

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL



**“Everyone has the right to freedom
of opinion and expression”**

-Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Banned Books Week 2018

Each year during *Banned Books Week* the American Library Association (ALA) calls attention to books that have been challenged in US Libraries. At the same time Amnesty International groups draw attention to people around the world who have been imprisoned, threatened, or murdered because of what they wrote or published or because of their work in the publishing or media industries. This year we look at a small sample of many hundreds of worldwide cases while we continue to acknowledge and take action on unresolved cases from past years.



Image from: www.adoheg.world.com/media/print/amnesty_international_graveyard

The development of this packet relied upon reports and actions from the following organizations.

Amnesty International, including various national sections

American Library Association

Committee to Protect Journalists

PEN International, English PEN, PEN America, and other PEN sections

Reporters without Borders

Southern Poverty Law Center

2018 Banned Books Week Cases

 <p>Image from Amnesty International</p>	<p>Merzoug Touati - Blogger - Sentenced to 10 Years - Algeria Urgent Action June - Urgent Action August</p> <p>Following more than 16 months in pre-trial detention, Algerian blogger Merzoug Touati was sentenced to a 10 year prison term for some peaceful online posts. The Court of Appeal in Bejaya reduced his sentence to 7 years on 21 June. He is a prisoner of conscience.</p>
 <p>Image from BBC.com</p>	<p>Shahidul Alam - Photographer - Faces 14 Years for Media Interview - Bangladesh Urgent Action - AI Australia Online Petition</p> <p>Shahidul Alam, photographer and social activist, has been charged under Section 57 of Bangladesh's Information and Communication Technology Act after giving an interview to <i>Al-Jazeera</i> on the current wave of school student protests in Bangladesh. Detained and charged solely for exercising his right to freedom of expression, Shahidul Alam is a prisoner of conscience and must be immediately and unconditionally released.</p> <p>Publications: My Journey as a Witness (photography book)</p>
 <p>Image from Amnesty International</p>	<p>Xulhaz Mannan - LGBT Magazine Publisher - Murdered - Bangladesh</p> <p>Xulhaz spoke out and defended the rights of LGBTI people. He founded <i>Roopban</i>, the first and only LGBTIQ magazine in Bangladesh and bravely stood up for the rights of LGBTIQ people. But he and a colleague were brutally murdered by extremists. What's worse, the government has not brought his killers to justice. They are getting away with murder.</p>
 <p>Image from Amnesty International</p>	<p>Jean Bigirimana - Journalist - Disappeared - Burundi 2018 Online Action</p> <p>In the aftermath of the failed coup d'etat of 13 May 2015 troops loyal to the president unleashed their anger on media houses. Many journalists fled the country and others went into hiding as a result, but a few others decided to stay and openly continue their work. Jean Bigirimana, who worked for the Iwacu media group, was one of them. He has been missing since 22 July 2016, the day he was arrested and forcibly disappeared by agents believed to be of the National Intelligence Agency (SNR).</p>
 <p>Image from Amnesty International</p>	<p>Tashi Wangchuk - Indigenous Language Advocate - Sentenced to 5 Years in Prison - China / Tibet</p> <p>The five-year prison sentence against Tibetan language education activist Tashi Wangchuk for "inciting separatism" highlights the Chinese authorities' unyielding assault on Tibetans who peacefully defend their cultural rights. He is a prisoner of conscience.</p> <p>See the NY Times documentary that led to his imprisonment: A Tibetan's Journey for Justice (via YouTube)</p>



Image from Amnesty International

Ilham Tohti - Indigenous Uyghur Rights Activist - Scholar / Researcher & Publisher of Website - Sentenced to Life in Prison - China

[Online Action](#)

Respected university professor Ilham Tohti worked tirelessly to build bridges between ethnic communities in China. He always opposed violence in his writing and lectures, and sought to encourage cooperation and understanding. But he's been jailed for life – supposedly for stirring up ethnic hatred. He is a human rights defender and prisoner of conscience. Act now: Tell China to release Ilham Tohti immediately.

Publications: [Jewher Ilham: A Uyghur's Fight to Free Her Father](#) (University of New Orleans Press); [Select online writings and video](#) from Pen America



Image from Amnesty International

Amal Fathy - Women's Rights Advocate Posting on Facebook - Harassed and then Detained - Facing Unclear Charges - Egypt

[Urgent Action 16 August](#)

Amal Fathy was detained by police on 11 May, after she posted a video on her Facebook page in which she shared her experience of sexual harassment, highlighted the prevalence of the issue in Egypt, and criticized the government's failure to protect women as well as the deteriorating socio-economic situation in Egypt. In August her [case was referred to trial](#). Amnesty International considers Amal Fathy to be a **prisoner of conscience**.



Image from Amnesty International Russia

Akmaral Tobylova - Browsing Opposition Website - Kazakhstan

[Urgent Action 18 April](#)

Akmaral Tobylova, a prisoner of conscience, had been under house arrest since 13 March and charged with financing an extremist organization merely for browsing an opposition party website. On 13 April she was released on bail but continues to face charges.

Report: [Think before you post: Closing down social media space in Kazakhstan](#)



Image from Amnesty International

Journalists - 16 Journalists Killed in 2017-18 - Mexico

It has been reported that Mexico and Syria were the world's most violent countries for journalists in 2017. At least six more journalists were killed in 2018. The [annual report on Mexico](#) calls attention to a lack of serious investigations. Amnesty International has called for [urgent action to protect journalists in Latin America](#) and end the [open season on reporters](#). As a new Mexican president takes office, Amnesty International is making [several human rights recommendations](#) including a focus on the protection of journalists and human rights defenders.



Image from Reuters

Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe OO - Reuters Journalists - Sentenced to 7 Years in Prison - Myanmar

[Two Reuters journalists have been formally charged](#) and [sentenced to 7 years](#) in connection with their peaceful journalistic activities after being detained for more than seven months. The two men had been investigating military operations in northern Rakhine State.

Publications: [Massacre in Myanmar: a Reuters Special Report](#); **Related:** [This Article Does Not Exist](#)



Human Rights Watch / © Radio Svoboda

Stanislav Aseev - Freelance Journalist - Held Incommunicado by Russian Backed Separatists in Separatist Controlled Eastern Ukraine

[Online Action](#)

Stanislav Aseev, a Ukrainian freelance journalist who the pro-Russian separatists in Donetsk have kept in detention on spurious charges since June 2017, has declared a hunger strike. The de facto authorities claim the journalist committed “espionage”- a trumped up accusation, based solely on his legitimate, peaceful work as a journalist. **Related Report:** [You Don't Exist](#)



Image from Amnesty International

Ashraf Fayadh - Poet - Charged with Apostasy & Taking Pictures of Women - Sentenced to 8 Years and 800 Lashes - Saudi Arabia

[Urgent Action](#)

Palestinian poet and artist Ashraf Fayadh has had his death sentence overturned by a court in Saudi Arabia. He has been re-sentenced to eight years in prison and 800 lashes. He is a **prisoner of conscience**.

Publications: [Instructions Within](#) (book); [Poems](#) linked from PEN America

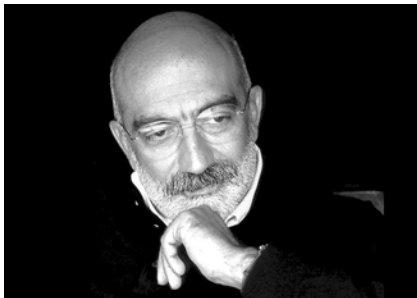


Image from Amnesty International

Ahmet Altan - Novelist & Journalist - Sentenced to Life w/o Parole - Turkey

Ahmet Altan is a prominent novelist, essayist, and journalist. He served as the founding editor-in-chief of [Taraf](#) from 2007-2012. His brother Mehmet has been a Professor of Economics at Istanbul University since 1986. On September 10, 2016, Ahmet and Mehmet Altan were arrested in a dawn raid, as part of a wave of arrests of thinkers and writers following the failed coup of July 2016. Their alleged crime consists of giving [subliminal messages to rally coup supporters](#) on a television broadcast the night before the coup attempt. (Pen America)

Publications: [Endgame](#) & [Like a Sword](#) (books); [I will Never See the World Again](#) (NY Times); [Select online writings](#) from PEN America

Related: [Weathering the Storm Defending Human Rights in Climate of Fear - Turkey: Journalism is Not a Crime - AI Cartoonist Campaign](#)



Image from Committee to Protect Journalists

Me Nam - Environmental Blogger - Sentenced to 10 Years - POC - Vietnam

[2018 CPJ International Press Freedom Award Winner:](#)

Nguyen Ngoc Nhu Quynh, one of Vietnam's most prominent independent bloggers, is best known by her pen name, "Mother Mushroom." She has been behind bars since 2016. In 2017, Quynh was sentenced to 10 years in prison after a one-day trial. The charges were in connection with 18 articles she posted online, including reports on an industrial toxic spill that devastated large areas of the country's coast. ([Committee to Protect Journalists](#))

Publications: [Interview](#) linked from PEN America

Active Cases from Past Banned Books Week



Image from Amnesty International

Raif Badawi - Blogger - 10 Year Sentence and Flogging - Saudi Arabia

[Case Update & Twitter Actions](#)

Saudi Arabian blogger Raif Badawi was detained in June 2012 and sentenced in 2014 for setting up a website focused on social and political debate. He was sentenced to 10 years in prison, 1 million riyal fine, and a cruel and inhumane punishment of 1,000 lashes, the first 50 of which were carried out in a public square in Jeddah on 9 January 2015. Waleed Abu al-Khair, Badawi's attorney, is currently serving a 15-year prison term solely for his human rights work.

Related: [Detention of Women's Rights Activists including Raif Badawi's Sister](#)

Publications: [1000 Lashes: Because I Say What I Think](#) (book); [Raif Badawi, The Voice of Freedom: My Husband, Our Story](#) (book)



Image from Amnesty International

Prageeth Eknaligoda — Journalist / Cartoonist Sri Lanka — Disappeared Person

[AI Research](#) | [AI Take Action](#)

Sri Lankan journalist and political analyst Prageeth Eknaligoda went missing on 24 January 2010 from Homagama, near the capital Colombo. In June 2018, Amnesty International called upon authorities to take action against ongoing [harassment and threats](#) against Sandya Eknaligoda, wife of Prageeth and campaigner against enforced disappearances.

Publications: [Several Cartoons by Eknaligoda from BBC](#)



Image from Amnesty International

Mansoor Ahmed — Blogger / Human Rights Activist (POC) — United Arab Emirates — Sentenced to 10 Years

[AI Research](#) (Video Available) [AI Take Action](#)

Emirati human rights defender and blogger Ahmed Mansoor has been detained in Abu Dhabi since his [arrest](#) at his home on 20 March 2017. Amnesty International continues to call for his immediate unconditional release and quashing of his sentence, see [statement on May 31, 2018](#).

According to UAE's official news agency WAM, Ahmed Mansoor had been arrested on the orders of the Public Prosecution for Cybercrimes and accused of using social media websites to "publish false information and rumours"; "promote [a] sectarian and hate-incited agenda"; and "publish false and misleading information that harm national unity and social harmony and damage the country's reputation".

Related News from Amnesty International - No Action Requested at the Time

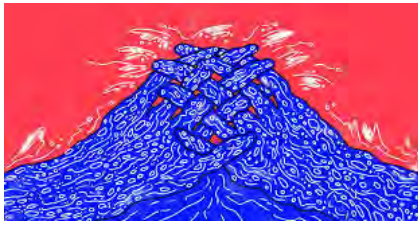
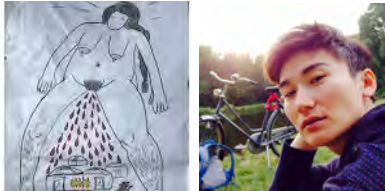


Image from Amnesty International

Arbitrary detentions of Cuban artists protesting Decree 349

Amnesty International is concerned that [Decree 349 contains vague and overly broad restrictions on artistic expression](#). Under the decree, all artists, including collectives, musicians and performers, are prohibited from operating in public or private spaces without prior approval by the Ministry of Culture. Under the new decree, the authorities also have the power to immediately suspend a performance and to propose the cancelation of the authorization granted to carry out the artistic activity.



Drawing from Amnesty International
Photo from [Daily Mirror](#)

Zhanar Sekerbayeva - LGBTI & Women's Rights Photographer - Detained and Fined for 'minor hooliganism' - Kazakhstan

On the evening of 15 August, police took Zhanar Sekerbayeva to Almalinsky police station in Almaty where she was [formally charged](#) with the administrative offence of "minor hooliganism". Zhanar Sekerbayeva is a member of the group 'Feminita', which held a photo session on 9 August to raise awareness about the taboo surrounding menstruation in Kazakhstani society. Taking photos is not a crime nor is campaigning for women's health and rights. If found guilty, she could face a fine or up to 10 days of "administrative detention".

Links for Booksellers and Librarians

The books listed below relate to this year's Banned Books Week cases and are available from major international publishers, Amazon, or other booksellers.



My Journey as a Witness

by Shahidul Alam; Rosa Maria Falvo
Publisher: Milano, Italy : Skira ; Dhaka, Bangladesh : Bengal Foundation ; New York, NY : Distributed in USA by Rizzoli International Pub., 2011.



Instructions Within

by Ashraf Faydh
Publisher: [S.I.] : English PEN/ The Operating System, 2017.
Bilingual Edition.



Like a Sword Wound

by AHMET ALTAN
Publisher: [S.I.] : Europa Editions, 2018.



Raif Badawi: The Voice of Freedom: My Husband, Our Story

by Andrea C Hoffmann
Publisher: London : Little, Brown Book Group 2016.



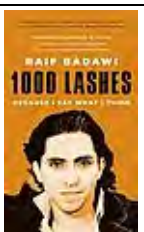
Endgame

by Ahmet Altan; Alexander Dawe
Publisher: New York : Europa Editions, 2017.



Jewher Ilham : a Uyghur's fight to free her Father

by Jewher Ilham; Adam Braver; Ashley Barton; Molly Gessford
Publisher: New Orleans : University of New Orleans Press, 2015.



1000 Lashes : Because I Say what I Think

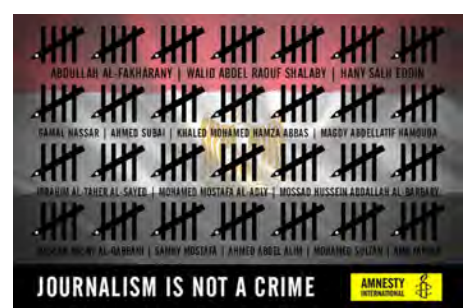
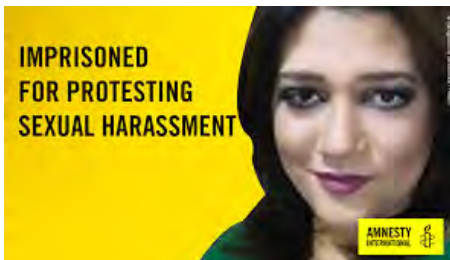
by Raif Badawi
Publisher: Vancouver ; Berkeley : Greystone Books, 2015.

Addenda

- [ALA Banned Books Week Press Kit](#)
- [ALA Banned Books Week 2018](#)
- [Banned Books Week Readings from AIUSA](#)
- [Wikipedia on Banned Books Week](#)

Amnesty International Images Related to Banned Books and Censorship may be found on the web. Examples include:

- [Cartoonists use drawings to demand the release of colleagues in Turkey](#)
- from <https://twitter.com/amnesty>



- Other AI Images



Minister of Home Affairs
Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal
Bangladesh Secretariat
Dhaka, Bangladesh

Ambassador Mohammad Ziauddin
Embassy of Bangladesh
3510 International Drive NW
Washington, DC 20008

October 2018

Dear Home Minister,

We are deeply concerned for photographer Shahidul Alam, who was arrested in Dhaka on August 5 after giving an interview to Al-Jazeera about a wave of student protests. He has been charged under Section 57 of the Information and Technology Act, which carries a minimum sentence of 7 years and a maximum of 14 years. When Shahidul Alam appeared in court he was unable to walk, leading to concerns that he had been subjected to torture or ill treatment.

We urge you to immediately and unconditionally release Shahidul Alam, who is a prisoner of conscience, detained solely for peacefully exercising his human right to freedom of expression.

In addition, please ensure that other journalists, human rights defenders, and members of the political opposition can safely exercise their rights to peaceful freedom of expression, association, and assembly.

Sincerely,

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No Further Action Requested for Banned Books Week 2018

Minister of Home Affairs
Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal
Bangladesh Secretariat
Dhaka, Bangladesh

Ambassador Mohammad Ziauddin
Embassy of Bangladesh
3510 International Drive NW
Washington, DC 20008

October 2018

Dear Home Minister,

We are writing you out of concern for justice for **Xulhaz Mannan**, who was murdered in April 2016 when machete-wielding attackers stormed into his home. Xulhaz and his colleague were hacked to death. Even though there are witnesses and ample evidence, the police investigation has stalled and Xulhaz's killers have not been held accountable.

Xulhaz was a founder of Bangladesh's only magazine dedicated to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ) issues. His attackers are believed to belong to Ansar al-Islam, the same extremist group responsible for similar assaults on bloggers discussing atheism, feminism, science and other secular issues.

The failure to hold anyone accountable for Xulhaz's murder has created a climate of fear among human rights defenders, including LGBTIQ activists. They are not able to express themselves freely, fearful that they will also come under attack and that the government will do nothing.

We call on you to ensure that the murder of Xulhaz Mannan is investigated thoroughly, and that the perpetrators are brought to justice.

Yours sincerely,

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No Further Action Requested for Banned Books Week 2018

Yushu Zangzu Zizhizhou Remin
Jianchayuan
Minzhulu, Yushushi
Yushu Zangzu Zizhizhou
Qinghaisheng 815000
People's Republic of China

October 2018

Dear Chief Procurator:

Prisoner of conscience, Tashi Wangchuk, has been sentenced to 5 years in prison after being featured in a New York Times video. Tashi Wangchuk was formally arrested in March 2016 on suspicion of "inciting separatism." Chinese authorities have detained him since 27 January 2016. He had no access to his family until September 2016 and, during police investigations, had little access to his lawyers. The five-year prison sentence against Tibetan language education activist Tashi Wangchuk for "inciting separatism" highlights the Chinese authorities' unyielding assault on Tibetans who peacefully defend their cultural rights.

Tashi Wangchuk has already spent more than two years in detention, with no access to his family. Before his arrest, he voiced concerns that many Tibetan children are unable to use their native language fluently and that this was contributing to the gradual extinction of Tibetan culture. Tashi Wangchuk is a human rights defender and prisoner of conscience who used the media and China's own legal system in his struggle to preserve Tibetan language, culture and identity.

We are urging you to immediately and unconditionally release Tashi Wangchuk, who is a prisoner of conscience, detained solely for exercising his right to freedom of expression. Pending his release, we are urging you to ensure that he has regular, unrestricted access to his family and lawyers of his choice without delay, and is protected from torture or other-ill-treatment.

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No Further Action Requested for Banned Books Week 2018

Prosecutor General
Kairat Kozhamzharov
14 Orynbor Street
Astana, 010000
Republic of Kazakhstan

October 2018

Dear Prosecutor General,

We are writing to appeal to you in the case of **27-year-old graphic designer AKMARAL TOBYLOVA**, sanctioned to house arrest from Almalinsky district court in Almaty. Akmaral Tobylova, a prisoner of conscience, had been under house arrest since 13 March and charged with financing an extremist organization merely for browsing an opposition party website. On 13 April she was released on bail but continues to face charges.

With Amnesty International and many people around the world, we urge the Kazakhstan authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Akmaral Tobylova and any others detained simply for peacefully exercising their human rights.

We call on authorities to terminate the criminal proceedings against her and any others who have been accused under anti-extremism legislation for the peaceful exercise of their human rights.

Finally, we urge the authorities to amend overly broad provisions in anti-extremism legislation to ensure it cannot be misused to target political opponents and stifle dissent. We ask you to remind police, prosecutors, and other authorities that they have an obligation to respect and protect the right to freedom of expression and association.

Respectfully,

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No Further Action Requested for Banned Books Week 2018

Attorney General
U Tun Tun Oo
PO Box 6022
Union Attorney General Office No. 25
Nay Pyi Taw
Republic of the Union of Myanmar

October 2018

Attorney General U Tun Tun Oo:

Journalists Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo have been sentenced to seven years in prison in connection with their peaceful journalistic activities.

According to Amnesty International, there has been an erosion of the space for a free press in Myanmar, where journalists and other media workers face ongoing restrictions in connection with their work. The arrest and sentencing of Reuters journalists Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo appears to be aimed at preventing them, as well as other journalists, from independently reporting on the Rohingya crisis.

I call on you to immediately and unconditionally release the two men, as they have been detained solely for the peaceful exercise of their human right to freedom of expression, and drop the charges against them.

Further, a free and independent press is essential to protecting the human rights of all people. It is time that Myanmar brought legislation into line with international human rights law and standards by repealing all laws which criminalize or impose restrictions on the human right to freedom of expression – including the 1923 Official Secrets Act.

Yours sincerely,

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No Further Action Requested for Banned Books Week 2018

Head of the DNR
Aleksandr Zakharchenko
Donetsk
Ukraine
Email: op@dnr-sovet.su

DNR Minister of State Security
Vladimir Pavlenko
Donetsk
Ukraine
Email: mgbdnr@yandex.ru

October 2018

Dear Mr. Zakharchenko and Mr. Pavlenko,

Freelance journalist Stanislav Aseev has been held in a detention facility called Izolyatsiya since June 2017. We ask that you release him immediately. Under international humanitarian law, arbitrary, abusive and prolonged detention of civilians is prohibited.

We understand that Stanislav Aseev is a freelance journalist in the separatist-controlled Donetsk, eastern Ukraine, who, until his captivity on 2 June 2017, was working under a pseudonym and reporting about daily life in the self-styled "Donetsk People's Republic". In July 2017, it was discovered that Stanislav Aseev had been held in incommunicado detention by pro-Russian separatists since 2 June 2017. Initially, de facto authorities denied knowledge of his fate and whereabouts.

Pending his release, please allow him to be visited by the UN Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine and ensure that he has regular access to adequate medical care.

We ask that Stanislav Aseev be released immediately. Further, we ask that you ensure that Stanislav Aseev and other journalists are able to carry out legitimate journalist activities without interference, including when travelling in and out of the territories affected by the conflict in eastern Ukraine.

Yours sincerely,

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Minister of Justice
Mr. Abdülhamit Gül
Adalet Bakanlığı
06659 Ankara, Turkey

Ambassador Serdar Kiliç,
Embassy of the Republic of Turkey
2525 Massachusetts Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20008

October 2018

Dear Minister and Ambassador –

The undersigned call upon the Turkish government to drop all charges and release journalist and novelist Ahmet Altan and more than 100 journalists who have been detained for carrying out their legitimate journalistic activities. Further, we ask that the government cease detaining and prosecuting journalists for these reasons.

According to Amnesty International, freedom of expression in Turkey is under sustained and increasing attack. Since the failed coup attempt in July 2016, academics, journalists and writers who criticize the government risk criminal investigation and prosecution, intimidation, harassment and censorship. At least 156 media outlets have been shut down by executive decree since July 2016. An estimated 2,500 journalists and other media workers have lost their jobs. Arrests and routine use of lengthy pre-trial detention intimidates journalists.

In the case of Ahmet Altan, we understand that he was most recently arrested following the failed coup of 2016. Further, according to PEN America, he was arrested and found guilty of defamation in July 2013 in light of an editorial he published in Taraf and has faced various other defamation charges in connection with his journalism and fiction writing. Altan was sentenced to life in prison on 16 February 2018 for attempting to overthrow the constitutional order through the use of force and violence.

We, the undersigned, join with Amnesty International, PEN International and other human rights organization to call on the Turkish government to drop charges against Ahmet and release him immediately along with other journalists unjustly detained. Further we ask that you:

- Ensure that media workers can carry out their function of commenting on public issues, informing public opinion, and conveying information and ideas without threats, harassment or intimidation, and are not prosecuted for expressing views that do not constitute incitement to violence.
- Ensure that criminal charges brought against media workers are solely for recognizably criminal offences defined in laws which are sufficiently clearly formulated to enable people to know what is permitted and what is not, and do not involve unnecessary or disproportionate interference with freedom of expression.
- End the routine use of lengthy pre-trial detention and ensure that any such detention is regularly reviewed by an independent and impartial court and that detainees have access to sufficient information to be able to effectively challenge their detention.

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

October 2018

Your Majesty:

We call on you to free Raif Badawi and stop flogging him.

Raif Badawi is a Prisoner of Conscience, held solely for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression. Please drop all charges against Badawi and ensure that he is unconditionally released without further delay.

We are also deeply concerned about the number of activists in Saudi Arabia who, like Raif Badawi, are persecuted for openly expressing their views online. We call on you to stop arresting, charging, prosecuting and sentencing activists for simply exercising their rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

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No Further Action Requested for Banned Books Week 2018



AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL – SRI LANKA
WHERE IS **PRAGEETH EKNALIGODA?**

October 2018

Dear President Sirisena:



On **January 24th 2010 Prageeth Eknaligoda**, a journalist and cartoonist who had written articles critical of the Sri Lankan government **disappeared**.

Reportedly, at least 15 journalists have been killed since 2006 without prosecutions occurring for these crimes. Amnesty International believes his support for the opposition candidate prior to the 26 January 2010 Presidential election may have made him a target.

Neighbors saw white van without ID plates near Prageeth’s home the day of the disappearance. There are reports that others have been abducted by paramilitary groups and state agents as far back as 2006. **Prageeth himself was abducted by such a van in 2009 and released after a day.**

Please use your position **to investigate the disappearance of Prageeth Eknaligoda.**

Please **make the results** of this investigation **public and hold accountable those responsible.**

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His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan
 President of the United Arab Emirates
 Ministry of presidential affairs
 Corniche Road
 POB 280, Abu Dhabi, UAE



Your Highness,

I am writing to ask you to take steps for immediate release of Ahmed Mansoor, a blogger, human rights defender and recipient of the prestigious Martin Ennals Award for Human Rights Defenders (2015).

Ahmed Mansoor was arrested in the early hours of 20 March 2017 at his home in the emirate of Ajman in the northern parts of the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

On 29 May 2018, Ahmed Mansoor was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment and a fine of 1,000,000 Emirati Dirham (approximately USD \$270,000). The court also ordered placing him under surveillance for three years following his release.

Ahmed Mansoor was tried and convicted on charges including "insulting the status and prestige of the UAE and its symbols" including its leaders, "publish[ing] false information to damage [the] UAE's reputation abroad" and "portray[ing] the UAE as a lawless land."

We are calling on the UAE authorities to quash Ahmed Mansoor's conviction and sentence and release him immediately and unconditionally as he is a prisoner of conscience, detained solely for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression and his human rights work.

NAME

SIGNATURE

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No Further Action Requested for Banned Books Week 2018