

Dates for your diary	27/01/2025: Holocaust Memorial Day 21/06/2025: Concert in support of Amnesty, Chichester 5-6/07/2025: Amplify summit, AGM and National Conference, Birmingham
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Dear writers

Local events



Write for Rights 2024: our thanks to Margaret and Scott Robertson for hosting, feeding with cake and watering a small group of members for the Write for Rights action on 14/12/2024. We completed 54 cards and 3 signed letters to governments, so a very productive meeting, in the warm!



Other events

Monday 27/01/2025: International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust.

The Holocaust Memorial Day Trust encourages remembrance in a world scarred by prejudice and systematic, targeted persecution. HMDT also promotes and supports Holocaust Memorial Day – the international day on 27 January (which marks the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau). The murder of 6 million Jews during the Holocaust is central to Holocaust Memorial Day; we also remember the millions more people murdered through [the Nazi persecution of other groups and those in more recent genocides.](#)



- HMD 2025: the theme is 'For a better future' <https://hmd.org.uk/what-is-holocaust-memorial-day/this-years-theme/>
- Light the Darkness: Each year people from across the UK take part in the Light the Darkness national moment for Holocaust Memorial Day; at 8pm on 27 January people across the nation will light candles and put them safely in their windows. Follow this link to find out more about this action: <https://hmd.org.uk/lightthedarkness/>
- Follow this link to find out about HMD events near to where you live: <https://hmd.org.uk/take-part-in-holocaust-memorial-day/activities/>

Thursday 30/01/2025, 19:00 – 20:30: Refugees in Conversation (online webinar). A rare opportunity to hear the voices of refugees and asylum seekers, led by keynote speaker Enver Solomon, CEO of the Refugee Council. You will need to [register online](#) to attend

Saturday 5 – Sunday 6/07/2025: Amplify Summit 2025. AGM & National Conference, Teaching & Learning Building, University of Birmingham. The event will be open to AIUK Section members and activists, only. It will not be a public event, but rather a gathering space for the AIUK movement. The event will incorporate both important AIUK governance and additional sessions designed to entertain, upskill, and spark conversation. Further details to follow.

Carry on writing!

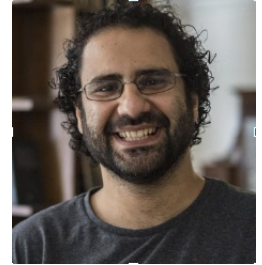
Bob Dewick, Amnesty

Amnesty action: campaigns & letter-writing

Egypt update from Margaret, our Campaign Co-ordinator

Happy New Year to you all and thanks for all your support throughout 2024. I hope your New Year resolutions include renewed efforts to campaign for our Egyptian prisoners. Sadly, several of them remain in very worrying situations.

Alaa Abd El-Fattah Update



- Our efforts to persuade the UK government to pressure the Egyptian authorities into releasing the UK/Egyptian national, Alaa Abd El-Fattah, have intensified as his mother, 69-year-old **Laila Soueif**, continues her hunger strike in his support. Despite appeals on Alaa's behalf signed by several Nobel Laureates, and calls by prominent celebrities such as **Brian Cox** and **Emily Watson**, the Foreign Secretary, David Lammy, does not seem to have made any progress in securing Alaa's release. A vigil for Alaa was held in Downing Street on 19 December, attended by Laila and other members of Alaa's family and supporters.
- It was, however, encouraging to hear from our Secretary, Bob Dewick, that the new Chichester M.P., **Jess Brown-Fuller**, had responded positively to his letter and had taken an active interest in the case (unlike Arundel and South Downs M.P.) I forwarded her letter to Diana, our Egypt Coordinator, who was happy to share it with Alaa's family.
- There have been a number of articles relating to British Nationals detained abroad in December, including Alaa Abd El-Fattah, if you would like to read more about this:
 - 'It's about political will': is the Foreign Office failing Britons detained abroad? <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2024/nov/24/its-about-political-will-is-the-foreign-office-failing-britons-detained-abroad?>
 - 09/12/2024 'Time is running out': 12 Nobel laureates urge Keir Starmer to intervene in case of jailed activist Alaa Abd el-Fattah <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2024/dec/09/11-nobel-laureates-keir-starmer-alaa-abd-el-fattah-egyptian-activist>

Oqba Hashad

Thanks to all who came to the Write for Rights event on 14 December. We managed to send six cards and messages of solidarity to Oqba Hashad, the disabled Egyptian prisoner unjustly detained because of his brother's activism. We also sent an appeal to **President al-Sisi**. Oqba was one of the three highlighted cases this year, so we hope that WfR pressure will succeed in persuading the Egyptian government to order his release.



- If you were not able to take part in the Write for Rights actions, you might like to sign an online petition for him on the Amnesty International website by following this link: www.amnesty.ie/w4rs-2024-egypt-oqba/

Badr Mohamed

A third urgent action appeal on behalf of Badr Mohamed was circulated on 19 December, in advance of the hearing of his appeal on 22 December by the Court of Cassation. He is currently being held in cruel and inhumane conditions after a grossly unfair trial in which he received a 5-year sentence relating to protests in Ramsis Square in 2013, when he was 17 years old. We have not yet received any update about the result of the hearing.



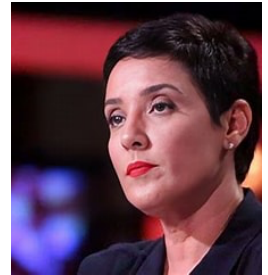
- Please support him by signing an online action: www.amnesty.org.uk/urgent-actions/unjustly-jailed-father-appeals-prison-term

Urgent Action Appeal for Sonia Dahmani, Tunisia

Tunisian lawyer and media personality **Sonia Dahmani** has been arbitrarily detained since security forces arrested her from the Tunisian Bar Associations' office in Tunis on 11 May 2024. She is facing five separate legal proceedings, all stemming from the exercise of her right to freedom of expression. Sonia Dahmani is currently held in the Manouba prison in cruel and inhuman conditions including exposure to extreme cold and lack of access to basic necessities.

The Tunisian authorities must immediately and unconditionally release Sonia Dahmani, quash her unjust convictions and drop the baseless criminal investigations against her.

Sonia's case was highlighted in our May Group Newsletter – this is a second action in her support.



- Please follow the link below to find out more about Sonia's case and to send an urgent action email appealing for her release.
www.amnesty.org.uk/urgent-actions/unjustly-jailed-lawyer-treated-inhumanely

Good news from Algeria!

Journalist Ihsane El Kadi has been released from El Harrach prison, following a presidential pardon to over 4,000 prisoners.

65-year-old Ihsane El Kadi is well-known for being a critical voice against the Algerian authorities throughout his decades-long career as a prominent journalist, media editor-in-chief and founding director of the independent media company Interface Media. He had been arbitrarily detained since 24 December 2022 and was serving an unjust five-year prison sentence for exercising his right to freedom of the press. Interface Media remains arbitrarily dissolved.



- Ihsane's case has been included in our Group Newsletter a number of times since his imprisonment. A heartfelt thank you to everyone who sent appeals: your efforts have made a difference!
- Following his release, Ihsane El Kadi expressed "*infinite gratitude*" to those who campaigned for his freedom. He credited international activism with influencing the authorities' decision to pardon him and improving his detention conditions. El Kadi emphasized the importance of global solidarity, stating that international campaigns provide hope and reassurance to detainees, reminding them they are not forgotten.

Action: Türkiye must stop human rights violations in north west Syria

Further to the action highlighted in the October Newsletter: despite Bashar al-Assad's fall as ruler of Syria on 08/12/2024, Afrin's families still cannot return to their homes because the Syrian National Army, working under Türkiye's command, does not allow them. In addition, human rights abuses are continuing in Afrin city.

- Investigations by Amnesty International and other Human Rights groups have detailed serious rights violations by troops from Türkiye and militias supported by Türkiye in Syria. The situation is ongoing.
- Residents in Afrin are enduring a wide range of violations, mostly at the hands of Syrian armed groups that have been equipped and armed by Türkiye.
- If you want to find out more, please see [the short video by John Elo](#), the Country Co-ordinator for Syria (AIUK)
- If you did not sign the online action in October, it is still live on the Amnesty website, with some more background information:
<https://www.amnesty.org.uk/activist-actions/ccsmegsyria1-0>

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>