

Rodrigo Mundaca Cabrera and MODATIMA members
Chile



Death threats against environmental campaigners

The Defence Movement of Earth, Environmental Protection and Access to Water (MODATIMA) campaigns against the illegal extraction of water in Petorca Province, a region seriously affected by water scarcity. As a result, MODATIMA members have been subjected to death threats, physical attacks, harassment and legal proceedings.

In 2012 the local authorities initiated four criminal cases against MODATIMA member Rodrigo Mundaca Cabrera. One of these led to a suspended prison sentence. In 2015 Rodrigo was physically attacked by unidentified men, and earlier this year his life was threatened over the phone.

Another MODATIMA member, Verónica del Carmen Vilches Olivares, told Amnesty that unidentified people have verbally threatened her from inside vehicles without license plates, most recently on 10 March.

MODATIMA members are afraid to leave their homes, and fear losing their jobs or damaging their employment prospects because of their campaign work.

APPEAL Call on the authorities to provide protection measures to Rodrigo Mundaca Cabrera and other members of MODATIMA, in accordance with their wishes. Urge them to launch an independent investigation into the death threats and harassment, and publicly recognise the legitimacy of human rights defenders working to promote the right to water.

▶ Minister of Interior and Public Security Mario Fernández Baeza
Palacio de La Moneda,
Santiago de Chile
Chile

Salutation: Dear Minister/Estimado Señor Ministro
Postage: World

▶ His Excellency Mr Rolando Drago
Embassy of Chile
37-41 Old Queen Street
London SW1H 9JA

Salutation: Your Excellency

Lahpai Gam
Myanmar



Torture victim in urgent need of medical care

Lahpai Gam, an elderly ethnic Kachin man, requires urgent treatment for serious health problems that may have resulted from torture. The farmer has been hospitalised since March.

Lahpai and six others were arrested by army officials in June 2012 in Kachin State. He was held incommunicado for almost a month and tortured by the military before being transferred to prison. Lahpai was subsequently charged with being a member of the Kachin Independence Army and sentenced to 20 years in prison, reduced to eight years after the Supreme Court overturned part of his conviction because of insufficient evidence.

However, the court upheld the conviction on two charges relating to bombs planted near bridges in Kachin State. The conviction is based on a 'confession' letter dating from the time of Lahpai's torture and incommunicado detention.

APPEAL Urge the authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Lahpai Gam and all other prisoners of conscience. Pending his release, state that they should ensure he receives the necessary health care, can access his medical records and receives a second medical opinion. Call for an independent inquiry into the torture allegations and for those responsible to be brought to justice.

▶ Minister of Home Affairs
Lt. Gen. Kyaw Swe
Office No. 10 Nay Pyi Taw
Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Salutation: Dear Minister
Postage: World

▶ His Excellency Kyaw Zwar Minn
Embassy of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar
19A Charles Street
London W1J 5DX

Salutation: Your Excellency

Thayyib Shaheem
Maldives



Activist arrested for 'spreading panic' online

Social media activist Thayyib Shaheem was arrested on 16 March for 'spreading panic' online after criticising a controversial development project. He faces a 15-month sentence.

The police claim Thayyib, a supporter of the opposition Maldives Democratic Party (MDP), was arrested for his tweets on the recent swine flu outbreak. Amnesty, however, believes it related to his public criticism of a proposed large-scale development project involving Saudi Arabia on the Faafu atoll, southwest of the capital Malé.

In early March a crackdown was launched on the media, opposition parties and opponents of the project. The Criminal Court in Male' threatened 'legal action' against journalists who 'disrupt the peace and stability of Maldives', while police raided the MDP's headquarters.

APPEAL Urge the authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Thayyib Shaheem, and drop the criminal proceedings against him. State that he is a prisoner of conscience, detained solely for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression. Call on them to respect the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, and end the harassment of journalists and media outlets.

▶ Minister of Home Affairs Azleen Ahmed
Ministry of Home Affairs
10th Floor, Velaanaage
Male'
Republic of Maldives

Salutation: Dear Minister
Postage: World

▶ His Excellency Mr Ahmed Shiaan
Embassy of the Republic of Maldives
22 Nottingham Place
London W1U 5NJ

Salutation: Your Excellency

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Itai Dzamara Zimbabwe



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Enforced disappearance of an activist

Journalist and pro-democracy activist Itai Dzamara was taken from a Harare barber shop on 9 March 2015 by five unknown men who accused him of stealing cattle. Itai was handcuffed and driven off in a white truck with concealed number plates. Two years on, his whereabouts remain unknown.

Itai's wife filed a missing person report with the police. On 13 March, the High Court ordered the Minister of Home Affairs, the Minister of State Security, the Commissioner-General of Police and Director General of the Central Intelligence Organisation to find Itai and regularly report progress of the search for him. This order, however, has not been complied with.

Before his arrest, Itai, leader of the pro-democracy Occupy Africa Unity Square (O AUS) group, addressed a Movement for Democratic Change rally in Harare and called for mass action against the deteriorating economic conditions. He and other O AUS members have been subjected to arbitrary arrests and severe police beatings instigated by supporters of the ruling ZANU-PF party.

APPEAL Call on the authorities to thoroughly investigate the enforced disappearance of Itai Dzamara and make the results public. Urge them to bring those responsible to justice in fair trials. Call on them to ensure that, if Itai is in state custody, he is not tortured or subjected to other ill treatment, and to disclose his whereabouts.

► Commissioner-General of the Police
Augustine Chihuri
Zimbabwe Republic Police
7th Street and Josiah Chinamano Avenue
P.O Box CY 8807
Harare
Zimbabwe

Salutation: Dear Commissioner-General
Postage: World

► The Chargé d'Affaires Mr Cecil T Chinenerere
Zimbabwe House
429 Strand
London WC2R 0JR

Salutation: The Chargé d'Affaires

Azimjan Askarov Kyrgyzstan



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Activist serving life sentence on trumped-up charges

Human rights defender Azimjan Askarov was jailed for life in September 2010 on fabricated, politically motivated charges following an unfair trial. Azimjan, an ethnic Uzbek, was accused of being involved in the murder of a police officer during violent clashes between ethnic Kyrgyz and ethnic Uzbeks in southern Kyrgyzstan earlier that year. He was then arbitrarily detained and tortured whilst in police custody.

In March 2016, the UN Human Rights Committee recognized that Azimjan was a victim of torture, had been arbitrarily detained, that the conditions of his detention were inhumane, and that he was denied a fair trial. In response, the Supreme Court of Kyrgyzstan reviewed his case. However, instead of releasing Azimjan, the case was referred to Chui Regional Court, which in January 2017 upheld his sentence.

APPEAL Call for the immediate and unconditional release of Azimjan Askarov, as he is a prisoner of conscience imprisoned solely for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression. Ask the President to ensure a thorough, impartial and independent investigation into the allegations that Azimjan was tortured and that his lawyer and relatives were harassed. Ask for reparations to be provided to all of them.

► President Almazbek Atambaev
Prospekt Chuj, 205
Government House
Bishkek 720003
Kyrgyzstan

Salutation: Dear President Atambaev
Postage: World

► Her Excellency Mrs Gulnara Iskakova
Embassy of the Kyrgyz Republic
Ascot House
119 Crawford Street
London W1U 6BJ

Salutation: Your Excellency

Sirikan 'June' Charoensiri Thailand



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Award-winning lawyer faces 15 years in prison

Award-winning lawyer Sirikan 'June' Charoensiri has been standing up for human rights during a dark period of military rule in Thailand, but could be jailed for up to 15 years.

In June 2015, June attended a peaceful protest by pro-democracy student activists in Bangkok to monitor the situation and provide legal representation if necessary. She now finds herself facing sedition charges and a potential trial in a military court alongside her clients. June, a specialist at the Thai Lawyers for Human Rights group, also faces charges in two additional cases relating to her defence of the student activists.

Since the military coup in 2014, there has been a severe crackdown on human rights in Thailand. As June, who recently won the prestigious Lawyers for Lawyers Award, says: 'There is now an environment where risk is visible and imminent.'

APPEAL Urge the authorities to immediately and unconditionally drop all charges against Sirikan 'June' Charoensiri, protect the independence of lawyers and their freedom to defend their clients without fear of prosecution or any other forms of retaliation, and end the repression of peaceful dissent.

► Commissioner General of Royal Thai Police Pol. Gen Chakthip Chaijinda
Royal Thai Police Headquarters
Rama 1 Road
Pathumwan
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10330
Thailand

Salutation: Dear Commissioner General
Postage: World

► His Excellency Mr Pisanu Suvanajata
Royal Thai Embassy
29-30 Queen's Gate
London SW7 5JB

Salutation: Your Excellency

Rafael Maldonado Guatemala



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Shooting incident latest threat for human rights defender

A shooting outside the home of Rafael Maldonado has left the human rights defender fearing for his safety. On the night of 3 April unidentified figures gathered outside his house and shot at a car nearby. This was just the latest in a series of threats and intimidation against the legal director of Guatemalan Centre for Legal, Environmental and Social Action (CALAS), a well-known NGO that defends and promotes the right to a healthy environment and the rights of indigenous peoples.

Other CALAS staff members have reported acts of intimidation, harassment and violence against them for many years. In November 2016, Jeremy Abraham Barrios Lima, assistant to the executive director of CALAS, was killed by unknown assailants in the centre of Guatemala City. He was in charge of managing sensitive information related to the high profile cases CALAS is litigating.

APPEAL Urge the authorities to conduct an independent, thorough and impartial investigation into the threats against Rafael Maldonado, make the results public and bring those responsible to justice. Call on them to immediately provide Rafael with adequate protection, according to his wishes. Urge them to publicly recognise those working on land, territory and environmental issues.

► Thelma Aldana
Fiscal General de la República
15 avenida 15-16 zona 1
Edificio Gerona 8° Nivel
Ciudad de Guatemala, 01001
Guatemala

Salutation: Dear Attorney General/
Estimada Señora Fiscal
Postage: World

► His Excellency Mr Acisclo Valladares Molina,
Embassy of Guatemala,
13 Fawcett St
London SW10 9HN

Salutation: Your Excellency

Ali Aarrass Morocco



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Torture victim held in solitary confinement

Since being moved into solitary confinement in October 2016, Belgian-Moroccan national Ali Aarrass's already fragile health has sharply deteriorated. According to his family and lawyers, he is allowed out of his cell for only an hour a day, sleeps on a concrete slab, receives inadequate food, and is given just one shower a week.

The UN Committee Against Torture has urged the Moroccan authorities to improve Ali's detention conditions, which amount to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, to prevent 'irreparable harm' being caused.

Ali has been in prison since December 2010, when he was forcibly returned to Morocco from Spain, where he was supporting his elderly father. For 12 days he was held in a secret detention centre and tortured with electric shocks, beatings and cigarette burns. His conviction on illegal weapons and terrorism charges was based on a 'confession' extracted under torture and a grossly unfair trial. Morocco's Court of Cassation recently rejected Ali's appeal against his 12-year prison sentence.

APPEAL Call on the authorities to implement the decision of the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention: release Ali Aarrass immediately, compensate him, and ensure that while he remains in custody he is protected from further ill-treatment. Urge them to hold an independent and impartial investigation into the torture allegations and to bring those found responsible to justice in fair trials.

► Minister of Justice and Liberties
El Mustapha Ramid
Ministère de la Justice et des Libertés
Place El Mamounia – BP 1015
Rabat
Morocco

Salutation: Dear Minister
Postage: World

► His Excellency Mr Abdesselam Abouddrar
Embassy of the Kingdom of Morocco
49 Queens Gate Gardens
London SW7 5NE

Salutation: Your Excellency

Barbaros Şansal Turkey



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LGBTI activist held over social media posts

On 31 December 2016, Barbaros Şansal posted a short video online criticising people for celebrating the New Year at a time of widespread detention of journalists, corruption, and child abuse allegations in Turkey. The fashion designer and LGBTI rights activist ended his message with a wish for 'Turkey to drown in its shit', and later shared a tweet.

On 2 January, Barbaros was extradited from the territory of northern Cyprus, where he was spending New Year. On arrival at Istanbul's Atatürk airport, he was assaulted by ground staff and detained by police. The following day Barbaros was remanded in pre-trial detention and accused 'inciting the public to hatred or hostility' through his video and tweet.

Barbaros was held until 1 March, when a court conditionally released him, but also banned him from foreign travel, which prevents him carrying out his work. He has since been threatened, and is so afraid of physical attacks that he is reluctant to leave his home.

APPEAL Call on the Minister of Justice to drop the charges against Barbaros Şansal, lift the travel ban, and start a criminal investigation into the assault at the airport and the threats he subsequently received.

► Minister of Justice Mr Bekir Bozdağ
Ministry of Justice
Adalet Bakanlığı
06659 Ankara
Turkey

Salutation: Dear Minister
Postage: Europe

► His Excellency Mr Abdurrahman Bilgiç
Embassy of the Republic of Turkey
43 Belgrave Square
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Salutation: Your Excellency