

# Amnesty International UK

## NAMCAR Newsletter June 2021



### North America and the Caribbean

Canada, Cuba, Dominican Republic, English Speaking Caribbean, Haiti, USA

Hello everyone,

We hope this finds you well. We are delighted to welcome **Fareeha Ahmed**, our new **AIUK Country Coordinator** for the **Caribbean States excluding Cuba** (Dominican Republic, English Speaking Caribbean, Haiti). Fareeha's first task will be to set up a new social media Instagram account for the Caribbean states.

Very Best Wishes from the Namcar team.

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## CANADA

**Amnesty International Report 2020/21: The State of the World's Human Rights**

Click here for: [Canada](#)



### Violations of the rights of Indigenous Peoples (Ongoing Action)

Years of campaigning led by Indigenous women, girls, and two-spirit people resulted in government finally calling an inquiry to investigate the scope and scale of violence against Indigenous women, girls, and two-spirit persons, and to identify solutions to end the violence. In June 2019, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls issued its final report, including 231 Calls for Justice. **The federal government committed to creating a National Action Plan by June 2020** to transform the Calls for Justice into concrete actions, but has delayed creation of the plan, and a timeline and process to create it remains unknown.

Please find a link to a report issued by Amnesty Canada in March this year and entitled ("[No More Stolen Sisters](#)" Campaign Guide). It does focus mainly on actions in Canada but makes very interesting reading and will inspire you to take the action below.

### ACTION REQUEST

Please keep sending an e-mail or **Write a letter** to Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations Carolyn Bennett, calling on her to create a National Action Plan to end violence against First Nations, Métis, and Inuit women, girls, and two-spirit persons.

## CUBA

**Amnesty International Report 2020/21: The State of the World's Human Rights**

Click here for Cuba: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/americas/cuba/report-cuba/>

### STOP PRESS:

Luis Manuel Otero Alcántara was reportedly released from hospital on May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021.



<https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/leading-cuban-dissident-discharged-hospital-after-4-weeks-2021-05-31/>

Luis Manuel is a key figure in the **San Isidro Movement**, a diverse group of independent artists, journalists and activists who defend freedom of expression in Cuba.

He had been held seemingly under state custody in a hospital in Havana since 2 May, with little contact with the outside world and reportedly highly restricted visits, solely for peacefully exercising his freedom of expression. He was named a prisoner of conscience by Amnesty.

An **Urgent Action** was issued on 20<sup>th</sup> May, and many UK activists wrote emails to the President. Thank you very much to all who took action on his behalf.

No update has been issued yet by the IS, but actions should be paused until we have further news. More details of the case here:

<https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/AMR2541472021ENGLISH.pdf>

### **LAUNCH OF NEW CAMPAIGN: #TheEternalFlame**

The new campaign in response to the recent waves of detentions and harassment of members of Cuba's **San Isidro Movement** should be launched in the UK in early June. Apologies for the delay, which is due to technical issues at the IS providing the key materials (a film and an online petition) in English.

### **CUBAN POETRY AT FESTIVAL OF SOCIAL JUSTICE**

The poem, "**Las estrellas me ayudan / The stars help me**", by **Pablo Pacheco Avila**, was read by Sue Bingham at the online **Poetry for Social Justice** event on 27<sup>th</sup> May, organised by the Reading Amnesty Group. Pablo, a journalist and former prisoner of conscience, wrote the poem in prison. He served 7 years of a 20 year sentence and was exiled to Spain.

You can watch the event here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U4yBJ6xA4wY>  
Sue's contribution is from 1.05.56 to 1.09.29

### **CARIBBEAN STATES (EXCLUDING CUBA)**

The **Amnesty Report for 2020/21: The State of the World's Human Rights** has entries for:

**Dominican Republic:** <https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/americas/dominican-republic/report-dominican-republic/>

and **Trinidad and Tobago:** <https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/americas/trinidad-and-tobago/report-trinidad-and-tobago/>

## USA

**Amnesty International Report 2020/21: The State of the World's Human Rights**

Click here for: [USA](#)

### Freeing People from immigration detention



Over one hundred leading US immigration, civil rights, and human rights organizations called on the Department of Homeland Security to immediately halt the deportations of asylum-seeking parents and their children from the South Texas Family Residential Center in Dilley, Texas. You can read AIUSA's **media release** here. This is Amnesty USA's top priority for the first quarter of 2021.

### ACTION REQUEST

**Online action** – Just follow the link: **immigration action** which works outside of the US.

**Tweet** @POTUS and @JoeBiden to free people from immigration detention including all families.

**Write** to raise the issue with the US ambassador in London:

Her Excellency Linda Thomas-Greenfield, U.S. Embassy London, 33 Nine Elms Lane, London SW11 7US.

### Death Penalty

The **Amnesty International Death Penalty Report 2020** was released on 21 April. Here's the link: <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/ACT5037602021ENGLISH.PDF>  
You'll find the USA from pages 17 to 23.

Let's start with the good news:

The Governor of the US state of **Virginia** has signed into law a bill **abolishing the death penalty**, making Virginia the 23<sup>rd</sup> abolitionist state in the USA. Significantly, this is the first Southern state to abolish the death penalty.

AI USA has issued a statement to welcome the news, available from this link:

<https://www.amnestyusa.org/press-releases/virginia-abolishes-the-death-penalty/>



A very Urgent Action for **Quintin Jones** was issued on 13 May with an execution date of 19 May 2021. We were highlighting in particular that the sentencing jury was presented with a since discredited theory regarding his “future dangerousness”, which proved to be a key factor leading to his death sentence; and the impact of the ineffective legal representation he received, which resulted in key appeal deadlines being missed. Here is a [video](#) from the New York Times where he is asking for clemency. Sadly he was executed.

(PHOTO: Texas Department of Criminal Justice via Associated Press)

### Guantánamo Detention Centre

On the 19th anniversary of the Detention Centre, Amnesty issued this report:  
**USA: Right the Wrong, Decision Time on Guantánamo.**

### ACTION REQUEST

Please **share the report** as widely as possible. If you can, use your local press.

Please **keep writing** to Joe Biden. There is now a petition online. Here’s the link:  
<https://www.amnesty.org/en/get-involved/take-action/dose-guantanamo/>

### FILM: *The Mauritanian*

A Hollywood production about Guantánamo and Mohamedou Ould Salahi was released in the US on 19 February 2021 and is now available in the United Kingdom. Amnesty International is endorsing the movie and partnered with the production team for a joint launch. You can watch the trailer here: [“The Mauritanian”](#).

The film was released in the UK on 1st April. We are planning to use it as a tool to propel our work to close Guantánamo this year, which we feel hopeful about in the new Biden administration.

The film is based on the extraordinary story of Salahi being held for fourteen years without charge in Guantánamo and his memoir, *Guantánamo Diary*. Jodie Foster, who acts as Salahi's lawyer in the film, won Best Supporting Actress at the Golden Globe Awards.

Thank you to the **Lewes Amnesty Group** which has been very active regarding the closure of the Guantánamo Detention Centre. An action was organised on Saturday 29 May 2021 in Brighton by the Lewes Amnesty Group to "Close Guantánamo Now". Petitions were signed, leaflets distributed. Took part in the action: the Kingston, Croydon, Lewes, Brighton and London Amnesty Groups, the Guantánamo Justice Campaign, the North America Country Coordinator, the Amnesty Kent Network and Amnesty UK.



Photo: Katie Vandyck

The Biden administration has approved three [detainees at Guantánamo Bay](#) for release to countries that agree to impose security conditions on them, including the oldest of the remaining wartime prisoners, lawyers and United States government officials said on Monday.

The approvals raised to nine the number of the [40 detainees currently at the wartime prison](#) who have been approved for transfer to other countries. But it is unclear where the three men will go, or when, in part because the State Department has to make diplomatic and security arrangements with countries to take them. Here is the [full Article](#) from the New York Times.

## Justice

A year ago: **The 25th of May 2020 was a day that changed the world forever.** Officer Derek Chauvin and three other Minneapolis Police Officers tortured and extrajudicially executed George Floyd. Darnella Frazier, a 17-year-old Black woman, filmed the murder, released the video, and the planet erupted with rage at yet another police killing of a Black man in the USA. George Floyd was a father, a brother, a son, a partner, and a friend. His life was cut short, over a call to the police over a potentially fraudulent cash bill.

**Derek Chauvin** was found guilty of killing **George Floyd**. In spite of this verdict, we still have a system that is racist to its core. The system of policing in the USA must change and we must work towards it.

[George Floyd's family marches in Minneapolis to mark the first anniversary of his death.](#)

AIUSA's media statement is here: <https://www.amnestyusa.org/press-releases/conviction-of-derek-chauvin-a-measure-of-accountability-police-reform-still-needed/>

Statement by UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet on guilty verdict in George Floyd case:

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=27016&LangID=E>

### **Hate Crimes**

Joe Biden's Newly-signed hate crime legislation is a major step forward. Here's AI UK's [Press Release](#)

### **SOLIDARITY ACTION REQUEST** (Ongoing Action)

**Kelly Gonzalez Aguilar** was freed from US immigration detention after 2 years and 11 months.

Kelly, a 23-year-old transgender woman, fled Honduras at 12 years old.

Please cease all appeals to authorities, but feel free to continue sending support letters to Kelly at the home of her sponsors. Kelly Gonzalez Aguilar, 5721 Genoa St., Oakland, CA, 94608 USA

### **SOLIDARITY ACTION REQUEST** (Ongoing Action)

#### **Chelsea Manning Update**



After she attempted suicide, a federal judge ordered that Chelsea Manning be released from jail in Virginia. Ms Manning had been in jail since May 2019 for refusing to testify before a grand jury investigating WikiLeaks.

Solidarity letters can continue to be sent to:

Chelsea Manning c/o Queerious Labs 3542 Fruitvale Ave, #124 Oakland, CA 94602, USA

#### **Leonard Peltier**



Amnesty International has long called for clemency and release for Native American activist Leonard Peltier, due to fair trial concerns, the exhaustion of his appeals and his having served more than 40 years in prison, some of which were spent in solitary confinement, for a crime he has always claimed he did not commit. The threat of COVID-19 underscores the urgency of this call, as Peltier is 75 years old and has serious health concerns.

**NEW:** AI Denmark have received a request on behalf of an artist who is taking part in an art project in the UK. They would like to collaborate with Amnesty International and they are looking for a list of political prisoners and their addresses to which the public can send postcards to. Leonard Peltier will be part of this project.

### **ACTION REQUEST** (Ongoing Action)

Please continue to urge President Biden to grant clemency to Leonard Peltier and release him. You can email or write a letter.

President Joe Biden

The White House

# Amnesty International UK

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Email: [www.whitehouse.gov/contact](http://www.whitehouse.gov/contact)  
Twitter: @POTUS and @JoeBiden  
Instagram: @POTUS and @joebiden  
Facebook: @POTUS and @joebiden

Contact the Federal Bureau of Prisons and urge them to transfer Leonard Peltier to a facility closer to his family.

Link to Urgent Action: <https://www.amnestyusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/uaa01619-1.pdf>

### **SOLIDARITY**

Please keep showing your support and **send solidarity cards** to:  
Leonard Peltier, #89637-132  
USP Coleman 1 , US Penitentiary  
PO Box 1033, Coleman, FL 33521 USA