

TAKE ACTION



Real lives

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

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Nasrin Sotoudeh Iran

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38 years and 148 lashes for defending women's rights

Human rights lawyer Nasrin Sotoudeh has been sentenced to 38 years in prison and 148 lashes after two unfair trials. The charges against her stem solely from her peaceful human rights work, including her work as a lawyer defending women who protested against Iran's abusive forced hijab (veiling) laws. Hers is the harshest sentence recorded against a human rights defender in Iran in recent years.

Nasrin was arrested at her home in Tehran on 13 June 2018, and taken to Evin prison, where she has been ever since. She was denied a lawyer of her choosing for months, and refused to attend her trial, in December 2018, saying the proceedings were unfair.

After her arrest, the authorities told her that in September 2016 a court had convicted her, in her absence, in a separate case and sentenced her to five years in prison.

A fearless advocate for human rights, Nasrin has faced years of harassment, intimidation and imprisonment.

APPEAL Urge the authorities to release Nasrin Sotoudeh immediately and unconditionally, and pending her release ensure she has regular contact with her family and a lawyer of her choosing. Call on them to stop criminalising the defence of women's rights, including peaceful protest against forced hijab, and abolish forced hijab laws.

▶ Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei
c/o Permanent Mission of Iran to the UN
Chemin du Petit-Saconnex
281209 Geneva
Switzerland

Salutation: Dear Supreme Leader

Postage: World

▶ His Excellency HE Hamid Baeidinejad
Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran
16 Princes Gate
London SW7 1PT

Salutation: Your Excellency

Tran Thi Nga Vietnam

© Getty Images



Held in solitary for peaceful activism

Human rights defender Tran Thi Nga, also known as 'Thúy Nga', was arrested in January 2017. She was accused of 'conducting propaganda against the state' for her writings and online videos.

On 25 July 2017, the court of Ha Nam province convicted Tran Thi Nga and sentenced her to nine years in prison and five years' house arrest. She is being held in solitary confinement. After visiting her in January 2019, her family reported that she suffered from backache and depression. Whenever she is allowed to leave her cell, a prison guard accompanies her and she is forbidden to talk to or contact anyone in the prison, as punishment for 'stubbornness': refusing to 'confess' to her alleged crimes.

Tran Thi Nga is known for her peaceful activism and advocacy on land and labour rights and environmental issues. She is a prisoner of conscience imprisoned solely for peacefully exercising her human rights.

APPEAL Urge the authorities to release Tran Thi Nga immediately and unconditionally. Pending her release ask them to treat her humanely, allow her to receive visitors including family, friends and lawyers, and move her to a detention centre in her home town.

▶ State President Nguyen Phu Trong
So 2, Hung Vuong
Ba Dinh
Hanoi
Vietnam

Salutation: Dear President

Postage: World

▶ His Excellency Mr An Ngoc Tran
Embassy of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam
12-14 Victoria Road
London W8 5RD

Salutation: Your Excellency

Malak al-Kashef Egypt

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Transgender woman held in all-male prison

Malak al-Kashef, 19, is a transgender woman human rights defender, arbitrarily detained in the all-male Mazra'at Tora prison. Malak is known for her activism on LGBTI rights in Egypt.

Officers of the National Security Agency (NSA) arrested Malak at her family's residence in Giza on 6 March 2019. She was one of dozens arrested in connection with anti-government protests over a train crash on 27 February that set Cairo's main railway station ablaze, killing 25 people. Malak had used social media to call for protests over the fire. She now faces trumped-up charges of 'aiding a terrorist organisation' and 'misusing social media to commit a crime punishable by law'.

On 10 March, the authorities subjected her to a forced anal examination at a government hospital, where she was also subjected to other forms of sexual assault. She is currently held in solitary confinement.

APPEAL Urge the authorities to drop all the charges against Malak al-Kashef and to release her immediately and unconditionally. Until her release, they must protect Malak from torture and other ill-treatment including sexual violence. Call on them to end medical examinations to determine whether a suspect has engaged in anal sex, as such examinations constitute torture.

▶ Public Prosecutor
Nabil Sadek
Office of the Public Prosecutor
Madinat al-Rehab
New Cairo
Egypt

Salutation: Dear Counsellor

Postage: World

▶ His Excellency Mr Tarek Ahmed Ibrahim Adel
Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt
26 South Street
London W1K 1DW

Salutation: Your Excellency

Hwang Won North Korea



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TV producer missing for 50 years

On 11 December 1969, an aeroplane travelling from the South Korean city of Gangneung to the capital, Seoul, was hijacked to North Korea. Thirty-nine passengers returned to South Korea in February 1970, but 11 were held in North Korea – including TV producer Hwang Won.

Hwang Won is among hundreds of people who vanished in illegal operations by North Korean agents after the Korean War. Despite repeated requests from his son Hwang In-cheol, the North Korean authorities have refused to confirm where he is, or whether he is alive or dead. After piecing together limited information from a broker who took people out of North Korea, Hwang In-cheol has strong reason to believe his father is still alive.

If he is alive, Hwang Won turns 82 this year. Time is running out for him to be reunited with his family in South Korea.

APPEAL Urge the President of South Korea to ask the North Korean authorities to immediately investigate the cases of Hwang Won and others who may be held in North Korea against their will, provide accurate information about their fate, and respect their right to return to South Korea.

▶ President of the Republic of Korea
Moon Jae-in
1 Cheongwadae-ro, Jongno-gu
Seoul 03048
Republic of Korea

Salutation: Dear President Moon

Postage: World

▶ Her Excellency Ms Enna Park
Embassy of the Republic of Korea
60 Buckingham Gate
London SW1E 6AJ

Salutation: Your Excellency

Eren Keskin Turkey



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Lawyer hounded for speaking out

Human rights lawyer Eren Keskin is at risk of imprisonment as a result of over 140 prosecutions for her role as the symbolic editor-in-chief of the now closed Kurdish newspaper, Özgür Gündem. In 79 of them, she has been convicted and sentenced to a total of 12 years and six months in prison and almost 500,000 lira (£65,000) in fines. Not paying the fines could also lead to a prison sentence. This amounts to judicial harassment of an outspoken defender of human rights.

Over the years, Eren Keskin has been repeatedly prosecuted, and sometimes convicted, for exercising her right to freedom of expression. In 1995 Eren was sentenced to two and a half years' imprisonment and served six months in prison for using the word 'Kurdistan' in an article. Eren has also been physically attacked and has received death threats for defending human rights.

APPEAL Urge the Minister of Justice to ensure Eren Keskin can exercise her right to freedom of expression and carry out her human rights work free from reprisals and judicial harassment.

▶ Abdulhamit Gül
Ministry of Justice
Adalet Bakanlığı
06659 Ankara
Turkey

Salutation: Dear Minister

Postage: Europe

▶ His Excellency Ümit Yalçın
Embassy of the Republic of Turkey
43 Belgrave Square
London SW1X 8PA

Salutation: Your Excellency

130 men and boys Cameroon



Still missing after four years

On 27 December 2014, Cameroonian security forces sealed off and searched two villages in the far north of the country, after repeated attacks there by the Boko Haram armed group. As well as killing nine people and destroying at least 70 properties in the villages of Magdeme and Doublé, the security forces – gendarmes, police and military – arbitrarily arrested hundreds of people. At least 25 later died in custody.

More than three years later, at least 130 boys and men arrested on that day are still missing. The Cameroon government claims to have no knowledge of their whereabouts. They are victims of enforced disappearance.

The impact has been severe on the women and children left behind. They live in fear and uncertainty, risking abuse themselves as they search for the truth about the fate of their missing loved ones.

APPEAL Urge the President to ensure a full, impartial and independent investigation into the enforced disappearance of more than 130 boys and men from Magdeme and Doublé. Ask for the results to be made public. Call for measures to prevent abductions and enforced disappearances, and end impunity.

▶ President
Paul Biya
P.O. Box 95
Yaoundé
Republic of Cameroon

Salutation: Your Excellency

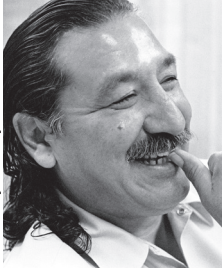
Postage: World

▶ Albert Fotabong
High Commissioner
84 Holland Park
London W11 3SB

Salutation: Your Excellency

Leonard Peltier USA

© Courtesy of Jeffrey Scott



Health failing after decades in prison

Leonard Peltier, an Anishinabe-Lakota Native American, has been in prison for more than four decades, despite concerns that his trial was unfair. Now aged 74, he is imprisoned in Florida, 2,000 miles from his family in North Dakota. The distance and expense make visits almost impossible.

At the time of his arrest, Leonard was a leading member of the American Indian Movement (AIM), which campaigned for Native American rights. In 1975 two FBI agents were killed during a confrontation with AIM members on the Pine Ridge reservation in South Dakota. Leonard was convicted of their murders, although it later emerged that the FBI coerced an eyewitness and withheld evidence. He is serving two consecutive life sentences.

After decades in prison, including time in solitary confinement, Leonard is in poor health. He has diabetes and in 2016 was diagnosed with an aneurysm of the abdominal aorta, which could kill him if it ruptures.

APPEAL Urge the US authorities to grant Leonard Peltier (inmate register no.89637-132) clemency and release him. In the meantime, they should immediately transfer Leonard Peltier to the Federal Correctional Institution in Oxford, Wisconsin. This would bring him closer to his family and to proper medical facilities.

▶ Chief John O'Brien
Designation & Sentence Computation Center
Federal Bureau of Prisons
Grand Prairie Office Complex
346 Marine Forces Drive
Grand Prairie, TX 75051
USA

Salutation: Dear Chief O'Brien
Postage: World

▶ His Excellency The Honourable
Robert Wood Johnson IV
American Embassy
33 Nine Elms Lane
London SW11 7US

Salutation: Your Excellency

Lesbians and gay men in Chechnya Russian Federation

© Al/Jon Comejo



Homophobic crackdown resumes

In late 2018, the Chechen authorities unleashed a new wave of attacks on people believed to be gay or lesbian. At least 40 have been arbitrarily detained and tortured in Chechnya, a republic in the south of Russia. At least two people are reported to have been tortured to death. The authorities are also said to be destroying people's passports, making it difficult for them to flee Chechnya in future.

In a similar onslaught in 2017, about 100 gay men were abducted and killed – and no-one has been held to account. The failure of the Russian authorities to investigate these attacks has enabled the homophobic crackdown to resume. The Russian Federation has an obligation under international human rights law to prohibit discrimination and to investigate and prosecute hate crimes.

APPEAL Urge President Putin to carry out a prompt, effective and thorough investigation into the reports of homophobic detention, torture and killings in Chechnya and to ensure that anyone found guilty or complicit in such crimes is brought to justice. Urge him to ensure the safety of those who may be at risk in Chechnya because of their real or perceived sexual orientation. Call on him to condemn in the strongest terms possible any homophobic comments made by officials.

▶ Vladimir Putin
President of the Russian Federation
Ul. Ilyinka, 23
103132 Moscow
Russian Federation

Salutation: Dear President
Postage: Europe

▶ His Excellency Dr Alexander V Yakovenko,
Embassy of the Russian Federation,
6/7 Kensington Palace Gardens,
London, W8 4QX

Salutation: Your Excellency

Women and girls of Mkhondo South Africa

© AI



Inadequate healthcare puts lives at risk

For the women and girls of Mkhondo municipality in Mpumalanga Province, pregnancy and childbirth can be difficult and dangerous. The health district they live in, Gert Sibande, is one of the worst performing in South Africa: maternal mortality and teenage pregnancy rates are high. But although antenatal care is free, it can be an intimidating experience.

Women and girls say nurses are sometimes physically rough, shout at girls for getting pregnant, or gossip in front of other patients. Long waiting times and shortages of HIV medicine and contraceptives make it difficult for women to plan and maintain their health. Women in labour face huge costs for private transport because of a critical shortage of ambulances.

Things have improved a little since we started our campaign to improve reproductive health services in Mkhondo. For example, the antenatal clinic in Amsterdam, a typical town in the area, now opens seven days a week, so working women no longer lose pay when they go for a check-up. But more progress is needed.

APPEAL Urge the provincial Department of Health to remove all barriers that prevent women and girls in Mkhondo municipality accessing ante-natal care and emergency health services. Ask the Minister to introduce accountability mechanisms for breaches of confidentiality and privacy in clinics.

▶ Ms Sasekani Manzini
MEC for Health
Mpumalanga Province
No. 7 Government Boulevard, Building No. 3
Riverside Park, Extension 2
Nelspruit 1200
South Africa

Salutation: Dear Minister Manzini
Postage: World

▶ Her Excellency Ms Nomatamba Tambo
High Commission of the Republic of South Africa
South Africa House
Trafalgar Square
London WC2N 5DP

Salutation: Your Excellency