



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

Edward Snowden
USA



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Whistleblower's asylum blocked

In May 2013 Edward Snowden leaked US National Security Agency (NSA) classified documents to the media, including the Guardian. He acquired the files while working as a consultant at the NSA base in Hawaii.

The documents revealed the existence of extensive surveillance programmes carried out by the US and UK intelligence organisations, as well as the so-called Five Eyes alliance, a secret arrangement on spying and intelligence-sharing between Australia, the US, Canada, New Zealand and the UK.

Snowden claimed he was hoping to expose that these countries grossly violate individuals' right to privacy. However, the US government charged him with violating the Espionage Act and the theft of government property.

Snowden fled to Russia, where he was granted residency until August 2017. The US has revoked his passport, blocking any move to travel to another country offering him asylum. He faces up to 30 years in prison if he returns to the US.

APPEAL Call on the US authorities to stop interfering with Snowden's ability to travel; to drop all charges related to public interest disclosures such as information about human rights violations; and – should he eventually face trial – ensure it is a fair trial with the ability to mount a public interest defence.

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

Salutation: Dear President Obama
Postage: World

▶ His Excellency Matthew Barzun
American Embassy
24 Grosvenor Square
London W1A 6AE

Salutation: Your Excellency

Atena Farghadani
Iran



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Jailed Iranian artist on hunger strike

Iranian artist Atena Farghadani, who has been on hunger strike in Gharchak prison since 9 February, is critically ill. Her lawyer reports that she has suffered a heart attack and lost consciousness. She began her hunger strike in protest at her detention and ill-treatment.

Atena was originally arrested on 23 August 2014 for illustrations referring to killings in the aftermath of the disputed 2009 election and a cartoon she posted on Facebook criticising members of parliament for considering a bill threatening access to family planning services.

She was released on bail, but rearrested on 10 January 2015, possibly for a YouTube video she posted on her treatment in prison. It described beatings and body searches by female guards.

Charges against her include 'spreading propaganda against the system' and 'insulting members of parliament through paintings'.

Throughout her first detention, she was held in solitary confinement and denied access to a lawyer.

APPEAL Call on the authorities to give Atena Farghadani urgent medical care. Ask that she is immediately and unconditionally released because she was imprisoned solely for exercising her rights to freedom of expression and association. Call for visits from her family and lawyer to be allowed and for protection from torture and other ill-treatment.

▶ Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran
Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei
The Office of the Supreme Leader
Islamic Republic Street – End of Shahid
Keshvar Doust Street
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Salutation: Your Excellency
Postage: World

The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the UK is temporarily closed. Please write to:

▶ Son Excellence Monsieur l'Ambassadeur
République Islamique d'Iran
4 Avenue d'Iéna
75116 Paris, France

Salutation: Your Excellency

Aster Fissehatsion
Eritrea



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Politician still held incommunicado

Aster Fissehatsion has been held incommunicado without charge or trial since 18 September 2001. She was arrested together with 10 others including her former husband, then Vice-President of Eritrea. They became known as the G-15.

The G-15 were all senior party officials in the People's Front for Democracy and Justice Party (PFDJ). Together they wrote a letter to party members proposing solutions for the 'crisis of Eritrea' and called on the PFDJ to follow proper procedures and keep party promises.

In August 2001, the Secretary General of PFDJ accused the G-15 of attempting to destabilise the country and in response the G-15 wrote an open letter calling on the Eritrean people to help solve the country's problems. Eleven of the 15 signatories, including Aster, were arrested.

Aster's son Ibrahim says: 'I do not know about the physical conditions, medical needs and psychological state of my parents... but I do know their ideals are still growing and will stand the test of time.'

APPEAL Tell the President of Eritrea that Aster is not forgotten. Call on him to release Aster and all other prisoners of conscience, reveal the whereabouts and fate of all prisoners, and allow them access to their families and lawyers. Prisoners suspected of a crime must be immediately charged with a recognisable criminal offence or else be released.

▶ President Isaias Afewerki
Office of the President
PO Box 257, Asmara
Eritrea

Salutation: Your Excellency
Postage: World

▶ Ambassador Estifanos Habtemariam Ghebreyesus
Embassy of the State of Eritrea
96 White Lion Street
London N1 9PF
Fax: (020) 7713 0161

Salutation: Your Excellency

Yevgeniy Vitishko
Russian
Federation



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Environmental activist denied parole

In April environmental activist Yevgeniy Vitishko was denied parole and, in response, continues his hunger strike. He is serving a three-year sentence in a prison colony in Tambov.

At his parole hearing, the prison administration opposed his release on the grounds that he had received reprimands for a number of misdemeanours, including giving an item of personal clothing to another prisoner who felt cold and a 'negligent attitude towards weeding tomatoes'.

Yevgeniy, a prominent member of Environmental Watch for the North Caucasus, received a conditional sentence in 2012 for allegedly damaging a fence erected illegally in a forest in the Krasnodar region. He and other local activists asserted that their intention was to document the illegal fencing and the cutting down of rare protected trees.

In December 2013 Yevgeniy was charged with breaking the conditions of his sentence and ordered to serve three years in the prison colony.

APPEAL Call on the authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Yevgeniy Vitishko as he is a prisoner of conscience. Call on them to ensure he has access to any medical attention he needs.

▶ Prosecutor General of the Russian Federation
Yurii Yakovlevich Chaika
Prosecutor General's Office
ul. B. Dmitrovka, d.15a
125993 Moscow GSP- 3
Russian Federation

Salutation: Dear Prosecutor General
Postage: World

▶ His Excellency Mr Alexander
Vladimirovich Yakovenko
Embassy of the Russian Federation
13 Kensington Palace Gardens
London W8 4QX
Fax: (020) 7229 5804

Salutation: Your Excellency

The Mansoura
Women
Egypt



Menatalla, Abrar and Yousra
(left to right) © Private

Conviction overturned but still in prison

On 12 April students Abrar Al-Anany and Menatalla Moustafa, and teacher Yousra Elkhateeb (Real Lives Autumn 2014) had their convictions overturned by Egypt's highest court. However they remain in prison awaiting retrial for the same offences.

The 18-year old students and 21-year-old teacher were jailed on 21 May 2014 for taking part in a peaceful protest at Mansoura University in the Nile Delta, and sentenced to between two and six years. The protests led to clashes between students and security forces, leaving 70 people injured.

Eyewitnesses and university officials testified that the three women had not been involved in the clashes: they had protested peacefully, then sought safety inside the university as soon as the clashes began. Nevertheless, they were charged with breaching the protest law, belonging to a banned organisation that uses 'terrorist methods', 'thuggery', attacking the security forces and destroying public property.

APPEAL Press the authorities to immediately and unconditionally release the Mansoura women. Call on them to repeal the Law Regulating the Right to Public Gatherings, Processions and Peaceful Protests (Law 107 of 2013), or amend it to bring it in line with international law and standards.

▶ President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi
Office of the President
Al Ittihadia Palace
Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt

Salutation: Your Excellency
Postage: World

▶ His Excellency Nasser Kamel
Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt
26 South Street
London W1K 1DW
Fax (020) 7491 1542

Salutation: Your Excellency

Khalil Ma'touq
Syria



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Human rights lawyer two years disappeared

On 2 October 2012, human rights lawyer Khalil Ma'touq set off on a drive to work. He never arrived and his family have not seen him since. Despite repeated calls for information on his location, the Syrian authorities never responded.

His family believe he was arrested by the security forces at so-called government-controlled checkpoints operating on his route to work. Thanks to unofficial sources reached by his lawyer, we know that he might have been held at a number of different security branches until being transferred, in September 2013, to the Palestine Branch, a detention and interrogation centre run by Military Intelligence.

Khalil Ma'touq has been a human rights lawyer for many years. He has defended hundreds of political prisoners and prisoners of conscience and was the director of the Syrian Centre for Legal Studies and Research. He suffers from advanced lung disease and breathing difficulties and needs regular medication.

APPEAL Express concern that the public prosecutor continues to deny that Khalil Ma'touq is being held by the state. Ask for his immediate and unconditional release, protection from torture and ill-treatment, and access to medical care and his lawyer.

Communication with Syria is difficult. To ensure appeals reach the Syrian authorities, we recommend contacting:

▶ His Excellency Permanent Representative to the UN Bashar Ja'afari
Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations
820 second avenue, 15th Floor
New York NY 10017

Salutation: Your Excellency
Postage: World

Ahmet Yildiz
Turkey



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Shot dead for being gay

In July 2008, Ahmet Yildiz, 26, was killed in what has been described by activists as a gay 'honour killing'.

Ahmet was shot leaving the apartment he shared with his fiancé Ibrahim Can. The sole suspect is Yildiz's father. Although an international warrant for his arrest was issued in 2011, he still has not been apprehended.

Ibrahim Can claims Ahmet was receiving threats of violence from his family at the time and had filed a criminal complaint with the State Prosecutor's office in Üsküdar in October 2007 in order to be awarded protection. The complaint was never investigated. His family never collected the body for burial.

Three months after the murder, Yildiz's father was finally identified as a prime suspect and a warrant was issued for his arrest. By then, he was believed to have fled to Iraq. An international arrest warrant was issued in 2011 after a new judge was assigned to the case. The investigation has still not taken place.

APPEAL Urge the Minister of Justice to ensure that the suspected perpetrator of Ahmet Yildiz's murder is brought to justice in a fair trial. Call for an independent, thorough and impartial investigation into the failure of the Turkish authorities to protect Ahmet when he was receiving threats just months before his murder.

▶ Mr Kenan İpek
Ministry of Justice
Adalet Bakanlığı
06659 Ankara
Turkey

Salutation: Dear Minister

Postage: Europe

▶ His Excellency Mr Abdurrahman Bilgiç
Turkish Embassy
43 Belgrave Square
London SW1X 8PA
Fax: (020) 7393 0066

Salutation: Your Excellency

Liu Ping
China



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Improve activist's prison conditions

In June Liu Ping (Write for Rights 2014) will have served one of her six and a half years in jail. We're raising her case again to push the authorities to improve her conditions and ensure she receives the medical attention she needs.

Liu Ping was arrested one week after organising a demonstration demanding that high-ranking officials make public their wealth. It's believed her arrest was an attempt to silence the New Citizen's Movement, a peaceful network of activists to which Liu Ping is linked.

She says she was tortured while in pre-trial detention and remains at risk of other torture and ill-treatment. She is also being denied the medical care she needs. Her daughter Liao Minye, who was finally awarded visitation rights in December 2014, says her health is fast deteriorating.

'I am innocent. Every step I have taken, it has all been in the legitimate pursuit of equality, freedom and democracy,' says Liu Ping. Since the start of her detention, her family has been regularly harassed by official parties to deter them from speaking out about her case.

APPEAL Urge local prison authorities to allow Liu Ping the necessary medical treatment she requires. Call on them to allow regular visits from family and lawyers.

▶ Director of Jiangxi Provincial Bureau of Prisons Administration
Justice Department of Jiangxi Province
No 8 Shengzhengfu Dayuan Nanyilu
Nanchang City Jiangxi Province
People's Republic of China 330046

Salutation: Dear Director

Postage: World

▶ His Excellency Liu Xiaoming
Embassy of the People's Republic of China
49-51 Portland Place
London W1B 1JL

Salutation: Your Excellency

Ihar Tsikhanyuk
Belarus



© Laurent Hini

LGBTI activist waiting for justice

With the Pride season upon us, we're revisiting the case of Ihar Tsikhanyuk (Real Lives Winter 2013 supplement). On 27 June, London Pride's parade theme is LGBTI heroes, and we'll be featuring him.

The Belarusian LGBTI rights activist was questioned, beaten and subjected to threats and abuse by police for being gay following the unsuccessful attempt to register the LGBTI NGO Human Rights Centre Lambda in January 2013.

Those responsible for his ill-treatment have yet to be held to account, and Ihar Tsikhanyuk and others connected to the Human Rights Centre Lambda remain at risk of further threats and abuse due to their sexual orientation and continued LGBTIQI activism.

Ihar Tsikhanyuk has said: 'I don't want to hide myself. I live openly. It is not easy in Belarus, but I want to show people that I am a person like everybody. With my example I want to show that it is possible to live openly.'

APPEAL Urge the General Prosecutor to open an impartial, independent and thorough investigation into allegations of Ihar Tsikhanyuk's ill-treatment. Demand that those responsible are subjected to disciplinary and criminal proceedings. Call on the Ministry of Justice to register the Human Rights Centre Lambda and other LGBTI organisations.

▶ General Prosecutor Alyaksandr Koniuk
Generalnaya Prokuratura
ul. Internatsionalnaya 22
220030 Minsk
Belarus

Salutation: Dear General Prosecutor

Postage: Europe

▶ His Excellency Mr Sergei Aleinik
Embassy of the Republic of Belarus
6 Kensington Court
London W8 5DL
Fax: (020) 7361 0005

Salutation: Your Excellency