

WRITE FOR RIGHTS 2023



**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



'I will never forget what Amnesty did for me. I will remember it all my life. Even here in prison, people were coming up to me and saying, "I know who you are, I've seen you in Amnesty publications and in the news". They even said, "I've signed your petition". It's encouraged me so much.'

Dorgelesse Nguessan,
Write for Rights 2022



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YOUR WORDS HAVE POWER

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.

This year, 10 December marks the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), a milestone document on the rights to which everyone is entitled. You can celebrate by helping to defend the rights of the people featured in this campaign.

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 taking action for human rights.

This booklet contains information about the campaign and the 10 cases, as well as letter-writing tips and other creative ideas to help you maximise your impact.

Your messages of support don't have to be in the form of a letter: you can send a card, photo or drawing, or go online. You can also attend an event hosted by an Amnesty UK group. Find out more at [amnesty.org.uk/write-for-rights](https://www.amnesty.org.uk/write-for-rights). Thank you for supporting this campaign and for helping to achieve human rights change.

• Need to order more booklets?

Go to [amnesty.org.uk/write-for-rights](https://www.amnesty.org.uk/write-for-rights) or email us on activism@amnesty.org.uk

Global solidarity works

Write for Rights shows that when we act together, we can change lives. More than 5.3 million messages of support and letters of appeal were sent during the campaign in 2022. They had a huge impact on people, communities and organisations who had suffered abuses and were campaigning for justice.

• More than 479,000 people took action for Chow Hang-tung, a human rights lawyer from Hong Kong. In December 2022, she won an appeal against her conviction.

• Activists Joanah Mamombe, Cecillia Chimbiri and Netsai Marova were arrested in 2020 after leading an anti-government protest in Zimbabwe. While Netsai fled the country, Joanah and Cecillia's case went to trial. In July 2023, the pair were finally acquitted.

'Thank you for your letters... With your support, how could I give up?'

Chow Hang-tung, Write for Rights 2022

LETTER WRITING WORKS

This year's campaign

Join our campaign and change lives this winter. From women human rights defenders to environmental activists, this book shares the stories of people around the world whose rights have been abused and who urgently need your support.

Global action and solidarity help to raise their profile and campaign work, 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 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 make your voice heard – we've included 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 feedback form at

[amnesty.org.uk/write-for-rights](https://www.amnesty.org.uk/write-for-rights)

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 real impact. Please do as many actions in this booklet as possible – and if you have the time, prioritise personal handwritten messages to the individuals themselves. The people we support say these are the most powerful messages they receive.

New to Write for Rights?

Getting involved in our letter-writing campaign couldn't be easier. 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. The more the better, of course, but 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 (but only if you feel comfortable and there are no risks to you and your family). This shows the letter is genuine and personal. Keep requests clear and polite.
- If there's anything else you're unsure of check the frequently asked questions section on page 20 or contact us on activism@amnesty.org.uk

Materials

Need more booklets? Please order via the online form at [amnesty.org.uk/write-for-rights](https://www.amnesty.org.uk/write-for-rights) or email us on activism@amnesty.org.uk

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

- Posters and images for social media (or to print for in-person events)
- 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](#)

Dates to remember

- Write for Rights 2023 runs from **1 November to 31 December**
- International Children's Day is **20 November**
- International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women is **25 November**
- International Women Human Rights Defenders Day is **29 November**
- International Human Rights Defenders Day is **9 December**
- International Human Rights Day and the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are **10 December**



1. AUSTRALIA

Uncle Pabai
and Uncle Paul



2. BRAZIL

Ana Maria
Santos Cruz



3. ESWATINI

Thulani
Maseko



4. KYRGYZSTAN

Rita
Karasartova



5. MYANMAR

Maung
Sawyeddollah



6. POLAND

Justyna
Wydrzyńska



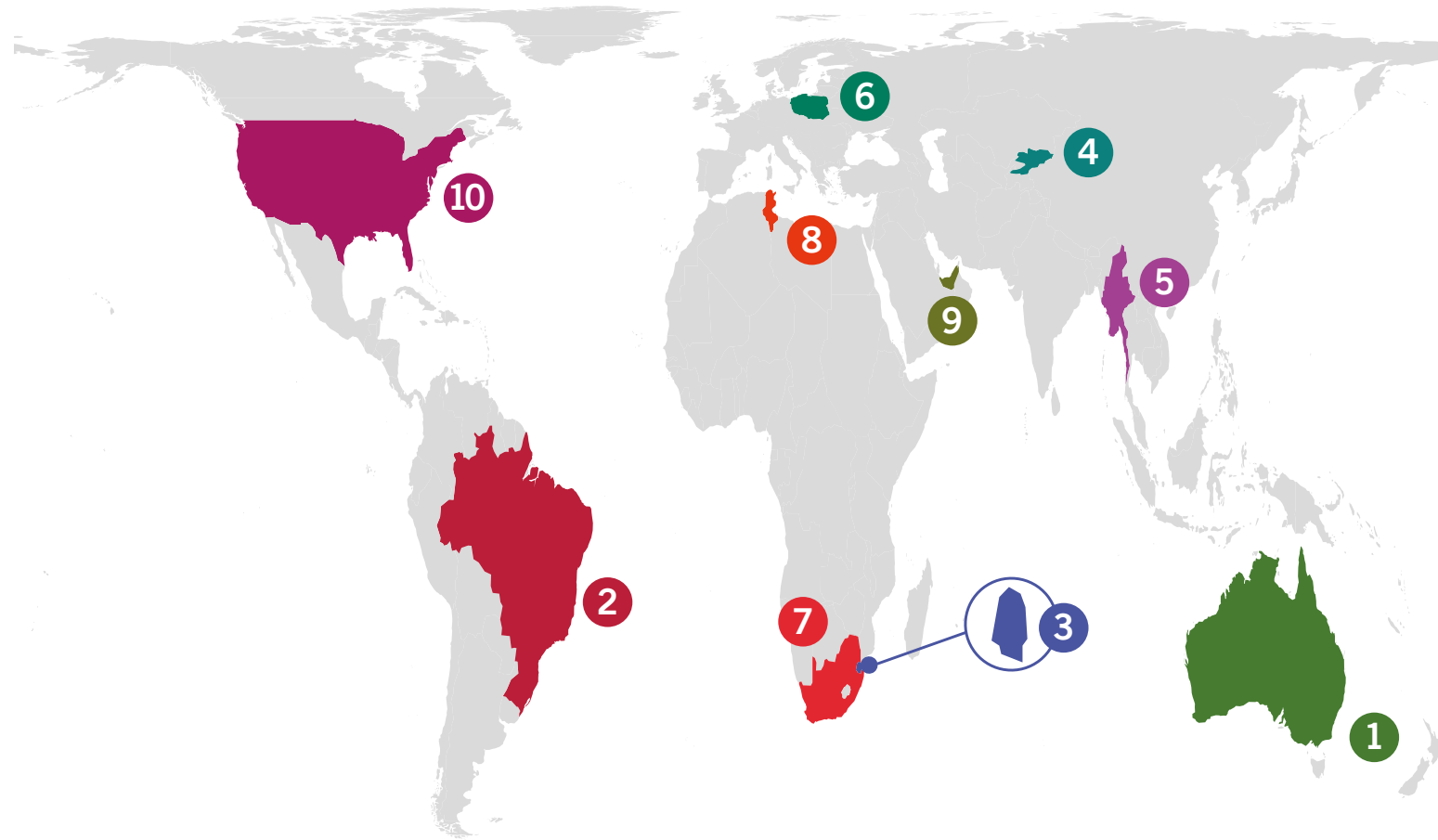
7. SOUTH AFRICA

Thapelo Mohapi
and the Abahlali
baseMjondolo
movement



8. TUNISIA

Chaima
Issa



10. USA

Rocky
Myers



9. UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Ahmed
Mansoor

UNCLE PABAI AND UNCLE PAUL

Australia



Defending their communities from the climate emergency

Uncle Pabai and Uncle Paul are Guda Maluyligal men, and community leaders from Boigu and Saibai islands in the Torres Strait, the most northern part of Australia. Their Indigenous ancestors have lived there for thousands of years.

Now their way of life – which, as Indigenous Peoples, is deeply connected to the land, sea and sky – is at risk because of the climate emergency. Rising sea levels are causing more destruction every year, as beaches, sacred cultural sites and food gardens are being destroyed. The islands' infrastructure is also in danger.

Uncle Pabai and Uncle Paul have now turned to the courts. They argue that the Australian

government is not taking sufficient action to prevent climate change from destroying their land and culture.

If immediate action is not taken, the Torres Strait islanders will be forced to flee their homes as a large part of their land is becoming uninhabitable. This would be devastating for the communities.

'We are born to these islands, they are our mothers, our identities, who we are. For thousands of years, our warrior families fought off anyone who tried to take our homelands from us. But now, we could lose the fight to climate change.'

Uncle Pabai

Send a message of support and solidarity

Uncle Pabai and Uncle Paul
c/o Amnesty International
Australia
Locked bag 23
Broadway, NSW, 2007
Australia

Language English, Kalaw
Kawaw Ya

Pronouns He/him

Suggested message I support you in your fight to protect your island homes

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 prime minister to reduce carbon emissions to protect communities in the Torres Strait from climate harm.

Write to Prime Minister of Australia Anthony Albanese
PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra, ACT, 2600
Australia

f @PaulBiya.PageOfficielle
t @PR_Paul_BIYA
@ @presidentpaulbiya
Hashtag #PabaiVCmth, #W4R23

Salutation Honourable
Prime Minister

In your letter ask him to take the necessary action to protect the human rights of First Nations Peoples in the Torres Strait by rapidly cutting carbon emissions in line with the world commitment of limiting global warming to 1.5°C and the best available science.

Notes Letters can be sent individually or in batches.

ANA MARIA SANTOS CRUZ

Brazil



A mother's fight for justice

Almost five years after the death of activist Pedro Henrique, his mother Ana Maria Santos Cruz is still seeking justice.

Pedro was a vocal advocate of racial justice and human rights. He started Walks of Peace, an annual march in Tucano, Bahia, to unite people to speak out on police abuses, primarily against Black communities.

This activism was met with threats and hostility from the police. Officers began to monitor Pedro, threaten and attack him.

On 27 December 2018, Pedro was shot eight times by three hooded gunmen who raided his home. He was sleeping next to his girlfriend, who recognised the men as police officers.

The officers suspected of his murder were indicted in 2019 but they are still working. The investigation has not concluded, and a trial has yet to begin. Despite ongoing threats, Ana Maria bravely continues to search for the truth about her son's death.

'I do not believe that there is one man or woman in this entire earth that can silence a mother's scream for justice. They will never silence me.'
Ana Maria Santos Cruz

Send a message of support and solidarity

Ana Maria Santos Cruz
c/o Amnesty International
Brazil
Rua da Gloria, 344
Rooms 302 and 304
Gloria
CEP: 20241-180
Rio de Janeiro
Brazil
@ @justiceparapedrohenrique

Language Portuguese, English
Pronouns She/her
Suggested message You are not alone

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 general prosecutor to ensure full accountability for those involved in the killing of Pedro Henrique.

Write to General Prosecutor of Bahia
Ministério Público do Estado da Bahia
Quinta Avenida, nº 750,
º1 andar
sala 129, do CAB (Centro

Administrativo da Bahia)
CEP 41.745-004
Salvador, BA
Brazil

t @MPdaBahia
Hashtag
#JusticeForPedroHenrique,
#W4R23

Salutation Dear General Prosecutor
In your letter ask him to take all necessary measures to ensure an independent, impartial and thorough investigation into Pedro Henrique's murder and bring those responsible to justice in fair trials.

THULANI

MASEKO

Eswatini



RITA

KARASARTOVA

Kyrgyzstan



Killed for speaking the truth

Thulani Maseko was a loving father and husband. He was a devout member of the Methodist Church, an activist and LGBTI ally. People who knew him described him as humble and friendly.

After qualifying as a lawyer, he fought for the people of Eswatini, a country ruled by a wealthy monarchy, but where approximately 60 per cent of the population lives below the poverty line. Thulani openly criticised the country's repressive laws and excessive state violence against peaceful protest.

He knew the risks of speaking out were high. In 2014 he spent a year in prison for writing news articles denouncing the lack of judicial independence and integrity in his country.

On 21 January 2023, he was shot dead in his home in front of his wife, Tanele. Just hours earlier, King Mswati III said those calling for democratic reform would be 'dealt with' and 'people should not shed tears and complain about mercenaries killing them'. No one has yet been held accountable for Thulani's murder.

'We shall never surrender, for we know there is a price to pay for the truth.'

Thulani Maseko, speaking at the Oslo Freedom Forum 2016

Send a message of support and solidarity

Tanele Maseko
c/o Amnesty International
South Africa
97 Oxford Road
Saxonwold
Johannesburg
2196 South Africa
@Tanele70

Language English, Siswati

Pronouns He/him

Suggested message Send Thulani a message of hope and support (such as 'You are not alone') via his wife, Tanele.

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 general prosecutor to ensure full accountability for those involved in the unlawful killing of Thulani Maseko.

Write to

His Majesty
King Mswati III
Office of the King
Lozitha Palace
PO Box 1
Kwaluseni
Eswatini

✉ clerktoparl@swazi.net

Facebook /EswatiniGov

Twitter @EswatiniGovern1

Instagram @presidentpaulbiya

Hashtag

#JusticeForThulaniMaseko,
#W4R23

Salutation Your Majesty

In your letter ask him to ensure the unlawful killing of Thulani Maseko is effectively investigated, those responsible are brought to justice in fair trials, and Thulani's family is provided with access to effective remedies.

Peaceful protester faces 15 years in prison

Rita Karasartova loves spending time with her children, practicing yoga and sewing chapans, her country's traditional quilted robe. But in October 2022 her life turned upside down.

She and 26 other people were arrested for opposing a new border agreement that gave control of a freshwater reservoir to Uzbekistan. The group called for people to peacefully demonstrate against the deal because they feared Uzbekistan would restrict or prohibit access to this water, which is scarce in the region.

They were charged with organising 'mass disorder'. Rita has also been charged with attempting to 'violently overthrow the government', which carries a prison sentence of up to 15 years. She was detained in a cramped

cell for months without access to healthcare or contact with her family. Now she is under house arrest with a strict curfew.

Rita is a human rights campaigner and an expert in civic governance. For over a decade, she has provided independent legal advice and helped people wronged by a corrupt and unreliable legal system. She leads the non-governmental Institute for Public Analysis and is a member of the United Democratic Movement of Kyrgyzstan, where she fights against poverty and injustice.

'What drives a person? Dreams or fear? If we have a dream, then fears can be overcome.'

Rita Karasartova, in an interview with online Kyrgyz newspaper *New Faces*

Send a message of support and solidarity

Rita Karasartova
c/o Civic Initiatives
Abdrakhmanova 204 Office
14 Bishkek 710040
Kyrgyz Republic
✉ freedomrita@protonmail.com

Language English, Russian, Kyrgyz

Pronouns She/her

Suggested message We are thinking of you. Stay strong. Send messages and drawings of friendship and hope.

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 authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Rita from house arrest and to drop all charges against her.

Write to General Prosecutor
139 Toktonaliev Street
Bishkek 720040
Kyrgyz Republic
✉ statement@prokuror.kg

Hashtag

#боштондук (freedom),
#Свободу Рите
(Freedom to Rita in Kyrgyz and Russian)

Salutation Dear General Prosecutor

In your letter ask him

to immediately and unconditionally release Rita Karasartova from house arrest and drop all charges against her so she can carry out her legitimate human rights work without fear of retaliation.

MAUNG

SAWYEDDOLLAH

📍 Myanmar



JUSTYNA

WYDRZYŃSKA

📍 Poland



Taking on Facebook for its role in atrocities

Six years ago, Maung Sawyeddollah was playing football and dreaming of becoming a doctor. Then Myanmar's military began carrying out ethnic cleansing against the Rohingya, a minority ethnic group who have been severely discriminated against by the state for decades. Thousands of Rohingya were killed, raped, tortured and had their villages burned down.

Fearing for their lives, Sawyeddollah and his family walked for 15 days to reach Bangladesh's Cox's Bazaar refugee camp, where they are still. He was only 15 years old.

Sawyeddollah now wants to become a lawyer and achieve justice for the suffering around him. He is campaigning for Meta, which owns Facebook, to take responsibility for its contribution to the atrocities. Years before the

attacks, Meta's algorithms amplified anti-Rohingya incitement on the Facebook platform, fuelling the Myanmar military's violence.

He and his community are calling for Meta to pay reparations for its role in the atrocities, including to fund education programmes in the Cox's Bazaar camp. He believes that education can help the people in his community rebuild their lives.

'We are in living hell... Facebook cannot remake our lives as before; only we can do that. But what we need is education to do it. We are just asking for a little to give opportunities to Rohingya students in these [refugee] camps.'

Maung Sawyeddollah

Send a message of support and solidarity

Maung Sawyeddollah
c/o Amnesty International
South Asia Regional Office
23/2 Horton Place
Colombo 7
Sir Lanka
🐦 @M_Sawyed

Language Rohingya, Bengali, Burmese, English, Urdu

Pronouns He/him

Suggested message I act with you in your fight for reparations

Can I

Send a religious card or message? No

Send an Amnesty card or mention Amnesty? Yes

Include my name and address? Yes

Send an appeal letter

Urge Meta to pay reparations to Maung Sawyeddollah and the affected Rohingya communities.

Write to Mark Zuckerberg
Meta CEO
1 Hacker Way
Menlo Park
CA 94025
USA



humanrightsteam@meta.com

📘 /zuck

📷 @zuck

Hashtag #PayUpMeta,
#RohingyaRemediation,
#RohingyaReparations

Salutation Dear Mr Zuckerberg
In your letter ask him to ensure Meta provide an effective remedy to Maung Sawyeddollah and affected Rohingya communities, as the company enabled hatred and discrimination against them to thrive on the Facebook platform.

Prosecuted for defending the safe right to abortion

Justyna Wydrzyńska's own abortion experience without support or access to information inspired her to help others make informed decisions about their reproductive rights.

Justyna co-founded Abortion Dream Team, an activist collective that campaigns against abortion stigma and offers advice on how to access safe abortion in Poland, where legislation on this issue is among the most restrictive in Europe.

In February 2020, Justyna helped Ania (name changed for safety reasons), who was in an abusive relationship, pregnant and desperate. She said she would rather die than continue with the pregnancy. Justyna, herself a survivor of a violent relationship, sent Ania abortion pills, but Ania's partner intercepted the package and

contacted the police.

In November 2021, the public prosecutor charged Justyna with 'helping with an abortion'. In March 2023, she was found guilty and sentenced to eight months of community service. Justyna's lawyers have appealed the verdict.

This conviction sets a dangerous precedent: without the support Justyna and other activists provide, people like Ania would be alone and without the safe healthcare to which they are entitled.

'I was driven by the will to help when no one else wanted to or could... For me, helping Ania was an obvious, decent and honest thing to do.'

Justyna Wydrzyńska

Send a message of support and solidarity

Justyna Wydrzyńska
c/o Amnesty International
Polska
Sapieżyńska 10A
00-215 Warsaw
Poland
✉ dla.justyny@amnesty.org.pl

Language Polish, English

Pronouns She/her

Suggested message Stay strong

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 general to immediately overturn Justyna Wydrzyńska's unjust conviction.

Write to Prosecutor General
National Prosecutor's Office
ul. Postępu 3 02-676 Warsaw
Poland
✉ biuro.podawcze.pk@prokuratura.gov.pl

🐦 @PK_GOV_PL

Hashtag #IAmJustyna

Salutation Dear Prosecutor General

In your letter ask him to immediately overturn Justyna Wydrzyńska's conviction and refrain from bringing other charges against her for carrying out her legitimate defence of human rights.

THAPELO MOHAPI AND THE ABAHLALI BASEMJONDOLO MOVEMENT

📍 South Africa



Threatened for defending his community

Activist Thapelo Mohapi wants a better life for his people but since 2021 he has been forced to live in hiding due to death threats.

He is general secretary of the Abahlali baseMjondolo movement (AbM), a grassroots organisation defending people's rights in South Africa, particularly in areas suffering economic hardship, including eKhenana in KwaZulu-Natal province.

Most of the residents of eKhenana have migrated there from rural parts of South Africa in search of a better life. They cannot afford the cost of living in that area, and often resort to making homes from tin, with little or no access to water and sanitation. They also face challenges such as police brutality, forced evictions and poor public services.

AbM members in eKhenana have worked hard to improve the lives of people in the community, speaking out against local government corruption and starting a school, farm, communal kitchen and shop. As a result, they have received resistance, threats and attacks from state officials who have also encouraged violence against them. This has included murders and damage to their homes. In 2022, three AbM members were killed in eKhenana.

'I am prepared to sacrifice my life for this movement and for the killings in South Africa to end.'

Thapelo Mohapi

Send a message of support and solidarity

Thapelo Mohapi and the AbM movement
c/o Amnesty International
South Africa
97 Oxford Road, Rosebank
Johannesburg, 2196
South Africa
Facebook /abahlalibasemjondolo
Twitter @abahlalibm
Instagram @abahlalibasemjondolo

Language isiZulu, English, Sesotho, isisXhosa

Pronouns He/him

Suggested message Keep up the fight for your communities

Creative action Thapelo loves jazz and supports football teams Mamelodi Sundowns and

Manchester City, so you could draw pictures related to these to accompany your message.

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 South African Police Service to thoroughly and effectively investigate the attacks and killings of AbM members.

Write to Minister of Police
Private Bag X463

Pretoria
0001

Facebook /abahlalibasemjondolo

Twitter @abahlalibm

Instagram @abahlalibasemjondolo

Hashtag #ProtectThapelo, #ProtectAbM

Salutation Dear Minister
In your letter ask him to conduct a thorough, impartial, independent, transparent and effective investigation into the harassment and killings of AbM members, and bring suspected perpetrators to justice in fair trails; and to end attacks against AbM members, including Thapelo Mohapi, and their families.

CHAIMA

ISSA

📍 Tunisia



Facing prison for her political opinions

Activist Chaima Issa speaks openly about what she believes is right. She is the daughter of a former political prisoner and was one of the first to publicly oppose the Tunisian president Kais Saied after he suspended parliament, dismissed the prime minister and took executive control of the country in July 2021, claiming sweeping emergency powers.

Since then, human rights in Tunisia have deteriorated, many courts lack independence, and freedom of expression is under attack

Chaima was arrested on 22 February 2023 for alleged 'conspiracy' after meeting foreign diplomats and other Tunisian opposition figures to discuss the political situation. She was released on 13 July after four months

in arbitrary detention, but the legal case is ongoing. The authorities have banned her from travelling abroad and appearing in public spaces.

A military court, which lacks independence, is also investigating Chaima for criticising the authorities on a radio interview in 2022. She could face decades in prison for her peaceful activism, but her bravery shines through: when taken into custody, she raised a clenched fist and sang the national anthem.

'Is this Tunisia? Is this the Tunisia we dreamed of?'

Chaima Issa

Send a message of support and solidarity

Chaima Issa
c/o Amnesty International Tunis
Regional Office
24 Avenue de la livre
Les Berges du Lac 2
Tunis
Twitter @IssaaChaima

Language Arabic, French, English

Pronouns She/her

Suggested message I support you in your fight for human rights in Tunisia

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 authorities to drop the baseless investigation and other restrictions against political activist Chaima Issa.

Write to We request that you do not send physical letters, as the Tunisian postal system is unreliable. The office of the president also makes it difficult for members of the public to send letters to him.

✉ contact@carthage.tn

Facebook /Presidence.tn

Twitter @TnPresidency

Hashtag #FreeChaima

Salutation Your Excellency

In your letter ask him to drop the baseless investigation and other restrictions against Chaima Issa, as she has been detained solely for exercising her right to freedom of expression.

AHMED MANSOOR

United Arab Emirates



Locked up for 10 years for speaking out

Poet, blogger and human rights activist Ahmed Mansoor is a loving father and husband, but is currently behind bars in al-Sadr prison in Abu Dhabi. He is in solitary confinement without access to books, pens or paper. He does not even have a bed.

Before his arrest, Ahmed was one of the few voices providing reliable, independent information on the state of human rights in the country. He regularly raised the issues of unfair trials, detention and torture of people critical of the government. He spoke about violations within the judicial system and national laws that breach international law.

In response, the security forces searched his home and arrested him in March 2017. For over a year, no one, not even his family, knew where he was. In May 2018, Ahmed was sentenced to 10 years in prison on charges including 'insulting the UAE and its symbols'.

In protest at prison conditions, Ahmed has gone on hunger strike twice, resulting in severe weight loss and putting his life at risk. He is only allowed out of his cell three times a week when guards have removed all the other prisoners from the outdoor yard.

'The only way to counter repression is by revealing it... if [activists] do not talk, who will?'
Ahmed Mansoor

Send a message of support and solidarity

Ahmed Mansoor
c/o Mrs S F
Gulf Centre for Human Rights
PO Box 245
Saida
Lebanon
🐦 @Ahmed_Mansoor

Language English, Arabic
Pronouns He/him
Suggested message I am with you in solidarity

Can I

Send a religious card or message? No
Send an Amnesty card or mention Amnesty? Yes
Include my name and address? Yes

Send an appeal letter

Urge the president to release Ahmed Mansoor immediately and unconditionally.

Write to President of the United Arab Emirates
Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan
c/o Embassy of the United Arab Emirates
1-2 Grosvenor Crescent
London SW1X 7EE

🐦 @Ahmed_Mansoor

Notes For the best chance of the president seeing your letters, please take photos of them and post on Twitter/X and Instagram tagging him.
Hashtag #FreeAhmed

Salutation Your Highness
In your letter ask him to immediately and unconditionally release Ahmed Mansoor and quash his sentence and conviction, as he has been imprisoned solely for his peaceful human rights activism.

ROCKY MYERS

USA



Sentenced to death in a flawed process

Rocky Myers has spent almost half of his life on death row in Alabama. In 1994, a nearly all-white jury sentenced him to life for the murder of his elderly white neighbour. The trial judge overrode their decision and imposed a death sentence – a practice now illegal in Alabama.

No evidence linked him to the scene of the murder except for a video-recorder stolen from the victim that Rocky said he found on the street. Testimonies were tainted by inconsistencies and allegations of police pressure, with one later recanted as untrue.

Rocky's children and those who know him well describe him as a loving father and grandfather.

He was diagnosed with an intellectual disability when he was 11 years old.

The US Supreme Court ruled that defendants with intellectual disabilities 'face a special risk of wrongful execution'. Burdened with ineffective legal representation, and abandoned by his post-conviction lawyer, he missed key deadlines for appeal. His execution could be scheduled at any time.

'He was there, he took us to school... he waited when we got off the bus, he was the best father he could be.'

Rocky's son Robin LeAndrew Hood

Send a message of support and solidarity

Rocky Myers, AIS 0000Z563
Holman Correctional Facility,
M-44
Holman 3700
866 Ross Road
Atmore
AL 36503
USA

Language English
Pronouns He/him
Suggested message Rocky finds reading hard so keep messages simple
Creative action Send or draw pictures of where you live or go on holiday, or places you love.

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 governor of Alabama to use his authority to grant clemency to Rocky Myers and commute his death sentence.

Write to Governor of Alabama
Kay Ivey
The Office of Alabama Governor
600 Dexter Avenue
Montgomery, AL 36130
USA
✉ info@governor.alabama.gov

Salutation Dear Governor

In your letter ask her to use her power to grant clemency to Rocky Myers and commute his death sentence, ending the injustice that has tarnished his case for more than 25 years.

HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT

FROM 2022

Hundreds of thousands of people around the world took part in Write for Rights 2022, sending more than 5.3 million messages of support and appeals to the authorities. Here are some updates on the people we featured in the campaign.



© AI

Shahnewaz Chowdhury BANGLADESH

Arrested for expressing concern on Facebook about the impact of a coal power plant in his village, Shahnewaz Chowdhury's trial began in July 2022 and continues. The engineer and environmental activist faces up to 10 years in prison. During the campaign, 526,773 actions were taken for him, and his story generated international media coverage, from Canada to South Korea. Currently on bail, Shahnewaz continues his work on climate change. **'The campaign has caught the attention of international human rights organisations and leaders. [It] has resulted in letters, emails and requests reaching our government... and hope that the government will withdraw my case,'** he said.



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Dorgelesse Nguessan CAMEROON

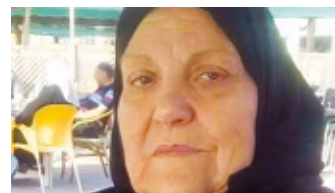
Dorgelesse Nguessan received a five-year prison sentence for attending her first protest in 2020, leaving her family struggling to survive. In November 2022, in an unusual move, the prison authorities met with her to see how she was and she was given a medical check. In December, the UN stated that the arrests during these protests were 'arbitrary'. An appeal process for Dorgelesse and 22 other protesters is now under way. **'I wonder what would have happened if I hadn't been supported by Amnesty. I felt lost. I don't want you to stop campaigning for me: please keep going until I am free,'** she said.



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Luis Manuel Otero Alcántara CUBA

Artist Luis Manuel Otero Alcántara is serving a five-year sentence in Cuba. A key figure in the San Isidro movement, which opposes government censorship, he was jailed after posting online that he was joining the 2021 mass protests. Now the Write for Rights letters sent to him are being turned into a piece of art. Amnesty International continues to work for his release.



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Zineb Redouane FRANCE

Zineb Redouane, 80, died in 2018 after being hit by a tear gas grenade shot by a police

officer. She was closing the window to protect herself from tear gas used in the policing of a protest about poor living conditions passing by in the street below. Four years on, no one has been charged or suspended over the killing. We continue to support the family's persistent efforts for justice.

'It is important to mobilise... to inform the public so that Madame Redouane's name is not forgotten. And above all, so that the police officer who killed her can be held accountable before the courts,' said the family's lawyer.

dinosaurs, cats, and alpacas that you drew are really cute, and I especially like the cat that is all black except for the two eyes (just like the one I have at home). With your support, how could I give up?' said Chow.



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Cecillia Chimбири, Joanah Mamombe and Netsai Marova ZIMBABWE

Activists Cecillia Chimбири, Joanah Mamombe and Netsai Marova were arrested in Harare and subjected to a degrading attack after taking part in an anti-government protest in 2020. When the women were given bail, Netsai left the country but Cecillia and Joanah stayed to face trial. They were finally acquitted of communicating falsehoods and obstructing the course of justice by the High Court in July 2023.

'I feel so relieved and I thank you for the amazing Write for Rights campaign. I am forever indebted. It is like a huge weight has been lifted off my shoulders. Reading all the letters and cards made me feel so loved and appreciated,' said Cecillia.



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Chow Hang-tung (鄒幸彤) HONG KONG

Human rights lawyer Chow Hang-tung was imprisoned in Hong Kong for peacefully commemorating the victims of the Tiananmen Square massacre. In December, she won an appeal against her conviction for 'inciting others to take part in unauthorised assembly'. However, she remains in prison on charges of inciting subversion, facing an additional 10 years. The campaign increased awareness of the human rights violations in Hong Kong, especially on the right to protest.

'Thank you for your letters. I wrote a lot of postcards... I initiated the [Amnesty] letters group when I was at the university... I never thought I would become the recipient of [Amnesty's] letters now. The



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Vahid Afkari IRAN

Brothers Vahid, Navid and Habib Afkari were tortured and jailed for protesting in Shiraz in 2018. Navid was sentenced to death and secretly executed. Habib was released in March 2022. Vahid remains in solitary confinement in jail. More than 446,000 actions were taken for his release. The campaign raised his profile and reached audiences inside Iran via Amnesty's Persian-language social media channels.



© AFP/Getty Images

Nasser Zefzafi MOROCCO

A key figure in the protest movement Hirak El-rif, Nasser Zefzafi is serving a 20-year prison sentence for his peaceful activism against the poor socio-economic conditions and marginalisation of Rif people. When he was arrested in 2017, he was tortured and ill-treated in police custody. His prosecution is an example of the current wave of repression and human rights abuses in Morocco. Nasser's family said they are grateful for the hundreds of thousands of actions taken on his behalf.



Aleksandra Skochilenko

RUSSIA

More than 594,000 actions were taken to support Aleksandra (Sasha) Skochilenko from St Petersburg, who was detained after peacefully protesting against Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Now she faces 10 years in prison. Her trial started on 15 December 2022 and continues. Amnesty continues to encourage independent media and foreign diplomats to attend her court hearings to help protect her from abuse.

'Your attention warms us up at this difficult time and lets us feel that we are not left alone... She sends you a big hello and thanks for the postcards! Thank you for the emotions that you give her. Now Sasha devotes all her time to communicating with you and preparing for the courts,' said her lawyer.



Yren Rotela and Mariana Sepúlveda

PARAGUAY

Activists Yren Rotela and Mariana Sepúlveda are two trans women fighting for the legal right to change their names. They have been attacked and prevented from speaking out about the discrimination they face. As part of the campaign, they went on an international tour to raise awareness. In December, the Supreme Court finally sent Mariana's case, stuck under constitutional consultation for four years, to the Court of Appeals, bringing a resolution closer. Yren's case remains before the Supreme Court.

'The love that I once did not feel, today is something very strong and that is why I always say that there is no time for more hate, we only have time to love,' says Yren. **'The [Write for Rights] tour awakened my abilities that were dormant, now I can speak in public without fear to continue demanding my rights,'** said Mariana.

GOOD NEWS FROM PREVIOUS

WRITE FOR RIGHTS



Mohamed Baker

EGYPT

Human rights lawyer Mohamed Baker and researcher Patrick Zaki were released from prison after a presidential pardon on 19 July 2023. Mohamed, detained since 2019 for defending Egypt's most marginalised people, featured in Write for Rights 2021. He said that everyone from Amnesty did much more than he expected and that he will never forget them standing by him.



Hakamada Iwao

JAPAN

More than half a century after his first and grossly unfair trial for murder, Hakamada Iwao, 87, has been granted a retrial, which is due to start on 27 October 2023. He spent 45 years on death row in Japan, until his temporary release in 2014 after a long-standing Amnesty campaign, including Write for Rights 2012.

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. They 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 the environment; or someone from a like-minded organisation.
- Bring in people new to human rights activism. Hold an event at work during lunchtime or ask people to sign action cards or write letters in your workplace, school, library or community club.
- 10 December is Human Rights Day and, this year, the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: a good time to hold your event.
- November-December is the season of goodwill: host a celebration with mulled wine and mince pies for your family, friends or housemates.
- 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, along with people you know.
- Contact local media – they can promote and report on 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.

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 fundraise@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

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/write-for-rights](https://www.amnesty.org.uk/write-for-rights)

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 PRICEY. 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 any business or other close links with a country or have concerns, we would recommend that you do not give your full name or address. **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
amnesty.org.uk/join

 @amnestyUK  /amnestyUK



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