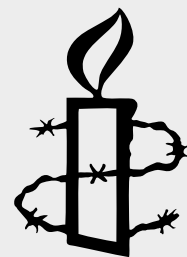


TAKE ACTION



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

Shaker Aamer USA



© US DoD

13 years in Guantanamo without charge

In February 2002 Shaker Aamer was sent to the US detention centre in Guantánamo Bay. One of the first to arrive, he is now the last UK resident there. During his incarceration, Shaker says, he has been tortured and kept in solitary confinement. But he has never been charged, tried or convicted of any crime.

Born in Saudi Arabia, Shaker moved to the UK in 1996 and married a British woman. They have four British children. He was detained by Afghan forces in 2001 in Afghanistan where, he says, he was working for a Saudi charity. Five years after arriving at Guantánamo, he was cleared for transfer, suggesting the USA has no intention of bringing him to trial.

Shaker has protested about his imprisonment and joined other detainees in hunger strikes. He has post-traumatic stress disorder, as well as arthritis, ring worm, diabetes, irritable bowel syndrome, extreme kidney pain and other medical problems. The UK government has publicly called for him to be returned home.

APPEAL Call on President Obama to secure the release of Shaker Aamer and his return to the UK – unless he is to be charged and brought to fair trial. Ask for Shaker to be given immediate access to independent medical assessments and care. Urge the US authorities to investigate allegations that Shaker Aamer was tortured and bring to justice anyone found responsible.

► President Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington DC 20500
USA

Salutation: Dear President
Postage: World

► His Excellency the Hon Matthew Barzun
American Embassy
24 Grosvenor Square
London W1KA 6AH

Salutation: Your Excellency

Raif Badawi Saudi Arabia



© Private

Prisoner of conscience flogged

Saudi Arabian blogger Raif Badawi was sentenced to 10 years in prison and 1,000 lashes for 'insulting Islam' and setting up an online forum for political and social debate. He was arrested in June 2012 and convicted in May 2014 of violating Saudi Arabia's strict technology laws and insulting Islamic religious figures on his website.

Despite an international outcry, he received the first 50 of the 1,000 lashes on 9 January. According to a witness in Jeddah, he was taken from a bus in shackles and brought to the public square in front of the mosque after the prayers ended. He was flogged on his back and legs before a large crowd.

Two subsequent flogging sessions, planned for 16 and 23 January, were suspended on 'medical grounds'. But Raif Badawi remains at risk of being publicly flogged 50 times every week until he has received the 1,000 lashes.

Flogging violates the absolute prohibition of torture in international law.

APPEAL Tell the Saudi authorities that you are profoundly disturbed by the punishment of Raif Badawi and call on them to halt the flogging. Call for Raif Badawi to be released immediately and unconditionally as he is a prisoner of conscience, detained solely for exercising his right to freedom of expression. Call for his conviction and sentence to be quashed.

► King Salman bin Abdulaziz al-Saud
The Custodian of the two Holy Mosques
Office of His Majesty the King
Royal Court, Riyadh
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Salutation: Your Majesty
Postage: World

► His Excellency the Ambassador
Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia
30-32 Charles Street
London W1J 5DZ
Fax: (020) 7917 3113

Salutation: Your Excellency

Women and girls in Mkhondo South Africa



© Private

Maternal health hazards

Mkhondo municipality in Mpumalanga Province is a risky place to give birth. Maternal mortality in the local health district more than doubled in the year from 2011/12 to 2012/13.

The district is among the worst-performing in South Africa, but faces some of the country's biggest maternal health challenges. It has the highest rates of HIV infection among pregnant women (46.1 per cent) and rates of teenage pregnancy are above average. More than 10 per cent of births in public health facilities are to girls under the age of 18.

But going for an antenatal check-up or an HIV test in Mkhondo is far from easy. The barriers include an understaffed service, lack of privacy and confidentiality, and lack of information about sexual and reproductive health. And with only one clinic serving a wide area, someone who can't afford public transport may face a walk of up to 10km.

Those most likely to be deterred by these barriers are those whose health is at greatest risk during pregnancy: women with HIV and adolescents.

APPEAL Call on the South African government to take a coordinated approach to combating maternal mortality, HIV/AIDS and gender discrimination, recognising the gendered barriers to accessing health services. Call on the government to ensure all departments allocate an adequate budget for this purpose and report regularly to Parliament on their progress.

► Pravin Gordhan, Chair of the Inter-Ministerial Task Team on Service Delivery
Private Bag X802
Pretoria , 0001
South Africa

Salutation: Dear Minister Gordhan
Postage: World

► South African High Commissioner
His Excellency Mr Obed Mlaba
South Africa House
Trafalgar Square
London WC2N 5DP
Fax: (020) 7839 5670

Salutation: Your Excellency

Al Jazeera Journalists Egypt



Peter Greste, Mohamed Fahmy and Baher Mohamed

Journalists jailed on trumped-up charges

Egypt's highest appeals court has overturned the conviction of Al Jazeera journalists Mohamed Fahmy, Peter Greste and Baher Mohamed, but the three men will remain in detention pending a retrial.

The three were serving between seven and 10 years in prison on trumped-up charges of broadcasting false news and aiding the Muslim Brotherhood. They have been in custody since their arrest on 29 December 2013. Mohammed Fahmy sustained a broken arm a few days before the arrest and his condition has worsened in prison.

At the trial, state security officers testified that they had uncovered a plot between Al Jazeera and the Muslim Brotherhood to undermine Egypt's reputation. The prosecution, however, presented no evidence to substantiate the charges.

Mohammed Fahmy, Peter Greste, and Baher Mohamed are prisoners of conscience, imprisoned solely for peacefully exercising their right to freedom of expression. They should be released immediately and unconditionally.

APPEAL Call on the Egyptian authorities to release Mohamed Fahmy, Peter Greste and Baher Mohamed immediately and unconditionally and ensure their convictions are quashed. Call on them to ensure Mohamed Fahmy has access to any medical attention he needs and is granted medical leave.

► President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi
Office of the President
Al Ittihadia Palace
Cairo
Arab Republic of Egypt

Salutation: Your Excellency
Postage: World

► His Excellency Mr Nasser Kamel
Embassy of Egypt
26 South Street
London W1K 1DW
Fax: (020) 7491 1542

Salutation: Your Excellency

Ali Özdemir Turkey



14-year-old Syrian refugee blinded while seeking safe haven

Ali Özdemir, a 14-year old Syrian refugee, was shot in the head on the night of 18/19 May 2014 when approaching the Turkish border from Syria. There was no verbal warning and there were no warning shots in the air. The shot entered his skull just behind the right eye socket and exited just behind the left eye socket. He survived but was blinded in both eyes.

Ali was with nine other refugees – his cousin, two friends and a family of six. They planned to enter Turkey from near the Syrian town of al-Derbasiyah to go to Kiziltepe in south-eastern Turkey where Ali's family had been living for most of the crisis in Syria.

On 30 October 2014, Ali's father made a criminal complaint to Turkish prosecutors about the shooting of his son. To date there has been no response from the prosecutor's office.

The shooting of people fleeing conflict is despicable and a clear violation of international law which must be punished.

APPEAL Call on the Turkish authorities to carry out an independent and impartial investigation into the shooting of Ali Özdemir; bring to justice any Turkish officials responsible; ensure that Ali Özdemir is given access to justice and compensation for his injuries. Call on them to allow any civilians trying to leave Syria to enter through official border crossings.

► Mr Bekir Bozdağ
Ministry of Justice
Adalet Bakanlığı
06659 Ankara
Turkey

Salutation: Dear Minister
Postage: Europe

► His Excellency Abdurrahman Bilgiç
43 Belgrave Square
London SW1X 8PA
Fax: (020) 7393 0066

Salutation: Your Excellency

Women of Zimbabwe Arise Zimbabwe



Peaceful protests brutally suppressed

On 13 and 14 February 2014 members of Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA) held peaceful Valentine's Day protests in Harare and Bulawayo. In Harare riot police fired tear gas on the crowd and eight WOZA members were arrested and beaten before being taken into custody. Although released a few hours later, they needed hospital treatment. Amnesty fears that similar scenes will occur when WOZA members hold this year's Valentine's Day protest.

Since February 2003 WOZA members have been subjected to intimidation, harassment, and ill-treatment by police officers. They are repeatedly arrested while taking part in peaceful demonstrations against the deteriorating social, economic and human rights situation in Zimbabwe. Women with babies, children and a heavily pregnant woman have been among those arrested.

The treatment of WOZA demonstrates the government's increasing intolerance of peaceful public demonstrations criticising government policies.

APPEAL Call on the Zimbabwe authorities to immediately stop the arbitrary arrest, intimidation, harassment and ill-treatment of WOZA activists, and to investigate all reports of harassment of human rights defenders. Call on them to respect the right of WOZA members to freedom of expression, association and assembly.

► Commissioner General of Police Augustine Chihuri
Zimbabwe Republic Police
Police Headquarters
PO Box 8807
Causeway, Harare
Zimbabwe

Salutation: Dear Commissioner General
Postage: World

► His Excellency Mr Gabriel Mharadze Machinga
Embassy for the Republic of Zimbabwe
Zimbabwe House
429 Strand
WC2R 0JR
Fax: 020 7379 1167

Salutation: Your Excellency

Sombath Somphone Laos



© www.sombath.org

Enforced disappearance of civil society advocate

On 15 December 2012 civil society leader Sombath Somphone, 62, left his office at 5.30pm. His car was stopped at a checkpoint in the Lao capital, Vientiane, at 6pm. Video footage appears to show that he got out to talk to police. A truck with flashing lights then arrived and Sombath was taken to the truck and driven away. Family and friends identified the man in the video as Sombath Somphone. He has not been seen or heard from since.

Sombath Somphone has dedicated his life to sustainable development and poverty reduction in Laos. He advocated the strengthening of civil society as a way of ensuring that development benefited the whole population.

The authorities deny arresting Sombath Somphone and blame his disappearance on a private dispute. Statements from the police describing their investigations give little information or detail and show a lack of thoroughness and urgency.

APPEAL Call on the Lao authorities to establish an independent commission to undertake a thorough and impartial investigation into the enforced disappearance of Sombath Somphone. Urge them to return him safely to his family, in accordance with international law. Demand that they keep his family and lawyers informed about the progress of the investigations.

► President Choummaly Sayasone
Office of the President
Presidential Palace
Setthathirath
Vientiane
Lao People's Democratic Republic

Salutation: Your Excellency

Postage: World

► His Excellency Mr Sayakane Sisouvang
Embassy of Lao People's Democratic Republic
Asia House
63 New Cavendish Street
London W1G 7LP

Salutation: Your Excellency

Campaign for Equality Iran



© Campaign for Equality

Ten year sentence for women's rights campaigner

Behareh Hedeyat, a member of the Campaign for Equality, has been in prison since 2010. Behareh was sentenced for 'insulting the president', 'insulting the Leader', and for 'acting against national security'. She is now serving a 10-year sentence.

Launched in 2006, the Campaign for Equality is a network of women and men committed to ending discrimination against women in Iranian law and promoting women's rights. The Campaign gives volunteers basic legal training. The volunteers then travel around the country talking with women in their homes and in public places about their rights and the need for legal reform. They are also collecting a million signatures for a petition demanding an end to legal discrimination against women in Iran.

The Iranian authorities have obstructed the Campaign's work and repressed its activists. Since 2006 dozens of women's rights defenders, some associated with the Campaign for Equality, have been arrested, summoned for trial or prosecuted.

APPEAL Call on the Iranian authorities to release Behareh Hedeyat immediately and unconditionally. Urge them to drop all charges and convictions against Campaign for Equality activists for their peaceful campaigning for equal rights for women in Iran.

► Ayatollah Sadegh Larijani
Head of Judiciary
c/o Public Relations Office
Number 4, 2 Azizi Street
Vali Asr Ave., above Pasteur Street intersection
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Salutation: Your Excellency

Postage: World

► Chargé d'Affaires Mohammad-Hassan Habibollahzadeh
Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran
50 Kensington Court
London W8 5DD
Fax: 020 7589 4440

Salutation: Dear Mr Habibollahzadeh

Serrano Cruz sisters El Salvador



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Still looking for sisters after 30 years

Sisters Ernestina and Erlinda Serrano Cruz, then seven and three years old respectively, were captured by the Salvadorean army in June 1982 during a military operation in San Antonio de la Cruz. Both their parents are now dead, but 30 years on their siblings continue the fight for justice.

That fight has taken them through El Salvador's national courts to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights which found that El Salvador had violated the human rights of Ernestina and Erlinda Serrano Cruz, and of their family, by failing to carry out an effective and timely investigation into the girls' disappearance.

The sisters were taken at the height of the internal armed conflict in El Salvador and remain among the estimated 898 children 'disappeared' during that time.

APPEAL Call for a proper investigation into the disappearance of Ernestina and Erlinda Serrano Cruz. Urge the authorities to try to locate all disappeared children by ensuring that the National Search Commission for Disappeared Children has the mandate and resources it needs to locate them.

► President Mauricio Funes Cartagena
President of the Republic
Casa Presidencial
Alameda Dr. Manuel E. Araujo No. 5500
San Salvador
El Salvador

Salutation: Dear President

► His Excellency Mr Werner Romero
Embassy of El Salvador
2nd Floor, 8 Dorset Square
London NW1 6PU
Fax: (020) 7224 9878

Salutation: Your Excellency