

URGENT ACTION

NEWSLETTER



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“We are beyond happy. We have waited for this moment for five and a half years and want to thank everyone who worked towards this joyful day.”

— Akida Rouzi, daughter of Rebiya Kadeer, on her mother's release.

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Photo: Former prisoner of conscience Rebiya Kadeer and her daughter Akida, greeting well-wishers upon Rebiya's arrival in the U.S. © Chris McGraw

Releases!

EGYPT: Omar Yahya Youssef.

Egyptian national Omar Yahya Youssef was released from detention in Egypt on June 23. He was detained and interrogated. He has now joined his family in Alexandria.
(UA 170/05 issued Jun. 20, 2005)

EQUATORIAL GUINEA: About 70 inmates at Black Beach prison.

Amnesty International confirmed on June 7 that the food situation at Black Beach Prison has improved since this UA was issued; but there is no information on whether the prisoners have received any medical treatment. Authorities responded to this UA and press release by telling journalists and saying on national radio that AI's version of events was all lies, that they knew of their obligations and provided food for the prisoners. President Obiang Nguema pardoned six Armenian nationals "for humanitarian reasons", on the occasion of his birthday on June 5. They are expected to fly out of Equatorial Guinea on June 9.
(UA 84/05 issued Apr. 12, 2005)

NEPAL: Keshav Thapa.

On June 20, Keshav Thapa, a farmer and security guard, was released from the Surya Binayak army barracks in Bhaktapur district, where he had been tortured and held in illegal detention for one week. The Royal Nepalese Army (RNA) has said it is investigating the

incident. Family members have requested no further intervention in his case, fearing that there could be reprisals.

(UA 168/05 issued Jun. 17, 2005)

NEPAL: Govinda Ghimire and Achyut Kumar KC.

Govinda Ghimire, a 23 year old student, was released on June 22, on the orders of the Supreme Court, but re-arrested immediately by security forces personnel in plain clothes. His whereabouts are now unknown and he may be at risk of torture. Achyut Kumar KC, a 38 year old farmer who was arrested on November 17, 2003, has been released according to a government report. This action has been reissued to a portion of the UA Network for continued action on behalf of Govinda Ghimire.

(UA 122/04 issued Mar. 23, 2004 & reissued Dec. 23, 2004 & Jun. 24, 2005)

PAKISTAN: Members of the Baloch Students Organization: Nawaz Ali, Akhter Nadeem, Imdad Baloch, Yusuf Baloch, Ghulam Rasool Allah Nazar, Naseem Baloch.

Imdad Baloch, Yusuf Baloch, Ghulam Rasool and Naseem Baloch were reportedly released on May 24. They had been detained incommunicado for two months, along with Nawaz Ali and Akhter Nadeem, and were reportedly tortured. Nawaz Ali and Akhter Nadeem are still detained at an unknown location and remain at risk of torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. This

Urgent Action has been reissued to a portion of the UA Network for continued action.

(UA 111/05 issued May 5, 2005 & reissued Jun. 8, 2005)

SOMALILAND: Up to 100 demonstrators from the Gaboye minority group and Khadar Osman Dhabar (killed).

Up to 100 detained demonstrators from the Gaboye minority group who had reportedly protested peacefully at the shooting of Khadar Osman Dhabar have been released. They were held incommunicado for a short period and then freed without charge. The police officer who killed Khadar Osman Dhabar on May 13 is being investigated in police custody and Amnesty International will monitor the progress of the case.

(UA 127/05 issued 31 May 2005)

SUDAN: Mahmoud Gazira, of Nuba ethnicity, United Sudan National Party member; Hanan Mahmoud Gazira, daughter of Mahmoud Gazira; Abdel-Aal Mahmoud Gazira, son of Mahmoud Gazira; Adil Gazira, brother of Mahmoud Gazira; El-Amin Kuku (m), aged 13 (disabled); Anid Kau Lioi, daughter of Mayak Nich, community leader in Soba Aradi IDP (Internally Displaced Persons) Camp; Akuch Kau Lioi, daughter of Mayak Nich; and more

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The Joyful Release of Rebiya Kadeer

This story is excerpted from an article of "Urgent Action Network," an international newsletter for UA coordinators produced by the UA Team at AI's headquarters in London, UK.

Prisoner of conscience Rebiya Kadeer was finally released on March 17 on medical parole. She was flown immediately to the USA, where her husband and five of her 11 children reside. Since her release she has been vocal about her experiences in prison, and has vowed to continue campaigning for Uighurs' human rights.

Three days before she was released, Rebiya Kadeer says that eight or nine guards told her not to associate with Uighurs abroad or reveal sensitive information about the XUAR. "If you do so," she was told, "your business and children will be finished." Five of Rebiya Kadeer's 11 children live in the XUAR; one of them is now reportedly in hiding. At least four people associated with her have been arrested since her release, apparently for no reason beyond their involvement with her (see UA 122/05 issued May 13, 2005).

Rebiya Kadeer founded and directed a large trading company in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (XUAR), in northwest-

ern China, championed the rights of the Uighur ethnic group, and became one of China's most prominent advocates of women's rights. In August 1999, police arrested her as she went into a hotel to discuss human rights with US Congressional staff members who were visiting China. She spent the next five and a half years in jail, in a region where prison conditions are notoriously harsh: prisoners in the XUAR receive poor food, inadequate sanitation and little medical treatment.

The Chinese government charged Kadeer with "providing secret information to foreigners," on the basis of carrying local newspapers to the meeting, and sending other newspapers to her husband in the US. All these newspapers were publicly available. She was tried in secret and sentenced in March 2000 to eight years' imprisonment. In early 2004, her sentence was reduced by one year.

A successful and charismatic businessperson, Kadeer had used her resources to provide her fellow Uighurs, the region's predominantly

Muslim majority ethnic group, with training and employment. The Chinese government had recognized her contributions by appointing her to its prestigious national advisory group, the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. The government also appointed her to its delegation participating in the 1995 United Nations World Conference on Women. She was a standing member of the XUAR Chamber of Commerce, and in 1997 she founded the Thousand Mothers Movement to promote women's rights and economic security.

During Kadeer's five and a half years in jail, AI issued an Urgent Action, two follow up actions, and a WARN (Worldwide Accelerated Response Network) action due to concerns of ill treatment. AIUSA also featured Rebiya Kadeer as a Special Focus Case (SFC) for nearly four years, as well as a Children's Edition SFC, where young students in grades four to nine were asked to write to Chinese officials urging her release. Thank you to all who wrote appeals. 🌍

Releases, continued

than 200 detainees from Soba Aradi IDP camp.

Mahmoud Gazira and Hanan Mahmoud Gazira have now been released.

(UA 136/05 issued May 24, 2005 & reissued Jun. 16 & 24, 2005)

SYRIA: 'Ali al-'Abdullah (m), journalist and member of Jamal al-Atassi Forum, member of the Committees for the Revival of Civil Society and the Human Rights Association of Syria (HRAS); Dr Suhayr Jamal al-Atassi (f), Chair of Board of Directors of Jamal al-Atassi Forum; Directors of Jamal al-Atassi Forum: Hussein al-'Awadat (m); Nahed Badawiyah (f); Dr Hazem al-Nahar (m); Jihad Massouti (m); Muhammad Mahfoudh (m); 'Abdel Nasr Kalhous (m); and Yusef al-Jihmani (m).

The eight directors, named above, of the unauthorized Jamal al-Atassi Forum (a political discussion group) were released without charge on May 31, after one week in detention. They were not ill-treated, according to newspapers quoting Hussein al-'Awadat and Suhayr Jamal al-Atassi.

(UA 139/05 issued May 25, 2005 & reissued Jun. 3, 2005)

Executions / Stays / Commutations

BARBADOS: Lennox Ricardo Boyce and Jeffrey Joseph.

AI has learned that Lennox Boyce and Jeffrey Joseph have had their death sentences commuted to life imprisonment by the Barbados Court of Appeal.

(UA 268/04 issued Sep. 20, 2004)

PAKISTAN: Mohammad Ameen.

Mohammad Ameen's family is negotiating with the family of the man he was convicted of murdering, with a view to arranging payment of compensation to secure his release. Under Pakistan's law of *Qisas Diyat* (retribution/compensation), anyone sentenced to death for murder may be pardoned if the victim's family agrees to accept payment in this way.

(UA 150/05 issued Jun. 2, 2005)

PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY: 30 to 50 prisoners on death row.

On June 22, President Mahmoud Abbas reportedly ordered a retrial for all those who had been sentenced to death by the notoriously unfair State Security Court. While Amnesty International welcomes this decision, there are still concerns that the prisoners could be executed even after retrials. There are also concerns that those who are currently on

death row but did not appear before the State Security Court remain at risk of execution. President Abbas's statement came 10 days after the execution of four Palestinians, one of whom had been sentenced by the State Security Court. These were the first executions since August 2002 and officials have indicated that more will follow.

(UA 160/05 issued Jun. 13, 2005 & reissued Jun. 24, 2005)

SAUDI ARABIA: Abbas Majood Akanni, Murtala Amao Oladele, Abbas Azeez Oladuni, Nurudeen Owoalade, Nurudeen Sani, Mohammed Abdulahi Yussuf, Wahid Elebyte, Ahmed Abbas Alabi, Suliamon Olyfemi, Mafiu Obadina, Samiu Hamud Zuberu, Kasim Afolabi Afolabi, and Abdullamim Shobayo.

Suliamon Olyfemi is believed to have been sentenced to death. At a sentencing hearing on May 16 the other men named above, who had been tried with him, say they were told that he was to suffer the death penalty.

It is usual in Saudi Arabia for condemned prisoners not to be told of their sentence until they are taken from their cells to be executed. The other twelve men were sentenced on May 16 to five years' imprisonment and 500 lashes. For reasons unclear, Abbas Majood Akanni was not taken to court to hear his sentence.

(UA 323/04 issued Nov. 26, 2004 & reissued Jun. 21, 2005)

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO: Lester Pitman, Peter Dial, Andrew Dottin, Mark Teeluck, Ramsingh Jairam.

Amnesty International has learned that Lester Pitman was granted a stay of execution by the High Court on June 10 pending further legal hearings. He is no longer in danger of imminent execution. However, a death warrant could be re-issued once his appeal has been heard. In an affidavit filed in support of his legal appeals, Lester Pitman told of the anxiety and suffering he felt when reading his death warrant: ***"I have been feeling really scared. I can't help but think of myself being taken to the gallows to be executed. I can't understand how I could be executed when I am still appealing my conviction and I have not even been heard by the Mercy Commission [for a clemency hearing]. When I realized that I was to be executed, my mind went blank and I felt numb. I did not hear when the Superintendent read the date on which I am scheduled to be hanged. Later on, I asked a prison officer who told me that I am scheduled to be hanged on Monday."***

It appears that the authorities are moving to issue four further death warrants. According to media reports, Peter Dial, Andrew Dottin, Mark Teeluck and Ramsingh Jairam had letters read to them on June 10 informing them that their cases were to go before the Mercy Committee for consideration of commutation of their death sentences. The examination of cases by the Mercy Committee is required before a death warrant can be issued. This Urgent Action has been reissued to a portion of the UA Network for continued action.

(UA 158/05 issued 9 Jun. 2005)

USA (OK): Garry Thomas Allen.

A county judge has stopped Garry Allen's execution in order that his mental competency for execution can be assessed. A recent evaluation has suggested that Garry Allen may be legally insane. A jury will now decide the question of his competency. It is likely that the proceedings will not occur for several months.

(UA 106/05 issued May 3, 2005)

Other News

ETHIOPIA: Student demonstrators at Addis Ababa University (AAU) and elsewhere, and many opposition party officials and supporters, including Andargachew Tsege (m), writer, former deputy Mayor of Addis Ababa; Gebrechristos Haileselassie (m); Azeb Amare (f); Endale Hailu (m); Haileyesus Ijiga; Bisrat Abbi;

Getachew Mogesse; Kemirte Kamma; Gizaw Gebremedhin; and Shemsu Sesekicho.

On June 18, the Federal Commissioner of Police announced that 690 detainees arrested between June 6 and 10 in post-election demonstrations against alleged election fraud have been released without charge. Thousands of others, including those named above, reportedly remain in incommunicado detention, at risk of torture or ill-treatment, and enforced "disappearance". This Urgent Action has been reissued to a portion of the UA Network for continued action.

(UA 154/05 issued Jun. 7, 2005 & reissued Jun. 23, 2005)

GUATEMALA: Armando Sanchez.

Lawyer Armando Sanchez has told Amnesty International that he has not received any further death threats following the UA issued on his behalf on January 7, 2005.

(UA 05/05 issued Jan. 7, 2005)

IRAN: Nasser Zarafshan.

Lawyer and human rights defender Nasser Zarafshan requires immediate medical attention for a chronic and worsening kidney condition. He resumed a hunger strike on June 7 protesting at being denied treatment. His health is believed to be deteriorating. He continues to be held in a cell with prisoners convicted of violent crimes. This Urgent Action has been reissued to a portion of the UA Network for continued action.

(UA 113/05 issued May 6, 2005 & reissued Jun. 15, 2005)

ITALY/LIBYA: Over 1,000 people.

The Italian authorities forcibly returned at least 45 people to Libya on June 22, where they may be at risk of serious human rights violations, including torture. They were not given an effective opportunity to apply for asylum and have their claims assessed in a fair and satisfactory asylum procedure. Many more foreign nationals have recently arrived on the island of Lampedusa and as of June 22, 866 people were reportedly detained in the temporary holding center for foreign nationals on the island.

(UA 69/05 issued Mar. 18, 2005 & reissued Jun. 27, 2005)

KYRGYZSTAN: 541 refugees from Andizhan, Uzbekistan (men, women and children)

Kyrgyzstan authorities are preparing to return a further 29 people to Uzbekistan in violation of international refugee law. They are at risk of other grave human rights violations, including torture or other ill-treatment, unfair trial and possible execution should they be returned. The 29 were amongst hundreds of people who fled the city of Andizhan in neighbouring Uzbekistan after government troops reportedly fired on thousands of mainly unarmed and peaceful demonstrators on May 13.

(UA 141/05 issued May 27, 2005 & reissued Jun. 6, 10, 17, & 23, 2005)

MEXICO: Environmentalists Felipe Arreaga; Celsa Valdovinos, wife of Felipe Arreaga; Albertano Peñalosa Domínguez; his sons Adalí Peñalosa, aged 15, and Isaac Peñalosa, aged 19.

Albertano Peñalosa Domínguez is one of the founders of *Organización Campesina Ecológica de la Sierra de Petatlán* (OCESP), Peasant Environmentalist Organization of the Sierra de Petatlán, along with prisoner of conscience, Felipe Arreaga. Gunmen attacked Albertano Peñalosa Domínguez and his family on May 19, resulting in the murder of his twenty-year old son Armando and nine-year old son Adatuel, while fifteen-year old Adalí and nineteen-year old Isaac were seriously wounded along with their father. AI continues to fear for the safety of Celsa Valdovinos, Felipe Arreaga's wife and leader of *Organización de Mujeres Ecológicas*, Women's Environmentalist Organization. This Urgent Action has been reissued to a portion of the UA Network for continued action.

(UA 50/05 issued Mar. 2, 2005 & reissued May 23, 2005)

MONGOLIA: Lodoisambuu Sanjaasuren, lawyer and human rights defender, aged 60

Amnesty International has received conflicting reports on the level of medical attention that Lodoisambuu Sanjaasuren is receiving in detention for his serious heart condition. The Mongolian government has claimed that he is receiving adequate medical treatment. However, this assertion is contradicted by Lodoisambuu Sanjaasuren's family, who say that he has been denied access to his doctor since March 3, and that he is in a "critical" condition. This Urgent Action has been reissued to a portion of the UA Network for continued action.

(UA 128/05 issued May 19, 2005 & reissued Jun. 23, 2005)

PAKISTAN: Diwan Hashmat Hayat, his wife Naheed Hashmat Hayat, their five children, and Naheed Hashmat Hayat's relatives.

Diwan Hashmat Hayat, who is detained in Jhelum District Central Jail, Punjab, is at renewed risk of attack by prison guards or other prisoners, after a recent newspaper article reignited public opinion about the charges of blasphemy that he faces. His wife, Naheed Hashmat Hayat, their five children and Naheed Hashmat Hayat's relatives have also been threatened because of their relationship to Diwan Hashmat Hayat. This Urgent Action has been reissued to a portion of the UA Network for continued action.

(UA 189/04 issued Jun. 3, 2004 & reissued Jun. 14, 2005)

PERU: Luis Alberto Ramírez Hinostroza and members of his family.

Amnesty International is seriously concerned for the safety of Luis Alberto Ramírez Hinostroza and his family, following a third attempt on his life. He is a key witness in the judicial process against Luis Pérez Documet, a retired general who has been charged with the 1991 "disappearance" of nine people in the city of Huancayo. This Urgent Action has been reissued to a portion of the UA Network for continued action.

(UA 259/04 issued 3 September 2004 & reissued Jun. 3, 2005)

SYRIA: Sheikh Muhammad Ma'shuq al-Khiznawi, aged 48, Kurdish imam and Islamic scholar.

Sheikh Muhammad Ma'shuq al-Khiznawi, a Kurdish imam and Islamic scholar well-known for his criticism of violence and terrorism, reportedly died on May 30 from injuries sustained during torture. He was allegedly tortured while detained at an unknown location by Military Intelligence personnel, and was admitted to the Tishrin Military Hospital in the capital Damascus on May 27, where he later died. Amnesty International has no further information at present on the circumstances of his death.

(UA 131/05 issued May 19, 2005 & reissued Jun. 1, 2005)



Sheikh Muhammad Ma'shuq al-Khiznawi, Kurdish imam and Islamic scholar, reportedly died on May 30 from injuries sustained during torture.

SYRIA: Muhammad Ra'dun, lawyer and Head of the Arab Organization for Human Rights - Syria (AOHR-S), and Nizar Ristnawi, founding member of the AOHR-S.

Muhammad Ra'dun was charged on May 30 by the Supreme State Security Court (SSSC) with "disseminating false information" and with "involvement in an illegal organization of an international nature." If convicted, he faces more than three years in prison. There has been no news of Nizar Ristnawi since his arrest on April 18, and Amnesty International believes he is in grave danger. This Urgent Action has been reissued to a portion of the UA Network for continued action.

(UA 140/05 issued May 25, 2005 & reissued Jun. 3, 2005)

TURKEY: Abdulkadir Bartan, alleged member of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).

Official statements from the security forces suggest that Abdulkadir Bartan, an alleged member of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK—now renamed as Kongra-Gel), may have been killed following his capture by the army in Sirnak province, southeast Turkey on April 14 or 15. This Urgent Action has been reissued to a portion of the UA Network for continued action.

(UA 95/05 issued Apr. 20, 2005 & reissued May 25, 2005)

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES (UAE): Salem Abdul Rahman Nawab al-Baloushi.

Salem al-Baloushi was detained in Saudi Arabia without charge or trial from February 2003 until he was handed over to the UAE authorities possibly in April 2005. The reason for his arrest is not known, but it may have been connected to the fact that he had traveled to Afghanistan in the 1980s.

On June 11, Salem al-Baloushi was allowed to make a telephone call to his family. The

conversation lasted for about 15 minutes during which he asked about his family's well-being. His family thought he sounded as if he was in good health, though he is still being held without charge and without access to lawyers at an unknown location.

(UA 57/05 issued Mar. 11, 2005 & reissued Jun. 7 & 16, 2005)

USA: Ahmed Abu 'Ali, aged 23, US national.

Further evidence has emerged which suggests that Ahmed Abu 'Ali was tortured and ill-treated while detained in Saudi Arabia, with the knowledge of US authorities. The incommunicado detention in which he is currently held in the USA may amount to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. This Urgent Action has been reissued to a portion of the UA Network for continued action.

(UA 340/04 issued Dec. 22, 2004 & reissued Feb. 4 & 23, 2005 & May 27, 2005)

VENEZUELA: Oscar Barrios, Carolina García, Elvira Barrios, Oneida Barrios, Eloisa Barrios, Inés Barrios, Pablo Sólorzano, Beatriz Barrios, Juan Barrios, Jorge Barrios, aged 15, and Justina Barrios.

On June 18, an attempt was made on the life of Oscar Barrios as he left the house of the widow of Luis Barrios who was allegedly killed by the police in September 2004. This is the most recent in a series of attacks, threats and acts of intimidations against the Barrios family since they filed a complaint about the police killing of Narciso Barrios in 2003. Members of the family have been detained by police several times and Amnesty International believes that they are in grave danger. This Urgent Action has been reissued to a portion of the UA Network for continued action.

(UA 226/04 issued on Jul. 16, 2004 & reissued Oct. 29, 2004, Jan. 25, 2005 & Jun. 21, 2005)

AIKids: Making Cards and Making a Difference

Each summer, **AIKids' Summer Postcard Action** enables youngsters nine to fourteen years old to hand-make and send postcards for human rights defenders and **prisoners of conscience** (POC) described in this shortened and simplified version of the adult Summer Postcard Action distributed throughout AIUSA by mail and web (amnestyusa.org/action/summer/).

This isn't "just" an arts and craft activity, it's part of AIUSA's commitment to human rights education. It empowers students and builds their compassion; it raises the spirits of the recipients, and sometimes acquaints campers, scouts, and Sunday schoolers with the awesome mission and work of Amnesty International. Order your copies of the AIKids' Summer Postcard Action in quantity from the UA Office or visit the AIKids' website and print out the PDF versions of the AIKids' Summer Postcard Actions in English, Spanish, or both!

Please let us know what you think of this activity and how it can be improved for continuing use with your students!

