



## 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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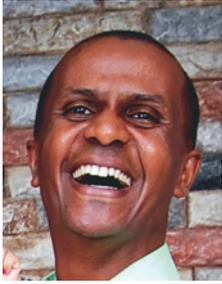
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Eskinder Nega  
**Ethiopia**



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**Imprisoned for defending freedom of expression**

Journalist Eskinder Nega is serving an 18-year prison sentence for speeches and articles criticising the Ethiopian government. He was arrested in September 2011, shortly after speaking in defence of press freedom at an event organised by an opposition party. In June 2012 he was convicted, in an unfair trial, of terrorism offences and high treason.

It was the eighth time that Eskinder had been arrested and prosecuted for his journalistic activities.

Ethiopia's Anti-Terrorism Proclamation enables the prosecution of legitimate and peaceful activities as 'terrorist' acts, and the authorities routinely use criminal charges and accusations of terrorism to silence dissenters.

For the past four years, the authorities have restricted Eskinder's contacts with friends and family. In early 2014, he was instructed to name four people, who had to be related to him, who would from then on be his only permitted visitors.

**APPEAL** Urge the Ethiopian authorities to remove the unlawful restrictions on who may visit Eskinder Nega in prison. Call on them to release him immediately and unconditionally. Tell them to stop using or threatening criminal proceedings to silence criticism, and to stop harassing journalists and human rights activists.

▶ Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn  
PO Box 1031  
Addis Ababa  
Ethiopia

**Salutation:** Dear Prime Minister

**Postage:** World

▶ His Excellency Mr Berhanu Kebede  
Embassy of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia  
17 Prince's Gate  
London SW7 1PZ

**Salutation:** Your Excellency

Teodora del Carmen Vásquez  
**El Salvador**



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**Punished for suffering a still-birth**

A court in San Salvador has upheld the 30-year prison sentence imposed on Teodora del Carmen Vásquez after she gave birth to a still-born baby.

On 13 July 2007 Teodora, who was expecting her second child, was at work when she felt a severe pain. She went into labour and was unconscious when she gave birth. When she came round, bleeding profusely, police handcuffed her and arrested her on suspicion of murder. Only then did they take her to hospital.

In El Salvador, women who suffer still-births are often suspected of having had an abortion, which is considered a crime in all circumstances. Teodora's trial for 'aggravated homicide' was deeply flawed: she was presumed guilty and could not afford an effective legal team.

In December 2017, after almost 10 years in prison, the same tribunal that sentenced her reviewed her case. It upheld her sentence and Teodora must now spend another 20 years behind bars.

**APPEAL** Call on the Minister of Justice to ensure the immediate release of Teodora del Carmen Vásquez and all other women incarcerated for pregnancy-related complications.

▶ Mauricio Ramírez Landaverde  
Minister of Justice and Public Security

**Email:** mramirez@seguridad.gob.sv

**Salutation:** Dear Minister

The postal service is insecure, so please send an email.

▶ Her Excellency Mrs Lidia Elisabeth Hayek-Weinmann  
Embassy of El Salvador  
8 Dorset Square 1st & 2nd Floors  
London NW1 6PU

**Salutation:** Your Excellency

Yu Wensheng  
**China**



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**Lawyer at risk of torture**

Yu Wensheng, a prominent human rights lawyer, was detained in Beijing on 19 January this year. He was on the way to drop his 13-year-old son off at school when the police took him away for questioning. They accused him of 'picking quarrels and provoking trouble'.

Yu Wensheng is being held incommunicado, without access to a lawyer and his family. At least five lawyers have been to the police station to try to see him, but the police refused their requests without giving any reasons. Yu Wensheng's wife, Xu Yan, tried to leave money for him to buy extra food and other items, but the police refused her every time.

On 27 January and 28 January 2018, the police raided Yu Wensheng's home and confiscated some documents and Xu Yan's mobile phone.

Yu Wensheng is at risk of torture and ill-treatment. He is a prisoner of conscience, detained solely for exercising his right to freedom of expression. Chinese law allows the police to refuse access to lawyers for up to six months in cases which they claim involve 'endangering national security'. This increases the risk of that prisoners will be tortured.

**APPEAL** Call on the authorities to release Yu Wensheng immediately and unconditionally, as he has been detained solely for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression. Urge them to ensure that Yu Wensheng has access to a lawyer of his choice and his family. Tell them to ensure that Yu Wensheng is not tortured or otherwise ill-treated.

▶ Meng Bin  
Director  
Shijingshan District Detention Centre  
Jia No. 1, Guchengnanli  
Shijingshanqu  
Beijing Shi 10043  
People's Republic of China

**Salutation:** Dear Director

**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

Azza Soliman  
Egypt

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**Prosecuted for defending human rights**

Lawyer Azza Soliman defends victims of torture, arbitrary detention, domestic abuse, and rape in Egypt. Over 20 years the authorities have harassed her, arrested her, and put her under surveillance. Pro-government media have smeared her. But Azza refuses to be intimidated.

Today Azza faces three trumped-up charges: tax evasion, operating a civil society organisation without proper registration, and slandering the country by saying that women in Egypt are in danger of rape. Her assets have been frozen, and she is banned from travel. If convicted, she could face a lengthy prison sentence.

The charges are part of Case 173, in which Egyptian judges have imprisoned 43 people working for non-government organisations (NGOs), and shut down several international NGOs. It is part of an orchestrated campaign to dismantle Egypt's human rights movement and crush dissent.

**APPEAL** Urge President al-Sisi to drop the charges against Azza Soliman, and lift the ban and asset freeze orders immediately and unconditionally. Call on him to drop Case 173 and lift the travel ban and asset freeze orders against human rights defenders and human rights organisations.

▶ President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi  
Office of the President  
Al Ittihadia Palace  
Cairo  
Arab Republic of Egypt  
**Salutation:** Your Excellency  
**Postage:** World

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

Matsumoto  
Kenji  
Japan

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**Sentenced to death despite mental disability**

This month Matsumoto Kenji reaches his 65th birthday – the 24th to be spent on death row. Kenji was sentenced to death on 17 September 1993 for two separate robberies and murders committed in the period between September 1990 and September 1991.

Matsumoto Kenji has a mental disability thought to be due to mercury poisoning (Minamata disease). According to his lawyer, police coerced him to confess by offering him food and telling him things such as 'be a man'. He was charged alongside his brother, Matsumoto Hiroshi, with whom he had a dependent relationship. Hiroshi committed suicide after his arrest warrant was issued. Despite all this, the court ruled that Kenji was mentally competent to be sentenced to death and that his confession was reliable.

After 24 years in Japan's harsh detention conditions, including solitary confinement and limited exercise time, Matsumoto Kenji now uses a wheelchair and has a delusional disorder. He is unable to assist his lawyer, and he does not understand the nature and purpose of the punishment imposed on him. He could be executed at any time.

**APPEAL** Call on the Minister of Justice not to execute Matsumoto Kenji and to introduce a moratorium on executions in Japan. Demand that Matsumoto Kenji and all other prisoners' death sentences be commuted. Urge the government to improve the treatment of death row inmates, and to end solitary confinement.

▶ Ministry of Justice  
1-1-1 Kasumigaseki  
Chiyoda-ku  
Tokyo 100-8977  
Japan  
**Salutation:** Dear Minister  
**Postage:** World

▶ His Excellency Mr Keiichi Hayashi  
Embassy of Japan  
101-104 Piccadilly  
London W1J 7JT  
**Salutation:** Your Excellency

Giulio Regeni  
Egypt

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**Research student's death unsolved**

Giulio Regeni, an Italian citizen and a doctoral student at Cambridge University, was arrested by plainclothes police in Cairo on 25 January 2016. He was in Egypt to conduct research for his PhD.

On 3 February 2016 Giulio's body was found on the side of the Cairo-Alexandria highway by passengers on a bus that had broken down. An autopsy showed that he had been tortured repeatedly for several days before his death.

The abduction, torture and murder raised suspicions that he died under torture while detained by Egyptian state agents. The Egyptian authorities deny this. But their apparent reluctance to conduct a thorough and independent investigation can only fuel the suspicions. Since early 2015, hundreds of Egyptian students, political activists and protesters have been abducted, tortured and forcibly disappeared by the National Security Agency.

The Italian authorities announced their own investigation into Giulio Regeni's death and demanded that Egypt co-operate. Egypt, however, failed to give the inquiry access to vital evidence and the Italian government recalled its ambassador in April 2016.

**APPEAL** Urge Egypt's public prosecutor to work with the Italian authorities to establish the truth about what happened to Giulio Regeni, investigate the allegations of torture and make the findings public. Call on him to bring to justice those suspected of criminal responsibility for Giulio's torture and death. Urge him to consult Giulio's family and provide them with appropriate and adequate reparation.

▶ President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi  
Office of the President  
Al Ittihadia Palace  
Cairo  
Arab Republic of Egypt  
**Salutation:** Your Excellency  
**Postage:** World

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

## Rodrigo Mundaca Chile



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### Under threat for defending water rights

Rodrigo Mundaca speaks up for rural communities in Petorca Province, Chile, who depend on water for their lives and livelihoods. Water is scarce in Petorca, and in the competition for this essential resource the communities are losing out to powerful politicians and businesses. Rodrigo and his organisation, MODATIMA, use their voices to tell the wider public what is happening and expose illegal water extraction. For this, they have been threatened and attacked.

Between 2012 and 2015, the Chilean authorities initiated four criminal cases against Rodrigo. In March 2015, he was physically attacked. A series of death threats against MODATIMA members has made them afraid to leave their homes. Also, Rodrigo tells us that defenders of the right to water in Petorca Province find it difficult to obtain employment and are losing their jobs because of their activism.

■ Please time your appeal letter to coincide with World Water Day on 22 March.

**APPEAL** Ask the Chilean authorities to provide effective protection to Rodrigo Mundaca and all other members of the Defence Movement of Earth, Environmental Protection and the Access to Water (MODTIMA) who feel they are at risk. Protection measures must be devised in consultation with them and in accordance with their wishes. Urge them to publicly recognise the importance and legitimacy of the work human rights defenders do on land, territory and the environment.

▶ Mario Fernández Baeza  
Ministerio del Interior y de Seguridad Pública  
Palacio de la Moneda  
Santiago de Chile  
Chile

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

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

## Bobomurod Abdullayev Uzbekistan



### Journalist held in torture jail

Since September 2017 Bobomurod Abdullayev has been incarcerated in one of the most notorious detention centres in Uzbekistan, where torture is common. In prison he has had only limited access to lawyers and his family. None of their meetings were private.

Bobomurod Abdullayev is an independent journalist, sports commentator and political analyst who has contributed articles to international media organisations. He was arrested on 27 September by the National Security Services (SNB) in the capital, Tashkent, and was taken to their pre-trial detention centre. The SNB later searched his home and confiscated books, a computer, memory cards and other equipment.

On 1 October, in a closed hearing, a court ordered his continued detention for allegedly preparing and distributing online materials in an attempt to overthrow the constitutional order of the state. Amnesty's research into the SNB pre-trial detention centre in Tashkent shows that prisoners are tortured in interrogation rooms, punishment cells, toilets and shower rooms, and in purpose-built soundproof torture cells.

**APPEAL** Urge the Uzbekistani authorities to release Bobomurod Abdullayev immediately and drop the charges against him, as he appears to be detained solely for his journalistic work and criticising the government. Ask them to protect him from torture and ill-treatment pending his release, and to ensure that he has full access to legal safeguards, in accordance with Uzbekistan's obligations under international human rights law. These safeguards include regular access to his family and a lawyer of his choice

▶ Rustam Inoyatov  
Chairman of the National Security Service  
9 Matbuotchilar Street  
Tashkent  
Uzbekistan

**Salutation:** Dear Chairman  
**Postage:** World

▶ His Excellency Mr Alisher Shaykhov  
Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan  
41 Holland Park  
London W11 3RP  
**Salutation:** Your Excellency

## Hadidiya and Humsa Occupied Palestinian Territories



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### Communities face demolition

The Palestinian inhabitants of Hadidiya and Humsa hamlets in the Jordan Valley region of the West Bank are at constant risk of having their homes demolished by the Israeli army. The residents have pursued legal action against demolition orders since the 1980s, but to no avail.

The army forbids the residents to build permanent structures, so they live in tents and shacks which provide little protection from the harsh desert weather. But even these structures are considered 'illegal' and have been demolished on several occasions. They are not allowed to connect to electricity or water grids, or to drill new wells, or to use wells or roads in the immediate area: these are exclusively for Israelis living in nearby settlements – which are unlawful under international law.

When our staff visited the hamlets last year, residents told us that the level of harassment from the Israeli army had increased. In Humsa, the residents are ordered to stay out in the hills with their cattle from 5am to midnight whenever military training takes place. In 2016 that happened 40 times.

**APPEAL** Call for the demolition and expulsion orders on Hadidiya and Humsa to be rescinded and for confiscated property to be returned to the residents. Urge the Israeli authorities to remove the discriminatory rules that deny the residents access to water, electricity and other basic requirements for survival.

▶ Benjamin Netanyahu  
Prime Minister  
Office of the Prime Minister  
3 Kaplan Street  
Hakirya  
Jerusalem 91950  
Israel

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

▶ His Excellency Mr Mark Regev  
Embassy of Israel  
2 Palace Green Kensington  
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**Salutation:** Your Excellency