

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



***Human Rights on Capitol Hill***

*published by Amnesty International USA*

May 22, 2019

*In this edition of Human Rights on Capitol Hill:*

- 1) **Pride Around the World-** June marks Pride month, an international celebration of the LGBTQ community
  - a. **Taiwan-** First in Asia: Parliament legalizes same-sex marriage
  - b. **China-** Amnesty International documents plight of transgender individuals
  - c. **U.S.-** Amnesty International USA continues fight for transgender woman seeking asylum
- 2) **U.S. Gun Violence Awareness Month-** As the U.S. marks Gun Violence Awareness month this June, will the Senate finally pass legislation to save lives?
- 3) **Myanmar-** After 18 months imprisonment, two Reuters journalists are finally freed.
- 4) **Hungary-** Amnesty International urges the U.S. government to push for press freedom in Hungary
- 5) **Libya-** Amnesty International documents war crimes in Libya
- 6) **Civilian Casualties-** Pentagon seriously under-reported civilian casualties caused by U.S. military operations.
- 7) **Amnesty International Lobby Day-** Over 120 Amnesty activists lobby Congress to end gun violence and to halt arms sales to Saudi-Emirati Coalition

What's Coming Down the Pike?

June 4- **Commemoration of 30th Anniversary of Tiananmen Square.**



**EQUALITY  
IS A  
HUMAN  
RIGHT**



- 1) **Pride Around the World** – June marks Pride month of Pride, a time of celebrating the LGBTQ community and honoring its history throughout the world.
  - a. **Taiwan-** Victory! In May, Taiwan’s legislature [became the first in Asia](#) to legalize same-sex marriage. This comes after a long arduous campaign to get legislation passed by the parliament. While a milestone, the law still falls short of full marriage equality. It does not provide equal adoption rights for same-sex couples. The law allows spouses in same-sex marriages to adopt the biological children of their partners, but not joint adoption of non-biological children, as permitted for opposite-sex married couples.
  - b. **China-** In May, Amnesty International released a report titled “[I Need My Parent’s Consent to Be Myself](#)” which highlights how transgender people are largely invisible in the health care system in China. The report documents the barriers faced by transgender individuals who want to access gender-affirming treatments as well as the dangers associated with counterfeit hormone medication and self-surgery.
  - c. **U.S.-** In 2018 Amnesty International USA [launched a campaign](#) to #FreeAlejandra, a transgender woman activist forced to flee violence and persecution in El Salvador. She came to the U.S. in 2017 seeking asylum and has been detained by Homeland Security (“DHS”) for 18 months. Amnesty is calling on DHS to [release Alejandra](#) and not to deport her to El Salvador.



- 2) **U.S.- Gun Violence Awareness Month-** June is Gun Violence Awareness Month. In February the House passed legislation mandating universal background checks on all gun sales. Yet the Senate has refused to take up this common-sense legislation even in the wake of recent shootings in Colorado, North Carolina, and California. On May 6 over 120 Amnesty Activists lobbied their Senators to pass the Background Check Expansion Act (S.42).

Amnesty is also urging the Senate to pass the Gun Violence Prevention and Research Act (S. 184) (funding for gun violence research) and Ethan's Law S. 193 (requiring safe storage of firearms).



- 3) **Myanmar-** In early May, [Myanmar authorities finally released Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo](#), two Pulitzer Prize-winning Reuters journalists arrested for investigating the killings of Rohingya Muslims in Rakhine State. The case against Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo was a travesty of justice from start to finish, and they should never have spent a single day in prison. Myanmar authorities must follow through by releasing all other journalists and prisoners of conscience detained on trumped-up charges, and by repealing all laws that maintain a chokehold on free expression. Amnesty thanks those members of Congress who fought for the release of the Reuters journalists.
- 4) **Hungary:** On May 13 President Trump met with Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orban at the White House. The meeting represents a substantial about-face in U.S. foreign policy; for years, prior U.S. government officials had declined to meet with Orban, in part due to his efforts to [dismantle Hungary's civil society](#). Amnesty USA and Amnesty Hungary have urged U.S. government officials to curb Orban's draconian policies. The State Department should immediately restart the [media freedom program](#), and Congress should fund Radio Free Europe programming in Hungary.



- 5) **Libya:** In a [statement](#) for a May 15 House Foreign Affairs hearing on the conflict in Libya, Amnesty International outlined the war crimes and human rights abuses taking place among warring parties. A new, groundbreaking Amnesty [report](#) relies on satellite imagery and witness interviews to document indiscriminate attacks on densely populated residential areas in Tripoli.
- 6) **Pentagon seriously under-reported civilian casualties caused by U.S. military operations.** Amnesty International has conducted [extensive investigations](#) and found that the [Pentagon's annual report](#) to Congress published on May 1 did [not report](#) the [full extent](#) of civilian casualties caused by U.S. military operations. While Congress takes up the National Defense Authorization Act, it must thoroughly investigate the number of civilians killed by U.S. operations and ensure that future military operations take all reasonable measures to [protect civilians](#) from lethal force.
- 7) **Amnesty International Lobby Day.** On May 6 over 120 Amnesty activists from 38 states lobbied Congress [to require universal background checks on all gun sales and to halt arms sales to the Saudi- UAE coalition committing civilian casualties in Yemen](#). They met with over 175 congressional offices. Amnesty is the only U.S. human rights organization with a national grassroots network.



*Above: Amnesty International activists from 38 states hit Capitol Hill.*

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### **What's Coming Down the Pike?**

- On June 4 at 1:30 pm Amnesty International USA will co-host a rally on the Capitol West Lawn to commemorate the 30th Anniversary of Tiananmen Square. Speakers will include Congressional leaders, Chinese human rights activists, and Francisco Bencosme of Amnesty International USA.

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*For more information, please contact:*

Africa: Adotei Akwei [aakwei@aiusa.org](mailto:aakwei@aiusa.org)

Asia: Francisco Bencosme

[fbencosme@aiusa.org](mailto:fbencosme@aiusa.org)

Eurasia: Daniel Balson [dbalson@aiusa.org](mailto:dbalson@aiusa.org)

Mid East: Philippe Nassif

[pnassif@aiusa.org](mailto:pnassif@aiusa.org)

Americas: Charanya Krishnaswami

[ckrishna@aiusa.org](mailto:ckrishna@aiusa.org)

Refugees: Ryan Mace [rmace@aiusa.org](mailto:rmace@aiusa.org)

Gender: Tarah Demant [tdemant@aiusa.org](mailto:tdemant@aiusa.org)

Gun Violence: Adotei Akwei

[aakwei@aiusa.org](mailto:aakwei@aiusa.org)

National Security: Daphne Eviatar

[deviatar@aiusa.org](mailto:deviatar@aiusa.org)

Criminal Justice: Krissy Roth

[krith@aiusa.org](mailto:krith@aiusa.org)

Human Rights Defenders: Andrew Fandino

[afandino@aiusa.org](mailto:afandino@aiusa.org)

All other issues: Joanne Lin [jlin@aiusa.org](mailto:jlin@aiusa.org)