



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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Yolanda Alcino Dominican Republic



Yolanda Alcino with her children © AI

Stateless in the Dominican Republic

Yolanda Alcino is struggling to register the birth of her children because of her Haitian descent.

In September 2013, the Dominican constitutional court ruled that hundreds of thousands of people descended from Haitian migrants and born between 1929 and 2007 were 'denationalised', rendering them stateless and unable to access key services.

Yolanda was only recently granted her own identity documents. Her new birth certificate is marked 'transcribed foreigner' even though she has never held any other nationality. As a result, she has been unable to finish school, find employment or access health services. And the future of her family remains uncertain. Without birth certificates it will be difficult for her two children to continue their education beyond primary school.

In May 2014 the Dominican Congress passed a naturalisation law which should have allowed these people to access their documents. But most Dominicans of Haitian descent still face discrimination and the threat of deportation.

APPEAL Call for Yolanda Alcino's children to have their Dominican nationality fully recognised, along with all other Dominicans of Haitian descent facing a similar situation. Call on the authorities to fight discrimination and prejudice against those of Haitian descent, Haitian migrants and black people in the country.

▶ Danilo Medina
President of the Republic
Palacio Nacional
Avenida México esquina Doctor Delgado
Gazcue
Santo Domingo
República Dominicana

Salutation: Dear President

Postage: World

▶ His Excellency Dr Federico Alberto Cuello Camilo
Embassy of the Dominican Republic
139 Inverness Terrace
London W2 6JF

Salutation: Your Excellency

Darya Poliudova Russia



© AI

Blogger facing jail

Political activist and blogger Darya Poliudova has been sentenced to two years' imprisonment for opposing Russia's policy on Ukraine. She posted photos on Russian social media which showed her holding posters with slogans such as 'No war in Ukraine but a revolution in Russia'. The authorities claimed this amounted to 'calls to commit extremist activities' and 'calls to commit actions threatening the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation'.

Darya was arrested on 29 August 2014, and was held in pre-trial detention until February 2015, when she was released under travel restrictions. Her sentence, passed on 21 December 2015, is not yet in force as she has appealed.

Darya, who lives in a small town in southern Russia, is well known locally for her activism in the streets and online and faces constant persecution because of it. She has been detained many times, which led to her losing her job as legal counsel at a hospital.

APPEAL Call on the Russian authorities to withdraw the charges and urge them to respect and protect the right to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association without discrimination.

▶ Colonel General Igor Kolosov
Head of the Regional Federal Security Service
of the Russian Federation for Krasnodar Region
Ul. Mira 46
350063
Krasnodar

Salutation: Dear Colonel General

Postage: World

▶ His Excellency Mr Alexander V Yakovenko
Embassy of the Russian Federation
13 Kensington Palace Gardens
London W8 4QX

Salutation: Your Excellency

Six students Tunisia



© AI

Six sentenced to prison for 'sodomy'

Six Tunisian men have been sentenced to three years' imprisonment for 'sodomy'. After being convicted, they were tortured and ill-treated in custody and although they are now out on bail pending an appeal, they continue to receive threats and fear their lives are in danger.

The men, university students, were arrested at a party on 2 December in Kairouan, and were forced to undergo an anal examination to justify the charge of 'sodomy'. The three-year sentence, imposed on 10 December, is the maximum provided under Article 230 of the Tunisian Penal Code, which covers 'sodomy and lesbianism'. Five of the men had no lawyers to represent them. Their appeal is set for 25 February.

Some of the men have spoken about being beaten at the police station after they were arrested. A lawyer defending them has told Amnesty that they have been threatened since their release, and are too afraid to go outside. The men's normal lives and studies have been disrupted and they are in constant fear of facing new accusations or charges.

APPEAL Urge the Tunisian authorities to quash the mens' convictions. Call on them to order an immediate, impartial and effective investigation into allegations of torture and other ill-treatment, and protect them from threats. Ask them to repeal Article 230 of the Penal Code which criminalises consensual same-sex sexual relations.

▶ President Béji Caïd Essebsi
Presidential Palace
Carthage
Tunis
Tunisia

Salutation: Your Excellency

Postage: World

▶ His Excellency Mr Nabil Ammar
Embassy of Tunisia
29 Prince's Gate
London SW7 1QG

Salutation: Your Excellency

Kamal Foroughi Iran



© Private

Elderly prisoner in need of medical care

Kamal Foroughi, a British-Iranian businessman aged 76, is serving an eight-year prison sentence in Evin Prison, Tehran, after an unfair trial for espionage and possession of alcohol. His health is deteriorating and he has limited access to his lawyer.

Before his arrest he needed specialised medical tests, including cancer screening. Although he eventually had some tests in November 2015, the results appear not to have been shared with him or his family.

Kamal was arrested on 5 May 2011 by men in plain clothes who failed to show a warrant or explain to him the reasons for his arrest. He has been in Evin Prison, Tehran, ever since, part of the time in solitary confinement without access to a lawyer or his family. The first time he was allowed to meet his lawyer was the day before his court hearing, early in 2013.

Kamal's wife, two children and grandchildren all live in the UK and he is not allowed to write to them or receive letters from them. He has never been allowed UK consular assistance.

APPEAL Call on the Iranian authorities to ensure that Kamal Foroughi receives any specialised medical care he needs, and apply Article 58 of the Islamic Penal Code which allows for his conditional release after one third of his prison term. Urge them to ensure that he has regular access to a lawyer of his choice and his family.

▶ Head of the Judiciary Ayatollah Sadeq Larijani
c/o Public Relations Office
Number 4, Deadend of 1 Azizi
Above Pasteur Intersection
Vali Asr Street
Tehran
Islamic Republic of Iran

Salutation: Your Excellency

Postage: World

▶ His Excellency Mohammad Hassan
Habibollahzadeh
Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran
16 Princes Gate
London SW7 1PT

Salutation: Your Excellency

Chaw Sandi Tun Burma



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Woman imprisoned for Facebook post

Chaw Sandi Tun has been sentenced to six months in prison over a Facebook post deemed insulting to the Burmese military. She is a prisoner of conscience, held solely for exercising her right to freedom of expression.

She shared a photo collage online which compared the uniform worn by General Min Aung Hlaing to the apparel of National League for Democracy chairwoman Aung San Suu Kyi. Her comment read: 'If you love her [Aung San Suu Kyi] so much put a piece of her longyi [sarong] on your head.' In Burma (Myanmar), the idea of a man wearing a woman's clothing on his head is offensive.

Chaw Sandi Tun was sentenced on 28 December under Article 66(d) of Burma's 2013 Telecommunications Law, which provides for up to three years' imprisonment for 'extorting, coercing, restraining wrongfully, defaming, disturbing, causing undue influence or threatening any person by using any Telecommunications Network'.

APPEAL Call on the Burmese authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Chaw Sandi Tun. Urge them to ensure that, pending her release, she is not tortured or otherwise ill-treated.

▶ President Thein Sein
President's Office
Office No.18
Nay Pyi Taw
Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Salutation: Your Excellency

Postage: World

▶ His Excellency Kyaw Zwar Minn
Embassy of the Republic of the Union
of Myanmar
19A Charles Street
London W1J 5DX

Salutation: Your Excellency

Mahdi Abu Dheeb Bahrain



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Imprisoned for defending teachers' rights

Mahdi Abu Dheeb, former president of the Bahrain Teachers' Association (BTA), is serving a five-year sentence in the notorious Jaw Prison.

He was convicted of using his position to call for a strike and inciting hatred for the regime, among other charges. He is a prisoner of conscience, jailed solely for exercising his rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly.

Mahdi sustained back injuries, including a slipped disk, from torture during the 64 days he was held in solitary confinement after his arrest on 6 April 2011. He has since found it difficult to walk without support and occasionally has to use a wheelchair.

Mahdi's family told Amnesty that since March 2015 prison officers have prevented him from receiving his medication for hypertension and diabetes, and vitamin tablets.

APPEAL Call for Mahdi to be released immediately and unconditionally, and to be allowed to receive his medication and vitamins.

▶ His Majesty 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

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

Salutation: Your Excellency

The Unity Five Burma

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Yar Zaa Oo and Paing Thet Kyaw

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Lu Maw Naing and Tint San

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Sithu Soe

Journalists in prison

Lu Maw Naing, Yarzar Oo, Paing Thet Kyaw, Sithu Soe – reporters for the *Unity* newspaper – and Tint San, its chief executive officer have been sentenced to seven years imprisonment for ‘disclosing state secrets’. They are prisoners of conscience, held for their legitimate work as journalists.

On 25 January 2014 *Unity* published an article about an alleged secret weapons factory in Pauk Township in Magwe region. The article reported that the factory was built in 2009 on land confiscated from farmers and that former army chief Than Shwe had visited it that same year. The government denied the allegations and the authorities seized copies of *Unity* around the country and arrested the five journalists. With most of its staff in prison, the newspaper was forced to close.

The sentencing of the five has had an intimidating effect on journalists working in Burma.

APPEAL Call for the immediate and unconditional release of the Unity media workers. Urge the authorities to ensure that they are not tortured or otherwise ill-treated, and that prison conditions and the treatment of prisoners meet international standards, including those in the UN Standard Minimum Rules on the Treatment of Prisoners.

▶ Ye Htut
Minister of Information
Office of the Ministry of Information
Office No 7
Naypyitaw
Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Salutation: Dear Minister

Postage: World

▶ His Excellency Kyaw Zwar Minn
Embassy of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar
19A Charles Street
London W1J 5DX

Salutation: Your Excellency

Ashraf Fayadh Saudi Arabia



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Poet facing execution

Ashraf Fayadh, a Palestinian poet and artist who lives in Saudi Arabia, has been sentenced to death for apostasy through his poetry. He has appealed against the punishment.

Ashraf was initially arrested on 6 August 2013, following a complaint that he was promoting atheism and spreading blasphemous ideas among young people. He was released the next day, then rearrested on 1 January 2014, when he was charged with apostasy. He was also charged with violating the country's Anti-Cyber Crime Law by taking and storing pictures of women on his phone.

On 30 April 2014 Ashraf was sentenced to four years in prison and 800 lashes for the charges relating to images of women. He was cleared of apostasy. On appeal, however, the court recommended that Ashraf should be sentenced for apostasy and sent his case back to the General Court, which then sentenced him to death. Throughout this process, Ashraf was denied access to a lawyer.

APPEAL Call on the Saudi authorities to release Ashraf immediately and unconditionally, to overturn his sentence and quash his conviction.

▶ King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud
The Custodian of the two Holy Mosques
Office of His Majesty the King
Royal Court, Riyadh
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Salutation: Your Majesty

Postage: World

▶ His Excellency HRH Prince Mohamed Bin Nawaf Bin Abdulaziz
Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia
30 Charles Street
London W1J 5DX

Salutation: Your Excellency

Natalya Sharina Russia



Librarian detained for holding 'extremist' books

Natalya Sharina spent two nights in a police cell and is currently under house arrest after the authorities found ‘extremist literature’ in the library where she works. She cannot leave her home and is not allowed access to the telephone or internet.

On 28 October, Natalya, the director of the Library of Ukrainian Literature in Moscow, was detained in her home, then taken to her work where investigators allegedly found works by Dmitry Korshinsky, a Ukrainian nationalist deemed ‘extremist’ by the Russian authorities.

During her detention Natalya, who suffers from high blood pressure, required emergency medical help four times. The doctors asked for her to be hospitalised but were told this would take three days. She was not taken to hospital.

APPEAL Urge the authorities to release Natalya Sharina immediately and unconditionally, and terminate any criminal proceedings against her. Urge them to respect the right to freedom of expression.

▶ Prosecutor General of the Russian Federation
Yurii Yakovlevich Chaika
Prosecutor General's Office
ul. B. Dmitrovka, d.15a
125993 Moscow GSP- 3
Russian Federation

Salutation: Dear Prosecutor General

Postage: World

▶ His Excellency Mr Alexander V Yakovenko
Embassy of the Russian Federation (Residence
of the Ambassador)
13 Kensington Palace Gardens
London W8 4QX

Salutation: Your Excellency