



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.

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The Editor

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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



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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-Wefaq 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-Wefaq 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



© Private

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
Islamic Republic of Iran

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