TEMPLATE PRESS RELEASE:

Amnesty International [group]

**PRESS RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: THURSDAY 1 NOVEMBER 2018 [OR ANY DATE **AFTER** 1 NOV]

**[TOWN] RESIDENTS JOIN GLOBAL LETTER-WRITING ACTION FOR WOMEN SUFFERING ‘BRUTAL’ PERSECUTION**

**Amnesty International [group]’s letter-writing campaign launches to support women who have been locked up, harassed or killed for defending their rights**

**“Letters sent from [town] will help right wrongs and change lives” - Amnesty group chair [name]**

Amnesty International [group] has today [date] launched its flagship annual letter-writing campaign, *Write for Rights*,across [area], to help change the lives of people around the world who are currently suffering human rights abuses.

[Town]residents are invited to send a card, email or tweet of support to twelve individuals or groups of people who have had their freedoms denied. Letters can also be written directly to those in power to demand an end to the abuses.

This year, the campaign will support women human rights defenders around the world who have been attacked, jailed, harassed or killed for standing up for their rights, including:

* Atena Daemi, jailed for speaking out against the death penalty in Iran;
* ‘Mother Mushroom’, a Vietnamese blogger serving a 10 year prison sentence for blogging about police brutality and environmental issues;
* Geraldine Chacón, a 24-year-old law graduate from Venezuela who is on conditional release from detention and banned from leaving her country because of her work educating young at-risk people about their human rights;
* Women and girls impacted by Northern Ireland’s restrictive abortion laws;
* Marielle Franco, a councillor from Rio de Janeiro killed for her work defending marginalised people in the city.

[Option: Amnesty Group is hosting its letter writing event at [insert details]]

Last year, more than 5.5 million messages were sent, having a huge impact on individuals’ lives. [Option for something personal i.e.: Residents in [town] played a big part in this success, with hundreds of letters written during our *Write for Rights* event.]

[Optional quote – amend and tweak as you wish]:

Amnesty International [GROUP] spokesperson, [NAME] said:

“In the one hundredth anniversary year of the Suffragettes, women around the world are still rising against brutal persecution and discrimination. From speaking out against sexual harassment to promoting abortion rights, women are sending a loud message that their rights are worth fighting for.

“But the situation for many women human rights defenders around the world is bleak – often harassed, intimated, locked up or even killed just for standing up for what they believe in.

“That is why millions of people around the world will be coming together this year to write messages of hope and solidarity to some of the brave women who have been jailed or intimidated for defending their rights.

“At Amnesty, we know that the simple act of writing a letter can make a huge difference to a person’s life. Letter writing can – and does - quite literally help save lives.

“For someone suffering behind bars or being targeted by the authorities, receiving messages of support can make all the difference. And when the letters come flooding in, those in power will often feel pressured to act against the abuses being committed.

“We hope that many [town] residents will get involved in this simple yet powerful act of solidarity. Letters sent from [town] will help right wrongs and change lives.”

Amnesty International’s *Write for Rights* campaign

*Write for Rights* goes back to the very roots of Amnesty International, which was founded in 1961, with Amnesty’s early campaigners writing letters of support to those affected by human rights abuses, as well as letters of concern to governments around the world.

Letters written during previous *Write for Rights* campaigns have:

* helped support **Chelsea Manning**, the US army whistle blower who was freed in May this year after outgoing US president Barack Obama cut short her 35-year sentence
* helped push Peru to drop charges against **Máxima Acuña** who was attacked by the police for standing up to one of the world’s biggest gold and copper mines when it evicted her family from their farmland
* helped put pressure on the US to release **Albert Woodfox**, who was freed in February 2016 after being held in solitary confinement for over 40 years.

**ENDS**

**Background information**

For more information on *Write for Rights* 2018 and for pictures, illustrations and further detail on the cases please contact [NAME].

Woman human rights defenders

Woman human rights defenders are increasingly being targeted not only because of their activism, but because of their identity as a woman. Since 1998, at least 3,500 human rights defenders have been killed. Women human rights defenders are often under increased threat – faced with gender-based violence as well as forms of abuse, harassment and attacks that other human rights defenders might face.

**Media contact:**

For more information contact:

(Name, number, email)

TEMPLATE LETTER TO EDITOR

Sir / Madam,

As the festive period draws close and people begin writing cards to their loved ones, thousands of people across the UK will also be writing messages to people suffering human rights abuses around the world

Amnesty’s annual *Write for Rights* campaign is based on a simple idea – that writing a letter can help change a life. In the past, the letters have helped free people unfairly imprisoned, reduce threats against human rights activists, and transform lives for the better.

Amnesty [town] group is delighted to host another *Write for Rights* event again this year and invites everyone in [town] to come along.

Readers of [paper] can help make a big difference to people’s lives. From Atena Daemi, jailed for speaking out against the death penalty in Iran, to Geraldine Chacón, a 24-year-old Venezuelan banned from leaving the country because of her work educating young people about their rights; individuals around the world will benefit hugely from our messages of support and hope.

Yours sincerely

[name]

[group]