

TAKE ACTION



# Real lives

Letter-writing changes lives.

A letter from you could help free a prisoner, stop an execution or help a bereaved family receive justice.

This *Amnesty Magazine* supplement is produced for readers and local groups wishing to write more letters in support of individuals at risk.

It is sent to all Amnesty local groups in the UK, and is also available to individual members on request, in print or by email. The supplement is printed on A4 paper to make it easier to photocopy for group letter-writing sessions.

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The Editor

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HRAC

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London EC2A 3EA

## Nabeel Rajab Bahrain



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### Jailed for criticising the authorities on TV

Leading human rights defender Nabeel Rajab has been sentenced to two years in prison for criticising the Bahraini authorities on TV. On 10 July, the High Criminal Court in Manama convicted him of 'publishing and disseminating rumours and false news' in TV interviews he gave in 2015 and 2016.

Nabeel, president of the Bahrain Centre for Human Rights, has been in and out of prison since 2012. In June 2016, he was jailed after tweeting about alleged torture in a Bahraini prison and the killing of civilians by the Saudi Arabia-led military coalition in Yemen. Six months later a court ordered his release, but the authorities immediately re-arrested him over the critical TV interviews. Nabeel spent over nine months in solitary confinement.

In a separate case, he is also being tried for 'spreading false rumours in time of war', 'insulting public authorities' and 'insulting a foreign country' on Twitter. The trial is ongoing, and if convicted, Nabeel would face 15 years in prison.

**APPEAL** Call on the Bahraini authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Nabeel Rajab, a prisoner of conscience detained solely for peacefully exercising his freedom of expression. While he is in detention, urge them to provide access to medical care and protect him from torture and other ill-treatment.

▶ King of Bahrain  
His Majesty Shaikh Hamad bin 'Issa Al Khalifa  
Office of His Majesty the King  
P.O. Box 555  
Rifa'a Palace, Manama  
Bahrain

**Salutation:** Your Majesty  
**Postage:** World

▶ His Excellency  
Shaikh Fawaz bin Mohammed Al Khalifa  
Embassy of the Kingdom of Bahrain  
30 Belgrave Square  
London SW1X 8QB

**Salutation:** Your Excellency

## Taner Kılıç Turkey



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### Amnesty chair held on false 'terrorism' charges

Amnesty Turkey chair Taner Kılıç faces spurious charges of membership of a 'terrorism organisation', as the authorities continue their widespread crackdown on critics and perceived opponents. He was detained on 6 June along with 22 other lawyers in Izmir. His home and office were searched.

Three days later Taner was charged with membership of the 'Fethullahist Terrorist Organisation', which the government claims was responsible for the July 2016 attempted coup. He is now in prison awaiting trial. The prosecution is based solely on the unsubstantiated claim that a secure mobile messaging app allegedly used by the 'Fethullahist Terrorist Organisation' had been discovered on Taner's phone. No evidence has been provided to back this up and Taner denies ever having downloaded or used the app. He also denies being a member of the Fethullah Gülen movement: on the contrary, he has criticised its role in Turkey.

Taner is one of thousands of Turks who have been prosecuted on trumped-up terrorism charges.

**APPEAL** Call on the Minister of Justice to drop the charges against Taner Kılıç and immediately and unconditionally release him from pre-trial detention.

▶ 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  
London SW1X 8PA

**Salutation:** Your Excellency

## İdil Eser – the Istanbul Ten Turkey



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### Amnesty director arrested at workshop

Less than a month after the detention of Amnesty Turkey chair Taner Kılıç (see above), its director, İdil Eser, was sent to prison on baseless charges. İdil, seven other Turkish human rights defenders, a Swedish IT trainer and a German non-violence and wellbeing trainer were arrested on 5 July at a workshop in Istanbul and then detained incommunicado.

The ten were prevented from informing relatives of their detention for 28 hours and denied access to lawyers for over 24 hours, both breaches of Turkish law. Some are being held in solitary confinement. They are accused, without grounds, of 'committing crime in the name of a terrorist organisation without being a member'. Eight have been remanded in pre-trial custody and two have been bailed.

The seven other human rights defenders are: Günel Kurşun (lawyer, Human Rights Agenda Association), İlnur Üstün (Women's Coalition), Nalan Erkem (lawyer, Citizens Assembly), Nejat Taştan (Equal Rights Watch Association), Özlem Dalkıran (Citizens' Assembly), Şeyhmuz Özbekli (lawyer). Veli Acı (Human Rights Agenda Association). The two trainers are Peter Steudtner and Ali Gharavi.

**APPEAL** Urge the Minister of Justice to immediately and unconditionally release human rights defenders İdil Eser, Günel Kurşun, İlnur Üstün, Nalan Erkem, Nejat Taştan, Özlem Dalkıran, Şeyhmuz Özbekli and Veli Acı and international trainers Ali Gharavi and Peter Steudtner.

▶ Minister of Interior Mr Suleyman Soylu  
İçişleri Bakanlığı  
Bakanlıklar  
Ankara  
Turkey

**Salutation:** Dear Minister  
**Postage:** Europe

▶ His Excellency Mr Abdurrahman Bilgiç  
Embassy of the Republic of Turkey  
43 Belgrave Square  
London SW1X 8PA

**Salutation:** Your Excellency

Tep Vanny  
Cambodia



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**Leading activist jailed for peaceful protest**

Award-winning activist Tep Vanny has been in jail for over a year for defending housing rights in the Boeung Kak Lake community, where thousands of families have been forcibly evicted from their homes. She was arrested on 16 August 2016 during a peaceful demonstration, and subsequently convicted of several trumped-up charges. One of the charges was ‘intentional violence with aggravating circumstances’, which related to a peaceful protest violently broken up by the police in 2013.

Tep Vanny has defended housing rights in her community in the capital, Phnom Penh, for over a decade. Despite local protests and international concerns, thousands of families have been forcibly evicted to make way for a tourist development, after a private company was granted a 99-year lease on the lake and surrounding land. The lake is now completely filled in with sand, but little progress has been made in developing the area.

Tep Vanny has also supported activists from other communities who have been forcibly evicted or are at risk of eviction in Phnom Penh.

**APPEAL** State that Tep Vanny is a prisoner of conscience, detained solely for peacefully defending the right to housing and freedom of expression. Urge the authorities to immediately and unconditionally release her, drop all charges and criminal investigations against her, and publicly condemn and order an end to harassment and violence against human rights defenders.

▶ Prime Minister Samdech Hun Sen  
Office of the Prime Minister  
Jok Dimitrov Boulevard, Phnom Penh  
Cambodia

**Salutation:** Dear Prime Minister

**Postage:** World

▶ Her Excellency Dr Soeung Rathchavy  
Royal Embassy of Cambodia  
64 Brondesbury Park  
London NW6 7AT

**Salutation:** Your Excellency

Tashi  
Wangchuk  
China



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**Detained for promoting the Tibetan language**

Tibetan activist Tashi Wangchuk has been arbitrarily detained for over 18 months on charges of ‘inciting separatism’, which carry a sentence of up to 15 years in prison. He was detained in January 2016 after appearing in a short New York Times documentary, *A Tibetan’s Journey for Justice*, which follows his unsuccessful attempt to file a lawsuit over the lack of Tibetan-language education in schools. The police claim the film shows Tashi attempting to discredit the Chinese government’s international image and its ethnic minority policies.

When his lawyers visited in March 2017, they found he was suffering from joint pain and requested a medical examination. However, as they had to leave the remote region of Yushu shortly afterwards, it is not known whether treatment was provided.

Tashi is a long-standing advocate for greater Tibetan-language education in schools in areas populated by Tibetans. He has used social media to express concerns about many Tibetan children being unable to speak their native language fluently and over the gradual extinction of Tibetan culture.

**APPEAL** Urge the authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Tashi Wangchuk, a prisoner of conscience detained solely for exercising his right to freedom of expression. Pending his release, call on them to ensure international fair trial standards are observed, and that Tashi receives regular, unrestricted access to his family, lawyers and medical care, and is protected from torture or other ill-treatment.

▶ Chief Procurator of Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture People’s Procuratorate  
Yushu Zangzu Zizhizhou Renmin Jianchayuan  
Qionglong Lu, Jiegu Zhen, Yushu Shi  
Yushu Zangzu Zizhizhou  
Qinghai 815000  
People’s Republic of China

**Salutation:** Dear Procurator

**Postage:** World

▶ His Excellency Mr Liu Xiaoming  
Embassy of the People’s Republic of China  
49-51 Portland Place  
London W1B 1JL

**Salutation:** Your Excellency

Jatupat ‘Pai’  
Boonpattararaksa  
Thailand



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**Facing jail for calling for democracy**

Pro-democracy activist Jatupat ‘Pai’ Boonpattararaksa faces up to 25 years in prison for peacefully demonstrating against Thailand’s military rulers.

Since the coup in 2014, the student has taken part in protests calling for the restoration of democracy. In 2014, Pai and four other students were arrested and briefly detained after flashing a three-fingered salute – a sign of dissent taken from the *Hunger Games* film adopted by the pro-democracy movement – and wearing T-shirts spelling out the message ‘We don’t want the coup’. In 2015, Pai and 13 other members of the New Democracy Movement student group were held for 12 days after protesting in Bangkok. He took part in further demonstrations at his university in 2016.

As a result, Pai faces four criminal cases involving charges of sedition, violations of the ban on political gatherings, and violations of a restrictive law that governed the constitutional referendum. If convicted in all four cases, he could be jailed for up to 25 years.

Pai could face an additional 15 years in prison for posting a critical article on Facebook.

**APPEAL** Urge the Attorney General to stop misusing criminal law to target human rights defenders, pro-democracy activists and journalists. Urge him to drop the four cases against Jatupat Boonpattararaksa and ensure that prosecutors do not indict him or other activists on new charges for their peaceful exercise of rights and freedoms protected by international law.

▶ Attorney General  
Pol Sub Lt Pongniwat Yuthapanborparn  
Office of the Attorney General  
The Government Complex, Chaengwatthana Rd  
Tungsonghong, Laksi  
Bangkok 10210  
Thailand

**Salutation:** Dear Attorney General

**Postage:** World

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

**Salutation:** Your Excellency

Juan Almonte  
Herrera  
Dominican  
Republic



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**Eight years since 'disappearance'**

Eight years ago, Juan Almonte Herrera, a member of the Dominican Committee of Human Rights, was reportedly abducted in the capital, Santo Domingo, and has not been seen since. His family and lawyers say they have been put under surveillance by the police, and journalists investigating the case have reported being harassed and intimidated.

On 28 September 2009, Juan was stopped on the street by four armed police officers, forced into a car and driven away. After a legal challenge from his lawyers, a court ordered Juan's immediate release. But the police denied he was in custody and declared him a fugitive. At the end of October 2009, two charred bodies were found in a car in Santo Domingo. One was identified as Juan by his sister, but the DNA tests were negative, although the family has contested the results.

In December 2009, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights called on the Dominican authorities to properly investigate Juan's disappearance and protect his relatives and lawyers. But little has been done and Juan's family and lawyers have received no official communications on the investigation.

**APPEAL** Express your concern to the Public Prosecutor that the investigation led by his office seems to have made no significant progress. Urge the authorities to immediately establish the whereabouts of Juan Almonte Herrera. Call for a full, impartial and independent investigation, with the results made public, those responsible brought to justice, and full reparation provided to his family.

▶ Lcdo. Jean Alain Rodríguez Sánchez  
Procurador General de la República  
Palacio de Justicia, Ave. Jiménez Moya esq.  
Juan Ventura Simón  
Centro de los Heroes, Constanza, Maimón y  
Estero Hondo  
Santo Domingo  
Dominican Republic

**Salutation:** Dear Lcdo. Jean Alain Rodríguez Sánchez  
**Postage:** World

▶ His Excellency Dr Federico Alberto Cuello Camilo  
Embassy of the Dominican Republic  
8 Gloucester Square  
London W2 2TJ

**Salutation:** Your Excellency

Indigenous  
peoples in the  
Peace River  
Valley  
Canada



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**Dam threatens traditional way of life**

A decade on from the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, the Canadian government is pushing ahead with a hydro-electric dam against the wishes of First Nation peoples in British Columbia.

In the nineteenth century, the Dane-Zaa people signed a treaty with the government designed to protect their way of life in the Peace River Valley. This would be violated by the Site C dam, approved by the federal and provincial governments in 2014, despite their environmental assessment concluding it would 'severely undermine' Indigenous use of the land, make fishing unsafe, and submerge burial grounds and cultural and historical sites.

In January, the Federal Court of Appeal concluded that the federal government was acting within the terms of Canadian environmental legislation.

A new minority provincial government came to power in June, and has committed to respect Indigenous rights. It has ordered an independent expedited review of the dam's economic viability. Regardless of the outcome, it is important to strengthen the provincial government's hand to do the right thing.

**APPEAL** Tell the Prime Minister the Site C dam's harmful impact on the lives and well-being of indigenous peoples is beyond dispute: it would damage their rights to health, culture and livelihood, which are protected under Canadian and international law. Urge him to ensure the rights of First Nations are respected and that the dam will not proceed against their wishes.

▶ The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau  
Office of the Prime Minister  
80 Wellington Street  
Ottawa, ON  
Canada  
K1A 0A2

**Salutation:** Dear Prime Minister  
**Postage:** World

▶ Her Excellency Mrs Janice Charette  
High Commission of Canada  
Canada House  
Trafalgar Square  
London SW1Y 5BJ

**Salutation:** Your Excellency

Aser Mohamed  
Egypt



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**Teenager charged after torture 'confessions'**

Fourteen-year-old Aser Mohamed was arrested in January 2016, 'disappeared' for 34 days, and tortured into 'confessing' to various crimes. Now 16, he faces a prison sentence of up to 15 years.

On 12 January 2016, armed police and National Security Agency officers arrested the teenager in an early morning raid on his family home in Cairo. They refused to tell his parents where they were taking him, instead claiming he would only be briefly questioned. Over the following 34 days, the authorities repeatedly denied they were holding him.

Aser then appeared before the Supreme State Security Prosecution without a lawyer and was charged with membership of the banned Muslim Brotherhood group and participating in a hotel attack. When he denied the charges, the prosecutor reportedly responded: 'It seems that you want to go back to the electric shocks again.' Despite Egyptian law prohibiting pre-trial detention for under-15s, the prosecutor authorised Aser's continuing detention.

Aser is currently held in inhumane conditions.

**APPEAL** Call on the Egyptian authorities to release Aser Mohamed immediately. Pending his release, urge that he is protected from torture and other ill-treatment and allowed full access to his lawyer, medical treatment and his family. Call on them to impartially and effectively investigate his enforced disappearance and allegations of torture and other ill-treatment, and prosecute those responsible in a fair trial without recourse to the death penalty.

▶ President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi  
Office of the President  
Al Ittihadia Palace  
Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt

**Salutation:** Dear President  
**Postage:** World

▶ His Excellency Mr Nasser Ahmed Kamel  
Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt  
26 South Street  
London W1K 1DW

**Salutation:** Your Excellency