

Dates for your diary	07/12/2024: Amnesty Amplify (London) 10/12/2024: Human Rights Day 14/12/2024: Write for Rights action, Barnham
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Dear writers

Local events

Saturday 14/12/2024 Write for Rights action, 10:00 – 12:00. You are invited to complete the 2024 Write for Rights cards at **Margaret Robertson’s house in Barnham** and meet up with other Amnesty members for a catch-up and refreshments (tea, coffee, cakes).

- Feel free to drop in any time between 10:00 and midday (you don’t need to come along for the full two hours!) and please bring along suitable cards to sign. This year, we’ve been asked not to use religious cards, so ask you not to bring nativity scenes or jolly Merry Christmas type images, as these will not be appropriate. Cards with messages such as “season’s greetings” and snow scenes or animal scenes will be fine, or you can bring postcards or notelets that are not Christmas-themed.
- All details about each case and suggested messages will be provided on the day.
- Please let Margaret know if you are planning to come along on mn_robertson@hotmail.com so we can plan refreshments; Margaret lives within easy walking distance of Barnham Station and can provide directions to her house. We look forward to seeing you there!

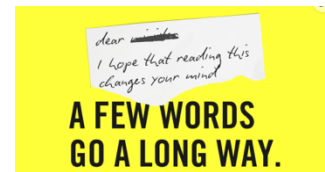


Other events

Write a letter, change a life: Write for Rights 2024, 1 November – 31 December

Every year, Amnesty International’s Write for Rights campaign brings together people from around the world to **fight injustice and support people whose human rights are under threat.**

Over the past few years **your actions have made a real difference to people’s lives.** From Zimbabwe to Guatemala to Kyrgyzstan, activists have been freed and justice has been served. Since Write for Rights started in 2001, more than 56 million actions have been taken, while over 100 people featured in the campaign have seen a positive outcome in their case.



This year’s campaign features people from around the world who are all connected because their human rights have been violated.

By writing letters, signing petitions and sharing stories, you can demand justice calling decision makers to do the right thing.

- **Not much time but want to support Write for Rights?** You can sign an online petition for the cases: <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/write-for-rights>



- **Want to send a message of support to the individual?** You can send a card to the individual: details of the address you can send your card to, and what messages and cards are appropriate, can be found in the Write for Rights 2024 booklet. Group members who receive an emailed Newsletter can download the booklet here: <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/write-rights-2024-get-started> and a copy of the booklet is shared with Group members who get the Newsletter posted to them. **This is the action we will be focusing on Saturday 14/12/2024** (see 'Local Events' above, for details)
- **Want to do more?** You can also send a letter to the authorities in support of the individual, if you have time or would like to continue to take action after 31 December: this helps put pressure on governments, leaders and decision-makers: take a look at the campaign booklet which includes letter details and contact addresses: <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/write-rights-2024-get-started>

Updates from previous Write for Rights campaign

- Rita Karasartova is a human rights defender and expert in civic governance, featured in the 2023 WfR campaign. Charged with attempting to 'violently overthrow the government', Rita and 21 other defendants were acquitted in June 2024. *"I would like to express my huge, huge gratitude. Your timely actions, these letters, petitions, signatures and the huge number of letters that went to the court...were very empowering to us all."* [Rita Karasartova]
- Thulani Maseko was assassinated at home; he was a devout member of the Methodist Church, an activist and LGBTQ+ ally. Tanele Maseko, his wife, expressed gratitude for the support from Amnesty supporters in the 2023 WfR campaign, which has strengthened the call for justice.
- Maung Sawyeddollah is a Rohingya Muslim who fled to Bangladesh. Alongside his studies, he started a campaign calling for Meta to pay reparations to help his community to rebuild their shattered lives. He was granted a student visa and moved to the US in August, to help ensure his safety, following his appearance in the 2023 WfR campaign
- Aleksandra (Sasha) Skochilenko is an artist and anti-war activist who was arrested after replacing price tags at a grocery shop with information about Russia's invasion of Ukraine. She was released in August this year as part of a prisoner swap, after huge public campaigning, including the 2022 WfR campaign. *"I want to say a huge thank you to Amnesty International. It's hard to put my gratitude into words, because, to a large extent, I am here thanks to you."* [Sasha Skochilenko]
- Hakamada Iwao was acquitted in September 2024: he was described as the world's longest serving death row prisoner, spending more than 45 years on death row. His case was a long-standing Amnesty campaign and featured in WfR 2012.

Saturday: 07/12/2024 Amplify Human Rights Festival (London). Full programme and booking online, here:

<https://www.woolwich.works/events/amplify-human-rights-festival>

Carry on writing!

Bob Dewick, Amnesty

Amnesty action: campaigns & letter-writing

Egypt update from Margaret, our Campaign Co-ordinator

Alaa Abd el-Fattah

Thanks to all of you who responded to the appeal by Mona, Alaa's sister, to write to your MPs calling on them to urge the Foreign Secretary, David Lammy, to take much more decisive action to work for Alaa's release. I should be very grateful if you could let me know if you receive any responses. Unfortunately, the response received so far from Andrew Griffith, MP for Arundel and South Downs, has not been encouraging.



Oqba Hashad: Write for Rights Campaign 2024

Many of you will remember that we have already written on behalf of **Oqba Hashad**, an Egyptian business student, unjustly detained for nearly five years without trial because of his brother's activism. Despite a court order for his release, he is still held in dreadful conditions and denied a proper prosthetic leg. He has said:

I don't understand why this is happening to me, why I am tormented and my body can no longer bear it.



We are very pleased to learn that he is one of the highlighted cases featured in the **Write for Rights Campaign 2024**. Please take the opportunity to send him a message of solidarity and support directly as part of the WfR campaign (see details of the letter writing event featured in this newsletter). You may also wish to sign an online petition appealing for his release at this link:

[Free Egyptian student Oqba Hashad - Amnesty International](#)

Egypt is a 'safe country'

Amnesty members might be shocked to hear that Egypt has been officially recognised as a 'safe country' by Irish Minister of Justice, Helen McEntee. Amnesty has challenged this decision.

Action: Tunisia – Nouredine Bhiri

On 18 October 2024, the Criminal Chamber of the Court of First Instance in Tunis sentenced Ennahdha leader and former justice minister **Nouredine Bhiri** to ten years in prison, on the basis of a social media post attributed to him and which he denied writing. Nouredine Bhiri who has spent 18 months in arbitrary detention in the Mornaguia prison, is being further punished simply for his peaceful political opposition.

We have written previously on Nouredine's behalf.



What you can do

Please email President Kais Saied to appeal for his release and to quash his conviction as his imprisonment is solely based on the peaceful exercise of his human rights using the template message below email: contact@carthage.tn



Your Excellency,

I write to you and your government to express my grave concern over the unjust conviction and arbitrary detention of senior Ennahdha leader and former justice minister **Noureddine Bhiri**.

The Criminal Chamber of the Court of First Instance in Tunis convicted and sentenced him to a harsh ten-year in prison on politically motivated and bogus charges for a social media post he denied writing. Following technical expertise requested by the accusation chamber, a court appointed committee concluded that he did not write the post. However, **Noureddine Bhiri** should never have been arrested or charged or detained in the first place, even if he had written the social media post, as it relates to the exercise of his right to

freedom of expression, which is guaranteed and safeguarded by international human rights law, including Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and Article 9 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, to which Tunisia is a state party.

According to **Noureddine Bhiri's** defence committee, the verdict issued against him followed an unfair judicial process that violated the rule of law and fair trial guarantees. For instance, his lawyers filed a complaint against the investigative judge who interrogated Noureddine Bhiri after his arrest and who initially refused **Noureddine Bhiri's** transfer to hospital despite apparent traces of beatings. On 13 February 2023, security forces violently arrested **Noureddine Bhiri**, severely injuring him on the shoulder. He spent several days in various medical facilities including for surgery on his shoulder, to treat fractured ribs and respiratory issues. The public prosecution disregarded the reports of torture raised by Noureddine Bhiri's lawyers, including the judge's denial of medical care.

I therefore urge you and your government to ensure that Noureddine Bhiri is immediately released from arbitrary detention, and that his conviction and sentence are quashed. Pending his release, I urge you and your government to ensure that he receives any medical treatment he may require and continue to allow him regular access and visits from his family and lawyers. Moreover, I call on you and your government to cease your targeted arrests of critics for the peaceful exercise of their human rights including the rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly.

Yours sincerely

Good news! Case 173 update

On 20 March 2024, after 13 years of investigations the authorities announced the closure of Case 173/2011, widely known as the "foreign funding" case, which had involved asset freezes against at least seven organizations and 11 NGO workers, as well as travel bans against at least 31 human rights defenders and NGO staff. Travel bans against 29 of them have now been lifted. Unfortunately, it is not all good news: the authorities have failed to reverse asset freezes imposed on renowned human rights defenders **Azza Soliman**, **Mostafa Al-Hassan** and **Hossam Bahagat** since the case was closed. We are contacting the IS to see if any further action is required: we have previously taken a number of actions about Case 173 and on behalf of Azza.

Want to do more?

Urgent Action Network

When you take action, you do it as part of a movement of tens of thousands of people across the world, working together to raise our voices, demand justice and make change happen. Please do take action, in solidarity with individuals at risk everywhere: <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/urgent-actions>