengthen your local Amnesty group or build a human rights campaign, these trainings will help you and your team make human rights count.

[Sign up now for this FREE online training programme.](#)

There are 8 modules in total, with multiple slots available for each. They work as a progression, so book each session in a chronological sequence, starting with 1. Amnesty UK & Politics 101.

Training content

The programme first covers four foundational skill sessions:

- Amnesty UK & politics 101
- Community Organising 101
- Storytelling 101
- Building relationships 101

This is followed by intermediate skills:

- Persuasive Conversations 201
- Recruit and retain Volunteers 201
- and an optional Community fundraising 101

Skills are then applied through Action Sessions – door knocking and phone banking for elections.

[Register here!](#)

Join Our Thematic Networks



Join Amnesty UK's specialist networks and projects focused on Trade Unions, gender rights, gender identity and sexuality, children's human rights, anti-racism, disabled people's human rights and the death penalty.

Our networks are activist led, bringing together experience and expertise from across the Amnesty movement to campaign for human rights change in their areas of focus.

Join Our Networks:

- [Join Disabled People's Human Rights Network](#)
- [Join the Anti-Racism Network](#)
- [Join the Children's Human Rights Network](#)
- [Join Amnesty Feminist Network](#)
- [Join the Queer Rights Network](#)
- [Join the Trade Union Network](#)
- [Join the Anti Death Penalty Project](#)
- [Join the Urgent Action Network](#)



February 2026 Minutes

Amnesty Glasgow West Group Meeting Thurs 12th February 2026

Minutes

Link to February meeting email [here](#)

1. Welcome and apologies

- (a) Attendance: Neil, Claire, Deborah, Clara, Andrew, Ken, Lucile, Emma, Ada, Paolo, Lauren, Mhairi, Merle
- (b) Apologies: Kirstie, Carol, Pam

2. Agreement of previous meeting minutes [link](#)

3. Team Updates (list of roles [here](#)):

(a) Treasurer

- i. postage from letters:
- ii. other expenditure:
- iii. donations:
- iv. current balance: £1,494

A. AIUK affiliation fee & church quarterly hire fee due soon

(b) Social Media & website (Lauren):

- Thanks to Rob, our website has a new menu item called "campaigns". Paolo has created two pages, one about JCB and one for the Humans Rights manifesto. <https://www.glasgowwestamnesty.org.uk/campaigns/humanrightsscotland/>
- Twitter/Bluesky discussion: raised again with recent news of Grok images etc, more organisations leaving; Claire asked in the Amnesty Scotland WA chat to see if other local groups have come off Twitter
 - Only 1 Edinburgh group responded - they came off ~2 years ago
 - E.g Clyde College just came off it with the line "X (formerly Twitter), in its current form and editorial approach, is no longer aligned with the college's values and we will no longer use it for communications"
 - * Arguments for / against → vote
 - * Clara: China & East Asia team are coming off Twitter, increasing Insta presence
 - * Agreed: There was unanimous agreement across the Group to no longer use Twitter / X. Lauren will post on the Group's Twitter that we will no longer use Twitter / X and will include in that message links to our alternative social media accounts,
- New Community Platform - looks great!

(c) Regional/Country focus:

- i. China & East Asia: International Secretariat published a Press Release on North Korea (corruption / human rights) - Reports of N. Koreans embracing any aspect of S. Korean culture are being targeted by the regime. Clara to share in the chat for minutes
 - ii. Uighurs Campaign in August , artistic campaign with 1 word - every day in August have 1 word on SM for people to learn. 21/08/26 - event
- (d) **Local Political Outreach**
- **A HUMAN RIGHTS MANIFESTO - Scotland 2026** - Published by AI Scotland office will be ready for May 2026 elections! Will launch in February
 - Scotland office is developing a toolkit for local groups - wait till next meeting
 - & when new MSPs elected - we should go and speak with them / send letters / invite to our meeting
 - Hustings?
4. ***Not currently active: Prisoner of Conscience/Individual At Risk; Theme Focus US Death Penalty***
5. **Updates from local groups (Daytime / Glasgow Uni)**
- (a) Daytime Group: From February onwards the Daytime Group will meet on the third Thursday of the month at 2pm in Partick Library, 305 Dumbarton Rd, Partick, Glasgow G11 6AB. Message from Graham, the Group's Chair - "Thank you for your support and help as we looked for a new venue."
 - (b) Edinburgh Central AIUK group: "We are having an open discussion (with any amnesty supporters) Monday 16th at 6pm on UK human rights and what we can do to defend them."
- Hybrid - f2f: The Crannie, 9 Cranston Street (near Waverley Station) or on Zoom.
- Zoom link:
 - <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/77637311682?pwd=L0xo067Y9taWhBa0gpJMpnWp81DLh1.1>
6. **Updates from Scottish Activism Rep (Paolo) / Scotland-wide WhatsApp group chat**
- (a) **Training programme for members on how to campaign better/tools for activism** - 10 modules, v interactive - Paolo to share link in the Signal chat. Led by Ashraf, who will attend our next meeting.
 - (b) **Urgent Actions** - cut from new website. Lots of discussions around it - hopefully will be reinstated
 - (c) **Tuesday 17.02.26 7pm: online meeting with liaisons from all AIUK groups in Scotland** to catch up on current activities of each group. Ashraf will talk about Scottish elections and the political / activist training programme.
 - i. Who can attend? Please contact Paolo for the link - maybe Andrew/Clara

- (d) Claire attended “**Group Planning Pack and Community Platform 2026**” meeting: Group Planning Pack 2026 is here. Community Platform:
- i. Group webpages on the AIUK website will contain the "About" for each Group and the Community Platform is where Group will post, blog and share about recent or upcoming events
 - A. Abi.odell@amnesty.co.uk is happy to help us to move our website onto the platform.
 - B. Can also keep our own website <https://www.glasgowwestamnesty.org.uk/>
 - ii. Anyone who “follows” our group (on the platform) would be notified of any events we put on our webpage.
 - A. Can also set “reminder” emails (like eventbrite)
 - iii. Hope is that we won’t need to send out any emails from mail@ - would all be done through this platform.
 - A. BUT that means everyone who has signed up to our mailing list would need to join the platform. “To continue to receive our updates, please join our platform”

BUT some people on our mailing list are “passive” readers - likely won’t sign up to the platform - so maybe we want to keep doing the emails for the time being. There could also be an option to reduce to, say, quarterly in the future.

People don’t have to be an AIUK member/UK-based to join the platform
7. Reminder: midnight tonight (12.02.26) is the deadline for completing the **Earned Settlement Government Consultation** - <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/earned-settlement>
- (a) Amnesty Guide: https://media.amnesty.org.uk/documents/Amnesty_International_UK_-_Guidance_Consultation_Response_-_A_Fairer_Pathway_t_7hsH4ns.pdf
8. We sent in our **JCB petition** to Glasgow Council, but Gabriel from Dundee has made a new one - if anyone wants to send it in email form (good links in it) - it’s [here](#).
- (a) Would anyone like to send this in / lead on being JCB-Council contact?
 - i. Paolo can update the website with the new letter
9. **Actions/updates from previous meeting**
- (a) **Re AI Scotland manifesto** - Paolo - did Liz reply to our qs re. Is this the first in a series of launch events re. the manifesto / Should we as a group come / e.g. do a petition / & did you tell her we feel there should be more communication between us / Ashraf / Amnesty Scotland office
 - i. Confirmed the initiative that Amnesty Scotland was involved in was led by another organisation
 - ii. Toolkit will be first step to work together
10. Our Stand gig: **Thurs 19 Feb 2026, doors 7pm show 8pm, duration 2hrs**
- (a) [Benefit in aid of Amnesty International - The Stand Comedy Club](#)

- (b) NB new venue cap 200 cabaret style (or can increase to 250 theatre style)
- (c) 18+, ticket price £13/11 ; as of 11.02, only 45 tickets sold!
- (d) Who can come? Carol, Kirstie, Claire, Paolo, Lauren, Andrew

Pre-event tasks:

- Contact press: ??
- Share on SM: Lauren
- Take materials from the hall (AI banner, posters, badges, leaflets re. Manifesto ; group flyers), [raffle proceeds poster](#), raffle books, collection tins:
- Prizes /(e.g. candles / alcohol (champagne/whisky/wine/gin ‘ box of chocs; more basic gifts can be grouped into gift bags (e.g. bath sets)/*:* Neil, Andrew, Claire
- **6.45pm arrive:** Clara, Ken, Debra, Andrew, Lauren, Claire
- **Sell tickets:** NB **prices** - £2 for 1 strip; £5 for 3 strips. (N.B. Do not detach individual tickets from strips!)
 - **money collected:** sellers to give funds raised from raffle to Kirstie
 - * Mhairi, Lauren, Clara, Debra

Photographs / Social Media:

- Photo consent: Stand manager announces that photos are being taken (make sure he does/we do)
- take photographs at the event for use in publicity: Paolo

AI Input on the night - Lead: Ashraf. Tasks:

- liaising with the host and asking them to lead the raffle
- providing a brief overview of the work of AI during the interval
- thanking The Stand, the performers and others giving freely of their time
- liaising with the host on buying the performers a drink (/ (*Treasurer*) / /to *reimburse cost*)

Follow-up:

- Andrew to write a short article for the AIUK Local Groups Update on the Fundraiser and include photos. (Funds Raised - Once the final total raised for AIUK Charity is notified by The Stand, AIUK arranges re. invoice)
 - Line-up: Fred Macaulay headlining
 - Pay for ads to boost sales

11. Review of 2025 & thanks to past & current role-holders.

12. AGM ([Team Roles](#))

NB one of Amnesty's (and our group's) goals is to form new leaders in this field - please ask/step up if you'd like to be mentored/coached this year to be able to take on a role next

year. You can be “apprentice” or “vice” this year. Remember you can then add this to your CV/ask for a reference!

- (a) Chair / Vice-Chair (could include e.g. alternating Meeting Chairs) - Claire, Clara
- (b) Secretary / Vice-Secretary - Andrew, Luca to assist (after May)
- (c) Treasurer / Vice-Secretary - Kirstie
- (d) Social Media Coordinator; Content Creator - Lauren
- (e) Urgent Actions - Merle
- (f) PoC (IAR) Lead - Mhairi
- (g) Country/Region Lead
- (h) Action Days / Events / Campaigns Coordinator
- (i) Amnesty Group Liaison - Paolo
- (j) Welfare and Diversity Coordinator - vacant
- (k) Political Outreach Coordinator - vacant
- (l) Community Outreach Coordinator - vacant
- (m) Press Coordinator - vacant

13. **2026 Plan for the year ahead - [Glasgow West 2026 Planner.docx](#)**

14. **Discussion/brainstorm:**

- (a) How can we get new active members?
- (b) How can we keep active members?
- (c) Any suggestions for the current/new role-holders on how to conduct their role?

15. **Urgent Appeals** - Merle # of letters written during meeting: [] Tally for the year: []

16. **Meal!** Review [Community Meal Sunday 22.03.26](#) & sign up to roles

- (a) Main qs:
 - i. confirm target audience: people who are interested in human rights / Palestine
 - ii. volunteer to put on eventbrite - Claire
 - iii. volunteer to email contacts (v overachieving list here! [Local organisations / stakeholders](#)) - Luca, Ken
 - iv. Agree: Screen, mic, speakers - loan theirs ~£100
 - v. Need: 5/6 “stewards” - Mhairi, Clara, Andrew, Lucile, Emma, others
 - vi. Time: 10am set up, 11.30am-12.30pm Speakers; Lunch 12.30pm-2pm; Mingle 2pm-3pm.
 - vii. Musicians - Paolo will look into
 - viii. Raffle: yes - We need to buy more tickets
 - ix. Action from Amnesty - Pip; JCB petition

17. Claire can't attend next meeting - anyone to Chair? → Clara

18. **AOB**

- 27.02.26: deadline for AIUK AGM resolutions - does our group want to co-propose resolution on independent review into AIUK finances? - agreed YES, Clara to liaise with other groups
- Did you know you can support Amnesty International UK by taking on a challenge event? From running, cycling, swimming to trekking, there's something for everyone, [have a look and see if there's anything you fancy taking on in 2026!](#)

AIUK Local Group Updates (*none received*)

Next meeting - Thurs 12th March 2026 - Guest Speaker Ashraf re. AIUK local group campaigning

Future Meeting

- Suggestion: MSP candidate hustings (April 1st = candidate announcement deadline)

Potential Speakers for 2026:

- [/Waiting/: Refugee Action - potentially with Daytime group]
- Clara: journalist from Somalia - Clara to check his availability and if needs transport/accommodation
- Paulo: law professor re. UK supreme court ruling that affects trans rights.
- AIUK Equality Network speaker - Ailig to look into - how to have conversations w family and friends
- Ebba: Palestinian researcher:
<https://sgsahblog.com/2025/01/27/activist-ethnography-in-palestine/>
- Refugees at Home - have contacted us to ask if we'd like a speaker
- [Amicus: after find out about Death Penalty network - admin@amicus-alj.org - Allan]



2026 Meeting Dates

New Members very welcome!

The Group meets every second Thursday of each 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 8th January 2026~~
- ~~Thursday 12th February 2026~~
- Thursday 12th March 2026
- Thursday 9th April 2026
- Thursday 14th May 2026
- Thursday 11th June 2026
- Thursday 9th July 2026
- Thursday 13th August 2026
- Thursday 10th September 2026
- Thursday 8th October 2026
- Thursday 12th November 2026
- Thursday 10th December 2026

BETTER TO LIGHT A CANDLE THAN CURSE THE DARKNESS

