

# WRITE FOR RIGHTS 2022



AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL





# YOUR WORDS HAVE POWER

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**‘Protection of UK citizens abroad is discretionary for the government. Literally, ministers choose which British citizens to protect. Campaigning makes a huge difference to their decisions. Your voices help keep people safe.’**

Richard Ratcliffe – husband of Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe, who was detained for six years in Iran and featured in Write for Rights 2016

**This winter join hundreds of thousands of Amnesty supporters around the world by taking part in our annual Write for Rights campaign and showing your support for people enduring human rights abuses.**

The 2022 campaign focuses on the right to protest. Throughout history, people coming together to demonstrate against injustice have changed the world for the better, from stopping wars to acting against racism.

Protest is powerful, but this precious right is under attack globally from politicians, governments and regimes who fear change and accountability. The people featured in Write for Rights 2022 know this only too well: they were all punished for using their right to protest.

But your messages can bring about real change, pressuring authorities to free prisoners and protect the vulnerable. They also provide comfort and support for those who are doing the difficult and often dangerous work of speaking out for human rights.

### Global solidarity works

Write for Rights shows that when we act together, we can change lives. More than 4.6 million messages of support and letters of appeal were sent during the campaign in 2021. They had a huge impact on people, communities and organisations who had suffered abuses and were demanding justice.

- More than 500,000 actions were taken for Bernardo Caal Xol, an Indigenous teacher, trade unionist and environmental campaigner in Guatemala. He was released from prison in March 2022.
- More than 660,000 actions were taken for Zhang Zhan, a citizen journalist who spoke out about politics and human rights in China. We continue to work for her release.

**‘Amnesty International gave me hope of freedom and now I am free. I am now with my family, I am now with my daughters, I am now with my partner. My mother has already cried with happiness to see me free. Thanks to each one of you, thanks to each one of you for spreading and sharing my letters.’**

Bernardo Caal Xol



'It gives me power to know that people do care.'

Janna Jihad, young Palestinian journalist

# LETTER WRITING WORKS

## This year's campaign

Join our campaign and change lives this winter. From anti-war protesters to environmental rights activists, this booklet shares the stories of people around the world whose rights have been abused and who urgently need your support. Global action and solidarity raises their profile, building momentum that can bring about many benefits, from protection to justice.

You can take action on some of the cases or, if you have the time, all 10. For each, we have suggested actions you can take, such as:

- Sending a message of solidarity to let the people featured know you're thinking of them.
- Writing a letter appealing to those with the power to stop the abuse.
- Getting creative to draw attention to the case – there are lots of ideas to inspire you.
- Using social media to show your solidarity or contact the authorities.
- Organising your own Write for Rights event and getting more people involved
- Whatever you do, please tell us about it using the form at [amnesty.org.uk/W4RFeedback](https://www.amnesty.org.uk/W4RFeedback)

## Personalised messages

Every action you take as part of Write for Rights is valuable and we only ask you to act when we believe it will have a real impact. Please do as many of the actions in this booklet as possible, and if you can, prioritise personal, handwritten solidarity messages to the individuals themselves – the people we support say these are the most powerful messages they receive.

## Suggested actions

When planning Write for Rights, we work closely with the people featured – or, if that isn't possible, their family, colleagues, and lawyers – to ensure we choose the most appropriate and effective actions for supporters to take. So we've suggested different actions from the typical letter writing for some cases in this booklet. Don't worry if you can't do all of these: there are plenty of cases where letter writing is recommended. We've also added some creative ideas for each case – these work particularly well if you are taking action as part of a group.

## New to Write for Rights?

Getting involved in our letter-writing campaign couldn't be easier, but we know the first time may seem a bit daunting. Here are some tips to get you started:

- This booklet has all the information you need on each case and advice on how to take action.
- You don't have to take action on all 10 cases. Anything you do to support one or two individuals will make a difference.
- Try to personalise your messages of support, as this will mean a huge amount to the recipient. If you're unsure what to write, we've suggested some messages.
- When writing to the authorities, please include your name and country (unless stated otherwise in the case information). This shows the letter is genuine and personal. Keep requests clear and polite.

- For each case we've stated whether you can include your full name and address in a solidarity card or letter. When we have said no, it is to ensure the person doesn't feel overwhelmed at having to reply to everyone, or to ensure your own security. In these cases, you can just give your first name and your town, city or country.
- If there's anything else you're unsure of check the frequently asked questions section on page 20 or contact us on [iar@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:iar@amnesty.org.uk).

## Online

Visit [amnesty.org.uk/write](https://www.amnesty.org.uk/write) for the latest information on the campaign. You can also download PDF versions of the booklet and additional resources, including:

- Case sheets with solidarity and appeal actions (useful to print out for events and stalls)
- Posters and images for social media (or to print for in-person events)
- Translations of suggested solidarity messages
- Address labels for individuals or appeal targets
- Updates on cases
- Top tips for organising a Write for Rights event
- Good news from previous campaigns
- Feedback form

## Printed materials

Need more booklets? Please order via the online form at [amnesty.org.uk/write](https://www.amnesty.org.uk/write); email us at [activism@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:activism@amnesty.org.uk); or download the pdf at [amnesty.org.uk/write](https://www.amnesty.org.uk/write)

## Dates to remember

- Write for Rights 2022 runs from **1 November to 31 December**
- International Children's Day is **20 November**
- The International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women is **25 November**
- 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence run from **25 November to 10 December**
- International Human Rights Defenders Day is **9 December**
- International Human Rights Day is **10 December**



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1. BANGLADESH



Shahnewaz Chowdhury

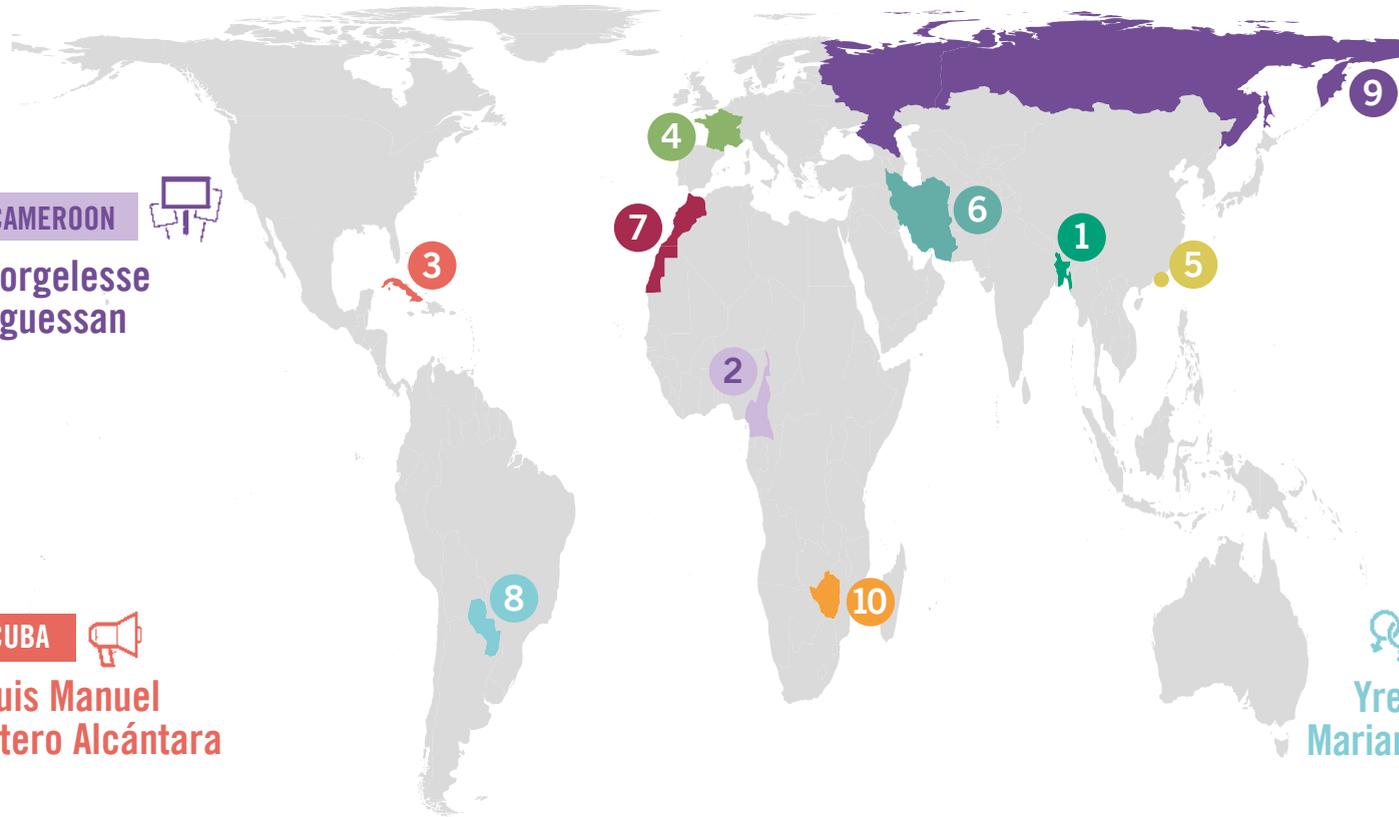


10. ZIMBABWE

Joanah Mamombe, Cecillia Chimhiri and Netsai Marova



© AI/Tsvagrayi Mukwazhi  
© AI  
© Private



© Private

2. CAMEROON



Dorgelesse Nguessan



9. RUSSIA

Aleksandra Skochilenko



© Aleksandra Skochilenko



© Natasha Pizzezy for AI

3. CUBA



Luis Manuel Otero Alcántara



8. PARAGUAY

Yren Rotela and Mariana Sepúlveda



© AI/P4u13



© Private

4. FRANCE



Zineb Redouane

Chow Hang-tung



5. HONG KONG



© AlexChan TszYuk



© Private

7. MOROCCO/WESTERN SAHARA



Nasser Zefzafi

Vahid Afkari

6. IRAN



© AFP/Getty Images

## BANGLADESH SHAHNEWAZ CHOWDHURY



© AI

## CAMEROON DORGELESSE NGUESSAN



© Private

### Environmental activist faces jail for Facebook post

On 26 May 2021, Shahnewaz Chowdhury's village was battered by a powerful storm. Heavy rains and fierce winds destroyed a number of homes. In response, he wrote a Facebook post about the impact of a local power plant, linking it to the environmental destruction in his region, Banskhali. He also urged young people in the area to 'resist injustice and support development' by speaking out.

The next day, the power plant company filed a case against Shahnewaz, accusing him of posting false information on social media. He was arrested by the police on 28 May and then

detained in inhumane conditions for 80 days without trial.

A passionate writer and keen cricket fan, Shahnewaz was eventually granted bail on 16 August 2021, but if convicted, he faces the prospect of many years in prison, simply for posting on Facebook.

**'Environmental and human rights activists are not enemies of anyone. They are friends of ... nature and people... For simply sharing my opinion, I have been treated like a criminal.'**  
Shahnewaz Chowdhury

#### Send a message of support and solidarity

Shahnewaz Chowdhury  
c/o Rashid Ahmed Chowdhury  
East Baraghona  
Post office: West Baraghona  
Police station: Banskhali  
Chittagong  
Bangladesh

**Language** Bangla or English

**Suggested message** You are not alone

**Creative action** Write Shahnewaz a message of friendship and support, take a photo of it and post it on social media, tagging Shahnewaz  
🐦@Shahnewaz9

#### Can I

**Send a religious card or message?** Yes

**Send an Amnesty card or mention Amnesty?** Yes

**Include my name and address?** Yes

#### Send an appeal letter

Urge the minister to immediately and unconditionally drop the charges against Shahnewaz Chowdhury.

**Write to** Anisul Huq  
Minister of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs  
Law and Justice Division  
Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs  
Building No. 04  
Bangladesh Secretariat  
Dhaka – 1000  
Bangladesh  
✉ minister@minlaw.gov.bd

**Salutation** Honourable Minister  
**In your letter ask him to** immediately and unconditionally drop the charges against Shahnewaz Chowdhury.

### Jailed for attending her first protest

Two years ago, Dorgelesse Nguessan was busy running her hairdressing business and supporting her family. Although she'd never been politically active, concerns about the state of the economy prompted her to join her first ever protest, a peaceful demonstration in the city of Douala on 22 September 2020.

Security forces fired rubber bullets, tear gas and water cannons to disperse protesters. As Dorgelesse turned into an alleyway, police followed her and fellow protesters, blocking them in. She was arrested, taken to a police station and held in a cell with 22 other people and only one bed.

Dorgelesse was subsequently charged with

'insurrection, assembly, meetings and public demonstrations' and sentenced to five years in jail. She is now in Douala Central Prison. The breadwinner of her family, Dorgelesse has an 18-year-old son with sickle cell anaemia – because she is behind bars, her relatives are struggling to pay for his medication.

**'Everything was falling apart. Life was getting more and more expensive. And my "livelihood" wasn't making any money. I said, "Well, if my voice can help inspire actual change in my country, why not?" That was what motivated me.'**  
Dorgelesse Nguessan

#### Send a message of support and solidarity

Dorgelesse Nguessan  
c/o Central Africa Team  
Amnesty International  
West and Central Africa  
Regional Office  
Pointe E, Rue 34  
Immeuble Malaado Piazza,  
6ème Etage  
B.P. 47582 Liberté  
Dakar  
Senegal

**Language** French or English

**Suggested message** We act with you

**Creative action** Write Dorgelesse a message of solidarity and hope, take a

photo of it and post it on social media, using the hashtag #freedorgelesse. On Facebook, make sure you tag Dorgelesse  
📘@dorgelesse.nguessan  
Her family will share the messages with her.

#### Can I

**Send a religious card or message?** Yes

**Send an Amnesty card or mention Amnesty?** Yes

**Include my name and address?** Yes

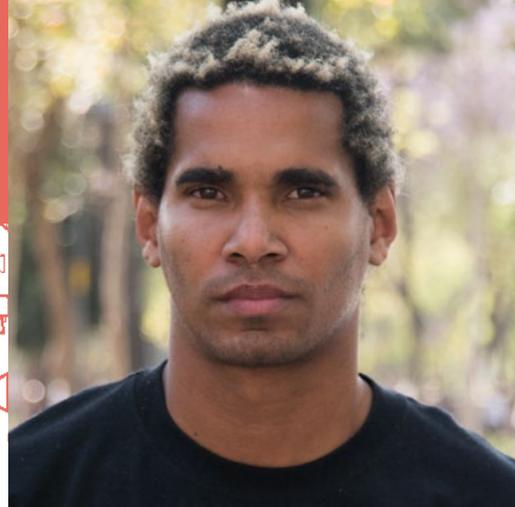
#### Send an appeal letter

Urge the president to release Dorgelesse Nguessan from prison immediately and unconditionally.

**Write to** President of the Republic of Cameroon Paul Biya  
Palais Présidentiel  
Yaoundé  
Cameroon  
✉ cellcom@prc.cm  
🐦@PR\_Paul\_BIYA  
📘@PaulBiya.PageOfficielle  
📷@presidentpaulbiya

**Salutation** Dear President  
**In your letter ask him to** release Dorgelesse from prison immediately and unconditionally, as she has been detained solely for peacefully exercising her right to freedom of expression and assembly.

## CUBA | LUIS MANUEL OTERO ALCÁNTARA



© Natasha Pizzezy for AI

## FRANCE | ZINEB REDOUANE



© Private

### Artist jailed for defending freedom of expression

Luis Manuel Otero Alcántara is a self-taught Black Cuban artist who loves to paint, dance and wear bright pink suits. His home in San Isidro, one of the poorest neighbourhoods in Havana, is a haven for the community, an open house for people to meet and connect.

A leader of the San Isidro Movement, which was formed to oppose government censorship, Luis Manuel posted a video online on 11 July 2021 to say he would be joining one of the largest demonstrations Cuba had seen in decades. As a result, he was arrested and taken to prison.

Luis Manuel was sentenced to five years' imprisonment following a trial behind closed doors, and is now in Guanajay maximum security prison. His health is declining and he is not receiving adequate medical care.

**'[The] song of an artist can reach millions of people and make them cry, a picture from a visual artist can transform the feeling of what is happening in a country. This is something an artist must take responsibility for.'**

Luis Manuel Otero Alcántara, in an interview with Index on Censorship

### Killed by a tear gas grenade while making dinner

On the evening of 1 December 2018, 80-year-old Zineb Redouane was in her fourth-floor apartment in Marseilles preparing dinner and chatting to her daughter on the phone. In the streets below, people were protesting about poor living conditions in the city after two residential buildings collapsed, killing eight people. Police officers were using tear gas to disperse the demonstrators.

When she realised tear gas was seeping into her apartment, Zineb went to close the window. As she did so she noticed the police officers down in the street, one of whom pointed an

MP7 tear gas grenade launcher in her direction and fired, hitting her in the face.

Zineb was killed by that reckless act: she died of her injuries the next day. Nearly four years later, an investigation into her death is still ongoing and no one has been charged or suspended over the killing. Zineb's family are still waiting for justice.

**'The police officer aimed at me. I saw him.'** Zineb Redouane, speaking on the phone to her daughter, Milfet

#### Send a message of support and solidarity

Luis Manuel Otero Alcántara  
Amnesty International Americas  
Regional Office  
Luz Saviñón 519  
Colonia Del Valle Norte  
Alcaldía Benito Juárez  
C.P. 03103  
Mexico City, Mexico

🐦 @LMOAlcantara  
📧 @LuisManuelOteroAlcantara  
📷 @luismanuel.oteroalcantara  
and the San Isidro Movement:  
🐦 @movsanisidro  
📧 @MovimientoSanIsidro  
📷 @mov\_sanisidro

#### Can I

**Send a religious card or message?** Yes

**Send an Amnesty card or mention Amnesty?** Yes

**Include my name and address?** Yes

#### Send an appeal letter

Urge the president to immediately and unconditionally release Luis Manuel Otero Alcántara.

**Write to** President of Cuba  
Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez  
c/o Embassy of the Republic of Cuba  
167 High Holborn  
London WC1V 6PA  
✉ despacho@presidencia.gob.cu  
🐦 @DiazCanelB  
📧 @PresidenciaDeCuba

**Salutation** Dear President  
**In your letter tell him to** immediately and unconditionally release Luis Manuel Otero Alcántara as he has been detained solely for peacefully exercising his rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly.

#### Send a message of support and solidarity

Milfet Redouane  
c/o Amnesty International  
France  
10 Jours pour signer 2022  
76 boulevard de la Villette  
75019 Paris  
France

**Language** French, Arabic or English

**Suggested message** I hope you keep strong in your battle for justice

**Creative action** Zineb loved cats and roses, so you could draw pictures of them to accompany your message. You could even put dried rose petals in the envelope.

#### Can I

**Send a religious card or message?** Yes

**Send an Amnesty card or mention Amnesty?** Yes

**Include my name and address?** Yes

#### Send an appeal letter

Urge the public prosecutor to ensure full accountability for all those involved in the killing of Zineb Redouane.

**Write to** Juges d'instruction (investigating judges)  
Tribunal judiciaire de Lyon  
67 rue Servient  
69003 Lyon  
France  
🐦 @TJLyon

**Salutation** Dear Investigating Judges

**In your letter ask them to** demand full accountability from all those involved in the killing of Zineb Redouane, including the officer who fired the grenade and his chain of command. The judges should consider all existing evidence and, if warranted, ensure all suspects are fairly tried.

## HONG KONG CHOW HANG-TUNG

Because of the Hong Kong National Security Law, anyone who has links with Hong Kong should refrain from participating in actions targeting the Hong Kong authorities.



© AlexChan Tszyuk

## IRAN VAHID AFKARI



© Private

### Jailed for remembering the Tiananmen Square victims

The Chinese government wants people to forget the victims of the 1989 Tiananmen Square crackdown, but Chow Hang-tung has made it her mission to ensure they are remembered.

A courageous human rights lawyer and activist, she was the vice-chair of the Hong Kong Alliance, which organised the world's biggest candlelight vigil commemorating the victims.

In 2020 and 2021, Hong Kong's authorities banned the event, citing public health issues in the midst of the pandemic. On 4 June 2021, Chow encouraged people on social media to commemorate the crackdown by lighting candles.

Later that day she was arrested for 'advertising

or publicising unauthorised assembly'.

Chow is now serving a 22-month prison sentence for peacefully remembering the victims of that horrific crackdown. She also faces a further 10-year sentence for allegedly endangering national security through her actions. Despite her plight, Chow's bravery shines through: 'To say I'm not afraid would be a lie, but I'm not so afraid I dare do nothing.'

**'Fighting for democracy under dictatorship; arrest is inevitable. If I am going to be arrested, so be it. Sacrifice for democracy is worth it.'**  
Chow Hang-tung

#### Send a message of support and solidarity

PO Box No.75  
Ma On Shan Post Office  
New Territories  
Hong Kong

#### Notes

- Do not write Chow's name or your own on the envelope.
- If you have safety concerns, you can email your message to [iar@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:iar@amnesty.org.uk).
- Use a nickname if you want.
- Write or print on regular A4 paper (no postcards!). Do not use glitter, stickers or glue.
- Write as many pages as you like, but don't include page numbers, stick or staple pages together, or put anything other than the letter in the envelope.

**Language** Cantonese, Mandarin or English

**Suggested message** We are thinking of you. Stay strong.

**Creative action** Chow loves cats, alpacas and dinosaurs, so you could draw them to accompany your message, take a photo, and post it on social media, tagging Chow

**f @tonyeechowpages**

Don't forget to follow her, too.

#### Can I

**Send a religious card or message?** Yes

**Send an Amnesty card or mention Amnesty?** No.

Don't mention any overseas organisation.

**Include my name and address?**

If you would like to receive a reply, write your address in the letter, but not on the envelope, as the envelope will be removed.

#### Send an appeal letter

Urge the Secretary for Justice to immediately release Chow Hang-tung and drop all charges against her.

**Write to Paul Lam**  
Secretary for Justice  
Department of Justice  
G/F, Main Wing, Justice Place  
18 Lower Albert Road,  
Central, Hong Kong  
✉ [sjo@doj.gov.hk](mailto:sjo@doj.gov.hk)

**Salutation** Dear Secretary for Justice

**In your letter tell him to** immediately release Chow Hang-tung and drop all charges against her, as she has been detained solely for peacefully exercising her right to freedom of expression.

### Tortured and jailed, simply for protesting

After peacefully attending protests in the city of Shiraz, Vahid Afkari and his brother Navid were arrested on 17 September 2018. Three months later, his brother Habib was also arrested for peaceful protesting. The authorities held the brothers in solitary confinement, tortured them, and forced them to 'confess' to crimes they repeatedly said they did not commit.

In a huge miscarriage of justice, the three were convicted on politically motivated protest-related charges. Vahid and Navid were also convicted following a baseless accusation involving the murder of a security official. Navid was sentenced to death and Habib and Vahid

were sentenced to decades in prison and 74 lashes each.

On 12 September 2020, Navid was secretly executed without warning, sparking outrage and renewed campaigning for the brothers in Iran and globally. Habib was released in March 2022, but Vahid remains in solitary confinement.

**'In order to present themselves as being capable of maintaining security, they [the authorities] arrest and detain innocent people... All I can do is to keep invoking the law and appeal to logic and reason.'** Vahid Afkari

#### Send a message of support and solidarity

Send messages of support on social media, tagging Vahid's brother Saeed

**🐦 @akfari\_saeed**

**📷 @saeed\_afkariii**

You can also send cards to Vahid in prison: although we don't believe they will be given to him, they will show the prison authorities that he has not been forgotten. Please don't include images of alcohol; religious symbols, imagery or texts; or any references to Amnesty.

Vahid Afkari  
Adelabad prison  
Imam Khomeini Road  
Saleh Boulevard  
Shiraz

Iran

**Language** Persian or English

#### Suggested message

Our thoughts are with you and your family.  
I am/We are thinking of you.

#### Can I

**Send a religious card or message?** No. Do not use religious symbols, imagery or texts, or images of alcohol.

**Send an Amnesty card or mention Amnesty?** No  
**Include my name and address?** Yes

#### Send an appeal letter

Urge the Head of Judiciary to release Vahid Afkari.

**Write to Mr Gholamhossein**

Mohseni Ejei  
Head of Judiciary  
c/o Embassy of Iran to the EU  
Avenue Franklin Roosevelt No.  
151050  
Brussels  
Belgium  
**🐦 @khamenei\_ir**  
**📷 @ejeii\_org**

**Salutation** Dear Mr Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejei  
**In your letter tell him to** release Vahid Afkari because he is arbitrarily detained; quash his unjust convictions and sentences; and, pending his release, end his solitary confinement and provide him with adequate healthcare.

## MOROCCO / WESTERN SAHARA | NASSER ZEFZAFI



© AFP/Getty Images

## PARAGUAY | YREN ROTELA AND MARIANA SEPÚLVEDA



© A/P4u3

### Locked up for 20 years for demanding change

Nasser Zefzafi was living peacefully with his family in Rif, a region long marginalised by the Moroccan government, when peaceful protests broke out in his home town in 2016. They were sparked by the death of a fishmonger, who was crushed by a rubbish truck as he tried to recover fish confiscated by the authorities. Millions marched peacefully to express their sadness and frustration and demand change. The Hirak El-Rif movement was born and Nasser, a firm believer in justice and equality, became a prominent figure in it.

The security forces subsequently arrested hundreds of protesters. In May 2017, Nasser was arrested for interrupting a sermon at a mosque and accusing the imam of acting as a mouthpiece for the authorities. After being tortured and ill-treated in police custody, he was sentenced to 20 years in prison in June 2018.

He was held in solitary confinement until 31 August 2018. Prison conditions have badly affected his health: he suffers from nerve pain and respiratory and eyesight problems, but the authorities have denied him the necessary medical care.

### Don't tell us who we are

Yren Rotela and Mariana Sepúlveda want to live freely and do the things they love – play volleyball, dance and go to the theatre. But as trans women who have been bullied, physically attacked and prevented from speaking out, they are too busy fighting for their rights. Trans people in Paraguay can't legally change their names or obtain identity documents that match their gender identity, among other discriminatory practices.

As a result, trans students can't get school certificates in their chosen names, which makes finding a job difficult. This inequality

motivated Yren and Mariana to demand change. But protesting is not easy for trans people in Paraguay, a conservative country that treats them and the wider LGBTI community unfairly. Protests by trans groups are often banned and demonstrations that do go ahead have been attacked.

Yren and Mariana have been fighting for years to change their legal names. If they succeed, it would mean the state had started to recognise their existence as trans women. 'I came into the world to show who I am,' says Yren, 'not to be told who I am.'

#### Send a message of support and solidarity

Nasser Zefzafi  
c/o Amnesty International Maroc  
20, rue Ouargha, Apt 5 Agdal  
Rabat 10080  
Morocco

**Language** Arabic, French, Amazigh or English

**Suggested message** I act with you in hope for your freedom

#### Can I

**Send a religious card or message?** Yes

**Send an Amnesty card or mention Amnesty?** Yes

**Include my name and address?**

Yes

#### Send an appeal letter

Urge the government to release Nasser Zefzafi immediately and unconditionally and quash his conviction.

#### Write to Aziz Akhannouch

Head of Moroccan Government  
Palais Royal – Touarga  
Rabat 10070  
Morocco  
Fax: +212 537771010

**Salutation** Your Excellency

**In your letter ask him to** release Nasser Zefzafi immediately and unconditionally and quash his conviction.

**'The beautiful thing about this popular movement is that it created hope among young people... this movement is different from previous ones... people demand hospitals, universities, infrastructure and other fair and legitimate matters.'** Nasser Zefzafi

#### Send a message of support and solidarity

Yren Rotela and Mariana Sepúlveda  
c/o Amnesty International Paraguay  
Hassler 5229 entre Cruz del Defensor y Cruz del Chaco,  
Asunción  
Paraguay

**Language** Spanish or English

**Suggested message** I act with you in the fight for trans rights

#### Can I

**Send a religious card or message?** Yes

**Send an Amnesty card or mention Amnesty?** Yes

#### Include my name and address?

Yes

#### Send an appeal letter

Urge the president of the Supreme Court to legally recognise the identities of transgender people.

**Write to** Presidency of the Supreme Court of Justice of Paraguay  
President of the Supreme Court of Justice  
Palacio de Justicia del Paraguay  
Mariano Roque Alonso y Testanova  
9° Piso, Torre Norte  
C.P. N°001001

Asunción  
Paraguay

**Salutation** Dear Mr President  
**In your letter ask him to** legally recognise the identities of transgender people so they can exercise their right to freedom of expression, association and protest under their self-perceived identities.

**'Today, I am standing, firm as a warrior. I am a person who loves themselves and loves life deeply and who will fight until my last breath for a more human Paraguay.'** Yren Rotela

## RUSSIA | ALEKSANDRA SKOCHILENKO



© Aleksandra Skochilenko

## ZIMBABWE | JOANAH MAMOMBE, CECILLIA CHIMBIRI AND NETSAI MAROVA



© Al/Tsvaigirayi Mukweziti

© Private

### In jail for opposing the invasion of Ukraine

Artist and musician Aleksandra Skochilenko decided to peacefully protest against Russia's invasion of Ukraine. On 31 March, she replaced price tags in a local supermarket in Saint Petersburg with small paper labels containing facts about the invasion. Within two weeks she was behind bars.

In the early morning of 11 April, Aleksandra was arrested by the police and charged with 'public dissemination of knowingly false information about the use of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation'. This is a new part of the criminal code hastily introduced by the

government the previous month in an attempt to stop Russians from criticising the invasion of Ukraine. Dozens of people have already been detained under it.

Aleksandra (Sasha for short) has been detained in appalling conditions ever since. She has coeliac disease and has been forced to go hungry for most of the time because the authorities have not given her the gluten-free food she needs. Aleksandra has also been harassed by detention centre staff and her cellmates. If convicted, she faces up to 10 years in prison.

#### Send a message of support and solidarity

Aleksandra Skochilenko  
Write for Rights  
Amnesty International  
1 Easton Street  
London WC1X 0DW

**Language** Russian or English  
**Suggested message** I act with you in solidarity

**Creative action** Draw pictures of cats (Aleksandra has two, Lucy and Maude) to accompany your message, take a photo, and post it on social media, tagging Aleksandra  
**f** sasha.skochilenko  
**@** @skochilenko using the hashtags #freeSashaSkochilenko

#freeSasha

Don't forget to follow her, too. You could also organise an artistic event or jam session to support Aleksandra.

#### Can I

**Send a religious card or message?** Yes

**Send an Amnesty card or mention Amnesty?** Yes

**Include my name and address?** Yes

#### Send an appeal letter

Urge the prosecutor to immediately release Aleksandra Skochilenko and drop the charges against her.

**Write to** Melnik Viktor Dmitrievich  
The Prosecutor of St. Petersburg  
2/9 Pochtamtkskaya Street  
Saint Petersburg  
190000  
Russian Federation  
Fax: +7 812 318 26 11

**Salutation** Dear Prosecutor  
**In your letter urge him** to immediately release Aleksandra Skochilenko and drop all of the charges against her, as she has been detained solely for expressing her opposition to the war.

### Abducted, beaten, sexually assaulted and jailed for protesting

After leading an anti-government protest, Joanah Mamombe, Cecillia Chimбири and Netsai Marova were brutally attacked. On 13 May 2020, they were arbitrarily arrested in Harare, taken to a police station and forced into an unmarked car. With hoods over their heads, they were driven out of the city. Fearing for their lives, the women were thrown into a pit, beaten, sexually assaulted and forced to eat human excrement. They were found two days later – miles from Harare, covered in cuts and bruises, and with their clothes torn – and taken to hospital.

While still hospitalised, Joanah, Netsai and Cecillia were charged with criminal offences

relating to the protest. Prison guards and police officers were at the hospital to prevent them from talking to journalists. After stating that they recognised some of their attackers, the women were re-arrested on 10 June 2020 and charged with faking their ordeal. They were detained for 16 days before being given bail.

Their trial is under way. No one has been held accountable for the trauma they suffered.

**'Instead of being protected by the state. Victims and survivors of atrocities are being prosecuted, while perpetrators are going unpunished.'**  
Cecillia Chimбири

#### Send a message of support and solidarity

**Address for Cecillia and Joanah:**  
c/o Lucia Masuka  
Executive Director  
Amnesty International Zimbabwe  
54 Midlothian Avenue  
Eastlea, Harare  
Zimbabwe  
**Address for Netsai:**  
c/o Amnesty Norge  
v/ Richard/SFL  
PO Box 702 Sentrum N-0106  
Oslo, Norway  
**f** Joanah: @JoanaMamombe  
**f** Netsai: @MarovaNetsai  
**f** Cecillia: @ceechimбири2

**Language** English and Shona  
**Suggested message** I act with you in your fight for justice  
**Creative action** Draw pictures of butterflies and flowers to

accompany your message, take a photo, and post it to your social media, tagging them. Don't forget to follow them, too.

#### Can I

**Send a religious card or message?** Yes

**Send an Amnesty card or mention Amnesty?** Yes

**Include my name and address?** Yes

#### Send an appeal letter

Urge the president to immediately and unconditionally drop all of the charges against Joanah, Netsai and Cecillia and end the harassment against them.

**Write to** Emmerson D. Mnagagwa  
President of the Republic of Zimbabwe  
Office of the President  
Munhumutapa Building  
Corner Sam Nujoma and Samora Machel Avenue  
P. Bag 7700  
Causeway, Harare  
Zimbabwe  
**f** info@opc.gov.zw  
**f** @edmnangagwa  
**f** @EmmersonDambudzoMnangagwa

**Salutation** Your Excellency  
**In your letter tell him** to immediately and unconditionally drop all of the charges against Joanah Mamombe, Cecillia Chimбири and Netsai Marova and end the harassment they face for peacefully exercising their right to protest.

# HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT

## FROM 2021

Hundreds of thousands of people around the world took part in Write for Rights 2021, sending more than 4.6 million messages of support and appeals to authorities. Here are some updates on the people we featured in the campaign.



© Private

### BELARUS

#### Mikita Zalatarou

Teenager Mikita Zalatarou was waiting for a bus when the police moved in on a nearby, and largely peaceful, protest about the recent presidential election. As the crowd started to run, someone told Mikita to run too, so he did. The next day police officers came to his home and arrested him, beating him and accusing him of throwing Molotov cocktails at two police officers the night before. He was convicted of mass disorder and use of explosives and is now serving five years in a child education prison colony.



© Private

### CHINA

#### Zhang Zhan

When Wuhan went into lockdown because of Covid-19, Zhang Zhan was one of the few citizen journalists to report on the unfolding crisis. She was subsequently sentenced to four years in prison. On 28 January 2022, Zhang was allowed to speak to her mother on a 20-minute video call. Her mother told us that Zhang's health has improved; that she can walk without assistance; and that Zhang has stopped her hunger strike and said the authorities had also stopped force-feeding her. We continue to campaign for her release.



©University of York/Alex Holland

### EGYPT

#### Mohamed Baker

Mohamed Baker has dedicated his career to defending the rights of the most marginalised people in Egypt. Because of his work as a human rights lawyer, he has been targeted by the authorities, who falsely accused him of 'terrorism' and threw him in prison. We continue to call for his release.



© Saleh Younis

### ERITREA

#### Ciham Ali Ahmed

Born in Los Angeles and raised in Eritrea, Ciham Ali Ahmed wanted to become a fashion designer when she grew up. But when she was 15, her hopes were shattered. In December 2012, Ciham was arrested as she tried to flee to Sudan. A decade on, Ciham has not been charged or brought to trial and her family still do not know where she is being held.



© Private

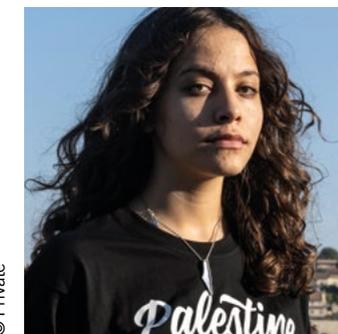
### GUATEMALA

#### Bernardo Caal Xol

A teacher and trade union leader, Bernardo Caal Xol empowered his people, the Indigenous Maya Q'eqchi', and peacefully protected their land and natural resources. After protesting against a hydroelectric dam project, he was convicted without evidence in 2018 and sentenced to more than seven years in prison. On 24 March 2022, Bernardo was released early after more than four years behind bars. His lawyers said a judge had ordered his release for good behaviour.

**'It's great news for Bernardo, his family and Guatemala's Indigenous Mayan Q'eqchi' communities that he can leave prison and be reunited with his loved ones... However, Bernardo remains convicted of a crime he did not commit and thus the Guatemalan authorities continue to criminalise him for his work in defence of human rights and the environment.'**

Erika Guevara-Rosas, Amnesty's Americas director



© Tanya Habjouqa/NOOR

### ISRAEL AND THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES

#### Janna Jihad

Janna Jihad wants a normal childhood for herself and all other Palestinian children. But the teenage journalist in the Israeli-occupied West Bank lives her life under systematic discrimination. Janna continues her journalism and supports the campaign to end the system of apartheid.



© Mahto Irigoyen/AI

## MEXICO

### Wendy Andrea Galarza Herrera

Wendy Andrea Galarza Herrera believes helping to raise young children is the best way to create a fairer world. It is a goal she works hard for in Mexico, where women are often abused and killed simply because they are women. Wendy was shot by the police during a peaceful protest in 2020 and no one has been brought to justice. We continue to campaign for justice and reparations for Wendy.



© KC Nwakalor/AI

## NIGERIA

### Imoleayo Adeyeun Michael

When young people took to Nigeria's streets in October 2020 to protest against a notoriously violent police unit, Imoleayo Adeyeun Michael joined them. Now he is being tried on trumped up charges and faces the prospect of a long spell behind bars. Amnesty is calling for the charges to be dropped immediately. **'I sincerely appreciate all who have been supportive... and Amnesty Nigeria who stretched out arms of love towards me,'** says Imoleayo Adeyeun.



© Yostorn Triyos/AI

## THAILAND

### Panusaya ('Rung') Sithijirawattanakul

A leading voice in Thailand's democracy movement, student Panusaya ('Rung') Sithijirawattanakul was jailed for 60 days under the draconian lèse-majesté law. She faces trial, and could be imprisoned for life. We call on the authorities to immediately drop the criminal proceedings against her and others charged solely for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of assembly and expression.



© Kate Mamaisur/AI

## UKRAINE

### Sphere

Sphere has championed LGBTI and women's rights since 2006. Founded by activists Anna Sharyhina and Vira Chernygina, it provides a safe space for women and LGBTI people in the city of Kharkiv. It has suffered frequent homophobic attacks. **'Before Write for Rights we felt quite burned out... After... we felt so charged and inspired. With all the plans and ideas we had, it makes it even more painful... that the war has broken out,'** says Anna.

# HOSTING AN EVENT

Every year, Amnesty groups across the UK organise a wide variety of Write for Rights events. Here are some ideas.

**Organise a letter-writing event and invite a speaker.** This could be a country coordinator; someone from one of the countries in the campaign; someone with knowledge or experience of the right to protest; or someone from another like-minded organisation.

**Contact your local media about your event.** They can report on or promote your event.

**Build relationships with people in your community** who might be interested in the individuals, countries or issues in this year's campaign – and invite them to your event.

**Encourage others in your communities** to set up their own letter-writing event at their school, workplace, sports club, community club or other venue.

**November-December is the season of goodwill:** host a celebration with mulled wine and mince pies for your family, friends or housemates.

**Bring in people new to human rights activism.** Hold an event at work at lunchtime or ask people to sign action cards or write letters in your school, library or community club.

**10 December is Human Rights Day** a good time to hold your event.

## FUNDRAISING AT YOUR EVENT

Here are some activities that could help you cover costs and raise funds for Amnesty International UK.

- Team up with a local café, restaurant or food stall and ask them to donate a percentage of their takings on the day. You could hold your Write for Rights event there, to bring in customers for them.
- Organise a tea party or bake sale to raise funds while you write. For tips and ideas, see [amnesty.org.uk/tea](https://www.amnesty.org.uk/tea)
- Invite a local choir to sing carols outside your venue. Organise a public collection while they perform.
- Set up a present-wrapping stall. Approach local shopping centres and shops as soon as possible to check if they have space. You could direct customers to your Write for Rights event or ask them to write a card while they wait.

Our Community and Events Fundraising team can offer advice and free materials for anyone raising money for Amnesty International UK at their Write for Rights event. Go to [amnesty.org.uk/organise-event](https://www.amnesty.org.uk/organise-event) or email [sct@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:sct@amnesty.org.uk)



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## WHY CAN'T I POST A LETTER TO ALL THE PEOPLE FEATURED IN THIS BOOKLET?

In some cases, it may not be safe for the person to receive mail or the postal service in their country may be unreliable. Also, some prison authorities limit the amount of mail people can receive. In every case, we work with the individual to determine the safest and most effective way to share messages with them. If we suggest a method you are unable to use – such as social media – please send a message to someone else in the campaign.

## WHY CAN'T I SEND RELIGIOUS CARDS OR MENTION AMNESTY TO SOME OF THE PEOPLE IN THE CAMPAIGN?

It is for the safety of the recipient. In some cases, association with a particular faith or Amnesty's human rights work could put them at greater risk.

## WHAT COUNTS AS A NON-RELIGIOUS CARD?

Cards illustrated with things like snowy scenes, fir trees and robins, or a postcard of your local area. The message 'Season's Greetings' is not religious.

## CAN I SEND CARDS PRODUCED BY OTHER ORGANISATIONS?

Yes, as long as their work cannot be considered political and the card follows the general guidance on the case.

## WHY ARE THERE ONLY 10 CASES?

The 10 cases are carefully chosen to have the maximum impact: they have been selected after a long process that involved obtaining the informed consent of each individual featured, planning each action, developing a strategy and assessing the risks.

## WHAT IF THE EMAIL ADDRESS OR FAX NUMBER FOR THE APPEAL LETTER DOESN'T WORK?

Please send a letter instead. The fax or email account may have been switched off because the recipient has been overwhelmed by appeals or the inbox is full.

## WHAT IF I RECEIVE A REPLY?

Please send a copy to the Individuals at Risk programme, as it will help us assess the impact of the campaign. ✉ [iar@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:iar@amnesty.org.uk)

## CAN I WORK ON THESE CASES AFTER WRITE FOR RIGHTS FINISHES?

Yes, in most cases. If you would like to work on a case long term, please let us know so we can make sure you have the most up-to-date information. ✉ [iar@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:iar@amnesty.org.uk)

## WHAT ELSE CAN I DO TO CAMPAIGN ON THE CASES OF INDIVIDUALS AT RISK?

You can join our Urgent Action Network, which protects people from torture, helps free people who are wrongly detained, and secures access to medical treatment or legal counsel for prisoners. As a network member, you will be sent requests – how many is up to you – to take action urgently on behalf of individuals at risk. Find out more at [amnesty.org.uk/urgent](https://www.amnesty.org.uk/urgent)

## WHY IS FEEDBACK IMPORTANT?

Finding out how many people took part in the campaign, and on which cases, shows us whether our tactics are working or need to be adapted. It also enables us to provide updates about an individual's changing circumstances. Please use the feedback form at [amnesty.org.uk/W4RFeedback](https://www.amnesty.org.uk/W4RFeedback)

## DOES THIS CAMPAIGN REALLY WORK?

Yes, solidarity is effective. Thousands of letters arriving at a prison tells the authorities the world is watching. And people who have received solidarity messages have told us how much it boosts their spirits and strength.

## SENDING CARDS AND LETTERS INDIVIDUALLY CAN BE PRICY, CAN I SEND THEM ALL IN ONE GO?

Yes, if it is cheaper and easier to send them in one envelope, please do so, unless otherwise stated in the case information.

## CAN I SEND MY LETTERS TO THE AMNESTY UK OFFICE?

No. We do not have staff in the office full-time so we cannot forward letters.

## IS IT RISKY TO SIGN MY LETTERS AND GIVE MY ADDRESS? WILL THAT COUNTRY REFUSE TO LET ME VISIT IT IN THE FUTURE?

We have no record of this happening. Thousands of Amnesty supporters sign their letters without experiencing any problems. But if you have business or other close links with a country or have concerns, you may wish to choose another case or not to give your full name or address (for example, sign a letter 'from Jane, Manchester'). **We have also stated in the case information in this booklet if we recommend not using your full details.**



# Join Amnesty International today to defend human rights

✉ [sct@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:sct@amnesty.org.uk)  
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