**Amnesty International Ringwood Group Urgent Action Requests - Letters Written**

**The Urgent Action Network of Amnesty International** consists of 165,000 people around the world who are outraged by injustice and are prepared to act swiftly at critical moments to stop it. Urgent Action is based on a simple idea:-- when someone is in immediate danger of serious abuse, key members of the government responsible for perpetrating or failing to prevent that abuse will receive thousands of faxes, telegrams, emails and air mail letters from every part of the globe. Those messages tell the authorities that the world is watching, and create a pressure to stop the abuse.

Examples of recent letters sent by Amnesty International Ringwood Group are given below.

 In order to make it efficient and easy to send multiple letters, draft letters are prepared and circulated amongst group members so that they can then add to or edit as they wish, before individually mailing them under their own name and address. Anyone willing to join in this activity please contact cumminsdt@gmail.com

**Iran** – Iranian political prisoner of conscience and internet blogger Hossein Maleki in critical condition in Tehran`s Evin prison. Amnesty International calls for medical treatment, immediate release and investigation into allegations of torture. Letters sent to the Leader of the Islamic Republic, Head of Judiciary, Secretary General High Council for Human Rights and Ambassador to UK.

**Saudi Arabia** – Two women`s rights activists convicted in unfair and manipulated trial for attempting to assist an abused woman. Charged with “inciting a woman to defy her husband”. Amnesty International calls for convictions to be quashed, and an end to harassment and persecution of human rights activists in Saudi Arabia. Letters sent to the King of Saudi Arabia, Minister of Justice, Minister of Interior and Ambassador to UK.

**Czech Republic** – Amnesty International calls on Czech Republic not to extradite political asylum seeker Tatiana Paraskevich to Russia or Ukraine, where she will be in danger of onward rendition to Kazakhstan and at serious risk of human rights abuse. Tatiana Paraskevich has close links with Kazakhstani opposition figure Mukhtar Ablyazov, who is recognised by the UK as being a Kazakh refugee. Czech Republic asked to honour its human rights obligations and to not accept unreliable statements of fair treatment by those seeking her extradition. Letters sent to Czech Minister of Interior, Minister of Justice and Ambassador to UK.

**Haiti** – Office of Haitian Kouraj organisation (gay rights organisation) attacked and ransacked, members assaulted and assets stolen by homophobic armed men. Kouraj works to raise awareness about gay rights and create debate and reduce stigma and prejudice. Amnesty International calls on Haitian Government to independently and impartially investigate the attacks and harassment of Kouraj, provide protection for Kouraj activists and publically acknowledge the legitimacy of gay rights defenders in Haiti. Letters sent to Director General of Haitian Police, Minister of Justice and Ambassador to UK.

**Iraq** – Iranian exiles living in Camp Liberty near Baghdad come under repeated rocket and mortar attack from Shia militant group the al-Mukhtar Army. 3 dead and 70 injured in latest attack. Residents of Camp Libery are members, supporters and family of PMOI a long established political organisation opposed to the Iranian regime. Camp was under US protection which then transferred to the Iraqi Government under a United Nations agreement. Letters calling on Iraqi government to honour the agreement, investigate the attacks and provide protection. Letters sent to the Prime Minister of Iraq, Minister of Justice, Minister of Human Rights and Ambassador to UK

**China –** Prominent Uighur scholar and founder of Uighur website Ibrahim Tohti taken from home by Beijing authorities, his whereabouts and conditions of detention are unknown. Uighurs are a Chinese minority from Xinjiang Province who are trying to maintain their culture, freedom of expression and ethnic identity in the face of Chinese central government`s policies of assimilation and control. Amnesty International recognises Ibrahim Tohti as a prisoner of conscience and calls upon the Chinese Government to disclose his whereabouts, unconditionally release him from detention and ensure he is not subjected to ill treatment or torture. Letters sent to Chinese President, Chinese Premier, Director of Department of Justice and Ambassador to UK.

**Australia** – Australia holds 1300 asylum seekers at a detention centre on Manus Island, Papua New Guinea, under harsh and humiliating conditions which appear to be designed to pressure them to return to the countries they fled. Violence has flared leading to death and many seriously injured. Witnesses are at risk of threats, intimidation and retaliatory action as an investigation begins. Amnesty International calls on the Australian Government to end offshore detention of asylum seekers, ensure that injured asylum seekers have proper medical care and legal redress, and conditions of detention are improved. Letters sent to Australian Prime Minster, Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea and the Ambassador to UK.

**Sri Lanka** – Human rights defenders in Northern Sri Lanka (Tamil area) have been arrested, detained, threatened and harassed by various government authorities. After the end of the civil war the Sri Lankan Goverment appointed a Lessons Learned and Reconciliation Commission which reported in 2011, but its recommendations have not been fully implemented. This Urgent Action calls for fairness, justice and humane treatment for Balendran Jeyakmurai, Father Praveen Mahesan and K M Rukshan Fernando, recently arrested human rights organisation defenders and activists Letters sent to President of Sri Lanka, Inspector General of Police, Attorney General and Ambassador to UK

**Saudi Arabia** – Prominent human rights lawyer and advocate Waleed Abu al-Khair currently on trial in Riyadh (on charges such as “breaking allegiance to and disobeying the ruler”) has for some unexplained reason been arrested and detained in al-Ha`ir prison, with reports indicating that he is being maltreated and denied basic legal and humane conditions of detention. In Saudi Arabia one can be charged for offences such as “questioning the integrity of officials”, “disseminating false information to foreign groups”, “forming an unlicensed organisation”, “seeking to disrupt security and inciting disorder by calling for demonstrations”. Letters sent to King of Saudi Arabia, Minister of Interior, Minister of Justice and Ambassador to UK urging the Saudi authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Waleed Abu al-Khair, to explain his current legal status and why he was arrested, and to protect him from ill treatment and risk of torture.

**Israel** – Mr Murad Shtewi a leading Palestinian human rights defender, who peacefully participates in weekly demonstrations by the residents of Kufr Qadum village, protesting the blocking of a vital access road to their village, has recently again been detained under what appears to be a general policy of harassment by Israeli forces against Palestinian protests all across the West Bank. An Amnesty International assessment of the circumstances of Mr Shtewi`s detention indicate that the charges against him are unfounded. Letters sent to Prime Minister of Israel, Military Judge Advocate General, Minister of Defence and Ambassador to UK calling for the release of Mr Shtewi, curtailment of excessive force by Israeli authorities, and to allow the people of Kufr Qadum the right of freedom of expression and peaceful protest.

**Azerbaijan** – Murad Adilov was arrested on August 11th on what appear to be false charges of drug possession. He is the brother of Natiq Adilov who is a well known active member of the opposition Popular Front Party, independent newspaper columnist and television broadcaster. There is serious concern around the world that the arrest of Murad Adilov has been motivated as an attempt to silence his brother. An impartial and objective investigation should be undertaken into the allegations of false charges, and to allegations of ill treatment during detention. Assisted by a lawyer of his choice the lawfulness of Murad Adilov`s detention should be reviewed in court without delay, using a legal process consistent with international fair trial standards. Letters sent to President of Azerbaijan, Prosecutor General, Director of detention centre and Ambassador to UK.

**Ethiopia** - British national Andargachew Tsige has recently been detained whilst travelling outside of Ethiopia, and is now being held at an unknown location in Ethiopia. Mr Tsige has been a prominent past holder of democratic political office in Ethiopia, and has been a peaceful political activist for many years, and his detention raises serious concerns among many people in the UK. Ethiopian Government called upon to guarantee that Mr Tsige will not be ill treated, or subjected to any forms of physical abuse or torture. That Mr Tsige is not imprisoned on the basis of trials and convictions made in absentia. If Mr Tsige is considered to have committed any crimes then he must be retried in public with full legal representation in accordance with established international standards of justice. Letters sent to Ethiopian Prime Minister, Minister of Federal Affairs, Minister of Justice and Ambassador to UK.

**Turkey** - The fighting on the Turkish border in and around Kobani / Ayn Al-Arab between the defenders of freedom and human rights the YPG, and the very extremist group Islamic State, has been much in the news all around the world, and many innocent Syrian refugees have been forced to seek safety and asylum in Turkey, since they have nowhere else to go.

It is true that Turkey has taken in large numbers of refugees from Syria and has done work to support them over the last few years, but recent reports on the situation of the refugees from Kobani / Ayn Al-Arab are a cause for serious concern, since some refugees are being detained by the Turkish Authorities on very questionable grounds, and some are being forcibly returned across the border against their will into a war torn environment.

Letters sent to Prime Minister of Turkey Mr Ahmet Davutoglu, Minister of Interior Mr Efkan Ala, Director General of Migration Management Mr Atilla Toros and Turkish Ambassador Abdurrahman Bilgic requesting Turkey

* To release from unlawful detention refugees from Kobani / Ayn Al-Arab
* To not forcibly return any of the refugees to Syria
* To maintain an open border for refugees from Kobani / Ayn Al-Arab and neighbouring areas, so they can exercise their lawful right to seek asylum from persecution

**Cambodia** – Following peaceful assembly outside City Hall in early November 11 women and a Buddhist monk, protesting to secure housing rights and land titles for Boeung Kak community residents in Phnom Penh, were jailed in unfair rapidly conducted short trials involving very questionable charges of obstructing traffic.

This is not the first time that representatives from Boeung Kak community have been unfairly arrested and imprisoned for exercising their rights of protest, and it is this that has drawn worldwide attention to how the Cambodian authorities respond to such protests. Letters sent to Minister of Interior and Deputy Prime Minister Sar Kheng, Minister of Justice Ang Vong Vathana, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Hor Nam Hong and Ambassador Nambora Hor.

The 11 jailed protesters should be immediately released, and the Cambodian authorities must end the use of criminal charges to silence, intimidate and punish peaceful protesters, who are only exercising the freedoms which the Cambodian Government has agreed to under the International Covenant for Civil and Political Rights.

**Zimbabwe** – This urgent action request concerns the abduction and disappearance on March 9th of Zimbabwean journalist and pro democracy campaigner Itai Dzamara, who along with many of his associates has suffered serious violence from the police over a considerable period of time.

There have been many media reports in recent years originating from highly respected and reputable sources, witnessing the police engaging in arbitrary arrests, harassment and intimidation of pro democracy activists in Zimbabwe. Not only are these actions contrary to the human rights of the activists involved, they are very damaging to the international reputation and standing of Zimbabwe, and negatively impact on its peaceful social, economic and political development. Letters sent to Zimbabwe Police Commissioner General Augustine Chihuri, Minister of Home Affairs Kembo Mohadi, Chairperson Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission Elasto Mugwadi and Ambassador Gabriel Mharadze Machinga. In the case of the recent abduction of Itai Dzarama, and in the interests of upholding the laws of Zimbabwe, letters request the police service should immediately investigate his abduction and bring to justice those responsible.

If Ital Dzarama is being held in detention then the government and responsible authorities should immediately disclose his whereabouts, allow him access to a lawyer of his choice, and ensure that he is not subjected to any form of torture or ill treatment.

**Colombia** – On the night of July 4th/5th in two separate incidents two transgender women were murdered in Cali, where there have been 68 documented transgender murders in the last 10 years. Across Colombia as a whole by mid this year 2015 there have already been 15 documented killings of transgender women, and in the two previous years combined it is reported that there were 164 killings. Letters sent to President Juan Manuel Santos, Attorney General Eduardo Montealegre and Ambassador Nestor Osorio.

Letters ask that in the case of the two Cali murders a full and impartial investigation should be carried out without delay, with the findings made public, and for those responsible to be prosecuted. Transgender women living in Cali appear to be particularly at risk of extreme violence, and this needs to be countered by implementation of stronger protection measures by the policing and law enforcement authorities.