

**BANNED BOOKS  
WEEK**

DEFENDING THE HUMAN RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL 



**EGYPT**

**RELEASE  
ALAA  
ABDEL FATTAH**

**GOOD NEWS  
RELEASED  
09/22/25**

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## **PROMINENT ACTIVIST REMAINS IN UNJUST DETENTION FOR SOCIAL MEDIA POST**

Alaa Abdel Fattah is a 43-year-old British-Egyptian technologist, author, and one of the leading voices of Egypt's 2011 revolution. In December 2021, he was sentenced to five years in prison for "spreading false news" after sharing a social media post. His sentence legally ended on September 29, 2024, but authorities refuse to release him.

## SEND A MESSAGE TO THE EGYPTIAN AUTHORITIES

**WRITE** Address to send letter:  
President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi  
Office of the President  
Al Ittihadia Palace  
Cairo, Egypt

Dear President al-Sisi,

I am writing to express urgent concern for British-Egyptian writer and activist Alaa Abdel Fattah, who remains imprisoned despite completing his five-year sentence on September 29, 2024. The refusal to count his pretrial detention violates Egypt's legal obligations and the findings of the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, which deemed this continued imprisonment unlawful.

Alaa's mother, Dr. Laila Soueif, had been on hunger strike since the day his sentence ended. She only ended her hunger strike after her children begged her to stop. The doctor had told them she was in critical condition and might not survive another 24 hours. Her peaceful protest reflects the desperation of a family facing prolonged injustice.

I respectfully urge you to release Alaa Abdel Fattah immediately and unconditionally, and ensure he has access to legal counsel, reading materials, sunlight, and regular family contact.

Egypt has an opportunity to demonstrate a commitment to justice and human dignity. I hope you will act without delay.

Sincerely,

[Insert your name]

**Send a copy of your letter to:**  
c/o Ambassador Motaz Mounir Zahran  
Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt  
3521 International Court NW  
Washington, DC 20008  
USA

**EMAIL** Send email appeal to:  
President's Spokesperson  
[p.spokesman@op.gov.eg](mailto:p.spokesman@op.gov.eg)

Ambassador Motaz Mounir Zahran  
[embassy@egyptembassy.net](mailto:embassy@egyptembassy.net)

## SEND A SOLIDARITY MESSAGE TO ALAA

**SEND** Send Alaa and his family messages of hope and solidarity. Share a poem or drawing.

In your card please do not mention Amnesty International or Egypt's human rights record; detention conditions, political criticism, or include details about Alaa's case.

**Address to send solidarity card:**

Mona Abdel Fattah  
4 Red Hill Close  
CB22 5JP  
Cambridge  
UK

Cards will be sent to family members, and messages will be shared with Alaa.

### SAMPLE MESSAGING

We are with you. Your voice inspires courage across the world. We honor your strength and your mother's bravery. Stay strong — we won't stop fighting for your freedom.

*In solidarity,*

### WORK BY ALAA

"[You Have Not Yet Been Defeated](#)" is a collection of essays, tweets, letters, and personal reflections by Alaa Abd el-Fattah, many of which were smuggled out of Egyptian prisons.

**SUPPORT OUR  
DIGITAL ACTION  
FOR ALAA**



**BANNED BOOKS  
WEEK**

**DEFENDING THE HUMAN RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION**

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL** 



Photo: © Private

**CHINA**

**RELEASE YASHAR**



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# **UYGHUR SONGWRITER SENTENCED TO THREE YEARS FOR HIS RAP LYRICS AND BOOKS IN HIS POSSESSION**

Yashar, also known as Yaxia'er Xiaohelaiti (亚夏尔·肖合拉提), is a 27-year-old Uyghur songwriter and rap artist who goes by the stage name “Uigga.” He was residing in Chengdu, Sichuan Province, when he was detained on August 11, 2023. Authorities charged him with “promoting extremism” and “illegally possessing extremist materials,” reportedly for his music published on the Internet and his possession of Uyghur-language books. It appears he is being punished solely for exercising his right to explore his own culture and freely express his views.

## SEND A MESSAGE TO THE CHINESE AUTHORITIES

**WRITE****Address to send letter:**

Party Secretary of Xinjiang  
Ma Xingrui  
479 Zhongshan Lu, Tianshan Qu, Urumqi,  
830041, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region,  
People's Republic of China

**Dear Secretary Ma,**

I am writing to express my alarm regarding the case of Yashar (Yaxia'er Xiaohelaiti 亚夏尔·肖合拉提), a Uyghur songwriter and musician. On June 20, 2024, the city court in Bole determined that he was guilty of “promoting extremism” and “illegally possessing extremist material.” These charges appear to stem solely from the lyrics of his songs and Uyghur-language books he legally purchased. The classification of these books as “extremist” appears to be unfounded. Yashar is being punished solely for exercising his right to explore his own culture and to freely express his views through his music.

His imprisonment places Yashar's health at real risk of deterioration. He suffers from bronchitis and requires regular medication, and it is unknown whether he is receiving the medical attention he needs.

I urge you to:

- Immediately and unconditionally release Yaxia'er Xiaohelaiti, also known as Yashar;
- Provide Yashar with regular, appropriate medical care and ensure he is not subjected to torture or other ill-treatment while in custody;
- Ensure that Uyghur artists can express their identity without fear of persecution or arbitrary detention.

Yours sincerely,  
[Insert your name]

**Send a copy of your letter to:**

c/o Ambassador Xie Fang  
Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the United States  
3505 International Place, NW,  
Washington DC 20008  
USA

**EMAIL****Send email appeal to:**

[chinaembpress\\_us@mfa.gov.cn](mailto:chinaembpress_us@mfa.gov.cn)

*There is no email for Secretary Ma so please send copies to China's Embassy in the U.S.*

## SEND A SOLIDARITY MESSAGE TO YASHAR

**SEND**

Send Yashar messages of hope and solidarity. Send positive, uplifting messages focused on solidarity, resilience, and creativity. You may add a drawing, a poem, an excerpt from a story or song, or any other form of artistic expression that you wish.

In your card please do not mention Amnesty International or China's human rights record; detention conditions, political criticism, or include details about Yashar's case or the broader Uyghur situation.

**Address to send solidarity card:**

Yaxiaer Xiaohelati  
Wusu Jianyu, 2 Dadui, 16 Jianqu  
Shenzhen Road 21  
Tacheng District, Wusu City, Xinjiang  
China 833006

**SAMPLE MESSAGING**

I am writing to let you know that you are not forgotten. Your songs and your courage continue to inspire people all over the world. I hope this letter brings you some light and strength, knowing that people around the globe stand with you in solidarity.

You are not alone — your voice still resonates, even from behind prison walls.

*With solidarity and respect,*

**WORK BY YASHAR**

This is a work by Yashar, using the stage name Uigga: <https://bit.ly/41G4Rfq>

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DIGITAL ACTION  
FOR YASHAR**



Photo: © Private

**MYANMAR**

# RELEASE SAI ZAW THAIKE



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## **PHOTOJOURNALIST SENTENCED TO 20 YEARS IN PRISON FOR REPORTING ON A CYCLONE**

Photojournalist Sai Zaw Thaike traveled undercover to Rakhine State, Myanmar, determined to report on the devastation of Cyclone Mocha, which slammed into the country in May 2023. Sai embedded himself with a relief team, but after a week there, Sai Zaw was arrested. He was interrogated, beaten, and in September 2023, sentenced by a military tribunal to 20 years in prison with hard labor. His trial lasted just one day. Following the 2021 military coup, the military raided the offices of “Myanmar Now,” a news agency where Sai Zaw worked. The media outlet was subsequently banned, and staff had to flee the country.

## SEND A MESSAGE TO THE MYANMAR AUTHORITIES

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**WRITE** **Address to send letter:**  
The State Administration Council  
c/o Embassy of the Republic of the Union of  
Myanmar  
2300 S St., NW  
Washington, DC 20008

**Dear State Administration Council,**

Photojournalist Sai Zaw Thaike was arrested in May 2023, after travelling to Rakhine State to report on the devastation caused by Cyclone Mocha. After a one-day trial in September, he was sentenced by a military tribunal to 20 years in prison with hard labor. He has endured beatings by prison staff and periods of solitary confinement.

He embedded himself with a relief team. But after a week there, Sai was arrested. He was interrogated and beaten. He has endured beatings by prison staff and periods of solitary confinement.

Journalism is not a crime, but over 200 journalists in Myanmar have been imprisoned in the past few years.

I am asking that Sai Zaw Thaike be immediately and unconditionally released.

Sincerely,

[Insert your name]

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**EMAIL** **Send email appeal to:**  
Commander-in-Chief of Defense  
[www.seniorgeneralminangunhlaing.com.m](http://www.seniorgeneralminangunhlaing.com.m)  
*m/en*  
*/contact/*

**Send copies to:**  
Myanmar Embassy in the U.S  
[pyi.thayar@verizon.net](mailto:pyi.thayar@verizon.net)

## SEND A SOLIDARITY MESSAGE TO SAI ZAW

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**SEND** Send Sai Zaw messages of hope and solidarity. Let him know that you support him.

In your card please do not mention Amnesty International or Myanmar's human rights record; detention conditions, political criticism, or include details about Sai Zaw's case.

**Address to send solidarity card:**

AIUSA, 89 South Street  
Suite LL01  
Boston, MA 02111

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### SAMPLE MESSAGING

Stay strong! You are not forgotten.

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### WORK BY SAI ZAW

Sai Zaw's photo taken at a protest in Yagoon, Myanmar



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DIGITAL ACTION  
FOR SAI ZAW**





Photo: © Private

**RUSSIA**

# **RELEASE MARK KISLITSYN**



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## **TRANS MAN RECEIVES 12-YEAR PRISON SENTENCE FOR EXPRESSING ANTI-WAR VIEWS**

Mark Kislitsyn, a 28-year-old transgender man and LGBTQI+ activist, was sentenced to 12 years for high treason after donating \$10 to a Ukrainian bank. He claimed the transfer was for humanitarian reasons. Despite his gender identity, he is imprisoned in a women's colony, forced to wear women's clothing, and denied gender-affirming treatment. Kislitsyn had been arrested and fined previously for his anti-war picket and was known to criticize the Russian invasion of Ukraine on social media.

Mark's sentencing takes place against the backdrop of an accelerating crackdown on LGBTQI+ rights. In May, Russian security forces arrested at least 10 book publishing professionals in Moscow on "extremism"-related charges over alleged "LGBTI propaganda" in books published by affiliated printing houses.

## SEND A MESSAGE TO THE RUSSIAN AUTHORITIES

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**WRITE** **Address to send letter:**  
Office of the Prosecutor General of the Russian  
Federation  
c/o Ambassador Alexander N. Darchiev  
Embassy of the Russian Federation in the USA  
2650 Wisconsin Ave., N.W.,  
Washington, DC 20007

U.S.P.S. does not deliver to Russia. Please send your letter to the Russian Embassy in the U.S. and request that they forward this to the Office of the Prosecutor General of Russia.

### **Dear Prosecutor General of the Russian Federation,**

Ensure the immediate release of Mark Kislitsyn. Mark is a civic and human rights activist who in December 2023 was sentenced to 12 years in a penal colony on charges of high treason after donating 865 rubles to Ukraine's National Bank. His actions were motivated solely by humanitarian reasons.

Mark is a committed pacifist who strongly opposes any violence, and he has stated that he did not know that the bank account he transferred money to had been opened in order to finance Ukraine's Armed Forces. He believed the money would go toward humanitarian aid.

Mark's persecution is politically motivated and must be stopped. In the penal colony, Mark is subjected to pressure from the prison authorities. He is regularly and arbitrarily placed in a punishment cell and subjected to other ill-treatment. I strongly urge you to take all necessary steps to ensure Mark Kislitsyn's immediate release.

Sincerely,

[Insert your name]

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**EMAIL** **Send email appeal to:**  
[ik9@54.fsin.gov.ru](mailto:ik9@54.fsin.gov.ru)

**Send copies to:**  
[mission@russiaun.ru](mailto:mission@russiaun.ru) or  
[press@russiaun.ru](mailto:press@russiaun.ru)

For more information on the crackdown on LGBTQI rights including the LGBTQI books and publishers targeted by Russian authorities, see Book Publishers Arrested in Anti-LGBTI Campaign:  
<https://bit.ly/4oX7uDM>

## SEND A SOLIDARITY MESSAGE TO MARK

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**SEND** Send Mark messages of hope and solidarity. Let him know you support him in his fight for human rights in Russia. You could draw pictures of animals (Mark volunteers at an animal shelter and has a corgi named "Jaina").

Send messages in Russian language only (use a translator and/or messaging below). Be creative, send a picturesque postcard. Don't use symbols such as peace signs or rainbows, or LGBTI+ imagery; Don't make reference to Ukraine (including use of yellow/blue colors) or Putin; Don't mention Amnesty International as Amnesty is listed as "undesirable" in Russia.

### **Address to send solidarity card:**

Alexandra Pintelina  
Tērbatas Street 14-3  
Regus, 505  
Riga  
LV-1011  
Latvia

### **SAMPLE MESSAGING**

Mark, we are with you!  
Марк, мы с тобой!  
Mark, we support you!  
Марк, мы поддерживаем тебя!  
Greetings from [your city name]  
Привет из [your city name] "

### **WORK BY MARK**

Poems Written by Mark in Prison:  
<https://bit.ly/475R1Xq>

**SUPPORT OUR  
DIGITAL ACTION  
FOR MARK**





Photo: © Private

**SAUDI ARABIA**

# **RELEASE MOHAMMAD BIN NASSER AL-GHAMDI**



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## **30 YEARS IN PRISON FOR PEACEFUL SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS**

Mohammad bin Nasser al-Ghamdi, a 56-year old retired teacher, was sentenced to death for his peaceful social media (X and YouTube) activity criticizing the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia and the country's foreign policy, and calling for the release of detained clerics. Although his death sentence was commuted, Mohammed was resentenced to 30 years in prison.

## SEND A MESSAGE TO THE SAUDI AUTHORITIES

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**WRITE****Address to send letter:**

Walid bin Muhammad Al-Sama'ani  
Minister of Justice  
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia  
Postal Code 11472, P.O. Box 7775

**Dear Minister,**

I am writing to express my grave concern regarding the case of Mohammad bin Nasser al-Ghamdi. While I acknowledge the commutation of his death sentence, I am deeply troubled by the decision of the Specialized Criminal Court's (SCC) appeals chamber to resentence him to 30 years in prison. He remains unjustly detained solely for exercising his right to freedom of expression online. After his arrest on June 11, 2022, Mohammad bin Nasser al-Ghamdi was held in solitary confinement for four months without access to his family or a lawyer.

According to the verdict and charge sheet reviewed by Amnesty International, Mohammad bin Nasser al-Ghamdi was convicted under Saudi Arabia's counterterrorism law for social media posts criticizing the Saudi King, Crown Prince, and foreign policy, and for calling for the release of detained religious clerics and protesting price increases. These are views protected under international human rights law, and he has not been accused of any violent crime.

Furthermore, his brother, Asaad bin Nasser al-Ghamdi, was also sentenced to 20 years in prison on May 29, 2024, for similar social media posts.

I urge you to immediately and unconditionally release Mohammad bin Nasser al-Ghamdi. His continued detention is a clear violation of his fundamental human rights.

Sincerely,

[Insert your name]

**Send a copy of your letter to:**

c/o Her Royal Highness Princess Reema bint Bandar bin Sultan  
bin Abdulaziz Al Saud  
Embassy of Saudi Arabia in the United States  
601 New Hampshire Ave NW,  
Washington, DC 20037  
USA

**EMAIL**

Send email appeal to: [1950@moj.gov.sa](mailto:1950@moj.gov.sa)

## SEND A SOLIDARITY MESSAGE TO MOHAMMAD

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**SEND**

Send Mohammed and his family messages of hope and solidarity. Encourage local teachers and their students to show support through letters and photos, which will be shared with his family in exile.

Cards will be sent to family members, and messages will be relayed to Mohammed.

In your card please do not mention Amnesty International or Saudi Arabia's human rights record; detention conditions, political criticism, or include details about Mohammed's case.

**Address to send solidarity card:**

Amnesty International USA  
89 South Street, Suite LL01  
Boston, MA 02111

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**SAMPLE MESSAGING**

Mohammed, you are a strong and courageous individual. Sending you hope!

**SUPPORT OUR  
DIGITAL ACTION  
FOR MOHAMMAD**



**BANNED BOOKS  
WEEK**

**DEFENDING THE HUMAN RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION**

**AMNESTY  
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**TUNISIA**

# **RELEASE SONIA DAHMANI**



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## **LAWYER AND MEDIA PERSONALITY JAILED FOR SPEAKING OUT AGAINST RACISM**

Sonia Dahmani, a 59-year-old Tunisian lawyer and prominent media personality, frequently appeared on radio and TV shows, such as “Emission Impossible” on IFM Radio and “Denya Zida” on Carthage+. She regularly commented on migration, racism, and other political issues, such as the poor detention conditions in prisons. Sonia Dahmani is facing five separate legal proceedings for publicly criticizing authorities about Tunisian prison detention conditions and speaking out against issues like racism. She has been arbitrarily detained since May 11, 2024.

## SEND A MESSAGE TO THE TUNISIAN AUTHORITIES

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**WRITE**

**Address to send letter:**  
President of Tunisia Kais Saied  
Carthage Presidential Palace  
La Goulette Road  
Carthage Archaeological Site  
Tunis  
Tunisia

**Your Excellency,**

I write to you to express my grave concern over the prolonged unjust imprisonment of Tunisian lawyer Sonia Dahmani. She is imprisoned for exercising her right to freedom of expression, including publicly criticizing conditions of detention in Tunisian prisons as well as the ill-treatment of refugees and migrants.

Following her public comments during her regular appearances on television and radio shows, Tunisian authorities have initiated five separate legal proceedings against her. All pending cases stem from the exercise of her right to freedom of expression.

Sonia Dahmani is enduring cruel and inhuman conditions of detention in prison. She has developed serious health issues and is denied necessities and adequate healthcare, while being subjected to mistreatment by prison guards. Sonia Dahmani shares a cell with four other detainees, including a shared toilet facility with no privacy. Hygiene is deplorable, with limited access to hot water; rats and insects infest her cell.

I urge you to immediately and unconditionally release Sonia Dahmani, quash her unjust convictions and sentences, and drop the baseless criminal investigations against her. Pending her release, she must be granted access to her family, lawyers, and adequate healthcare and held in conditions that meet international standards for the treatment of prisoners.

Sincerely,

[Insert your name]

**Send a copy of your letter to:**

c/o Ambassador Hanene Al-Tajouri Bessassi  
Tunisian Embassy in the United States  
1515 Massachusetts Avenue, NW,  
Washington DC 20005  
USA

**EMAIL**

**Send email appeal to:** [contact@carthage.tn](mailto:contact@carthage.tn)

## SEND A SOLIDARITY MESSAGE TO SONIA

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**SEND**

Send Sonia messages of hope and solidarity. Let her know that you support her in her fight for human rights. You could draw pictures of dogs (Sonia has a dog named Carla).

In your card please do not mention Amnesty International or Tunisia's human rights record; detention conditions, political criticism, or include details about Sonia's case

**Address to send solidarity card:**

Sonia Dahmani  
c/o Amnesty International Tunisia  
5 Rue Zouhair Ayadi  
El Menzah 4  
Ariana, Tunis 1082  
Tunisia

**SAMPLE MESSAGING**

Sonia, stay strong and please know that we will continue to call for your release!

**VIDEO RESOURCE**

Tunisia's Conscience in Jail: Free Sonia Dahmani

This video features live footage of Sonia's recent arrest from the Tunisian Bar Association: <https://bit.ly/45QhgQn>

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DIGITAL ACTION  
FOR SONIA**



Photo: © Christopher Penler

**USA**

# **PROTECT STUDENTS' RIGHTS**



[www.amnestyusa.org/banned-books/](http://www.amnestyusa.org/banned-books/)

**STOP THE CRACKDOWN: PROTECT STUDENT  
RIGHTS TO FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND  
STOP REVOKING VISAS OF FOREIGN STUDENTS**

No one should be ripped away from their family and sent to detention just for exercising their right to freedom of expression or be punished for peacefully protesting. No one should be threatened for exercising free speech by speaking at a protest or for publishing an op-ed, and no one should be deported for speaking out for human rights. All students should feel like they belong on their campuses and are free to be themselves without being harassed or singled out. Universities must fight to protect students' rights and refuse to collaborate in the government's attacks on campuses.

## SEND A MESSAGE TO THE U.S. AUTHORITIES

**WRITE****Address to send letter:**

Secretary Kristi Noem  
Department of Homeland Security  
300 7th St, SW,  
Washington, DC 20024  
USA

**Dear Secretary Kristi Noem,**

I am writing regarding the recent trend of targeting foreign students with repression, detention, and potential deportation for either their activities in protests, speaking out in support of Palestinian rights and against the ongoing war crimes and genocide in the occupied Gaza Strip, or due to their backgrounds.

Following the detention of Mahmoud Khalil on March 8 and the revocation of his residency status, the US government revoked the student visas of seven identified individuals and is seeking to revoke the residency status of at least two other students who protested or spoke up about the conflict in the occupied Gaza Strip under an obscure and rarely used provision of immigration law. At least 1300 additional students are known to have had their visas revoked. However, many of these students never received notice of the revocation, nor did they participate in any protest or expressive activity on campus. Some students may have been targeted due to having committed minor crimes such as traffic violations. According to a lawsuit filed on behalf of students, many were targeted because of their country of origin, particularly those from African, Arab, Middle Eastern, Muslim, and Asian backgrounds.

These repressive tactics and the summary revocation of people's immigration status demonstrate an utter lack of respect for their human rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, due process, and to be free from discrimination.

I urge you to restore the visas and immigration status of these students and visitors, release all students from immigration detention, refrain from deporting any of them, and end the targeting of students based on their immigration statuses and for exercising their human rights.

Yours sincerely,

[Insert your name]

**EMAIL**

Send email appeal to: [dhssecretary@hq.dhs.gov](mailto:dhssecretary@hq.dhs.gov)

## SEND A SOLIDARITY MESSAGE TO STUDENTS ACROSS THE U.S.

**SEND**

We are requesting people to write a solidarity message that will be shared with students across the country. It is important for individuals not to feel alone and to show the power of our collective movement. Everyone is encouraged to participate. We must stand in solidarity and claim our human rights to freedom of expression!

### HERE IS HOW YOU CAN PARTICIPATE IN THIS ACTION

1. Create a placard with a message or an artistic image showing solidarity for students rights to freedom of expression. Especially to students who come to the U.S. to pursue their studies.
2. Take a photo of yourself and/or your group holding the image. If you are not comfortable with being in the photo, no worries, just take the photo of the image or place the image against a known landmark in your community and send to [iar@aiusa.org](mailto:iar@aiusa.org)
3. Please post your solidarity message on your social media, tagging Amnesty International USA's X and Instagram accounts @AmnestyUSA and @AIUSAYouth so that we can retweet and share your messages!

Amnesty International USA will create a collage to share with students across the country.

**SUPPORT OUR  
DIGITAL ACTION  
FOR STUDENTS**

