

## **AMNESTY LAUNCESTON GROUP NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 2021**

*Welcome to our November Newsletter, the first produced since our previous compiler, Michele Laouenan, and her husband, Roger, have moved to Sussex. We wish them all the very best for the future and thank them for their many contributions to the group since its formation. We'd also like to thank Richard Bennett for stepping into the breach and volunteering to produce the Newsletter.*

Highlighted below are a couple of injustices that you might consider particularly worthy of action.

### **FREE HUMAN RIGHTS LAWYER NASRIN SOTOUDEH**



Nasrin is facing 38 years in prison and 148 lashes for her peaceful human rights work. She is a human rights lawyer who has dedicated her life to defending women's rights. Nasrin was given the harshest sentence possible after two grossly unfair trials and was separated from her husband and two children - just for saying women should be able to wear what they want.

Nasrin was briefly released from prison on temporary leave due to her ill health. However, after only a few weeks with her family she was cruelly returned to prison on 2 December 2020, against the recommendation of health professionals who said she remained infectious with the disease.

With confirmed cases of COVID-19 in prisons across Iran, Nasrin's life could be at risk. Prisoners are at particular risk because they are unable to adhere to the same social distancing and hygiene measures as those outside of prison to protect themselves.

Take a look at <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/nazanin-zaghari-ratcliffe-whats-happening> for more information and to find out what you can do to help Nasrin. It is essential that the Iranian authorities unconditionally release Nasrin on a permanent basis.

## **POLAND: PROTECT AFGHANS STRANDED AT POLISH BORDER**

Of particular relevance at the current time is the plight of Afghan refugees as they move towards the Polish border, where we are led to believe they will not receive a very sympathetic reception: and this from a civilised country within the EU. A situation in need of vigilance.

Afghans are stuck at the Polish-Belarus border following pushbacks by Polish authorities to Belarus in August. They have been stranded for weeks without adequate shelter, food, water and medical care. Polish and Belarusian border guards have kept them in a strip of land at the border, limiting their access to lawyers, humanitarian, and healthcare workers. While the European Court of Human Rights has ordered Poland to provide the group with food, water, clothing and adequate medical health care, Polish authorities have so far failed to comply with this request. Instead of denying asylum-seekers entry and pushing them back to Belarus, Poland must immediately admit them into its territory, allow them to seek protection and urgently provide them with adequate shelter, food, water and medical care.

You can get more information here: <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/press-releases/poland-declaration-state-emergency-puts-afghan-refugees-risk>

together with actions you can take.



## **WRITE FOR RIGHTS 2021**

It's that time of year again. Because of Covid we are not meeting to write our letters as a group but why don't you gather in your "bubble" together and make a session of it. What better cause to champion and still have a bit of enjoyment at the same time?

Some incredible people need your support. They bravely stood up for their rights but were detained or injured as a result. Each winter we call on people like you to take action as part of the world's biggest human rights event. This year, we need your support appealing to authorities and decision-makers to demand action.

Your voice has power, act



Click on or copy and paste this link to get access to this year's cases.

[Write For Rights 2021 | Amnesty International UK](#)

## **GROUP MATTERS**

For the time being we are continuing to meet via Zoom and this seems to be working very well. If anyone wants to join us on these, please contact Deri Parsons ([derrick.parsons@btinternet.com](mailto:derrick.parsons@btinternet.com)) for more information.

Talking of Zoom, we are intending to use this for some talks on Human Rights issues in the New Year. We'll let you know of these as and when details are finalised.

Although we are small in numbers, we are very successful at raising funds and we've recently sent £1300 to Amnesty International HQ. Many thanks to all who have contributed in whatever way to enable us to do this.

With regards to fund raising, we are going to try something new for us: we are going to ask various shops/centres if they would have an Amnesty collecting tin on their counters. Every small donation helps mount up to a significant amount. If you can offer a place for one of these, or suggest a possible venue, please let Richard know (his e-mail is at the end of this Newsletter).

It is quite difficult at the moment to be able to plan events with any degree of certainty, but we are hoping to be able to help run a Coffee Morning at the Launceston Methodist Hall in early February. We'll send more details of this when we know that it is going ahead.

### **FUTURE NEWSLETTERS**

Please send items and suggestions for inclusion in future letters to me, Richard Bennett, via e-mail ([lowernortonfarm@msn.com](mailto:lowernortonfarm@msn.com))