

# HUMAN RIGHTS ON CAPITOL HILL

OCTOBER 17, 2019



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### WHAT'S COMING DOWN THE PIKE?

*Asia* - October 22, 10 am, 2200 Rayburn: Amnesty's Asia Advocacy Manager Francisco Bencosme will testify before a House Foreign Affairs Committee hearing on human rights in South Asia.

*Mid East* - October 29, 10 am, 421 Cannon: Amnesty's Mid East Advocacy Director Philippe Nassif will speak on a panel about human rights in Bahrain and the Persian Gulf.

*U.S.-Mexico Border* - October 21-28: Amnesty International USA will send a high-level delegation to south Texas to examine access to asylum at the border.

### FULL OCTOBER NEWSLETTER CONNECT WITH US

## THIS MONTH'S FEATURE

**Refugees – Amnesty International USA Protests Trump Administration's Drastic Cuts to Refugee Admissions Program.** In late September the President announced that the U.S. would [cut](#) the refugee admissions goal to the lowest number in history when over [1.4 million](#) refugees need access to resettlement. On October 15, Amnesty International USA's Executive Director Margaret Huang was [arrested](#) during a protest at the Capitol while Secretary of State Pompeo met with Congress. In September, over [400](#) state and local elected leaders from 46 states called on the President to resettle more refugees.



*On October 15, Amnesty International USA's Executive Director joined other human rights leaders to protest the all-time low Presidential Determination for FY 2020.*

## OTHER HUMAN RIGHTS NEWS

**a) Turkey/Syria - Turkish Military Offensive Could Pose Devastating Humanitarian Consequences in northern Syria.** An estimated 2.2 million people in Northern Syria are at risk as Turkey continues its military operations against YPG/Kurdish forces. Amnesty International has identified attacks by Turkish forces that led to at least 32 civilian deaths, including the killing of a prominent Kurdish women's rights activist and politician. We are currently investigating reports of serious violations, including possible war crimes, in the current Turkish offensive. In areas that have come under Syrian government control, civilians are at risk of enforced disappearance, torture, forced conscription and arbitrary detention, particularly activists – both Syrian Arabs and Syrian Kurds. Amnesty International urges all states to end the transfer of weapons to combatants that carry a substantial risk of facilitating violations of human rights. Moreover, the government of Turkey must

ensure that individuals exercising their freedom of speech to criticize the military operation do not face retaliation through investigations, imprisonment, or violence. For additional, timely updates about the human rights situation in Northern Syria, please contact Philippe Nassif, Amnesty International USA Middle East Advocacy Director, at [PNassif@aiusa.org](mailto:PNassif@aiusa.org).

**b) Venezuela – Amnesty Venezuela Urges Senate to Pass Temporary Protected Status (“TPS”) for Venezuelans.** On September 26, Amnesty Venezuela director Marcos Gomez briefed Congressional staff on the deteriorating human rights condition in Venezuela. The need for the U.S. to protect Venezuelans is more urgent than ever: an estimated [200,000 Venezuelans](#) could benefit from TPS, and Venezuelans [now make up](#) the largest nationality affirmatively seeking asylum in the U.S. Venezuelans continue to be at risk of deportation and have been subject to Trump’s anti-asylum measures at the SW border. Amnesty urges the Senate to [immediately pass](#) the Venezuela TPS Act ([S. 636](#)).

**c) U.S. - Amnesty International Briefing Examines the Climate Crisis and Displacement of Peoples.** On October 8, Amnesty International USA [convened](#) an [expert panel](#) discuss the effects of the climate crisis on mass displacement throughout the world. The panelists detailed how the climate crisis, environmental degradation, and disasters contribute to displacement, both domestic and international.

**d) Saudi Arabia - Amnesty International Marks One-Year Anniversary of the Brutal Murder of Jamal Khashoggi.** Amnesty’s Mid East Advocacy Director Philippe Nassif recently spoke at a Congressional event and called on the [U.N. to investigate the killing](#) of Khashoggi. Amnesty International USA also co-hosted a vigil in front of the Saudi Arabia Embassy in Washington, D.C.

**e) U.S. - Amnesty International USA Sponsors National Rally to Demand Congressional Action on Gun Violence.** On September 25 Amnesty International USA joined activists from around the country in a [rally](#) calling on Congress to pass legislation to reduce gun violence. AIUSA is demanding that the Senate mandate universal background checks on all gun sales ([S. 42](#)) and urges the House to pass the Assault Weapons Ban Act ([H.R. 1296](#)), Keep Americans Safe Act ([H.R.1186](#)), Extreme Risk Protection Orders Act ([H.R. 1236](#)), and Disarm Hate Act ([H.R. 2708](#)).



*Above: On September 25 AIUSA co-hosted a rally to protest Congressional inaction on gun violence.*

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**U.S.-Mexico border** - October 21-28: Amnesty International USA will send a high-level delegation to south Texas to examine access to asylum at the southwest border. For more details, contact Americas Advocacy Director Charanya Krishnaswami at [ckswami@aiusa.org](mailto:ckswami@aiusa.org).

## FULL OCTOBER NEWSLETTER

For more human rights updates in Asia, the Americas, the Middle East and Eurasia, see our full October newsletter [here](#).

## CONNECT WITH US

Follow breaking human rights news, follow Amnesty International USA on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

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