

Global Write-a-thon 2008: Case Sheet

Group 78, Cambodia



The Phnom Penh city authorities have been threatening since June 2006 to forcibly evict nearly 150 families living on land known as Group 78. Most are poor street vendors; some are teachers or low-level civil servants. Once evicted, the authorities intend to resettle them in Andong, a site that has no water supply or sewage systems, where thousands of people evicted from elsewhere in Phnom Penh are living in squalor.



A Group 78 resident holds up a drawing showing the size of the land to which she has strong claims.

The families have applied for formal title to their land several times. They have official documentation proving that they have lived on the site for long enough to claim title, but the authorities have rejected all their applications.

The Chamkar Morn District Office has issued five eviction notices to the community of Group 78, none of them based on a court order. The local authorities have given the community different, often contradictory, reasons for the eviction. At times the community has been told that the land is state property which cannot be sold and at other times that the land is private property.

Group 78 residents have submitted appeals and petitions to state and local authorities, and the foreign governments providing financial support to Cambodia. The community has even engaged architecture students to produce plans to develop the site while they are still resident in order to show that eviction is not essential for development.

Thousands of people from elsewhere in Phnom Penh have already been forced off their land and resettled in Andong, where they live without sanitation, drinkable water or electricity. The distance from the city also makes it very difficult for the community to make a living: the price for transportation between Andong and the city far exceeds the expected daily earnings of most street vendors and junior civil servants.

Take Action!

Ask the Deputy Prime Minister to:

- Consult with the people of Group 78 about all development options, including plans that do not force them to be evicted;
- Ensure that those evicted are given fair compensation and/or adequate alternative accommodation;
- End all forced evictions as a matter of urgency, and ensure that any evictions that prove necessary are conducted only in full compliance with international human rights law and standards.

Write to:

His Excellency Sar Kheng
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior
Ministry of Interior
No. 75 Norodom Blvd
Khan Chamkamon
Phnom Penh
KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA

Fax: 011 250 586 647

Airmail postage: 94 cents

Salutation: "Dear Minister"

Universal Declaration of Human Rights - Article 25:

Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of him/herself and of his/her family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

Global Write-a-thon 2008: Case Sheet

Shi Tao, China



In April 2004, Chinese journalist Shi Tao used his Yahoo! email account to send a message to a U.S.-based pro-democracy website. In his email, he summarized a government order directing media organizations in China to downplay the upcoming 15th anniversary of the 1989 crackdown on pro-democracy activists in Tiananmen Square. Police arrested him in November 2004, charging him with “illegally providing state secrets to foreign entities.” Authorities used email account information supplied by Yahoo! to convict Shi Tao in April 2005 and sentence him to 10 years in prison.



China’s vaguely-worded legal definition of what constitutes a “state secret” gives authorities broad discretion to detain people who peacefully exercise their right to free expression. China has constructed an extensive system of Internet censorship to silence activists and journalists like Shi Tao. All Internet communications pass through government-controlled routers, and authorities are able to block access to many sites, to filter content, and to delete links or web pages considered “dangerous” or “subversive.”

Shi Tao (pronounced “*shur taow*”), a published poet and essayist, is currently held at Deshan Prison in Changde city, Hunan Province. Shi Tao was first held in Chishan Prison, where he was reportedly forced to labor under harsh conditions. His family has been harassed by the authorities. His wife underwent daily questioning by security officials and she eventually divorced Shi Tao after experiencing persistent pressure from her work unit. Shi Tao’s uncle and brother have been under surveillance and harassed both at work and at home. His mother has also reportedly been monitored and harassed.

Amnesty International considers Shi Tao to be a prisoner of conscience, imprisoned for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression, a right protected in international law and the Chinese constitution.

Take Action!

Ask the President to:

- Bring about the immediate and unconditional release of Shi Tao, and all those imprisoned solely for the legitimate exercise of their right to freedom of expression;
- Amend or repeal vaguely-worded laws or regulations that can be used to persecute individuals who exercise their human rights.

Write to:

President Hu Jintao
President of the People’s Republic of China
The State Council General Office
2 Fuyoujie
Xichengqu
Beijingshi 100017
PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Airmail postage: 94 cents

Salutation: “Your Excellency”

Universal Declaration of Human Rights - Article 19:

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Global Write-a-thon 2008: Case Sheet

Justine Masika Bihamba, DRC



Justine Masika Bihamba is a human rights worker in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). As a result of her work as the coordinator of a women's human rights organization, Synergy of Women Against Sexual Violence (SFVS), she and her family have been targeted by the DRC military. SFVS counselors have regularly been threatened and attacked because of their work.



On September 18, 2007, six army soldiers forced their way into Justine's house while she was away. They tied up her six children at gunpoint, and demanded to know where their mother was. Justine's 21-year-old daughter pleaded with the soldiers to take what they wanted but not to hurt anyone. One of the soldiers replied that they had not come to steal anything, but rather were on a "well-defined mission" ("*une mission bien déterminée*"). The group searched the house. One soldier kicked Justine's 24-year-old daughter in the face, breaking her tooth. He then tried to rape Justine's 21-year-old daughter and sexually assaulted her with a knife.

Justine returned home during the attack and immediately telephoned the authorities. In a search of the neighborhood with the military police, Justine and her children identified the soldiers involved in their attack as those guarding an army officer. The military police refused to arrest the men and claimed that there was no evidence against them.

On September 27, 2007, Justine lodged a legal complaint against the soldiers. In the following weeks and months, senior military and civilian authorities promised Justine that justice would be done. One year on from the attack, however, the men have still not been arrested or brought to trial.

Justine regularly sees the same men in the streets that attacked her children in their home. They continue to threaten her. Justine's five-year-old son now fears he will be killed whenever he sees a soldier. Her two daughters have fled abroad.

Take Action!

Ask the President to:

- Ensure there is an immediate, full and impartial investigation into the attack on Justine Masika Bihamba's family that results in the perpetrators being brought promptly to justice;
- Immediately protect human rights defender Justine Masika Bihamba and her family.

Write to:

President Joseph Kabila
Cabinet du Président
Palais de la Nation
Kinshasa/Gombe
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Email: cabinet_president@yahoo.fr

Airmail postage: 94 cents

Salutation: "Your Excellency"

Universal Declaration of Human Rights - Article 12:

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his/her privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his/her honor and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

Patriarch “Abune” Antonios, Eritrea



“Abune” Antonios is Patriarch of the Eritrean Orthodox Church. He has been under house arrest since January 2006. Amnesty International considers Abune Antonios to be a prisoner of conscience, and there are grave concerns for his health as he is 80 years old, has diabetes and is not receiving medication.



Patriarch Antonios has continually resisted government interference in religious affairs. In 2004 he protested the secret imprisonment of three Orthodox priests. In January 2005, the church authorities removed his executive powers. He is allowed to officiate at church services but has no administrative role in church affairs. On January 13, 2006, he was formally removed from office and placed under house arrest. On January 20, 2007, two priests accompanied by three government security agents entered his home and confiscated his personal pontifical insignia, a symbolic token of his position as bishop.

On May 27, 2007, the government appointed a new Patriarch, and at 5 am the following day, Abune Antonios was forcibly removed from his residence. Amnesty International has since learned that he is still under house arrest at an undisclosed location in the capital Asmara.

Minority faith groups such as the Jehovah’s Witnesses and over 35 evangelical Christian churches are banned in Eritrea. An estimated 2,000 members of minority evangelical churches which have been outlawed since 2002 are in detention in harsh conditions. Amnesty International has received reports that some detainees have been repeatedly beaten up and tied in painful positions in order to force them to renounce their faith.

Take Action!

Ask the President to:

- Release Patriarch Antonios immediately and unconditionally, as he is detained solely for the peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression and freedom of religion, both of which are guaranteed in the Eritrean Constitution;
- Immediately allow Patriarch Antonios the medical attention he requires for his diabetes;
- Ensure that Patriarch Antonios is given immediate access to his family, colleagues and to a lawyer.

Write to:

President Issayas Afewerki
Office of the President
PO Box 257
Asmara
ERITREA

Airmail postage: 94 cents

Salutation: “Your Excellency”

Universal Declaration of Human Rights - Article 18:

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

Filep Karma and Yusak Pakage, Indonesia



For peacefully raising a flag, Filep Karma and Yusak Pakage may spend the next decade or more in prison. On December 1, 2004, some 200 people participated in a nonviolent ceremony outside Abepura in Papua, Indonesia, during which the Morning Star flag, a symbol of Papuan independence, was raised.



Filep Karma

Indonesian police advanced on the crowd, firing shots and beating people with batons. Police arrested Filep Karma at the site of the ceremony, and reportedly beat and stomped on him during transport to the police station. A group of about 20 people were later arrested at the police station when they went to protest Mr. Karma's arrest, but all were subsequently released, except for Yusak Pakage. Mr. Karma and Mr. Pakage were later charged with rebellion for allegedly leading the flag-raising event. In May 2005, a court sentenced Filep Karma to 15 years in prison and Yusak Pakage to 10 years on charges of treason for having "betrayed" Indonesia by flying the outlawed Papua flag.

Many in Papua would like to separate from Indonesia and form their own nation. Supporters of independence for Papua have been among those jailed as prisoners of conscience in Indonesia. Simply attending a meeting at which the political status of Papua has been discussed can lead to one's arrest.



Yusak Pakage

Amnesty International takes no position on the political status of any province of Indonesia, but believes the right to freedom of expression includes the right to peacefully advocate independence or other political solutions and that these rights must be upheld.

Amnesty International considers Filep Karma and Yusak Pakage to be prisoners of conscience who have been detained purely for the peaceful and legitimate exercise of their right to freedom of expression. It calls on the government to free them and all other prisoners of conscience in Indonesia.

Take Action!

Ask the President to:

- Bring about the immediate and unconditional release of Filep Karma and Yusak Pakage;
- Ensure that laws concerning "rebellion" (Articles 106 and 110 of the Indonesian Criminal Code - KUHP) are not used against people who have engaged only in peaceful activities. State that Amnesty International believes that the right to freedom of expression includes the right to peacefully advocate referenda, independence or other political solutions. These rights must be upheld.

Write to:

President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono
President of Indonesia
Istana Merdeka
Jakarta 10110
INDONESIA

Fax: 011 62 21 345 2685

Airmail postage: 94 cents

Salutation: "Dear President"

Universal Declaration of Human Rights - Article 2:

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

The Campaign for Equality, Iran



The Campaign for Equality, an Iranian women's rights initiative launched in 2006, is committed to ending discrimination against women in Iranian law. Several activists have been arrested or tried for activities which are entirely legal, such as organizing peaceful gatherings and educational workshops, and petitioning for legislative change.



Ronak Safarzadeh

The authorities have blocked access to the Campaign's main website from inside Iran at least 12 times. Frequently denied official permission to hold public meetings, activists usually hold their workshops in the homes of sympathizers, some of whom have then been summoned by security officials for interrogation.

Campaign for Equality activists have also been prevented from traveling abroad. In March 2008, Parvin Ardalan's passport was confiscated for 72 hours. She was banned from traveling to collect the Olof Palme Human Rights Prize for her work on behalf of women in Iran.

Dozens of women's rights defenders are known to have been arrested, summoned for trial or tried since 2006. Most of them have been charged with vaguely worded security offenses. Such charges are used by the authorities to limit the activists' internationally recognized rights to freedom of expression and association as they seek to protect and promote women's rights in Iran. Two members of the Campaign for Equality – Ronak Safarzadeh and Hana Abdi – are currently detained as prisoners of conscience, solely because of their work for women's rights and the rights of Iran's Kurdish minority.

Women in Iran face widespread discrimination under the law. They are excluded from key areas of the state: they cannot, for example, be judges or stand for the presidency. Criminal harm suffered by a woman is less severely punished than the same harm suffered by a man. Evidence given by women in court is worth half that given by a man. Men are allowed to practice polygamy, and have an incontestable right in law to divorce their spouse; women do not.

Take Action!

Ask His Excellency to:

- Drop all charges against Campaign for Equality activists that are connected to their peaceful campaigning for equal rights for women in Iran;
- End the arrests and harassment of supporters of the Campaign for Equality;
- Review Iranian legislation with a view to ending all legalized discrimination against women.

Write to:

Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi
Head of the Judiciary
Howzeh Riyasat-e Qoveh Qazaiyeh/Office of the
Head of the Judiciary
Pasteur Street, Vali Asr Avenue
South of Serah-e Jomhuri
Tehran 1316814737
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

Email: info@dadgostary-tehran.ir (In the subject line write: FAO Ayatollah Shahroudi)

Airmail Postage: 94 cents

Salutation: "Your Excellency"

Universal Declaration of Human Rights - Article 7:

All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

Nathum Mohammad Isma'il al-'Ani, Iraq



Nathum Mohammad Isma'il al-'Ani was one of 18 people arrested by Iraqi security forces in Baghdad on December 21, 2005. There has been no news of Nathum Mohammad Isma'il al-'Ani since January 2006.



Iraqi security forces arrested, blindfolded and handcuffed the 18 men before taking them to an unknown location where they were interrogated. The men are said to have been tortured during interrogation. The reasons for the arrests are not known, but all those arrested are believed to be Sunni Muslims. They are believed to be the victims of enforced disappearance, and Amnesty International fears for their lives. Only two of them have been seen since January 2006.

After around two days, Nathum Mohammad Isma'il al-'Ani, his brother-in-law, Ahmad 'Abbas Khurshid al-Salihi, and one other man were separated from the rest of the group and detained in a small room for 15 days. They were reportedly kicked, beaten with metal bars, suffocated with pillows, denied toilet facilities and food, and given only very little water.

On January 4, 2006, Ahmad 'Abbas Khurshid al-Salihi, an Irish resident, was released without charge. On his release, he had a fractured nose and shoulder which he had sustained in detention, and he had suffered psychological trauma.

In late January 2006, the body of one of the arrested men, Firas Naji 'Abid Mikhlaf, was found in the al-Rostumiya district of Baghdad. According to autopsy reports, his body bore marks of torture, and he had been strangled.

There has been no further news of the whereabouts of Nathum Mohammad Isma'il al-'Ani and the other 15 men. His family has contacted the Iraqi authorities, the US-led Multi-National Force in Iraq, UK and US diplomatic representatives in Iraq, and the International Committee of the Red Cross in their search for him.

Take Action!

Ask the Prime Minister to:

- Bring about an immediate and impartial investigation into the allegations that Nathum Mohammad Isma'il al-'Ani, Ahmad 'Abbas Naji Khurshid al-Salihi, and other detainees were tortured in detention. Note that an autopsy of one of those detained with them bore marks of torture and strangulation;
- Request an independent investigation of the enforced disappearance of the men, and call for anyone found responsible to be brought to justice.

Write to:

Nuri Kamil al-Maliki
Prime Minister
Convention Center (Qasr al-Ma'ariadh)
Baghdad
REPUBLIC OF IRAQ

Email: info@iraqigovernment.org

Airmail postage: 94 cents

Salutation: "Your Excellency"

Universal Declaration of Human Rights - Article 6:

Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

Global Write-a-thon 2008: Case Sheet

Hakamada Iwao, Japan



Hakamada Iwao is suffering from mental illness after spending over 28 years in solitary confinement. He lives with the constant fear of execution.



Hakamada Iwao has been on death row since 1968. After an unfair trial, he was convicted of the 1966 murder of the boss of the factory where he worked and the murder of the man's wife and two children. The family had been stabbed and their house set on fire.

Hakamada Iwao confessed after police interrogated him for 20 without a lawyer present. Under the *daiyo kangoku* (substitute prison) system, suspects can be detained for up to 23 days of questioning. There is no limit on the length of interrogation sessions, during which the detainees' lawyers have only restricted access to them. Hakamada Iwao retracted his confession and testified during his trial that police had beaten and threatened him to force him to sign a confession, but he was found guilty and sentenced to death. He has appealed twice without success, and his petitions for a retrial were rejected three times, most recently in March 2008. His lawyers submitted a further appeal the following month.

Kumamoto Norimichi, one of the trial judges, stated publicly in 2007 that he had always believed Mr. Iwao was innocent, but that the two other judges at the trial had outvoted him. Hakamada Iwao appears to have been sentenced to death principally on the basis of a confession extracted under duress. According to his lawyer, the only evidence used against him was flawed.

Death row inmates are banned from talking to other prisoners, and they are not allowed to watch television or engage in personal interests or hobbies. They are only notified of their execution on the day it will be carried out, and their families are typically informed only after the execution has taken place. Hakamada Iwao is at constant risk of being executed at any time, unless he is pardoned by the Minister of Justice, or granted a retrial.

Take Action!

Ask the Minister of Justice to:

- Retry Hakamada Iwao in a trial that meets international standards of fairness;
- Abolish the *daiyo kangoku* or substitute prison system;
- Call for a moratorium on executions, and commute the sentences of all those now on death row.

Write to:

Mori Eisuke
Minister of Justice
1-1-1 Kasumigaseki
Chiyoda-ku
Tokyo 100-8977
JAPAN

Airmail Postage: 94 cents

Salutation: "Dear Minister"

Universal Declaration of Human Rights - Article 10:

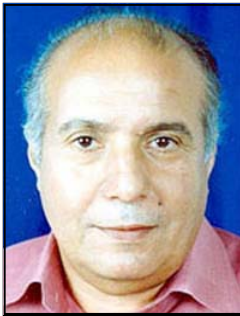
Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his/her rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him/her.

Global Write-a-thon 2008: Case Sheet

Fathi el-Jahmi, Libya



Because he advocated peaceful political change, Fathi el-Jahmi has spent most of the last six years in detention. He was arrested in 2002 after calling for free speech and political reforms during a conference in Tripoli. Authorities released him in March 2004, but arrested him again weeks later after he repeated his call for democracy during a media interview. He was detained incommunicado without access to family, lawyers or doctors.



Fathi el-Jahmi remained in detention at an undisclosed location, reportedly a special facility of the Internal Security Agency on the outskirts of Tripoli. He had only sporadic access to his family until July 2007, when authorities moved him to the Tripoli Medical Center.

Libyan authorities have stated that el-Jahmi was being tried on vaguely worded charges of “exchanging information with employees of a foreign state causing harm to the interests of the country” and “scheming with a foreign state in peacetime.”

Fathi el-Jahmi, a businessman and former provincial governor, suffers from diabetes, high blood pressure and coronary artery disease. There are serious concerns about whether he is receiving adequate medical care to treat his deteriorating state of health. Independent physicians determined that el-Jahmi is at risk of a heart attack and is in need of specialist care.

Amnesty International considers Fathi el-Jahmi to be a prisoner of conscience, who has been detained solely for the peaceful expression of his political views.

Take Action!

Ask His Excellency to:

- Immediately and unconditionally release Fathi el-Jahmi, who is in custody solely for the peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression;
- Allow Fathi el-Jahmi to seek medical treatment of his choice in Libya or elsewhere, and to grant him a passport to ensure that he suffers no restrictions if he wishes to seek medical treatment abroad;
- Ensure that el-Jahmi’s family has unimpeded access to him.

Write to:

Colonel Mu‘ammar al-Gaddafi
Leader of the Revolution
Office of the Leader of the Revolution
Tripoli
Great Socialist People’s Libyan Arab Jamahiriya
LIBYA

Airmail Postage: 94 cents

Salutation: “Your Excellency”

Universal Declaration of Human Rights - Article 19:

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Global Write-a-thon 2008: Case Sheet

The Women of Atenco, Mexico



When the women left their homes that May morning in 2006, they never imagined the horrific experience that lay ahead of them. During a police operation in response to protests by activists from a local peasant organization in San Salvador Atenco, Mexico, over 45 women were arrested without explanation.



Dozens of them were subjected to physical, psychological and sexual violence by the police officers who arrested them. More than two years later, they are still waiting for justice. None of the officials responsible for their abuse have been adequately held accountable.

Bárbara Italia Méndez is one of at least 26 women who reported being physically and sexually abused by Mexican police that day in May, 2006. At the time, she was a 27-year-old student and volunteer working for street children, and she had gone to the protest to show support for the community after violence between the police and protestors resulted in the death of a child. Police officers broke into the house where she was seeking refuge and arrested her without explanation. The officers pulled her hair, beat her, and forced her into a state police vehicle with her shirt pulled over her head. She was made to lie on top of other detainees, and during the journey to the prison, police officers raped her repeatedly.

Once at the “Santiaguito” prison near Toluca in Mexico State, the prison doctors who gave Bárbara Italia a check-up failed to document all her physical injuries or to gather evidence of the sexual abuse she had suffered. She was held in prison for 12 days before being released on bail. Like many others, she is still facing criminal charges.

More than two years later, Ms. Méndez and the other survivors still wait for justice.

Take Action!

Ask the Special Prosecutor to:

- Ask the federal authorities for a full and impartial investigation of those involved in the rape, sexual violence, torture and ill-treatment of Bárbara Italia Méndez and the other female detainees;
- Call for all the perpetrators to be brought to justice, including the senior officials who failed to prevent these human rights violations or carry out timely investigations.

Write to:

Special Prosecutor on Violence Against Women
Dra. Guadalupe Morfín Otero
FEVIMTRA
Procuraduría General de la República
Rio Elba, No. 17
Col. Cuauhtemoc, Del. Cuauhtemoc
México D.F, C.P. 06300
MÉXICO

Fax: 011 52 55 53460940
Email: atencionmujeres@pgr.gob.mx

Airmail Postage: 72 cents

Salutation: “Señora Fiscal Especial/
Dear Special Prosecutor”

Universal Declaration of Human Rights Article 3:
Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

Global Write-a-thon 2008: Case Sheet

Sergei Gurgurov, Moldova



Sergei Gurgurov has been left disabled by the reported torture and ill-treatment he received in police detention in late 2005. His speech is impaired due to head injuries, and his spinal injuries have left him unable to walk without a cane. His eardrums are damaged, and he has total loss of hearing in one ear. He is suffering from depression.



Sergei Gurgurov, clearly unable to walk, being helped up the steps to the courtroom in 2005.

Sergei Gurgurov was arrested in Chişinău, Moldova, on October 25, 2005, on suspicion of stealing a mobile phone. He said that police officers tortured him to force him to confess to further mobile phone thefts. He did not see a lawyer until November 3, when he was taken to court to appear before the investigation judge. He was unable to walk unaided into court and had to be dragged by two policemen. He was also unable to move his fingers and had difficulty talking. At the hearing, the judge ordered his release on bail, but police officers returned Sergei Gurgurov to detention with the excuse that some paperwork needed to be completed. He did not receive the specialist neurological care that he needed until after December 9, 2005, when he was released on bail.

In November 2005, his lawyer submitted a complaint about the ill-treatment to the Prosecutor General's Office, and an investigation was started, but very little action was taken. In August 2008, the Prosecutor General's Office stated that a criminal investigation would not be opened because authorities believed that Sergei Gurgurov had feigned the whole case and that he had not been tortured.

The charge against Sergei Gurgurov is still in force, and he is awaiting trial. The police officers who allegedly tortured him are still at work, and they have reportedly threatened the relatives with whom Sergei Gurgurov was staying, with the result that he has been asked to move.

Take Action!

Ask The Prosecutor General to:

- Bring about an immediate and impartial investigation into the allegations that Sergei Gurgurov was tortured and ill-treated in custody;
- Call for the suspected perpetrators to be suspended from duty while investigations are proceeding and for those found responsible to be brought to justice;
- Ensure that Sergei Gurgurov receives full reparation and compensation for any injuries sustained while in police detention.

Write to:

Valeriu Gurbulea
Prosecutor General of the Republic of Moldova
26, Mitropolit Banulesku-Bodoni Str.
MD-2005, Chişinău
MOLDOVA

Airmail postage: 94 cents

Salutation: "Dear Prosecutor General"

Universal Declaration of Human Rights - Article 5:

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Aung San Suu Kyi and Ma Khin Khin Leh, Myanmar (Burma)



The military rulers of Myanmar have jailed thousands of people in their continuing efforts to crush all dissenting views. Most prominent of those detained is Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the Nobel Peace Prize laureate who has been the beacon of hope and change for nearly two decades in Myanmar, the Southeast Asian nation formerly known as Burma.



Aung San Suu Kyi

Aung San Suu Kyi co-founded the National League for Democracy (NLD), a pro-democracy political party that sought to counter the military junta that had reigned over Myanmar since 1962. In 1990, the NLD won almost 80% of the parliamentary seats in a general election. Surprised at the landslide victory, the military junta refused to transfer power to Aung San Suu Kyi and the NLD, and jailed scores of political activists. Aung San Suu Kyi has spent 13 of the last 19 years under some form of detention.

Ma Khin Khin Leh, a school teacher and young mother in Myanmar, is another individual whose peaceful acts of courage have met with retribution from the Burmese government. She is serving a life sentence simply because she and her husband tried to organize a peaceful demonstration.



Ma Khin Khin Leh

Days before the demonstration was to take place, authorities moved to prevent it. Failing to find her husband, security agents arrested Ma Khin Khin Leh and the couple's three-year-old daughter. Although her daughter was released after spending five days in detention, Ma Khin Khin Leh, then age 33, was eventually transferred to Insein Prison. In December 1999, the Insein Special Court sentenced her to life imprisonment under vaguely-worded security legislation.

Authorities in Myanmar have justified the imprisonment of hundreds of students, politicians, doctors, lawyers, housewives, farmers and others on the basis that they were seeking to cause "unrest." Such arrests have been made possible by laws that allow an excessively wide interpretation of what constitutes a threat to security.

Amnesty International seeks the immediate and unconditional release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Ma Khin Khin Leh and all prisoners of conscience in Myanmar.

Take Action!

Ask the General to:

- Bring about the immediate and unconditional release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Ma Khin Khin Leh and all prisoners of conscience in Myanmar;
- Stop the violent repression of people for simply attempting to peacefully exercise their right to freedom of expression.

Write to:

Senior General Than Shwe
Chairman, State Peace and Development Council
c/o Embassy of the Union of Myanmar
2300 S Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20008

Airmail postage: 42 cents

Salutation: "Dear General"

Universal Declaration of Human Rights - Article 9:

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Mohammed Mohammed Hassan Odaini, USA



Mohammed Mohammed Hassan Odaini remains detained in Guantánamo despite being cleared for release over two years ago. Mr. Odaini was detained in March 2002, along with several other Yemeni nationals, and sent to the detention camp at the US Naval Base in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. In June 2005, US authorities declared him suitable for release from Guantánamo. Yemeni authorities have stated that they are prepared to take him back, yet he continues to be unjustly detained. He has not been interrogated for nearly two years and the reason for his continued detention is unclear. His lawyer, Mark Falkoff, has stated “For all [Odaini] knows, he could be there for the rest of his life.”



Mohammed Odaini was born in 1983 in Ta'iz, Yemen. He traveled to Pakistan in 2000 to study Islamic law at Salafi University in Faisalabad. In March 2002, Pakistani police raided a house in which he was having dinner with 14 other Yemeni nationals. All were handed over to US authorities and later transferred to the detention camp at the US Naval Base in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba.

Amnesty International is deeply concerned that Odaini and many other Yemeni nationals remain detained in Guantánamo without charge or trial, despite having been cleared for release. The United States detention facilities at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, have become emblematic of the gross human rights abuses perpetrated by the US Government in the name of fighting terrorism. At Guantánamo, the U.S. government sought to hold detainees in a place neither U.S. nor international law applied. But no one can be held outside of the law. All detainees held at Guantánamo must either be charged with crimes and given fair trials, or be released.

Take Action!

Ask the Rear Admiral to:

- Clarify why Odaini and the other Yemenis who have been cleared for release have not yet been returned to Yemen;
- Release Odaini and all those held in Guantánamo unless they are charged and tried in accordance with international standards of fairness.
- Push for the closure of the detention facility at Guantánamo Bay

Be sure to reference Odaini's prisoner number (ISN-681).

Write to:

The Honorable Robert M. Gates
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington DC 20301-1000

Fax: 1 703 697 8339

Postage: 42 cents

Salutation: “Dear Secretary of Defense”

Universal Declaration of Human Rights - Article 11:

(1) Everyone charged with a penal offense has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he/she has had all the guarantees necessary for his/her defense.

Women of Zimbabwe Arise, Zimbabwe



The activists of the human rights organization Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA) know the price of freedom. For organizing peaceful demonstrations to protest the worsening social, economic and human rights situation in Zimbabwe, WOZA members have been repeatedly harassed, intimidated, beaten and jailed by authorities.



With more than 35,000 members, WOZA is one of the most prominent civil society movements in Zimbabwe. As such, it has become a target of the Zimbabwean government, seeking to suppress dissident voices. In February 2005, 53 members of WOZA were arrested for a demonstration in which they marched with banners proclaiming "The Power of Love can conquer the Love of Power," and one month later, some 260 WOZA members, some carrying babies, were arrested for praying in public.

On May 28, 2008, WOZA leaders Jenni Williams and Magodonga Mahlangu and 12 other activists were detained for staging a peaceful march on the Zambian Embassy, with the intent of asking the Chair of the Southern African Development Community to help bring an end to state-sponsored violence in Zimbabwe. Those arrested were detained in deplorable prison conditions. Authorities released most of them soon after, but Jenni Williams and Magodonga Mahlangu continued to be held for nearly six weeks.

More recently, on October 16, Jenni and Magodonga were re-arrested after leading a protest to demand access to much needed food aid in Zimbabwe. The women were initially denied bail, remaining imprisoned for 21 days until an emergency appeal of the bail denial was granted. They continue to face pending charges.

Amnesty International is deeply concerned that Zimbabwean authorities are attempting to silence WOZA and other human rights defenders in order to prevent public criticism of the government and public scrutiny of its human rights record.

Take Action!

Ask the Minister of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs to:

- Drop all pending charges against WOZA activists;
- Put an end to the repeated arbitrary arrest, intimidation, harassment and ill-treatment of WOZA activists and other human rights defenders;
- Open investigations into all reports of harassment of human rights defenders;
- Ensure that WOZA members and all human rights defenders are able to exercise their rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly.

Write to:

Minister of Justice, Legal & Parliamentary Affairs
The Ministry of Justice, Legal & Parliamentary Affairs
Corner House
Leopold Takawira Street
Private Bag 7704
Causeway, Harare
ZIMBABWE

Airmail postage: 94 cents

Salutation: "Your Excellency"

Universal Declaration of Human Rights - Article 20:

Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.