

Amnesty International (AI) works steadily and impartially to protect fundamental human rights of people of all walks of life. In conjunction with Banned Books Week at the end of September, we direct attention to the plight of individuals who are persecuted because they produce, circulate or read books or newspapers or other writings. Because of the proverbial “power of the word”, many journalists and artists are under attack around the world — by governments &/or by opposition groups — whether or not they actually are critical of those in authority or of others seeking power.



# Banned Books Week 2011



## AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

The casesheets in this packet may be used together or separately as handouts for action by the public as well as by Amnesty members. Anyone wishing to use them or the postcard after October 2011 should check first with

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for possible changes. Please forward to the same address copies of any official replies. Accounts and photos of Banned Books Week activities are most welcome also.

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- **summary** of current cases & past releases (for display)
- **5 casesheets** - China, Iran, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Viet Nam
- **bookmark/postcard** - Bahrain
- master for reproducing bookmark/postcard  
(Please do not print the postcard on green paper.)

Most of this material — along with a downloadable poster by Carol Inouye (see back page) — is also at <[www.amnestyusa.org/bannedbooks/](http://www.amnestyusa.org/bannedbooks/)>.

**Petitions** are obtainable from <[marquardt.steve@gmail.com](mailto:marquardt.steve@gmail.com)>.

The **notes** collected here are a sampling, not a comprehensive account, of worldwide problems with freedom of expression. And the **resources** listed on the back page of this folder are suggestions, not endorsements. Amnesty International cannot vouch for the content of other publications or websites.

Cut-off date for information in this packet: 10 August 2011.

*Do not feel safe. The poet remembers.  
You may kill him — another will be born.  
Deeds and words shall be recorded.*

~ Czeslaw Milosz, Poland



*The lives of artists are more fragile than their creations. The poet Ovid was exiled by Augustus to a little hell-hole on the Black Sea called Tomis, but his poetry has outlasted the Roman Empire. Osip Mandelstam died in a Stalinist work camp, but his poetry has outlived the Soviet Union. Federico García Lorca was killed by the thugs of Spain's Generalissimo Francisco Franco, but his poetry has survived that tyrannical regime.*

*We can perhaps bet on art to win over tyrants. It is the world's artists, particularly those courageous enough to stand up against authoritarianism, for whom we need to be concerned, and for whose safety we must fight.*

~ Salman Rushdie, 19 April 2011

### SOME RECENT NOTES

“The defense of media freedom continues to be a battle, a battle of vigilance in the democracies of old Europe and a battle against oppression and injustice in the totalitarian regimes still scattered across the globe,” said Reporters Without Borders (RSF) Secretary-General Jean-François Julliard when RSF issued its 2010 World Press Freedom Index. In the latest index, Syria, Rwanda and Yemen fell to the bottom, joining Eritrea, North Korea, Turkmenistan, Iran, Myanmar, China, and Sudan there. Finland, Iceland, The Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland have ranked at the top since the index was created in 2002. (Amnesty International does not rank countries.)

[continued]

As of 4 August 2011, the Committee to Protect Journalists counted 869 journalists killed since 1992 (when it began keeping records), 23 of them in 2011 so far, and 649 journalists in exile worldwide. And the Newseum in Washington, DC has reported that more than 160 journalists have died in Iraq since the war began — more than in both World Wars, Korea, and Vietnam combined.

In observance of UNESCO's World Press Freedom Day, Judith McHale, US undersecretary for public diplomacy & public affairs, offered a tribute to journalists worldwide: "Journalism is a calling of everyday heroes. Of brave souls who speak out where silence and fear are the allies of tyrants. Of dedicated citizens who insist that there is more to an issue that others overlook as insignificant. Of dogged advocates who will not rest until the truth is exposed and injustice righted."

Those in the news media who do not adhere to standards of fairness provide excuses to press fetters worldwide, notes *New York Times* executive editor Bill Keller in a commentary on the **United Kingdom** hacking uproar ("Why Tyrants Love the Murdoch Scandal", 24 July 2011). "The sad truth is that any time those who pride themselves on their freedoms fail to live up to their ideals, there can be consequences in places where liberty is more precarious. Despots love to see a free press behaving badly. Even more, they love to see a free government reacting badly. When our government equates journalism with espionage, propagandists smirk: Even in **America**. ... An Africa watcher from the Committee to Protect Journalists sent me a report from the state-run press service last week, quoting Robert Mugabe's propagandists [in **Zimbabwe**] on the *News of the World* scandal: 'A media analyst ... said the hacking scandal should serve as a lesson to the third world that the concept of free media is a myth, saying people should judge from the way the British government has reacted to the scandal that even the West cannot practice what they preach.' ... [D]o we really want to be held up as role models for repression? I hoped Rupert Murdoch might use his day in the [UK] parliamentary hot seat to make this point. Instead he offered us **Singapore** — which ranks 152nd out of 195 nations in the Freedom House ranking of press independence — as 'the most open and clear society in the world' ... I'm betting that made every paper in Singapore."

• **Singapore's** leaders and judiciary frequently bring defamation cases against political opponents and foreign publications, including a 2010 libel suit against *The New York Times* Company for an opinion piece in its *International Herald Tribune*. "Singapore uses criminal defamation laws to silence critics of government policies," said Amnesty International's deputy director for the Asia-Pacific region, at the time of British author Alan Shadrake's arrest in July 2010 because of his book, *Once a Jolly Hangman: Singapore Justice in the Dock*. Mr Shadrake

was released on 9 July 2011, after serving five weeks in jail for contempt of court, and was deported to England. His lawyer, M. Ravi, commented in an interview that Singapore's censorship of the print media is anachronistic when political discussion has been shifting to online media: "They are behaving very much in the old style of extreme restrictions on freedom of speech," he said (*New York Times*, 11 April 2011). "This anxiety is completely misplaced given the fact that 90 percent of the population of Singapore is plugged in to the Internet, where you can see a wide range of scathing attacks on the system, thousands and thousands of vitriolic expressions of all sorts of things." "If Singapore aspires to be a global media city, it needs to respect global human rights standards for freedom of expression," says the Amnesty deputy director. "Singapore should get rid of both its criminal defamation laws and the death penalty." The UK launch of Mr Shadrake's book, based on extensive interviews with Darshan Singh, who had been Singapore's chief executioner for nearly 50 years, took place on 25 July. A second edition of the book is now available in bookstores in **Malaysia**, where it originally had been banned, as in Singapore.



Alan Shadrake, 75-year-old freelance journalist, outside Singapore Supreme Court © Alan Shadrake

• **Indonesia** - In the early hours of 3 March 2011, journalist Banjir Ambarita was stabbed in the Indonesian province of Papua and required surgery. He had written recently about two alleged rape cases involving the police. A journalist with a local newspaper, *Bintang Papua*, he also is a regular contributor to Vivanews and *The Jakarta Globe*. He is at risk of further attacks and intimidation. Earlier (July 2010), Ardiansyah Matra, a journalist covering corruption and illegal logging in Papua, was found dead in the province. Despite police investigations, no one has been held accountable for the attack. International human rights observers, non-governmental organizations and journalists are severely restricted in their work in Papua amid ongoing reports of serious human rights violations by the police and military. Victims and witnesses in Papua have few available legal remedies to make complaints about human rights violations. In recent years, there have been cases of intimidation and attacks against human rights defenders and journalists elsewhere in Indonesia as well.

• **Myanmar** - According to Reporters Without Borders, “the rare attempts to provide news or information [in Myanmar] are met with imprisonment and forced labor”. Zin Linn, deputy chairman of the Burma Media Association, told the Democratic Voice of Burma last year that Myanmar’s ranking on the RSF Index was unsurprising. “In Burma there is no press freedom at all,” he said, adding that even obituaries must pass the censor and those of political dissidents and their relatives have been refused (*Christian Science Monitor*, 20 October 2010).

• **Thailand** - During the February 2011 trial of Chiranuch Premchaiporn, Executive Director of the online newspaper Prachatai (“Thai People”), who is accused of not removing quickly enough a web forum user’s comments deemed offensive to Thailand’s monarchy, AI said that her arrest and trial “reveal how far the Thai government is willing to go toward silencing unpopular or dissident views”. Her trial is scheduled to resume this September.

• **Viet Nam** - The 2009 crackdown on freedom of expression continues and often includes long prison terms. Prison conditions in Viet Nam are generally harsh. Political prisoners held incommunicado are particularly vulnerable to torture and ill-treatment. Political commentator Vi Duc Hoi, tried in January 2011, has been sentenced to a 5-year prison term for posting essays on the internet. Human rights defender and environmental activist Cu Huy Ha Vu was convicted of “conducting propaganda against the state” by a court in Ha Noi on 4 April, after calling for a multiparty system in online articles and giving interviews to foreign media. He was sentenced to 7 years in prison followed by 3 years of house arrest. Amnesty International called it “a sham trial, with the presumption of innocence and right to a defence completely ignored”. Professor Pham Minh Hoang, a math lecturer with dual French-Vietnamese nationality, was accused of writing blog articles about environmental issues that “blackened the image of the country” by the judge at his trial; he was sentenced on 9 August 2011 to 3 years in prison on national security charges.

Imprisoned blogger Nguyen Hoang Hai (known as Dieu Cay), co-founder of the independent Free Vietnamese Journalists’ Club, has “lost his arm”, according to a security official at the prison investigation office. No explanation has been given and requests to meet with Hai have been denied. He has not been seen by his family or lawyer since October 2010, when he was supposed to have been released from a two-and-a-half-year sentence on politically motivated charges of tax fraud but instead was held for investigation for “conducting propaganda” against the state (AI Urgent Action bulletin, 27 July 2011).

Novelist Tran Khai Thanh Thuy, 50, who has written for a pro-democracy newspaper, arrived in San Francisco with her daughter on 23 June 2011, a day after Viet Nam released her on humanitarian grounds after she spent more than a year in prison in Ha Noi (Associated Press, 26 June). Speaking through an interpreter, she vowed: “Most definitely I will con-

tinue to write and advocate for human rights. I will use my experience in jail to expose the human rights abuses in Vietnam, both in greater society and within the prisons.” Unfortunately, her husband remains under house arrest in Ha Noi.

• **Laos** - Laos is among the 15 lowest-ranked countries in the Reporters Without Borders Press Freedom Index (2010).

• **Taiwan** - For the past two years, Freedom House has downgraded Taiwan’s rating in its annual report on global press freedom (*Christian Science Monitor*, 3 January 2011).

• **China** - A crackdown on writers, other artists, and activists surrounding the award in autumn 2010 of the Nobel Peace Prize to Liu Xiaobo (see update, page 14) has been overlapped by an apparent attempt to prevent “Jasmine Revolution”-inspired demonstrations by way of detentions, surveillance, disappearances, travel bans, and tighter internet censorship. Newspapers noted at the beginning of March that the government had established no-reporting zones in Beijing and Shanghai to stop journalists from covering possible demonstrations (*New York Times*, 1 March 2011) and the Foreign Correspondents Club of China said more than a dozen reporters, including from the BBC, CNN, and Bloomberg, were beaten or detained by security officers as they went to cover possible protests in Beijing on 26 February. “The authorities must honour the commitments they made before the Beijing Olympics in 2008 to allow the foreign press to conduct interviews in China without official interference,” said AI (3 March 2011). “Attempts to control the foreign media through violence, intimidation, and harassment show the authorities’ contempt for basic press freedoms and for China’s own rules.”

On 19 February 2011, police in Harbin, Heilongjiang province, detained Liang Haiyi (nicknamed Miaoxiao), who has been an active blogger on issues of freedom and human rights. On the same date, Ding Fangguan (known as Gu Chuan), 30, a writer and human rights activist, was detained; he was still being held incommunicado as of 29 March (AI Urgent Action bulletin), at risk of torture and other ill-treatment. His wife Li Xinai, 28, and their two children have been under illegal house arrest in the family home in Beijing, where computers, mobile phones, and some books were confiscated by police. Also on 19 February, at midnight, Ran Yunfei, a prolific writer and blogger, was detained in Chengdu, Sichuan province, on suspicion of “subversion of state power”. He was released unexpectedly, with restrictive conditions, on 9 August. The *New York Times* described him as “a reluctant critic” who had posted: “In a free country I would happily spend my life in the library doing research. But I live in a country where I cannot in good conscience merely live such a life.”

On 25 March, veteran democracy activist Liu Xianbin, 43, was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment and two years & four months deprivation of political rights for writing articles critical of the government online and in journals. This is the third

time he has been imprisoned. “Ten years imprisonment for writing articles is an appalling sentence, and a travesty of justice,” said AI’s Catherine Baber.

Australian national Yang Hengjun, 46, blogger and spy novelist, went missing on 27 March after telephoning a colleague from Guangzhou Airport in China to say he was being followed by three men.

“When artists venture into politics the risks to reputation and integrity are ever-present. But outside the free world, where criticism of power is at best difficult and at worst all but impossible, creative figures ... are often the only ones with the courage to speak truth against the lies of tyrants. We needed the samizdat truth-tellers to reveal the ugliness of the Soviet Union. Today we need Ai Weiwei, Liao Yiwu and Liu Xiaobo.”

~ **Salman Rushdie**, chairman of the PEN World Voices Festival of International Literature, *New York Times* op-ed, 19 April 2011

Meanwhile, two years after a harsh crackdown on protests by Uighurs in Urumqi, which began peacefully and later turned violent, the Chinese authorities continue to persecute Uighurs for peacefully exercising their right to freedom of expression. “By treating individuals who peacefully express their opinions or divulge information sensitive to the authorities as ‘terrorists’ the Chinese government perpetuates a climate of fear which helps to ensure a near-total black-out of information regarding the human rights violations suffered by Uighurs in China,” Amnesty International reiterated on 1 July 2011.

Memetjan Abdulla, a broadcaster and editor for eight years with the Uighur service of China National Radio, is serving a life sentence after a closed trial in April 2010. He was accused of inciting the unrest by translating into Uighur and posting on the Uighur website Salkin a call by an overseas Uighur group to protest the beating to death of migrant Uighur workers in Guangdong province. Hairat Niyaz, a Uighur journalist and website editor, continues to serve a 15-year sentence on charges of “endangering state security” for essays he had written and interviews he gave to Hong Kong journalists following the July 2009 protests. Dilshat Perhat, also a former editor of a popular Uighur-language website, remains in prison on a five-year sentence for “endangering state security”. Messages reportedly were posted on his website referring to protests on 5 July 2009 although, according to informed sources, as the website manager he removed them. News of the sentencing of another editor of a popular Uighur-language website in connection to the 5 July protests only came to international attention in March 2011. Tursanjan Hezim, 38, a former history teacher who ran the popular website Orkhun, reportedly was detained within days of the protests, although his family was

not informed of his whereabouts or the charges against him; the family did not learn until July 2010 of his seven-year sentence imposed after a secret trial.

Prisoner of conscience Hada was due to be released from prison on 10 December 2010 on completion of a 15-year sentence; however, the authorities continued to hold him and detained his wife Xinna and their son Uiles shortly before his expected release date. The family bookstore, Mongolian Academic Bookshop was also raided and ordered to close around that time. Active in promoting Mongolian literature and culture, the bookshop has been closed repeatedly in the past. At first Xinna and Uiles were held incommunicado; their whereabouts were unknown, and the authorities put some of their relatives under surveillance. According to Hada’s sister Naraa, when she was summoned by authorities on 20 February 2011 to persuade him to end a hunger strike, she saw notifications of Xinna and Uiles’ formal arrest (in mid-January). They are held separately and no family member has been able to visit Uiles (as of 20 July). He and his mother have been detained several times since 1995 when Hada was taken into custody. The authorities have repeatedly pressured Uiles who was only 13 years old when he was detained and beaten for the first time, to cut his ties with his parents. Xinna has been under constant surveillance since she was first detained in 1995.

• **North Korea** - Reporters Without Borders ranks North Korea second worst worldwide for harsh media restrictions.



Natalia Estemirova at AI Secretariat in London, 2008

© AI

- **Russia** - A leading Russian human rights defender accused of slandering the Chechen president was acquitted by a court in Moscow in mid-June 2011. Oleg Orlov, head of the NGO Human Rights Centre Memorial, had stated his belief that Ramzan Kadyrov was responsible for the murder of his journalist colleague Natalia Estemirova, who was abducted and killed in Chechnya in July 2009. “Oleg Orlov should never have been criminally prosecuted for expressing his opinion,” said an AI spokesman. “The decision is a small but welcome sign of respect for the rule of law and the right to freedom of expression, even as human rights defenders in Chechnya continue to suffer threats and intimidation. The next step for the Russian justice system should be to fully investigate the killing of Natalia Estemirova and to bring those responsible for her murder to justice.”

- **Belarus** - The last six months — since the protested elections — “have seen an unprecedented deterioration in the human rights situation in Belarus” said Amnesty International on 17 June 2011. “Key opposition figures have been detained, ill-treated and convicted in unfair trials. Critical NGOs, civil society activists and journalists have faced harassment.”

- **Macedonia** - The Macedonian authorities must stop their attempts to extinguish freedom of expression, Amnesty International said on 5 July 2011, after three of the country’s newspapers were shut down. “This is not an isolated incident but a confrontation with media critical of the government that has been going on for over a year,” said an AI spokeswoman. “These closures are looking more and more like an all-out assault on freedom of expression. ... Macedonian journalists have consistently alleged government interference in their work, ranging from being shut out of press conferences, to defamation suits, to death threats.”

- **Hungary** - Just as Hungary took its six-month turn in the European Union presidency at the beginning of this year, a new “media law package” that had been adopted by the Hungarian parliament in December 2010 came into effect, over widespread objections. Offering detailed recommendations for amendment, Amnesty International stated that “the breadth of the restrictions contained in the new legislation on media content, the lack of clear guidelines for journalists and editors, and the strong powers of the new regulatory body all risk placing unnecessary and disproportionate restrictions to freedom of expression in Hungary which go beyond the narrow restrictions permitted under international human rights standards on freedom of expression” (letter to Hungarian embassies). Minor amendments were offered in February, widespread argument continued, and on 10 March the European Parliament adopted a resolution pressing Hungary to “urgently review” its law on the basis of critical comments by the Council of Europe and the Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe and to repeal the laws or their provisions that are “found to be incompatible with the letter or spirit” of EU laws and other European conventions. The resolution also regret the threats

to media pluralism and freedom in other member states, such as Italy, Estonia, Bulgaria, and the Czech Republic (Agence Europe, 10 March 2011).



Protest against media legislation outside Hungarian Parliament, Budapest, 27 January 2011 © Ádám Szigei

- **United Kingdom** - Before the current chaotic expansion of *News of the World*-related controversies, the *New York Times* (22 March 2011) noted with partial approval moves to “reform the country’s notorious libel law — even “condemned by the United Nations” — “which has long made London a magnet for frivolous lawsuits” — popularly known as “libel tourism”. Meanwhile, Heathrow airport has a writer-in-residence (not a human rights issue)!

- **USA** - McClatchy Newspapers and other news organizations reported in September 2010 that revised Pentagon guidelines for reporters and photographers covering military trials at Guantánamo Bay included “significant”, somewhat less restrictive changes.

A committee of American Roman Catholic bishops has announced that *Quest for the Living God: Mapping Frontiers in the Theology of God*, by Sister Elizabeth A. Johnson, a theologian at Fordham University in New York, should not be used in Catholic schools & universities because it does not uphold church doctrine (*New York Times*, 30 March, 2011). Sister Johnson, a former president of the Catholic Theological Society of America and the American Theological Society, stated that the bishops had misinterpreted her book, which “endeavors to present new insights about God arising from people living out their Catholic faith in different cultures around the world. My hope is that any conversation that may be triggered by this statement will enrich that faith.”

- **Mexico** - Journalists and media workers in Mexico face serious risk of being attacked or murdered because of their work. According to the National Human Rights Commission, at least 70 journalists have been killed since 2000 and the whereabouts of 13 other abducted journalists remain unknown. Those investigating or reporting on crime and corruption are particularly vulnerable to attack or intimidation. In the vast majority of cases, perpetrators are not brought to justice, creating a climate of impunity (see Lydia Cacho update, page 14).

• **Cuba** - Despite having released journalists jailed in the “Black Spring” crackdown, Cuba still persecutes independent writers through arrests, beatings, surveillance, and intimidation, says the Committee to Protect Journalists.

• **Dominican Republic** - Many journalists in the Dominican Republic face threats and attacks, especially when they report on drug-trafficking and expose alleged ties between public officials and drug-trafficking networks. According to the national journalists’ union, more than 30 journalists and press workers have been attacked between January and May of this year. José Silvestre, a television journalist, was abducted and shot dead on 2 August 2011. The Dominican authorities “should strongly condemn these incidents, fully investigate each case and provide adequate protection to journalists,” said Amnesty International. “Journalists must be able to carry out their jobs without fearing for their lives.”

• **Honduras** - “Th[e] unprecedented level of violence against the Honduran media has obviously created fear and unease,” said Joel Simon, the executive director of the Committee to Protect Journalists, in a telephone interview with Andrew O’Reilly of Latin American News Dispatch (20 May 2011); the murder of reporters “has inevitably caused widespread self-censorship, and prevented local journalists from reporting on sensitive information, such as crime, local corruption and national security.”

• **El Salvador** - “It’s unacceptable for El Salvador to stand by while members of the media receive threats intended to silence them,” said AI’s Guadalupe Marengo on 10 May 2011.

• **Nicaragua** - Amnesty International also has raised concerns about the issue of freedom of expression and association in Nicaragua. The *AI Report 2010* documented a series of incidents involving attacks on journalists, government critics and civil society activists. This year, for example, Luis Galeano, a Nicaraguan journalist with the newspaper *El Nuevo Diario*, has received death threats by letter and phone from unknown individuals while investigating a corruption case.

• **Ecuador** - An Ecuadoran judge’s harsh sentence against a newspaper that criticized the President will have a chilling effect on freedom of expression in the country, Amnesty International said on 22 July 2011, after a court in Guayaquil sentenced three directors and a former columnist of *El Universo* to three years in prison and imposed punitive damages totaling US\$40 million. President Rafael Correa sued the newspaper for criminal libel after a February 2011 column called him a “dictator”.

• **Colombia** - Luis Eduardo Gómez, a Colombian freelance journalist who was a witness for an investigation into links between politicians and paramilitary groups, was shot and killed on 30 June 2011 in the northwestern province of Antioquia, according to news reports.

• **Venezuela** - Wilfred Iván Ojeda, a newspaper columnist and politician, was shot to death on 17 May 2011 in La Victoria, Aragua state, according to press reports.

“It’s very difficult for a Latin American writer to avoid politics. Literature is an expression of life, and you cannot eradicate politics from life.”

~ **Mario Vargas Llosa**, Peruvian novelist, after winning the Nobel Prize in Literature

• **South Africa** - “How a government that owes its very existence to its faith in the indivisibility of freedom can now so easily betray that faith” — by promoting drastic restrictions on freedom of expression — “is beyond belief”, wrote André Brink, one of whose novels “had the dubious distinction of being the first book in Afrikaans to be banned under apartheid”, in the *New York Times* (“A Long Way From Mandela’s Kitchen”, 11 September 2010).

• **Swaziland** - Journalists have been caught up in mass arrests in conjunction with demonstrations in Swaziland.

• **Gambia** - In *Climate of Fear Continues: Enforced disappearances, killings and torture in Gambia* (22 July 2011), AI details “how cases of enforced disappearances are yet to be resolved after several years, those involved in unlawful killings have not been identified and bought to justice, and torture is still widely used by the security forces. ... Most victims of enforced disappearances in Gambia are journalists, opposition party members or security force personnel. Investigations by the authorities rarely take place and perpetrators are not brought to justice. Extrajudicial executions have been routinely carried out in Gambia especially against members of the security forces who oppose the government.” Amnesty also has documented cases in which students, journalists and foreign nationals have been killed by security personnel.

On 19 July, three journalists and opposition party members living overseas, including former President of the Gambia Press Union Ndey Tapha Sosseh, were charged in absentia with treason in connection with the distribution of T-shirts bearing the logo “End to Dictatorship in the Gambia”. Four others had been arrested in June and remain in custody in Gambia where treason carries the death penalty. AI considers them prisoners of conscience who should be released.

• **Nigeria** - On 10 November 2010, the 15th anniversary of the execution of writer and human rights campaigner Ken Saro-Wiwa, along with eight other Ogoni leads, Amnesty International reminded the world that the same oil industry-linked environmental and human rights abuses against which they struggled continue. (See AI’s 2009 report, *Petroleum, Pollution and Poverty in the Niger Delta*.)

• **Uganda** - In a public statement on 16 May, Amnesty International expressed concern about harassment of journalists and “undue restrictions of the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly since the general elections in February 2011” and urged the Government of Uganda to “stop the ongoing use of force” against journalists, opposition leaders and their supporters. Even during demonstrations, “the use of force, including lethal force, by security forces must comply with human rights standards at all times in order to protect the right to life. ... Any law enforcement officials found to be responsible for human rights violations must be held accountable in fair trials which comply with international human rights law without recourse to the death penalty.” On 12 May 2011, 10 journalists were beaten by security officials while reporting opposition leader Kizza Besigye’s return from Kenya.

• **Burundi** - Jean-Claude Kavumbagu, the editor of a Burundian online news agency, Netpress, was released from prison on 16 May 2011. He had been detained since July 2010 after an article criticizing the capacity of the Burundian security forces to protect the country from terrorist attack. While welcoming his release, Amnesty International remains concerned that his prolonged pre-trial detention and conviction set a dangerous precedent for restrictions on freedom of expression in Burundi. During his detention, AI considered Jean-Claude Kavumbagu to be a prisoner of conscience. His family thanked members for their letters to the Burundian government calling for his release.

During the interactive dialogue with the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Burundi, Dr Fatsah Ou-guergouz, at the 17th session of the UN Human Rights Council (Geneva, 30 May–17 June 2011), Amnesty International expressed concurrence with the Independent Expert’s concerns regarding restrictions on the right to freedom of expression.

• **Rwanda** - On 3 June 2011, Amnesty International called on President Kagame to allow opposition politicians, journalists and human rights defenders to express their views without fear for their safety. Two weeks later in Geneva, AI welcomed Rwanda’s support of most of the recommendations made during UN Human Rights Council’s Universal Periodic Review — in particular all the recommendations to protect and respect freedom of expression, including by reviewing and revising existing legislation. In this regard, AI urged Rwanda to announce a timeframe for revising the genocide ideology law (being used to prosecute government critics, including journalists), as well as for consideration of amendments to the media law by Parliament. It also strongly encouraged Rwanda to review related laws and amend the sectarianism law in line with international standards. Amnesty also urged Rwanda to “uphold its commitment to undertake credible investigations into reports of harassment of journalists and to prosecute where the evidence warrants. Rwanda could demonstrate this commitment by re-opening investigations into the [24 June

2010] killing of journalist Jean-Leonard Rugambage [Banned Books Week 2010 featured case] and by following all leads.”

• **Equatorial Guinea** - The authorities in Equatorial Guinea must immediately end a draconian clampdown on freedom of expression taking place ahead of an African Union summit in the capital Malabo on 23 June, Amnesty International said (press release, 20 June 2011).

• **Cameroon** - Because some of his supporters paid a fine on his behalf, Cameroonian writer Bertrand Zepherin Teyou was released on 29 April 2011. He had been imprisoned since November 2010 after writing a book about the President’s wife (*The Banana Republic’s Beauty: Chantal Biya, from the street to the palace*).

• **Sudan** - Journalists suffer from harassment and various restrictions to their freedom of expression in Sudan. Newspapers also continue to experience surveillance and intermittent censorship. On 31 January 2011, the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) banned opposition newspaper *Ajress Al Hurriya* and stopped independent newspaper *Al Sahafa* from distributing its daily edition. During a previous crackdown on *Al Sahafa*, in November 2010, Darfuri journalist Jaafar Alsabki Ibrahim was arrested by the NISS. *Al Midan* newspaper also was stopped from distributing its printed edition on 2 February 2011; several of its staff members were detained.

• **Somalia** - Surviving pro- and anti-government militias is exceedingly difficult for journalists in Somalia. “Somali journalists are being prevented from informing the local population about daily violence that affects their lives — a service that is particularly vital in a conflict too dangerous for consistent international media reporting,” said an AI spokeswoman last year when announcing a briefing paper, *Hard News: Journalists’ lives in danger in Somalia*. “Somalia’s authorities must investigate the attacks and harassment of journalists, both by armed groups and members of their own government, and ensure that freedom of expression is respected.”

On 1 August 2011, the Committee to Protect Journalists welcomed the decision by authorities in Puntland, Somalia’s northeastern semi-autonomous region, to set free reporter Faysal Mohamed Hassan, who wrote for the private news site Hiiraan Online and was serving a prison sentence “over a story claiming that two murdered men belonged to Puntland’s security personnel”.

• **Eritrea** - Eritrean journalists in the US-based diaspora community reported government surveillance and harassment by Eritrean government supporters within the USA. The government tightly controls all media and reacts with hostility to any perceived criticism. All independent journalism has been effectively banned since 2001. Numerous journalists remain in incommunicado detention without charge or trial. In many

cases the government refuses to confirm their location or health status. Prisoner of conscience Dawit Isaac, a journalist detained in the 2001 clampdown, reportedly is in poor mental and physical health.

- **Ethiopia** - Most press in the country is state-controlled. Countless journalists have been imprisoned since the ruling party came to power nearly 20 years ago. Many of the journalists who have been allowed to work since 2005 self-censor their output in a climate of fear. Numerous journalists and editors have fled the country in recent years under the threat of prosecution and imprisonment.

Amnesty International has condemned threats made by the Ethiopian authorities against Eskinder Nega, a journalist and former AI Prisoner of Conscience at risk of detention or of physical harm. In February 2011 he was issued a warning to cease writing articles that the government considers to be inflammatory or face imprisonment. Amnesty also is concerned that the June 2011 arrests of Woubshet Taye (deputy editor of the *Awramba Times*) and Reyot Alemu (a regular contributor to the weekly *Feteh* newspaper) are further evidence that Ethiopia's Anti-Terrorism Proclamation is being used to limit legitimate freedom of expression in the country. A few days before her arrest, Reyot Alemu had written an article critical of government policy and the Prime Minister.

- **Libya** - Libyan-Danish writer Jamal al-Hajji, a former prisoner of conscience, was detained at the beginning of February 2011, apparently for calling for peaceful protests in Libya. Since protests began in mid-February and in the turmoil that has followed, there have been reports that Libyan authorities and those loyal to Colonel Mu'ammarr al-Gaddafi have targeted national and international journalists of various origins and professional affiliations. "Abuses against journalists seeking to report the facts are totally unacceptable and point to a deliberate effort to prevent the truth emerging through the fog of war," said Malcolm Smart, Amnesty International's Middle East & North African director, on 22 March.

On 28 March 2011, a group of armed men in plain clothes entered the home of 28 year-old journalist Rana al-Aqbani in Tripoli. They searched her apartment and confiscated all mobile phones, a computer, and personal documents. They took away Rana al-Aqbani, along with her younger brother, without providing any reason for their arrest. They were held in incommunicado detention but were released without charge in April.

- **Morocco** - Rachid Nini, editor of the el-Massa daily newspaper, was detained on 28 April 2011 following publication of several articles criticizing the counter-terrorism practices of the Moroccan security services, including prison sentences handed down after unfair trials against Islamists. He also has called repeatedly for increased political freedom and has written about corruption among government officials. On the eve

of his trial, scheduled to open on 18 May, Amnesty International said that the detention of Rachid Nini runs completely counter to reform promises King Mohammed VI made earlier this year, when he promised to strengthen human rights; it is "a severe attack on freedom of expression".

- **Egypt** - The European Commission's Lorenzo Natali Prize for the Mediterranean & Middle East was awarded in December 2010 to Egyptian journalist Manar Attiya Salem, who works for the daily *Al-Ahram*, for her article on forced marriages of minors.

Fearing for his safety, Amnesty International urged the Egyptian authorities to free activist blogger Amr Gharbeia (a former AI staff member currently working with the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights), thought to have been arrested on 23 July 2011. "The authorities have to make sure that he and all protesters in custody are not subjected to torture or ill treatment — something we have documented on numerous occasions since February, including by the military."

- **Yemen** - As Yemen fell steadily in the RSF Press Freedom Index over the past two years, the *Yemen Times* noted that "new media is very tightly controlled by the Ministry of Information, which in addition to monitoring the Internet, bans several mobile phone news services" (29 October 2009). Since then, the Yemeni government has been resorting to repressive and illegal methods to quash dissent, with human rights activists, journalists and students targeted (AI, 28 January 2011). Tawakkol Karman, the president of Yemeni NGO Women Journalists without Chains, was arrested on 23 January for taking part in a student demonstration in Sana'a. She was released a day later, but is alleged to have indirectly received a death threat from a high-ranking official. On 13 February 2011, journalist Samia Alagbry reportedly was subjected to an abduction attempt and physical assault while participating in a demonstration in Sana'a. She was secretary of the Rights and Freedoms Committee of the Journalists' Syndicate and regularly documents and reports human rights violations, particularly against journalists in Yemen.

- **Kuwait** - In November 2010, Amnesty International urged the Kuwaiti authorities to release Muhammad 'Abd al-Qader al-Jasema, an journalist and lawyer who was sentenced to one year in prison that month on charges relating to an article he wrote on his news blog, Mizan, criticizing the country's Prime Minister. Previously he had been editor-in-chief of the *Al-Watan* daily newspaper and then the founding editor-in-chief of the Arabic editions of *Newsweek* and *Foreign Policy*.

- **United Arab Emirates** - There are severe restrictions on freedom of expression and association in the federation of seven emirates. In April 2011 three more bloggers were detained in the ongoing clampdown in the UAE. According to a Reuters news report, the Attorney General of the UAE stated on 25 April that the three, along with previously arrested blog-

ger Ahmad Mansoor (a member of the Middle East and North Africa advisory committee at Human Rights Watch) and economist Nasser bin Ghaith (who also has written articles advocating political reform), were being held in preventive custody and being investigated in connection with acts that threaten national security and for allegedly insulting government leaders. Ahmad Mansoor and his lawyer have received death threats via Facebook.

• **Bahrain** - Aayat Alqormozi, a 20-year-old poet & student at the Faculty of Teachers (Bahrain University), taken into custody in March 2011 and sentenced in June to one year in prison for reading a poem at pro-reform rally in February, was released conditionally on 13 July. During her detention she was tortured. An appeal is underway. Amnesty International is calling on the authorities to annul her conviction and drop any pending charges.

**\* SEE POSTCARD**

Translated lines addressed to the King of Bahrain by Aayat Alqormozi:

*We do not like to live in a palace  
And we are not after power  
We are the people who  
Break down humiliation  
And discard oppression  
With peace as our tool*



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• **Israel/OPT** - On 6 May 2011, Amnesty International issued an Urgent Action bulletin concerning Ahmad Qatamesh, a Palestinian writer and humanities lecturer (at al-Quds University in Jerusalem) arrested by Israeli security forces at 2am on 21 April from his brother's home in Ramallah in the occupied West Bank and then held as an administrative detainee, which allows the Israeli authorities to detain someone indefinitely without charge and with no real opportunity to challenge the detention order. Ahmad Qatamesh was arrested by the Israel Defense Forces in 1992 and reportedly tortured. He wrote about his experiences in a publication called "I shall not wear your tarboosh [fez]". He was placed under administrative detention repeatedly during that decade.

• **Lebanon** - A series of arrests, detentions and harassment of Lebanese citizens for their online activities is raising fears that

Lebanon's era of Internet freedom may be coming to an end, reported the *New York Times* (3 November 2010).

• **Syria** - Amnesty International condemned 13 March 2011 the sentencing of Syrian journalist 'Ali al-'Abdullah to 18 months' imprisonment and called for his immediate & unconditional release as a prisoner of conscience. He was convicted, after an unfair trial in military court, of "spoil[ing] Syria's relations with another country", based on comments he had made to a news agency about elections in Lebanon and Iran. Previously, he had been imprisoned on three separate occasions.

Even before the current turmoil in Syria, Reporters Without Borders reported that "press freedom is fast shrinking away" in Syria, where "arbitrary detentions are still routine, as is the use of torture". Amnesty International warned in March & April & May that hundreds of people — including journalists — are believed to be held incommunicado at unknown locations across Syria, as protests continue. They are at serious risk of torture and other ill-treatment. Many of those detained are likely to be prisoners of conscience, held merely for exercising their rights to freedom of expression and association. The known detainees as of 6 May included Dorothy Parvaz, an Al Jazeera journalist, arrested upon arrival at Damascus International Airport on 29 April, having flown from Qatar to help cover the events.

"Between the pains of oppression and the hardships of liberation, I of course prefer the latter. Personally, I want to live nowhere but in Syria, although I am looking forward to acquiring a passport to visit my brothers in Europe, whom I have not seen for 10 years. I also want, finally, to feel safe."

~ **Yassin al-Haj Saleh**,  
writer and political activist,  
*New York Times*, 10 April 2011

• **Iran** - Blogger Hossein Derakhshan, 35, a dual Canadian-Iranian national, was unfairly tried and sentenced on 28 September 2010 to 19 1/2 years' imprisonment on vaguely worded charges relating to national security. He was detained without charge for about 19 months prior to trial and denied regular access to his family and lawyer. Amnesty International believes he is likely held solely for the peaceful expression of his views (Urgent Action bulletin, 7 October 2010). Another Iranian blogger, Zhila Baniyaghoub, editor-in-chief of the Focus on Iranian Women website, faced new criminal charges in April based on statements written on her blog, RFE/RL's Radio Farda reported on 15 April 2011. She has undergone several trials during the crackdown following the June 2009 presidential election and was charged in June 2010 with "spreading propaganda against the regime" and "insulting the president". She was sentenced to one year in prison and banned from any journalistic activities for 30 years, but had not begun to serve

her term by the time of Radio Farda's report. She was awarded the Courage In Journalism prize by the International Women's Media Foundation in 2009 and the Freedom of Speech Award from Reporters Without Borders in 2010.

Journalist Ahmad Zeidabadi, serving a six-year jail term that began in December 2009 after a mass "show trial", was awarded this year's Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize from UNESCO. His prison sentence is to be followed by five years of internal exile, and he has been banned for life from all social and political activities. The sentence was upheld in January 2010. When his wife visited him in June he had lost a lot of weight and seemed weak.

Heshmatollah Tabarzadi (known as Heshmat), 53, a journalist and leader of a banned political party in Iran, has been unsuccessful in his appeal to overturn his nine-year prison sentence (AI Urgent Action bulletin, 6 April 2011), although it has been reduced to eight years and the flogging portion (74 lashes) has been overturned. He has also been banned from participating in any social activities for 10 years. There are reports that he is held in poor prison conditions and that he has been beaten and threatened. His health deteriorated at the beginning of July and he was transferred to the prison medical facility where he was diagnosed with a heart condition (AI Health Professional Action, 2 August 2011).

• **Turkey** - The Prime Minister and his party "are using vague defamation laws and sweeping anti-terror statutes to rein in traditional targets such as Kurdish journalists, and, now, mainstream media critics", according to the Committee to Protect Journalists. In a study released in early April 2011, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's Representative on Freedom of the Media, Dunja Mijatovic, reported that 57 journalists are currently in prison in Turkey, mostly on the basis of the country's anti-terrorism laws, 11 other journalists also face charges, and an estimated 700-1,000 proceedings against journalists remain ongoing (Ellis & McKenzie, Project Syndicate, 29 April 2011). The European Commission has called on Turkish authorities to stop intimidation of the media and to uphold basic OSCE media freedom commitments. The UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights also has urged Turkey to guarantee freedom of opinion and expression.

In an 11 March editorial the *New York Times* deplored the arrest a week earlier of investigative journalist, Nedim Sener. "He had earlier angered the authorities by digging into the 2007 murder of Hrant Dink, a Turkish-Armenian journalist who had also run afoul of the government. More recently, Mr. Sener has questioned the government's handling of an alleged terrorist conspiracy to overthrow the Erdogan government." Similar charges have been leveled against another prominent journalist, Ahmet Sik. While the government's conspiracy investigations avenue not yet "come up with conclusive evidence of actual conspiracies," said the *Times*, "hundreds of

journalists have been subjected to criminal investigations for their reporting on these inquiries...".

• **Pakistan** - Faqir Mohammad Baloch, a poet and member of the Voice of Missing Baloch Missing Persons, was abducted on 23 September 2010. His body, showing signs of torture and a single bullet wound to the head at point blank range, was found a month later in the district of Mastung, part of "a growing trend of 'kill & dump' operations" carried out by various sides in the fifth wave of violent unrest afflicting the region, according to AI. Professor Saba Dashtiyari succumbed to his injuries after being shot repeatedly by unidentified gunmen on Sariat Road in Quetta while on his way home, on 1 June 2011. He was a renowned writer and poet and a professor at the University of Balochistan in the provincial capital. He was the author of several books on Baloch literature and culture and a scholar in Islamic studies. Over the past few years, he reportedly backed the call for resorting to arms for an independent Balochistan. Baloch groups have accused the Pakistani security forces, specifically the Frontier Corps, of carrying out his killing.

Amnesty International has called on the Pakistan authorities to ensure an independent, impartial, transparent and thorough investigation into the incident and to bring all those suspected of involvement in the killing — including any persons with command responsibility — to justice in fair trials and without the imposition of the death penalty. AI also calls on the Pakistan government to take urgent steps to end killings and abductions in Balochistan, which have increased at an alarming rate during the past year, resulting in the deaths of over 150 political activists, journalists, lawyers and students. The government should also investigate all other alleged human rights abuses, including all enforced disappearances recorded by the judicial Commission of Inquiry for Missing Persons.

Pakistani journalist Syed Saleem Shahzad was murdered in May 2011, after allegedly receiving repeated threats from Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). In September 2010, Umar Cheema, an investigative reporter for *The News*, risked speaking publicly to Jane Perlez about being abducted by assailants he believes were associated with ISI. Ms Perlez noted that at the beginning of that year, in Islamabad, "the home of Azaz Syed, a reporter for *Dawn*, the main English-language daily, was attacked by unknown assailants days after he was threatened by supposed ISI agents over an investigative article he was researching related to the military".

William Dalrymple, author of *Nine Lives: In Search of the Sacred in Modern India*, writes that the 17th-century Sufi poet-saint Rahman Baba (whose shrine at the foot of the Khyber Pass in northwest Pakistan was bombed by Taliban in March 2009) had long been considered the national poet of the Pashtuns living on both sides of the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. Rahman Baba wrote:

*Sow flowers,  
so your surroundings become a garden.  
Don't sow thorns; for they will prick your feet.  
We are all one body.  
Whoever tortures another, wounds himself.*

• **Sri Lanka** - Emergency regulations issued by the President have been used to silence critical media and generally violate freedom of expression in Sri Lanka, including through detention without charge or trial for periods lasting up to 18 months. Media workers have been tortured and killed.

• **Turkmenistan** - According to the BBC's country profiles, "the Turkmen government has an absolute monopoly of the media. The authorities monitor media outlets, control printing presses, block websites, monitor internet use and lay down editorial policies." In December 2010, the authorities suspended operation of the privately owned service provider on which 80% of mobile phone users depended for internet access. "There is a serious risk that the authorities could use state-owned service providers to monitor [communications]," said AI. "In a country where the right to freedom of expression has been under constant attack, the suspension of a service that allowed some contact with the outside world seems ominous."

• **Tajikistan** - Amnesty International has many concerns about the human rights situation in Tajikistan. Torture and other ill-treatment by law enforcement officers are widespread and carried out with impunity. There are frequent violations of the right to a fair trial and conditions in many of the country's prisons are inhumane. Freedom of speech is restricted; Tajikistani and international human rights groups report that independent newspapers and broadcasters face criminal and civil lawsuits for criticizing the government. For writing an article critical of the authorities, independent journalist Makhmadyusuf Ismoilov, who writes for the weekly newspaper *Nuri Zindagi* (Ray of Starlight), based in the capital, Dushanbe, was arrested on 23 November 2010 in the remote Soghd region of the country, where he had been working to promote circulation of the newspaper. According to his lawyer, he was been charged with "criminal defamation" and "insult through media". Journalist Urunboy Usmonov, who works for the BBC, was released on bail on 14 July 2011, a month after his arrest. He is alleged to have been tortured or ill-treated while in detention. Now at home with his family, he is not allowed to leave the country. Amnesty International maintains that he has been targeted for his legitimate work as a journalist, peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression.

• **Kyrgyzstan** - Following violence in the south of the country that began in June 2010, members of the ethnic Uzbek community have been targeted disproportionately by the Kyrgyzstani security services. Credible reports suggest that human rights defenders, journalists and members of the civil society



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**\* SEE CASESHEET**

have been and are being harassed, detained and ill-treated, leading to forced confessions.

• **Azerbaijan** - In Azerbaijan, threats, harassment, and acts of violence against journalists and civil society activists are carried out with near total impunity. Criminal and civil defamation laws are used to silence criticism, resulting in prison sentences and heavy fines. Journalists and civil society activists are frequently subjected to violence and prevented from carrying out their work, sometimes through excessive use of force by police officers. "As the environment inside Azerbaijan becomes ever more hostile towards all dissenting opinion, new cases of harassment of Azerbaijani journalists and activists have sent chilling messages to those seeking to exercise their right to freedom of expression," said John Dalhuisen, Deputy Director for Amnesty International's Europe and Central Asia Programme, on 31 March 2011.

On 26 March, Seymur Haziyevev, a columnist with opposition newspaper *Azadlig*, was abducted on his way home from work and beaten by six masked assailants. On 18 March a contributor to *Azadlig*, journalist Fakhraddin Hajibeyli, was assaulted in Berlin and admitted to hospital with severe injuries.

After blogger and prisoner of conscience Emin Milli was released (November 2010) and could no longer be hired as a translator, he reportedly said of the government, "I think this is the way they function. ... They punish some people and let everyone else watch. To say, 'This is what can happen to you'..." ("A Dissident Is Free From Jail, but His Punishment Is Not Over", *New York Times*, 24 June 2011, a week after Emin Milli left Azerbaijan for England).