



# TAKE ACTION

# Real lives

## Letter-writing changes lives.

A letter from you could help free a prisoner, stop an execution or help a bereaved family receive justice.



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

It is sent to all Amnesty local groups in the UK, and is also available to individual members on request, in print or by email. The supplement is printed on A4 paper to make it easier to photocopy for group letter-writing sessions.

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17-25 New Inn Yard  
London EC2A 3EA

## Virginia Laparra Guatemala

### EX-PROSECUTOR UNJUSTLY JAILED



© Virginia Laparra



Former prosecutor Virginia Laparra has been unjustly imprisoned for the last nine months because of her work investigating corruption cases. Amnesty considers her a prisoner of conscience.

The former head of the Special Prosecutor's Office against Impunity in the city of Quetzaltenango was spuriously convicted of the crime of 'ongoing abuse of authority' and sentenced to four years behind bars

in December 2022. The criminal proceedings against her began in 2018, after she reported a judge for possible inappropriate behaviour. In retaliation, that same judge filed two criminal complaints against her on the same grounds. Virginia was placed in pre-trial detention in February 2020, where she remained until her trial last year.

Amnesty is concerned that the authorities have condoned the use of vexatious litigation, forcing Virginia to defend herself simultaneously in two parallel proceedings initiated by the same person for the same acts. The authorities have also tolerated misogynistic attacks against her and her legal team.

### ► APPEAL

Urge the attorney general to drop charges against Virginia Laparra and immediately and unconditionally release her.

► María Consuelo Parras Agueta  
Attorney General and chief of the Prosecutor's office  
✉ aapineda@mp.gob.gt  
**Salutation:** Dear Mrs Attorney General

► His Excellency José Alberto Briz Gutiérrez  
Embassy of Guatemala  
1st Floor & Suite 1, 2nd Floor  
105a Westbourne Grove  
London W2 4UW  
**Salutation:** Your Excellency

## 126 people missing in Xinjiang China

### ARBITRAILY DETAINED AMID GOVERNMENT CRACKDOWN



© Molly Crabapple



In the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, 126 Uyghurs, Kazakhs and people from other predominantly Muslim ethnic groups are believed to be interned in camps or sentenced under vague and overly broad legal provisions without a fair trial and sent to prison.

They are among the estimated 1 million or more people in arbitrary detention in internment camps and

prisons in the region.

The Chinese government's crackdown against predominantly Muslim communities in Xinjiang is carried out under the guise of fighting terrorism.

In 2021, an Amnesty report showed that the systematic state-organised mass imprisonment, torture and persecution perpetrated by the authorities amounted to crimes against humanity. In August 2022, the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights released a report finding that crimes against humanity may have occurred in Xinjiang.

### ► APPEAL

Urge the president to immediately release everyone who is arbitrarily

detained in internment camps and prisons in Xinjiang. Pending their release, call on him to disclose their whereabouts without further delay, allow them access to their family and a lawyer of their choice, and ensure they are not subjected to torture or other ill-treatment.

► President of the People's Republic of China Xi Jinping  
Zhongnanhai  
Xichangan'jie Xichengqu, Beijing Shi 100017  
People's Republic of China  
✉ english@mail.gov.cn  
**Salutation:** Dear President

► His Excellency Zheng Zeguang  
Embassy of the People's Republic of China  
49-51 Portland Place, London W1B 1JL  
**Salutation:** Your Excellency

## Dr Mohammed al-Roken UAE

### LAWYER KEPT IN PRISON DESPITE COMPLETING SENTENCE



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Human rights lawyer and academic Dr Mohammed al-Roken (W4R 2014) is among eight Emirati dissidents who are still languishing

behind bars despite having completed their prison sentences.

In July 2013, Dr al-Roken was convicted of attempting to overthrow the government and given a 10-year sentence following a mass trial of activists and critics of the authorities. The politically motivated trial – known as 'UAE-94' – was part of a major

crackdown on human rights defenders designed to silence calls for reform. The proceedings were grossly unfair and marred by abuses, including defendants being denied access to a lawyer and held incommunicado or in solitary confinement. 'Confessions' obtained through torture were also used in court as evidence of their guilt.

Amnesty considers Dr al-Roken and the seven other dissidents to be prisoners of conscience.

### ► APPEAL

Urge the president to immediately and unconditionally release Mohammed al-Roken, Mohammed al-Mansoori, Hussain Ali Alnajjar al-Hammadi, Saleh

Mohammed al-Dhufairi, Dr Sheikh Sultan Kayed Mohammed Al-Qassimi, Ahmed al-Zaabi, Khalifa al-Nuaimi and Abdulla al-Hajri.

► President of the UAE  
His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates  
Presidential Court  
F836+2GJ – Al Khubeirah  
Abu Dhabi  
United Arab Emirates  
✉ @MohamedBinZayed  
@mohamedbinzayed  
**Salutation:** Your Highness

► His Excellency Mansoor Abdullah Khalfan Juma Abulhoul  
Embassy of the United Arab Emirates  
1-2 Grosvenor Crescent  
London SW1X 7EE  
**Salutation:** Your Excellency

## Ebrima Manneh Gambia

### FAMILY OF 'DISAPPEARED' JOURNALIST DENIED JUSTICE



#### ➤ APPEAL

Urge the president to release the remains of Ebrima Manneh to his family so they can bury him. Also call for a thorough, impartial and transparent investigation into his death and to keep his family informed of its progress.

➤ President of The Gambia  
H.E Adama Barrow  
President State House  
Banjul  
The Gambia  
Twitter @BarrowOfficial1  
**Salutation:** Your Excellency

➤ Her Excellency Fatou Bensouda  
The Gambia High Commission  
57 Kensington Court  
London W8 5DG  
**Salutation:** Your Excellency

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To mark the 17th anniversary of the enforced disappearance of the late journalist Ebrima Manneh, Amnesty has reiterated its call for his body to be released so

his family can finally bury him.

On 11 July 2006, Ebrima was arrested at the premises of pro-government newspaper the *Daily Observer* by

plainclothes officers believed to have been from the National Intelligence Agency. No official reason was provided by the authorities for his arrest.

In 2008, the Economic Community of West African States Court of Justice ordered the government to release Ebrima from unlawful detention and pay him compensation of \$100,000. This judgment was never complied with. In 2017, the police finally officially informed Ebrima family of his death, but provided no information about what happened or who was responsible. The family is unable to perform burial rites, as they still do not know where his body is.

## The Saturday Mothers Türkiye

### ON TRIAL FOR PEACEFUL PROTEST



disappeared, and their supporters, to exercise their rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, guaranteed in domestic and international human rights law.

➤ Minister Süleyman Soylu  
Minister of Interior  
Devlet Mahallesi  
İçişleri Bakanlığı  
Çankaya  
Ankara 06580 Türkiye  
Fax: +90 312 418 1795  
Email: basin@icisleri.gov.tr  
**Salutation:** Dear Minister

➤ His Excellency Osman Koray Ertaş  
Embassy of the Republic of Türkiye  
43 Belgrave Square  
London SW1X 8PA  
**Salutation:** Your Excellency

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On 25 August 2018, police in Istanbul used tear gas and water cannons to disperse a peaceful gathering of mainly women, some of whom in their 80s, known as 'Saturday Mothers'. The women have been holding a peaceful vigil protesting the enforced disappearance of their relatives since the mid-1990s. Now the authorities have banned their vigil demanding justice for their loved ones and 46 people including relatives of the disappeared are on trial for their participation in the 700th vigil on 25 August 2018.

#### ➤ APPEAL

Please write urge the Minister of Interior to allow the relatives of people forcibly

## Chow Hang-tung China

### TARGETED FOR COMMEMORATING TIANANMEN SQUARE VICTIMS



#### ➤ APPEAL

Urge the secretary of justice to immediately drop the charges and release Chow Hang-tung immediately, as she was charged solely for peacefully exercising her rights.

➤ Secretary for Justice Teresa Cheng  
Yeuk-wah  
Department of Justice  
G/F, Main Wing, Justice Place  
18 Lower Albert Road, Central, Hong Kong  
Fax: (852) 3902 8638  
Email: sjo@doj.gov.hk  
**Salutation:** Secretary Cheng

➤ His Excellency Zheng Zeguang  
Embassy of the People's Republic of China  
49-51 Portland Place  
London W1B 1JL  
**Salutation:** Your Excellency

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Hong Kong human rights lawyer and labour rights advocate Chow Hang-tung (W4R 2022) has made it her mission to ensure the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre victims are remembered, despite Chinese government attempts

to make people forget about them.

After encouraging Hongkongers on social media to light candles in commemoration, Chow was arrested in June 2021, convicted of 'advertising or publicising unauthorised assembly' and sentenced to 22 months behind bars. At the time of her arrest, she was the vice-chair of the Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements of China (the Alliance), which had organised the annual Hong Kong vigil commemorating the Tiananmen crackdown since 1990.

In September 2021, Chow was also charged with 'inciting subversion' under the draconian National Security Law. If convicted, she faces a potential 10-year prison sentence, solely for peacefully exercising her freedom of expression.



## Natalia Estemirova **Russia**

### GOVERNMENT FAILS TO BRING ACTIVIST'S KILLERS TO JUSTICE



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A leading human rights activist working in the North Caucasus region of Chechnya, Natalia Estemirova was abducted by armed men and killed

on 15 July 2009. Fourteen years on, the Russian government has still not provided a full investigation into the murder and nobody has been brought to justice.

Natalia worked for the prominent Russian human rights NGO Memorial – which was forced to close in 2021 – and was well-known for investigating gross human rights violations committed by Russian state agents during the second 1999-2009 Chechen conflict. She repeatedly drew criticism and threats from the Chechen authorities, including the Kremlin-appointed Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov.

In August 2021, the European Court of Human Rights ruled that the Russian authorities had failed to properly investigate her murder.

#### ➤ APPEAL

Urge the chairman of the Investigation Committee of the Russian Federation to ensure those responsible for Natalia Estemirova's murder are brought to justice in accordance with fair trial standards.

➤ Chairman of the Investigation Committee of the Russian Federation  
Aleksandr Ivanovich Bastrykin  
Tekhnicheskii pereulok, dom 2  
105005 Moscow  
Russian Federation  
🐦 @sledcom\_rf

**Salutation:** Dear Chairman of the Investigation Committee

➤ His Excellency Andrei Kelin  
Embassy of the Russian Federation  
6/7 Kensington Palace Gardens  
London W8 4QP

**Salutation:** Your Excellency

## Vanyaneka and Ovaherero pastoralist communities **Angola**

### PASTORALISTS GO HUNGRY AS FERTILE LAND IS DIVERTED TO RANCHERS



© AI

The Angolan government's diversion of communal grazing land to commercial cattle farmers in the municipality of Gambos has eroded the economic,

social and cultural resilience of the local Vanyaneka and Ovaherero pastoralist groups (Real Lives, Spring 2020), most notably their food security.

The far tip of the southern province of Huila, Gambos is located in a semi-arid region prone to cyclical droughts, but the communal grazing land of Tunda and Chimbolela has historically mitigated the impact of these dry spells among the pastoralist communities. Since the end of the civil war in 2002, however, the government has allowed ranchers to occupy 67 per cent of the fertile land in this area without due process. As a result, the Vanyaneka and Ovaherero now struggle to produce

food for themselves and the cattle on which they depend.

#### ➤ APPEAL

Urge the authorities to immediately deliver adequate food and drinking water to communities in Gambos who are suffering from or at risk of hunger and put in place long-term measures to increase the resilience of these communities to climate-driven crises.

➤ His Excellency Mr Geraldo Sachipengo Nunda  
Embassy of the Republic of Angola  
22 Dorset Street, London W1U 6QY

**Salutation:** Your Excellency

## Omar Radi **Morocco/Western Sahara**

### IMPRISONED AFTER UNFAIR TRIAL



© Fanny Hedenno

Omar Radi – a Moroccan journalist and vocal critic of the Moroccan government's human rights record –

was arrested on 29 July 2020. He was charged with 'harming national security' and rape. The Moroccan authorities have been harassing him since the publication in June 2020 of an Amnesty International report revealing they had unlawfully spied on him through his phone.

On 6 July 2021, Omar Radi was sentenced to six years in prison, after a grossly unfair trial. The court excluded some testimony in his defence and refused to call some defence witnesses. It also limited Omar's access to his lawyers and did not allow them to cross-examine witnesses.

In prison, Omar Radi is forbidden from writing and is denied the letters that friends and family send him.

#### ➤ APPEAL

Urge the authorities to quash the espionage charges against Omar Radi and grant a fair re-trial open to international observers for the rape charge. Ask that he be allowed to write and study.

➤ Minister of Justice  
Mohamed Ben Abdelkader  
Place Mamounia  
Mailbox 1015  
10070 Rabat  
Morocco

**Salutation:** Your Excellency

➤ His Excellency Mr Hakim Hajoui  
Embassy of the Kingdom of Morocco  
6 Grosvenor Gardens  
London SW1W 0DH

**Salutation:** Your Excellency