



# 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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## Chelsea Manning USA

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Chelsea Manning Support Network



### Whistleblower three years into her sentence

On 21 August, US Army Private Chelsea Manning will be three years into a 35-year sentence for leaking classified US government material to the website Wikileaks.

Some of the material pointed to potential human rights violations and breaches of international humanitarian law by US troops, among others, and by the CIA in its counter-terror operations. The US government argued that her actions damaged national security and endangered lives.

Chelsea Manning claimed she acted in the public interest, hoping to spark meaningful debate on the costs of war, specifically on the conduct of the US military in Iraq and Afghanistan. However, she was not permitted to present this as evidence at trial, only to explain her motives at the sentencing phase.

Before her conviction, she had already been held for three years in pre-trial detention, including 11 months in conditions which the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture described as cruel and inhumane.

**APPEAL** Express concern that Chelsea Manning was sentenced to 35 years in prison. Note that some of the information leaked was of great value to the public and that she has already served three years in prison, on top of the three years in pre-trial detention. Urge him to commute her sentence to time already served and release her.

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

**Salutation:** Dear President Obama

**Postage:** World

► His Excellency the Hon Matthew Barzun  
American Embassy  
24 Grosvenor Square  
London W1A 6AE

**Salutation:** Your Excellency

## Girls in early and forced marriage Burkina Faso



© Sophie Garcia

A survivor of forced marriage who found refuge in a shelter

### Girls forced to marry

In Burkina Faso girls as young as 11 are being forced to marry so their parents can benefit from large dowries. These girls are not getting control over their bodies or lives.

They rarely get an education because, once married, they are expected to do household chores. They face pregnancy when they are children themselves. In many cases, decisions about starting a family, how many children to have or whether contraception will be used are made by the husband.

Many of these girls are defying family and social pressure by refusing forced marriages, or escaping from them.

More than half a million Amnesty supporters wrote to the government Burkina Faso during the 2015 Write for Rights campaign, calling for stronger measures to prevent child marriage. In February 2016, the Ministry of Justice, Human Rights and Civic Promotion acknowledged that it had received correspondence about this from all over the world, and announced its commitment to eradicating early and forced marriage. This commitment now needs to be put into practice.

**APPEAL** Call on the Burkina Faso government to ensure that national laws to prohibit early and forced marriage are implemented and strengthened in line with international obligations.

► René Bagoro  
Minister of Justice of Human Rights  
Ministry of Justice and Human Rights  
Avenue de l'Indépendance  
Ouagadougou 01 BP 526  
Burkina Faso

**Salutation:** Your Excellency

**Postage:** World

► His Excellency Frederic Assomption Korsaga  
Embassy of the Republic of Burkina Faso  
16 Place Guy d'Arezzo  
Brussels B-1180

**Salutation:** Your Excellency



## Khadija Ismayilova Azerbaijan



© RFE/RL

### Investigative journalist jailed

On 1 September 2015, award-winning investigative journalist Khadija Ismayilova was sentenced to seven and a half years in jail. She is a prisoner of conscience.

She has reported extensively on high-level government corruption in Azerbaijan including the shady business dealings of President Ilham Aliyev's extended family. For years she also wrote about human rights violations. Shortly before her arrest in December 2014 she published a list of political prisoners in Azerbaijan.

In retaliation for her work, Khadija Ismayilova previously faced harassment by the authorities, including prolonged smear campaigns in state-controlled media and then fabricated charges including tax evasion, embezzlement, illegal business and abuse of power.

In a statement just two days before her arrest, Ramiz Mehdiyev, head of the presidential administration, accused journalists of treason, and singled her out as 'the best example' of journalists working against the government.

**APPEAL** Call on President Ilham Aliyev to immediately and unconditionally release Khadija Ismayilova. Urge the authorities to fully respect and protect the rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly.

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

**Salutation:** Dear President Aliyev

**Postage:** World

► His Excellency Tahir Taghizade  
Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan  
4 Kensington Court  
London W8 5DL

**Salutation:** Your Excellency

Leopoldo  
López  
Venezuela



© AI

**Opposition leader imprisoned**

In September 2015 Leopoldo López, leader of the Venezuelan opposition party Voluntad Popular (Popular Will), was jailed for 13 years and nine months for inciting violence during an anti-government protest in 2014. Although he had helped organise protests against government policies, there is no evidence that he instigated violence or committed any other crime. He is a prisoner of conscience.

In February and March 2014, Venezuela was shaken by mass street protests for and against the government. Violent clashes between the security forces and protesters resulted in 43 people dead and hundreds injured.

The government was quick to blame Leopoldo López and President Nicolás Maduro publicly called for his imprisonment.

Leopoldo López spent a year and a half in pre-trial detention, and is now held at a military prison. His imprisonment exposes the current government's lack of respect for dissenting views: opposition politicians and human rights defenders face continuous attacks from the authorities.

**APPEAL** Call for the immediate and unconditional release of Leopoldo López as he is a prisoner of conscience. There is no evidence to substantiate the charges against him.

▶ Nicolás Maduro Moros  
President of Venezuela  
Final Avenida Urdaneta, Esq. De Bolero  
Palacio de Miraflores  
Caracas, Distrito Capital  
Venezuela

**Salutation:** Dear President

**Postage:** World

▶ His Excellency Samuel Monacada  
Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of  
Venezuela  
1 Cromwell Road  
London SW7 2HW

**Salutation:** Your Excellency

Missing boys  
and men  
Cameroon



© AI

**Explain fate of 130 people 'disappeared'**

On 27 December 2014, hundreds of boys and men were detained by security forces in Magdeme and Doublé following attacks by Boko Haram in the area.

At least 25 of them died in custody – and possibly many more. The whereabouts of 130 people are still unknown.

In the same operation, nine people including a child were killed, more than 70 buildings were burnt down and many possessions were stolen or destroyed by security forces.

The impact of these disappearances has been severe. Women face economic challenges as a result of losing the family breadwinner, and risk abuses in the campaign to discover the fate of loved ones.

There has been no investigation into the disappearances or the human rights violations which occurred that day.

**APPEAL** Call on the authorities to conduct a full, impartial and independent investigation into the disappearance of the 130 boys and men, make the results public and bring those responsible to account. Ask them to disclose the identities, cause of death and place of burial of at least 25 people who died in custody.

▶ President Paul Biya  
PO Box 95  
Yaoundé  
Republic of Cameroon

**Salutation:** Your Excellency

**Postage:** World

▶ His Excellency Nkwelle Ekaney  
High Commission for the Republic of Cameroon  
84 Holland Park  
London W11 3SB

**Salutation:** Your Excellency

Costas  
Greece



© AI

**Beaten for being in love**

As Pride season begins, keep the focus on Costas and his partner, a refugee (Write for Rights 2015). While sitting in central Athens in August 2014, they were badly beaten by thugs in a homophobic and racist attack. No suspects were ever identified.

Between 2014 and 2015, the number of reported attacks against gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or intersex (LGBTI) people in Greece has more than doubled, while racist attacks remain an ongoing issue. Police and the government have done little to discourage such racial and homophobic violence. Greek law doesn't recognise same-sex relationships. 'It's like the government condones the attacks by not acknowledging we are real,' says Costas.

Costas and his partner now live in fear of their safety. In March 2015, his partner was attacked again.

**APPEAL** Urge the Minister of Justice to ensure this hate crime is fully investigated and ensure that Costas and his partner get compensation for the injuries and trauma suffered.

▶ Nikos Paraskevopoulos  
Ministry of Justice, Transparency and  
Human Rights  
96 Mesogeion Avenue  
115 27 Athens  
Greece

**Salutation:** Dear Minister

**Postage:** Europe

▶ His Excellency Konstantinos Bikas  
Embassy of Greece  
1A Holland Park  
London W11 3TP

**Salutation:** Your Excellency

Sheikh 'Ali  
Salman  
Bahrain



© al-Wafaq National Islamic Society

**Denied right to freedom of expression**

In June 2015, the main opposition leader in Bahrain, Sheikh 'Ali Salman, was sentenced to four years in prison for 'inciting hatred'. He is a prisoner of conscience held solely for exercising his right to freedom of expression.

The charges relate to speeches he made between 2012 and 2014 as Secretary General of the al-Wafaq National Islamic Society in which he called for political reform through peaceful and democratic means, and affirmed his party's wish to achieve the demands of the 2011 uprising and end impunity and human rights violations. He also stressed the need for equality for all in Bahrain, including the ruling family.

He denies all the charges. His conviction violates Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political rights, to which Bahrain is a signatory, to respect the right to freedom of expression.

**APPEAL** Call for the immediate and unconditional release of Sheikh 'Ali Salman and ensure his conviction is quashed; remind the authorities that he was sentenced after an unfair trial. Ask them to uphold the right to freedom of expression.

▶ King of Bahrain, His Majesty Shaikh Hamad bin 'Issa Al Khalifa  
Shaikh Hamad bin 'Issa Al Khalifa  
Office of His Majesty the King  
PO Box 555  
Rifa'a Palace  
Manama  
Bahrain

**Salutation:** Your Majesty

**Postage:** World

▶ His Excellency Shaikh Fawaz bin Mohammed Al Khalifa  
Embassy of the Kingdom of Bahrain  
30 Belgrave Square  
London SW1X 8QB

**Salutation:** Your Excellency

Itai Dzamara  
Zimbabwe



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**One year on, where is Itai Dzamara?**

Activist and journalist Itai Dzamara was abducted while having his hair cut in March 2015. He hasn't been seen since.

Two days earlier, Itai addressed a rally by the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC-T) in Harare, calling for mass action against the deteriorating economic conditions in Zimbabwe.

He is leader of the pro-democracy protest group Occupy Africa Unity Square (OAUS) and led several demonstrations against President Robert Mugabe calling on him to resign to pave the way for fresh elections. He and other members of OAUS have been subjected to frequent arrests and police beatings. After one peaceful protest, Itai was left unconscious after an attack by anti-riot police.

Those opposed to the president and ruling party ZANU-PF are increasingly subjected to state harassment.

**APPEAL** Call on the authorities to thoroughly investigate the disappearance of Itai Dzamara and make the results public. Urge the authorities to bring those responsible to justice.

▶ Augustine Chihuri  
Commissioner-General of the Police  
Zimbabwe Republic Police  
7th Street and Josiah Chinamano Avenue  
PO Box CY 8807  
Harare  
Zimbabwe

**Salutation:** Dear Commissioner General

**Postage:** World

▶ Mr Cecil T Chinere – Charge d'Affaires  
Embassy of the Republic of Zimbabwe  
Zimbabwe House  
429 Strand  
London WC2R 0JR

**Salutation:** Dear Mr Chinere

Behareh  
Hedayat  
Iran



© Private

**Free women's rights activist**

Behareh Hedayat, student activist and campaigner for women's rights, has been in prison since 2009 – one of hundreds of protesters arrested after anti-government demonstrations. She is a prisoner of conscience, held solely for her peaceful activism.

Her 10-year sentence includes six months for 'insulting the president', two years for 'insulting the Leader' (Ayatollah Ali Khamenei), five years for 'crimes against national security', two years for an earlier suspended sentence for participating in demonstrations in 2006, and six months added after she and a fellow activist wrote from prison encouraging students to continue the peaceful struggle for freedom.

Owing to harsh prison conditions, her health has deteriorated and she needs immediate medical attention. Now that she has served half her sentence, Behareh is eligible for parole under Iranian law.

A member of the Campaign for Equality, which aims to end discrimination against women in Iranian law, Behareh is also a member of Iran's largest student body, the Central Committee of the Office for the Consolidation of Unity.

**APPEAL** Call on the authorities to drop charges against Behareh and all Campaign for Equality activists. Urge them to revise legislation which discriminates against women and guarantees full gender equality.

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

**Salutation:** Your Excellency

**Postage:** World

▶ Mohammad Hassan Habibollahzadeh  
Chargé d'Affaires  
Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran  
16 Princes Gate  
London SW7 1PT

**Salutation:** Your Excellency