



AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL UK FEBRUARY 2023

NEWS from WARRINGTON GROUP

ACTION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

HOPE FOR HUMANITY

GROUP MEETING – Thurs. 16th February
MEETING TIME 7pm to 9pm

The February meeting is the AGM, a chance to look back at our achievements and to draw up/confirm plans for 2023.

TURKEY



Prof Şebnem Korur Fincancı : verdict

The third and final hearing in the baseless prosecution of human rights defender, forensic medicine expert and head of the Turkish Medical Association Prof Şebnem Korur Fincancı was held on 11 January. Regrettably, the court found her guilty of ‘making propaganda for a terrorist organisation’ and sentenced her to two years eight months and 15 days in prison.

The court also ruled that she be released from pre-trial detention where she has been held since 27 October 2022 pending appeal. The decision to release her is very welcome though the prosecutor can appeal this, as we have seen in other cases.

The link below takes you to the prison diaries Şebnem has been writing since her in initial detention. Although the “machine translation” is less than perfect they still give a really vivid impression of life in a Turkish prison and in her comments and concerns about the plight of fellow prisoners her commitment to the needs of others shines through.

<https://www.evrensel.net/yazi/92322/hapish-ane-gunluklerini-bitirmeden>



INDIVIDUALS AT RISK

Repeal death sentences of young protesters subjected to gruesome torture

The Iranian authorities must immediately quash the unjust convictions and death sentences of three young protesters who were subjected to gruesome torture including floggings, electric shocks, being hung upside down and death threats at gunpoint. The Revolutionary Guards agents raped one of them and sexually tortured another. Arshia Takdastan, 18, Mehdi Mohammadifard, 19, and Javad Rouhi, 31, each received two death sentences in December 2022 for “enmity against God” and “corruption on earth”. The court stated that the young men “incited...widespread” arson or vandalism by dancing, clapping, chanting or throwing headscarves into bonfires during protests in Noshahr, in northern Manzadaran province on 21 September 2022. Javad Rouhi received a third death sentence for “apostasy” based on his “confessions” under torture that he burned a copy of the Quran during protests. The men’s appeal is before the Supreme Court.

Send a message to the Iranian Embassy.

Email - iranemb.lon@mfa.gov.ir.

Drop the death sentences against Arshia Takdastan, Mehdi Mohammadifard and Javad Rouhi and release them immediately. Their unreliable confessions were obtained under torture!

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NEWS FROM CENTRAL AMERICA

HONDURAS



Carlos Ernesto Choc is an indigenous Maya Q'eqchi' human rights defender and journalist, who has been forced to relocate several times for his own safety. He

faces threats, criminalisation, physical attacks and raids on his home for reporting the truth. The charges against him started in 2017. He is currently under “alternative measures”—but he’s not under house arrest. He is able to work but he has to sign in every 30 days. The week after we met, he was due in court, where he could get the measures lifted or be imprisoned due to his work. But the hearing was cancelled so he has the case hanging over him—another tactic of intimidation. For Carlos the three big issues are: climate change and its effect on the Maya Q'eqchi' people, the extractive industry damaging the environment and land being taken away/criminalisation of indigenous people. All are generating displacement and forced migration. This is not people chasing the American dream — it is forced displacement. Their lands are disappearing, harvests are lost, leading to child malnutrition. Journalists who highlight the issues are being repressed. Carlos says: “I love my people and I’m proud of being an indigenous and community journalist”.

Here’s the link to PBI UK’s report of the visit and an interview with Reynaldo and Carlos: <https://tinyurl.com/2nfhx76p>;

NICARAGUA

UK sanctions two Nicaraguan politicians

Foreign Secretary James Cleverly has announced a new wave of sanctions aimed at “corrupt actors, and those violating and abusing human rights, as well as perpetrators of sexual violence in conflict.” The targets are from 11 countries across seven sanctions regimes and include two politicians from the municipality of Matagalpa.



“This wave, co-ordinated with international partners, marks International Anti-Corruption Day and Human Rights Day. The package includes individuals and entities involved in a wide range of grievous activities – including the torture of prisoners, the mobilisation of troops to rape civilians, and systematic atrocities. These sanctions demonstrate the UK’s commitment to defend free societies and the human rights of everyone, everywhere.”

GUATEMALA

Anti-corruption prosecutor held on spurious charges



Virginia Laparra, a former prosecutor, was arrested in February and has been held in detention since. She faces a sentence of up to nine years in prison. Pro-democracy advocates say it is an effort from conservative forces within the government to sap power from the country’s independent institutions and turn back the clock on Guatemala’s trailblazing anti-corruption efforts. There have been reprisals against other prosecutors, journalists, magistrates and human rights. “Virginia Laparra is a prisoner of conscience, who has been unjustly deprived of her liberty for more than nine months,” said Amnesty’s Americas director Erika Guevara-Rosas. “The criminal prosecution initiated against her is unfounded and solely due to her work as a prominent anti-corruption prosecutor. Virginia Laparra must regain her freedom immediately.”

"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." - Martin Luther King, Jr.