

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 supplement to *Amnesty Magazine* is produced for readers and local groups wishing to write more letters in support of individuals at risk. It is also intended to implement the decision of the Annual General Meeting 2013 calling for nine Real Lives cases to be included in each issue of the magazine.

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

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Amnesty

HRAC

17-25 New Inn Yard

London EC2A 3EA

## TAKE ACTION FOR

### Jehad Sadeq Aziz Salman and Ebrahim Ahmed Radi al-Moqdad Bahrain



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#### Teenage protesters sentenced to 10 years

Postage: World

Jehad Sadeq Aziz Salman and Ebrahim Ahmed Radi al-Moqdad, both aged 15, were arrested during an anti-government protest in Bahrain's capital, Manama, on 23 July 2012. They were not allowed to speak to their families or lawyers for almost 48 hours and were interrogated without a lawyer present. Both boys reported being beaten and forced to sign 'confessions'. They were held in a prison for adults.

Their trial began in October 2012 and in April 2013 they were sentenced to 10 years. Their families were not allowed into the courtroom to hear the verdict. The boys were transferred to another adult prison. Their sentences were upheld on appeal in September 2013.

When a fight broke out in Jehad and Ebrahim's cell on 14 May 2013 a fellow prisoner reported seeing prison guards beating several young men. Jehad and 13 others were then put in solitary confinement and denied family visits but were later moved back to their normal cells.

**APPEAL** Please ask the Bahraini authorities to quash the boys' convictions, as they were tried as adults despite being aged under 18. Demand that they are moved to a juvenile prison until they are retried in a juvenile court, that they are protected from torture and other ill-treatment, and that their allegations of torture are independently investigated.

▶ Sheikh Hamad bin 'Isa Al Khalifa  
Office of His Majesty the King  
PO Box 555  
Rifa'a Palace, al-Manama  
Bahrain

**Salutation:** Your Majesty

▶ Her Excellency Ms Alice Thomas Samaan  
Embassy of the Kingdom of Bahrain  
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London SW1X 8QB  
Fax: 020 7201 9183

**Salutation:** Your Excellency

## TAKE ACTION FOR

### Bakhtiyar Guliyev, Mahammad Azizov and Shahin Novruzlu Azerbaijan



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#### Young activists imprisoned for peaceful protest

Postage: World

Two men, Bakhtiyar Guliyev and Mahammad Azizov, and 17-year-old juvenile Shahin Novruzlu, were arrested in March 2013 after organising anti-government protests. Police later searched their homes and claimed they found illegal drugs and Molotov cocktails but the men's relatives insist that police planted these.

Bakhtiyar, Mahammad, Shanin and five other members of NIDA – a youth organisation campaigning for political and social reform – were charged in September 2013 with planning to organise acts of public disorder and intending to use Molotov cocktails during a protest. However, the protest had been peaceful until police used overwhelming force to break it up. Local human rights groups say over 90 protesters were arrested and mistreated.

Bakhtiyar, Mahammad and Shahin say they were beaten during questioning and their testimony extracted using physical abuse and psychological pressure. Shahin named his abuser and said: 'When I was interrogated my parents weren't with me. I was beaten and four of my teeth were broken.'

**APPEAL** Urge the President of Azerbaijan to take steps to release all eight youth activists immediately and unconditionally. Argue that they are all prisoners of conscience, detained only for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly. Remind the President that the country must honour its international obligations to protect and respect human rights.

▶ President Ilham Aliyev  
Office of the President of the Republic  
of Azerbaijan  
18 Istiqlaliyyat Avenue  
Baku, AZ 1066  
Republic of Azerbaijan

**Salutation:** Dear President

▶ His Excellency Mr Fakhreddin Gurbanov  
Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan  
4 Kensington Court  
London W8 5LD  
Fax: 020 7936 1783

**Salutation:** Your Excellency

## TAKE ACTION FOR

### Ali Mahmoud Othman Syria



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#### Citizen journalist is prisoner of conscience

Postage: World

Ali Mahmoud Othman is a citizen journalist. He disseminates information on the situation in Syria in the absence of reports by professional journalists, who are often in danger of arrest and imprisonment for reporting on subjects the Syrian authorities deem a threat to national security. He was also well known for providing help to foreign journalists.

He was arrested in 2012. Soon afterwards Syrian state TV showed an interview of him being questioned about his activities, which made it clear that he had been arrested by government forces. No one has heard from him since the interview was shown in May 2012, and his family have never been told where he is being held.

Amnesty International believes that Ali Mahmoud Othman is a prisoner of conscience held solely for his peaceful media-related activities and for assisting foreign journalists.

**APPEAL** Urge the authorities to say where Ali Mahmoud Othman is and what has happened to him, and to allow him to see his family and a lawyer of his choice. Urge them to ensure he is protected from torture and other ill-treatment. Call for his immediate release if he is being held solely for his activities as a citizen journalist.

▶ President Bashar al-Assad  
Presidential Palace  
Al-Rashid Street  
Damascus  
Syrian Arab Republic

**Salutation:** Dear President

▶ Her Excellency Mme Lamia Chakkour  
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France  
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**Salutation:** Your Excellency

**TAKE ACTION FOR****Miriam López  
Mexico**

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**Mother tortured to confess to false charges**

In February 2011 Miriam López was forced into a white van by two men and taken to a nearby military base. Twelve hours later she was presented to a civilian prosecutor accused of possession of drugs after an anonymous tip-off.

Miriam López was held for a week at the military base, where she alleges soldiers tortured and raped her. They used electric shocks, near asphyxiation and stress positions on her and also threatened her family, in an effort to get Miriam to 'confess' to trafficking drugs. She maintains her innocence.

Miriam spent 80 days in pre-trial detention before being charged with drug-related offences and transferred to a prison in Ensenada. She was finally released in September 2011, after her case was thrown out of court through lack of evidence.

Although Mexico's National Human Rights Commission has confirmed that Miriam was tortured and called for a criminal investigation, progress has been slow and the investigation poorly organised. Miriam continues to be denied justice and reparations.

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**APPEAL** Express concern about the torture suffered by Miriam López at the hands of Mexican soldiers and other federal officials in February 2011. Demand a full and impartial investigation, and for those responsible to be brought to justice. Urge the authorities to provide full redress to Miriam in accordance with her wishes.

▶ President Enrique Peña Nieto  
Residencia Oficial de los Pinos  
Casa Miguel Alemán  
Col. San Miguel Chapultepec, C.P. 11850  
Mexico City  
Mexico

**Salutation:** Dear President

▶ His Excellency Diego Antonio Gomez Pickering  
Embassy of Mexico  
16 St George Street  
London W1S 1FD  
Fax: 020 7495 4035

**Salutation:** Your Excellency

**TAKE ACTION FOR****Claudia Medina  
Tamariz  
Mexico**

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**Beaten, kicked and given electric shocks**

At 3am on 7 August 2012 Claudia Medina Tamariz woke to find marines had broken into her home in Veracruz City, Mexico. The mother of three was blindfolded and taken to a local naval base where she says she was given electric shocks, beaten and kicked. Claudia was accused of being a member of a violent criminal gang, which she denies.

The next day she was interrogated at the Federal Attorney General's Office and pressured into signing a statement that she wasn't allowed to read.

In court she retracted her statement and described the abuse she suffered in detention. All but one of the charges against her were dropped. She was released on bail.

A judge ordered the Federal Attorney General's Office to investigate her allegations. But to date no specialist medical and psychological assessment has been conducted as required by UN guidelines for investigating torture (the Istanbul Protocol), and no one has been held to account for Claudia's torture.

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**APPEAL** Urge the Federal Attorney General to investigate the alleged torture and ill-treatment suffered by Claudia Medina Tamariz, make the results public and bring those responsible to justice. Call on him to ensure Claudia receives full and impartial medical examinations, and to establish the Istanbul Protocol procedure for investigating allegations of torture and ill-treatment in Mexico.

▶ Federal Attorney General Jesús Murillo Karam  
Procuraduría General de la República  
Paseo de la Reforma 211-213  
Col. Cuauhtémoc, C.P. 06500  
Mexico City  
Mexico

**Salutation:** Dear Federal Attorney General

▶ His Excellency Diego Antonio Gomez Pickering  
Embassy of Mexico  
16 St George Street  
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**Salutation:** Your Excellency

**TAKE ACTION FOR****Ali Arrass  
Morocco**

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**Convicted on confession extracted under torture**

On 14 December 2010 Ali Arrass was forcibly returned to Morocco from Spain, where he had been caring for his aging father. This was despite warnings from the UN Human Rights Committee and Amnesty International that this would put the father-of-one at risk.

He has been detained ever since. For the first 12 days Ali was held incommunicado in a secret detention centre, where he was beaten on the soles of his feet, given electric shocks to his testicles, suspended from his wrists, and burnt with cigarettes.

On 19 November 2011 Ali was convicted of illegal use of weapons and participation in a group intending to commit acts of terrorism. He was convicted solely on the basis of a 'confession' extracted under torture. The UN Special Rapporteur on torture, Juan Mendez, and an independent forensic doctor have visited Ali in detention and confirmed his torture claims.

The Moroccan authorities have repeatedly failed to investigate Ali's claims of torture and ill-treatment.

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**APPEAL** Urge the Minister of Justice and Liberties to investigate reports that Ali Arrass was tortured or ill-treated during his detention. Urge him to re-examine Ali's conviction, excluding all evidence obtained under torture. Call on him to introduce video-recording and make the presence of defence lawyers compulsory during police interrogations in pre-trial detention, as a safeguard against torture.

▶ Minister of Justice and Liberties El Mustapha Ramid  
Ministère de la Justice et des libertés  
Place El Mamounia – BP 1015  
Rabat  
Morocco

**Salutation:** Your Excellency

▶ HH Princess Lalla Joumala Alaoui  
Embassy of the King of Morocco  
49 Queen's Gate Gardens  
London SW7 5NE  
Fax: 020 7225 3862

**Salutation:** Your Highness

**TAKE ACTION FOR****Alfreda Disbarro  
Philippines**

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**Punched in the face and beaten with a club**

On 3 October 2013 Alfreda Disbarro was at an internet café near her home in Manila when police officers accused her of being a drug dealer. She denied the allegation and emptied her pockets, which contained only a mobile phone and a five-peso coin. After being threatened with a gun, the mother of two was taken to the police headquarters where she says she was repeatedly punched in the face and stomach, beaten with a club, poked in the eyes, and had her head banged against a wall.

Over the following days Alfreda was in a lot of pain, had difficulty breathing and kept vomiting. During this period she was photographed with three \$100 bills and a sachet of drugs, and told to sign a blank sheet of paper.

After she complained to the Philippine Commission on Human Rights, Alfreda was examined by a doctor who found numerous bruises and marks on her body and concluded they were caused by a hard, blunt object.

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**APPEAL** Call on the Inspector General to hold an impartial and effective investigation into Alfreda's allegations of torture and other ill-treatment. Urge that if they are confirmed, the case is referred for public prosecution, immediate action is taken against police officers involved or complicit in the torture, and a safe space is provided for police officers to report torture by their colleagues.

▶ Inspector General  
Internal Affairs Service  
Philippine National Police Compound  
Camp General Crame  
Quezon City  
Metro Manila  
Philippines 1100

**Salutation:** Dear Inspector General

▶ His Excellency Enrique A Manalo  
Embassy of the Republic of the Philippines  
6-8 Suffolk Street  
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Fax: 020 7930 9787

**Salutation:** Your Excellency**TAKE ACTION FOR****Dilorom Abdukadirova  
Uzbekistan**

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**Tricked by false promises**

Dilorom Abdukadirova fled Uzbekistan in 2005 after security forces killed hundreds at a largely peaceful protest she had attended. She arrived in Australia in February 2006 as a refugee. But she missed her family. So after receiving assurances from the Uzbekistani authorities that nothing would happen if she went back, she returned in January 2010. However, at the airport she was detained for four days.

In March 2010 Dilorom was detained again and charged with attempting to overthrow the constitutional order and leaving the country illegally. At her trial in April 2011 relatives said she looked unusually thin, had a bruised face and was not wearing her headscarf, something she would not have done voluntarily.

Following an unfair trial, Dilorom was found guilty and sentenced to 10 years in prison. She was then accused of breaking prison rules, and her sentence was extended by a further eight years following a closed trial inside the prison.

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**APPEAL** Call on the Uzbekistani authorities to drop all charges against Dilorom Abdukadirova and release her immediately and unconditionally. Urge them to conduct a prompt, impartial and effective investigation into the allegations that she was tortured in custody and bring to justice anyone found responsible. Encourage them to allow the UN Special Rapporteur on torture to visit Uzbekistan.

▶ President Islam Karimov  
Rezidentsia Prezidenta  
ul. Uzbekistanskaia 43  
Tashkent 700163  
Uzbekistan

**Salutation:** Dear President

▶ His Excellency Otobek Akbarov  
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41 Holland Park  
London W11 3RP  
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**Salutation:** Your Excellency**TAKE ACTION FOR****Moses Akatugba  
Nigeria**

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**Finger and toe nails torn off with pliers**

On 27 November 2005 16-year-old Moses Akatugba was awaiting the results of his secondary school exams when he was arrested by the Nigerian army. He says he was shot in the hand, beaten on the head and back, and charged with stealing mobile phones.

After being transferred to a police station, Moses says he was beaten again with machetes and batons and had his finger and toe nails torn off with pliers to force him to sign two 'confessions'. He was convicted solely on the basis of the victim's statement and confessions he made under duress.

After eight years in prison, he was sentenced to death by hanging and remains on death row. His claims of torture have still not been investigated.

'I never thought I would be alive till this day. The pain I went through in the hands of the officers was unimaginable. In my whole life, I have never been subjected to such inhuman treatment,' Moses said in February 2014.

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**APPEAL** Call on the authorities to commute Moses Akatugba's death sentence and to institute an independent investigation into his allegations of torture.

▶ His Excellency Dr Emmanuel Uduaghan  
Governor of Delta State  
Office of the Governor  
Government House  
Asaba  
Delta State  
Nigeria

**Salutation:** Your Excellency

▶ His Excellency Dr Dalhatu Sarki Tafida  
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**Salutation:** Your Excellency