



AMNESTY

ELY CITY GROUP

**Remembering those experiencing injustice,
A time for contemplation.....**

June 2022

“Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners. And those who are ill-treated as if you yourselves were suffering.” Hebrews: 13:3

Once again, a special time has been set aside in Bishop Alcock's Chapel between the two morning services on the first Sunday of each month from 9.00am to 10.15am. Here we can hold in mind or pray for the people whose cases are highlighted for the current month. This meditation is open to those of all faiths and none.

Worldwide: Displaced people

According to the United Nations, the number of people forced to flee their own homes has gone above 100 million for the first time ever, fuelled by violence in Ukraine, Ethiopia, Burkino Faso, Myanmar, Nigeria, Afghanistan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This figure amounts to more than one percent of the global population, and covers asylum-seekers, as well as more than 50 million people displaced inside their own countries. The two countries featured here provide a snapshot of two regions.

Founded in 1998, Refugee Week is a UK-wide festival held around World Refugee Day on 20 June to encourage understanding of why people are displaced and the challenges they face when seeking safety. Refugee Week's vision is for refugees and asylum seekers to be able to live safely within the community and make valuable contributions to their new country. <https://refugeeweek.org.uk>

Please hold in mind or pray:

- For all those forced to leave their homes to seek safety for themselves and their families
- For all those who have to build new lives, often facing a hostile asylum system that is made harder by poverty, housing difficulties and the threat of being detained or deported.
- For governments to recognise the contributions made by refugees and asylum-seekers to society instead of focusing on negative stereotypes.

Bangladesh: Rohingya refugees

Nearly one million Rohingya refugees are living in threadbare camps in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, after they fled their homes in Myanmar due to the military's crimes against humanity – which are currently the subject of a case under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide at the International Court of Justice. Thousands have recently been forcibly relocated to Bhashan Char, a remote silt island in the Bay of Bengal. With no place to call their home and no livelihood opportunities, hundreds of Rohingya men, women and children take dangerous boat journeys to neighbouring countries every year between October and June during a break in the monsoon season.

Please hold in mind or pray:

- For the Bangladeshi government and the international community to allow Rohingya refugees a voice in the decisions that affect them
- For the international community to protect the human rights and dignity of the Rohingyas in Myanmar and Bangladesh, who have been denied their rights to freedom of movement and access to education, employment and health care.

The Americas: Haitian refugees

As the political and economic situation in Haiti continues to deteriorate, thousands of Haitians are moving across the Americas to escape kidnappings, gross human rights violations and widespread gang violence. Between 19 September and 19 October countries across the region illegally returned some 10,800 Haitians back to Haiti. The majority were returned by the US, sometimes using excessive force. Mexico has continued deportation flights to Haiti and pushbacks to Guatemala. By November, Mexico had detained 252,526 people, including children, in overcrowded immigration detention centres that did not comply with basic sanitary measures.

Please hold in mind or pray:

- For countries in the Americas to provide Haitians with asylum and offer other routes to legal residency so they can rebuild their lives in safety.
- For neighbouring countries to provide a 'comprehensive regional approach' for Haitian migrants.

The story of one family

When Syria's civil war broke out Muhammad had recently opened a carpentry shop and become engaged to Maha. The violence spread to Muhammad's town, and they fled to southwestern Syria, where he and several other male family members were arrested by the secret service. He spent nearly nine months in prison. When he was released, he fled across the border to Lebanon and Maha joined him in Tripoli, Libya, where they met daily abuse – verbal and physical. A week after the birth of their daughter their landlord threw them onto the street in the middle of winter. After more than three years they managed to claim asylum in the UK and now live in a small flat in London. 'We feel safe here and feel there is a good future for us as a family'.

<https://www.amnesty.org.uk/family-search-better-life>.

Sources for cases: Amnesty International

'I pray for all of us, oppressor and friend, that together we may succeed in building a better world, through human understanding and love, and that in doing so we may reduce the pain and suffering of all sentient beings.'

Dalai Lama XIV

"To clasp one's hands in prayer is the beginning of an uprising against the disorder of the world."

Please keep this sheet to hand and use it in prayer or meditation, and any action you feel and find possible.

Your local Amnesty group can be contacted at www.amnestyelycity.org.uk

ELY AMNESTY NEWS

Our monthly planning meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month. We are now meeting cautiously in person. The next two meetings will be held from 7pm on 7 June and 5 July in St Peter's House, Broad Street, Ely, CB7 4AH. Anyone interested is welcome to attend.

Our next Amnesty Talk will be held on 14 June in the Aedwen Room in the Ely Museum at 7.00pm. Nigina Istanakzai-Zarifi, the Amnesty International country coordinator for Afghanistan, will give a talk on Women in Afghanistan.