



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.

This supplement is 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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The Editor

Amnesty

HRAC

17-25 New Inn Yard

London EC2A 3EA

Teodora
del Carmen
Vásquez
El Salvador



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Mother jailed after suffering a still-birth

Teodora del Carmen Vásquez is serving a 30-year sentence for 'aggravated homicide' after suffering a still-birth. In 2007 she went into labour and lost consciousness. When she woke up her baby was dead. She was arrested on suspicion of murder.

In El Salvador women who miscarry or suffer still-births are routinely suspected of having had an 'abortion', which is illegal in all circumstances. In July a group of MPs proposed extending the jail term for having an abortion to 50 years.

Teodora's trial was deeply flawed: she was presumed guilty and could not afford an effective legal team. An appeal for a pardon was denied in 2015, and her only option now is to appeal for her sentence to be changed so that she is released.

There are, however, reasons for hope. María Teresa Rivera, jailed in 2011 after suffering a miscarriage, was released in May – although the authorities are appealing against her release. Amnesty met the new Minister of Justice in June to hand over petitions and letters.

APPEAL Urge the Minister of Justice to immediately release Teodora del Carmen Vásquez and all other women jailed for pregnancy-related complications who have exhausted other legal remedies. Mention Amnesty's meeting with him in June.

▶ Minister of Justice and Public Security
Mauricio Ramírez Landaverde
Ministro de Justicia y Seguridad Pública
17 Avenida Norte, Complejo Plan Maestro,
Edificio B1, nivel 1
Alamenda Juan Pablo II
San Salvador
El Salvador

Salutation: Estimado Señor Ministro / Dear Minister
Postage: World

▶ His Excellency Mr Werner Matías Romero
Embassy of El Salvador
8 Dorset Square 1st & 2nd Floors
London NW1 6PU

Salutation: Your Excellency

Johan Teterissa
Indonesia



© Al Jazeera English

Teacher convicted for raising banned flag

Primary school teacher Johan Teterissa is serving a 15-year sentence for leading a peaceful protest in front of the president in 2007, during which the Benang Raja, a banned regional flag, was raised.

Johan and 21 other activists were beaten by police and presidential guards. The torture continued during detention and interrogation: they were forced to crawl over hot asphalt, whipped with electric cables, and had billiard balls forced into their mouths. After an unfair trial, Johan was convicted of rebellion and sentenced to life in prison. This was later reduced to 15 years after an appeal.

Johan has endured nearly nine years of torture and ill-treatment in prison. After being moved to Batu Prison in July 2013, guards whipped him with electric cables until he bled. The following December, police and military personnel ransacked cells in the prison: Johan was stripped of his underwear and forced to sleep on a concrete floor.

Johan's prison conditions have improved, but Amnesty is still concerned about overcrowding, poor sanitation, and lack of medical treatment.

APPEAL Call for the immediate and unconditional release of Johan Teterissa and all other prisoners of conscience in Indonesia.

▶ His Excellency Joko Widodo
President of Indonesia
Istana Merdeka
Jakarta 10110
Indonesia

Salutation: Your Excellency
Postage: World

▶ His Excellency Dr Rizal Sukma
Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia
38 Grosvenor Square
London W1K 2HW

Salutation: Your Excellency

Mohammed
al-Roken
UAE



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Human rights lawyer jailed after crackdown

On 26 September human rights lawyer and professor Dr Mohammed al-Roken will spend his 54th birthday in prison. In 2013 he was among 94 people, including other lawyers, judges, academics, students and activists, convicted of attempting to overthrow the government after the grossly unfair 'UAE 94' trial. Dr al-Roken received a 10-year sentence. Several of those tried alongside him presented evidence of torture but none has been independently investigated.

An Amnesty member for over 20 years, Dr al-Roken had been our main UAE contact for a decade. Before his arrest, the authorities harassed him because of his work as a human rights lawyer, criticism of the UAE's human rights record, and advocacy of democratic reforms. He has been detained, banned from travelling, and forced to stop writing in newspapers and giving interviews, and subjected to surveillance.

In prison Dr al-Roken has been subjected to oppressively loud music, which could amount to torture. On 11 November 2015 the sound was so loud it caused him to pass out in his cell.

APPEAL Call for the immediate and unconditional release of Dr Mohammed al-Roken. Demand he is given immediate and regular access to his families and lawyers, receives any necessary medical attention, is not tortured or otherwise ill-treated, and is held in adequate conditions.

▶ His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates
Ministry of Presidential Affairs
Corniche Road
PO Box 280
Abu Dhabi
United Arab Emirates

Salutation: Your Highness
Postage: World

▶ His Excellency Mr Abdulrahman Ghanem
Almutaiwee CVO
Embassy of the United Arab Emirates
30 Prince's Gate
London SW7 1PT

Salutation: Your Excellency

Somchai Homla-or, Porpen Kongkachonkiet and Anchana Heemmina
Thailand



Porpen Khongkaconkiet

Activists charged after publishing torture report

Three of the country's leading human rights activists, including the chair of Amnesty Thailand, Porpen Khongkaconkiet, have been charged with 'criminal defamation' and 'computer crimes' after publishing a report on torture by the army and police. If found guilty, Porpen, Somchai Homla-or and Anchana Heemmina could be fined and jailed for five years.

In January their organisations – Cross Cultural Foundation and Duay Jai (Hearty Support) Group – submitted a report on 54 cases of alleged torture to the Internal Security Operations Command Region 4, an army unit responsible for national security operations in the Southern Border Provinces.

Since the report's submission, and its publication in February, army officials have placed pressure on the activists to reveal the identity of the alleged victims. They have also harassed Anchana and warned her against public campaigning.

APPEAL Urge the authorities to drop the charges against Somchai, Porpen and Anchana, and stop all threats and harassment. Call on them to reform the defamation laws, allow human rights defenders to work without harassment, and properly investigate all complaints of torture and other ill-treatment.

▶ Gen. Prayut Chan-O-Cha
Head of ISOC
Government House
Pitsanulok Road
Dusit
Bangkok 10300
Thailand

Salutation: Dear Prime Minister
Postage: World

▶ His Excellency Mr Kittiphong Na Ranong
Royal Thai Embassy
29-30 Queen's Gate
London SW7 5JB

Salutation: Your Excellency

Valentina Cherevatenko
Russia



© Alliance 'Women of the Don'

Leading activist faces two-year sentence

Prominent human rights defender Valentina Cherevatenko faces the prospect of two years in jail after being declared a suspect under the 'foreign agents law' on 24 June. The founder and chair of the Women of the Don Union is the first leader of a non-governmental organisation (NGO) to be accused of a criminal offence under the law, and it represents an ominous precedent.

The 'foreign agents law' was enacted in 2012 as part of the authorities' crackdown on the right to freedom of association. It requires all NGOs who receive foreign funding and engage in vaguely defined 'political activities' to register as 'organisations performing the functions of foreign agents', brand all their public materials accordingly, and comply with a stringent reporting regime.

Since then numerous independent NGOs have faced intrusive inspections by the authorities and arduous court proceedings. Over a hundred NGOs have been included in the 'foreign agents' register.

APPEAL Urge the authorities to immediately stop all criminal proceedings against Valentina Cherevatenko and stop the harassment of her. Remind them of their responsibility to ensure human rights defenders can carry out their legitimate activities free of harassment and without fear of reprisals.

▶ Yuri Alekseevich Baranov
Prosecutor's Office of Rostov Region
Per.Khalturinskiy, 101
Rostov-on-Don 344011
Russian Federation

Salutation: Your Prosecutor
Postage: World

▶ His Excellency Mr Alexander V Yakovenko
Embassy of the Russian Federation (Residence of the Ambassador)
13 Kensington Palace Gardens
London W8 4QX

Salutation: Your Excellency

Matsumoto Kenji
Japan



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Death sentence despite intellectual disorder

By 10 October, World Day Against the Death Penalty, Matsumoto Kenji will have spent over 23 and a half years on death row, despite serious concerns for his mental health. He was sentenced to death on 17 September 1993 for two separate robberies and murders in 1990-1991.

Matsumoto has had an intellectual disability since birth, and has a low IQ. His lawyer said he was forced to confess during the interrogation. His brother, with whom he had a dependant relationship, was charged with the same crime but committed suicide before trial. The court still decided Matsumoto was mentally competent to be sentenced to death, and that his confession was reliable.

Matsumoto suffers from a delusional disorder thought to result from his prolonged detention. He cannot assist his lawyer nor understand the nature and purpose of his punishment. Appeals against his conviction and repeated requests for a pardon or a retrial have been rejected. Osaka High Court is currently reviewing another retrial request, but Matsumoto could be executed at any time.

APPEAL Call on the authorities not to execute Matsumoto Kenji. Urge them to end the use of the death penalty in Japan and improve the treatment of death row inmates, including ending solitary confinement.

▶ Minister of Justice Mitsuhide Iwaki
Ministry of Justice
1-1-1 Kasumigaseki
Chiyoda-ku
Tokyo 100-8977
Japan

Salutation: Dear Minister
Postage: World

▶ His Excellency Mr Keiichi Hayashi
Embassy of Japan
101-104 Piccadilly
London W1J 7JT

Salutation: Your Excellency

Fred Bauma and
Yves Makwambala
DRC



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Youth activists at risk of death penalty

There is heightened repression in Democratic Republic of Congo against people who speak out against President Joseph Kabila. Fred Bauma and Yves Makwambala, activists for Filimbi, a body that encourages young people to peacefully and responsibly perform their civic duties, are victims of this crackdown.

On 15 March 2015 security agents stormed a Filimbi press conference and arrested at least 30 people, including Fred and Yves, a US diplomat, foreign journalists, and activists from Senegal and Burkina Faso. The US diplomat and foreign journalists were released on the same day, while the activists from Senegal and Burkina Faso were later deported.

Fred and Yves, however, were kept in secret detention for two weeks without access to family or lawyers. They were later moved to Makala prison in Kinshasa. If found guilty of the politically-motivated charges against them they face the death penalty. Amnesty considers them prisoners of conscience, jailed because of their peaceful political beliefs.

APPEAL Urge the authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Fred Bauma and Yves Makwambala and drop all charges against them. Call on them to uphold the rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly.

▶ President Joseph Kabila
Cabinet du President de la Republique
Palais de la Nation
Av. De Lemera
Kinshasa-Gombe
DRC

Salutation: Your Excellency

Postage: World

▶ His Excellency Mr Barnabe Kikaya Bin Karubi
Embassy of the Democratic Republic of the Congo
45-49 Great Portland Street
London W1W 7L

Salutation: Your Excellency

Jorge Lázaro
Samba Nunes
Brazil



© AI

Father seeks justice for murdered sons

As the world focused on Rio for the Olympics and Paralympics, Jorge Lázaro has continued his fight for justice. Two of his sons have been murdered, and his family has been threatened, separated, and placed under immense strain.

In 2008 Jorge's son Ricardo was playing football in Salvador, when three men started shooting. They were looking for two men suspected of stealing a bike from the son of a retired military police officer. Despite denying any involvement, Ricardo and another man were killed. In 2011 three military police officers were charged, but the case has not gone to trial, and no one has been brought to justice.

In 2011 Jorge unsuccessfully applied for Ricardo's brother Enio to be included in a protection programme. In 2013 Enio was abducted and shot dead by an unknown gunman.

The family were separated for a period: the authorities placed them in separate shelters. The children have been out of school for over five years, and a third son, Denilson, was shot and wounded in July.

APPEAL Urge the authorities to conduct an effective investigation into the attacks, and bring those responsible to justice. Call for the family to receive the social, financial and psychological support they need.

▶ Rui Costa, Governor of Bahia State
Avenida 3 n° 390, Plataforma IV
Prédio da Governadoria
3° andar – Centro Administrativo da Bahia- CAB.
CEP: 41745-005
Salvador – Bahia
Brazil

Salutation: Exmo Sr. Governador / Dear Governor

Postage: World

▶ His Excellency Mr Roberto Jaguaribe Gomes
De Mattos
Embassy of Brazil
14/16 Cockspur Street
SW1Y 5BL

Salutation: Your Excellency

Nazanin
Zaghari Ratcliffe
Iran



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Charity worker detained without charge

Nazanin Zaghari Ratcliffe, a British-Iranian project manager at the Thomson Reuters Foundation, was arrested on 3 April at Tehran's international airport.

She was due to return to the UK with her 22-month-old daughter, Gabriella, following a family visit. Before being taken away she was allowed to leave Gabriella with her parents, but the authorities confiscated Gabriella's British passport. Unidentified officials later told the family Nazanin was being held in the city of Kerman, and had been arrested for 'national security' reasons. She has no access to a lawyer and may have been coerced into 'confessing'.

On 11 May Nazanin was finally permitted to meet her family, though security agents remained present. She was allowed to make phone calls to relatives in Iran, but prevented from speaking to her husband, Richard, who is in the UK. In June Nazanin was moved to Evin prison. She is now able to see her mother and Gabriella, and has spoken to Richard, but her family has no way of contacting her. In August Nazanin was brought before a Revolutionary Court for the first time.

APPEAL Demand Nazanin Zaghari Ratcliffe is immediately released or formally charged with an internationally recognisable offence. Ask the authorities to allow her regular contact with her lawyer, British consular assistance, and family visits and phone calls. Demand that she is not tortured or ill-treated, and receives any medical attention she needs.

All appeals should be sent to the Iranian Embassy in the UK.

▶ Office of the Supreme Leader
Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei
c/o Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran
16 Princes Gate
London SW7 1PT

Salutation: Your Excellency

▶ His Excellency Mohammad Hassan
Habibollahzadeh
Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran
16 Princes Gate
London SW7 1P

Salutation: Your Excellency