

WRITE FOR RIGHTS 2013

All wrapped up for another year!

Dear Friends,

Happy New Year! Now that the festive season is over, after another successful Write for Rights campaign, here at Amnesty UK we would like to take this opportunity to thank you again for all your hard work and support over the past two months. Every year this campaign gets bigger and we are constantly impressed by your campaigning.

Good news

As in previous years, it doesn't take long for the good news to start filtering through:

Russian prisoner of conscience Vladimir Akimenkov, one of the Bolotnaya three, was freed under amnesty at the end of December, and earlier in the month, following almost 90,000 appeals for her release, the Cambodian housing rights activist Yorm Bopha was released on bail. She said on her release, "Thank you to Amnesty International's supporters! Your campaign has been successful, as my release shows!..."

We have also had some really inspirational messages from the individuals and groups that you have been showing solidarity to:

Miriam Lopez - Mexico

"It's incredible that there is so much support from different countries and cultures, and that people who don't even know me feel solidarity with me and support my struggle. I truly thank you all and hope that I can soon give good news regarding the case."

Ihar Tsikhanyuk - Belarus

"When I feel left with no hope to fight, I'll get a letter and it inspires me. The light of hope appears again, and my confidence in myself and my ability to change things returns! I thank everyone for their support and solidarity letters."

COFADEH - Honduras

"I'm really impressed by the impact that the campaign is already having. People have learned about the campaign from the media and they're calling me to send me their wishes. I even had people contacting me from Ireland."

You were part of something global

Over 2.1 million actions have been taken in over 83 countries!

Hundreds of thousands of activists around the world have written letters to government authorities on behalf of those individuals featured in our cases.

This activism has been an amazing reminder of this global movement's diversity – from workshops, film screenings, concerts, large scale light projections onto embassies, letter writing events on a ship on the Baltic Sea - activists are using their creativity to get the message out, that all of our words together can make a difference. We saw letter writing activities happening everywhere; from

beaches to sub-zero conditions. Even in countries where there is no Amnesty section, volunteers organised events, such as in Timor Leste and Guinea.

And here in the UK

Across the UK we've had a great response from you, who have held some great events, encouraging people to write thousands of solidarity and appeal letters. The time and effort that supporters and activist groups have taken this year has been incredible.

Helping us to launch the campaign with a bang were students activists from hundreds of universities across the country at the annual Student Conference. These students then went on to take the campaign back to their campuses, helping other students to get creative with their campaigning.



Amnesty UK Student Conference 2013 ©Amnesty International UK

From schools and youth groups all over the UK we have received thousands of beautiful cards, so many in fact that we haven't yet finished counting them before we send them off! Groups from all over the country have been finding new and fun ways to get people involved, such as the Sutton Coldfield group who in November held a "Poems Puns 'n' Pints" night, an open mic comedy event where people could get involved on stage as well as writing letters and signing petitions. It's innovative events like this that has helped the campaign reach out to new audiences and get more people involved.

We have also had a fantastic response from MPs and MSPs, many of whom have spoken out in support of the campaign. Gil Paterson, MSP of Milngavie said, "Amnesty International does a great job shining a light on some of the worst violations of rights across the world, and the Write for Rights Campaign is a simple way in which people can play their part in helping them to do so."

We held a great Parliamentary event in December, getting MPs involved in the campaign, writing letters and getting creative by making patches with solidarity messages on them to be made into a patchwork for the Afghan Women Skills Development Centre (AWSDC).



Write for Rights Parliamentary Event © Marie-Anne Ventoura – Marieanne Photography

In fact, the campaign was so effective in bringing attention to these cases that deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg mentioned one of them, The Committee of Relatives of the Detained and Disappeared in Honduras (COFADEH), in his tribute to Nelson Mandela in the House of Commons saying, "Organisations like the Committee of Relatives of the Detained and Disappeared in Honduras which works in the shadow of threats and intimidation ... are [an] example of the individuals and organisations who deserve our loyalty and support just as much as the British campaigners in the Anti-Apartheid movement in London showed unfailing loyalty and support towards Nelson Mandela in his bleakest days."

COFADEH were so pleased that Nick Clegg had mentioned them, that they hosted his whole speech on their website and even translated it into Spanish.

Continuing our work with individuals at risk

The Write for Rights campaign runs from November to the end of December, but remember that Amnesty's work with individuals at risk is a year round activity. We hope you'll continue to support our other campaigning throughout the upcoming year. Your help makes all the difference.

For more information, please visit our webpage: <http://www.amnesty.org.uk/issues/Action-for-individuals>

Thank you

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