

Alexander Koniuk
Prosecutor General of the Republic of Belarus
Internatsionalnaya Str., 22
220030 Minsk
Belarus

Dear Sir,

Emil Ostrovko was only 17 years old when in April 2018 he received a 10-year prison sentence for drug trafficking, later reduced to eight years. Emil had worked after school as a courier for an online company. His employer told him that the parcels he was delivering contained legal smoking mixtures – it was a lie; he was delivering illegal drugs. Investigators never looked for the owner of the company, or anyone else. Only Emil was prosecuted.

In Belarus, people serving lengthy prison sentences for petty drugs offences are treated far worse than other offenders and made to do long hours of hard labor. Emil was denied immediate access to vital medication and got frostbite after being forced to clear snow with his bare hands. While life has got a little better for Emil since he was moved to an adult prison in June, his youth and potential are being wasted because of highly punitive drug laws.

I urge you to immediately release Emil, clear his criminal record and ensure no children are imprisoned for minor, non-violent drug offences.

Yours sincerely,

Prime Minister of Canada
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A2
Canada

Dear Prime Minister,

The indigenous Anishinaabe community of Grassy Narrows, Ontario, has been hard-hit by mercury poisoning. The terrible impacts of toxic mercury dumped into the English and Wabigoon River system in the 1960s are still seen today.

Because of government inaction, generations of young people have grown up with devastating health problems and the loss of their cultural traditions.

In 2017, the federal government promised to deal with the mercury crisis “once and for all” – now is the time to make good on that promise.

Restore what mercury contamination has taken from the people of Grassy Narrows. These young people and future generations must have the opportunity to grow up in a thriving community and a healthy environment.

Yours sincerely,

Xi Jinping
President of the People's Republic of China
Zhongnanhai,
Xichangan'jie
Xichengqu, Beijing Shi 100017
People's Republic of China

Dear President Xi,

In 2017, Yiliyasijiang Reheman was studying at a university in Egypt and looking after his growing family. Then, in July of that year, people from your government pressured the Egyptian government to round up hundreds of Uyghur people in Egypt. Yiliyasijiang was among them. It is likely that Yiliyasijiang is now in one of your country's secret internment camps, where numerous human rights violations are taking place.

It is shocking and not right that up to one million mainly Muslim people have been taken away from their families and locked up in these camps since 2017. Please release Yiliyasijiang Reheman immediately and unconditionally and return him to his family – he has done nothing wrong.

Yours sincerely,

Public Prosecutor Nabil Sadek
Office of the Public Prosecutor
Madinat al-Rehab
Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt

Dear Sir,

I am concerned for the life and safety of Human Rights researcher, Ibrahim Ezz El-Din. On the evening of 11 June 2019, Ibrahim was walking home when four security officers dressed in plain clothes surrounded him and arrested him. When Ibrahim's family and lawyers asked where he was, police denied that he was ever detained.

Ibrahim is the fifth person linked with his organization, the Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedoms, to have been arrested in just three years. Hundreds like Ibrahim have been forcibly disappeared. They are held in secret detention for months, without ever being brought to trial and with no access to their lawyers or families and no external judicial oversight, where they are at a higher risk of torture and mistreatment. Many have been arrested simply for expressing their opinions peacefully, criticizing the authorities, or standing up for human rights. This pattern of abuse must end.

Please reveal where Ibrahim is, give him access to his family and lawyers and ensure that he is protected from torture and mistreatment. Release Ibrahim unless he is charged with an internationally recognized crime.

Yours sincerely,

Greek Minister of Citizen Protection
Michalis Chrisochoidis
Ministry of Citizen Protection
P. Kanellopoulou 4, 101 77
Athens, Greece

Dear Minister,

It is shocking that in Greece you can go to jail for saving lives. This is what happened to rescue workers Sarah Mardini and Seán Binder. They volunteered for a sea search and rescue organization in Lesbos and helped people in danger at sea. But they ended up in prison charged with spying, people smuggling and belonging to a criminal organization, until they were released on bail in December 2018 while awaiting trial.

No government should ever make criminals of people helping refugees, instead of doing more to protect a refugee's right to find a safe place to live. When people need to escape conflict, torture or other abuses in their countries, they often have no option but to make highly dangerous journeys to reach safety.

Please ensure that all charges against Sarah Mardini and Seán Binder are immediately dropped and acknowledge the legitimacy of humanitarian actions and the activities carried out by people acting in defense of refugee and migrant rights.

Yours sincerely,

Head of the Judiciary, Ebrahim Raisi
C/o Permanent Mission of Iran to the UN
Chemin du Petit-Saconnex 28
1209 Geneva, Switzerland

Dear Mr Raisi,

Yasaman Aryani and her mother, Monireh Arabshahi, were sentenced to a shocking 16 years in prison for campaigning against discriminatory forced veiling laws. They were arrested in April 2019 in relation to a video that showed them without headscarves on a women-only train handing out flowers on International Women's Day. This brave act, where Yasaman spoke of her hope for a future when all women in Iran would have the freedom to choose what to wear, was shared in a video that went viral on social media.

I urge you to release Yasaman Aryani and her mother Monireh Arabshahi, immediately and unconditionally as they are prisoners of conscience, jailed solely for their human rights work. Until they are released, please ensure they have regular contact with a lawyer of their choosing. I also urge you to stop criminalizing the work of women's rights defenders and abolish forced veiling laws.

Yours sincerely,

Lic. Mauricio Vila Dosal
Governor of Yucatán State
Palacio de Gobierno Calle 61 x 60 y 62
Col. Centro, C.P. 97000
Mérida, Yucatán
México

Dear Governor,

José Adrián was simply walking home from school when he stumbled onto the aftermath of a clash between a group of youths that ended up damaging a police car. The police jumped him and threw him against their car. Aged just 14 at the time, police arrested him with no explanation and never called his parents. They took him to the police station and tortured him there. His hearing disability could have prevented him to communicate well with police during his ordeal.

We ask you to make sure Adrián gets full reparations for the human rights violations he suffered and promote justice on his case.

Yours sincerely,

H.E. Babajide Olusola Sanwo-Olu
Governor of Lagos State
Governor's Office
Ikeja, Lagos State
Nigeria

Dear Sir,

Nasu Abdulaziz was 23 when men with guns and in bulldozers descended without warning on his community of Otodo Gbame, Lagos. Government must investigate this act of violence which resulted in the loss of numerous homes in the century-old community. Homes have been burned down, families have been shot at, tear gas has been used and livelihoods destroyed. Nine people are believed to have been killed, another 15 are still missing and 30,000 people have been left homeless.

Ensure a full investigation into the forced eviction of Nasu's community, and make sure that everyone is resettled and given full compensation.

Yours sincerely,

President Rodrigo R. Duterte
President of the Philippines
Malacañang Complex
J.P. Laurel Street
San Miguel, Manila 1005
Philippines

Dear President,

Marinel Sumook Ubaldo was only 16 years-old when she faced the disastrous effects of climate change. Marinel survived the deadly typhoon Yolanda in 2013 to become a leading youth activist, dedicated to ensuring the Philippine government, and governments around the world, confront climate change and tackle its effects on her community, and others like them.

Please support Marinel's cause by ensuring that you do all you can to enable the residents of Matarinao village in Salcedo, Eastern Samar (and other vulnerable communities in the Philippines) to live in decent conditions, including having access to enough food, water, housing, electricity and toilets. So far not enough has been done and the community has been left to live in unhealthy conditions, where it is hard to earn a livelihood.

Yours sincerely,

Permanent Mission of the Republic of South Sudan to the United Nations
336 East 45th Street, 5th Floor
New York, NY 10017
USA

Dear Ambassador,

I am writing in concern for Magai Matioy Ngong, a 17-year-old on death row in South Sudan. He was 15 years old when he was convicted of the murder of his cousin and sentenced to death by hanging. During his trial, Magai told the judge that he was only 15 years old at the time of the crime and that his cousin's death was an accident. Magai did not have a lawyer during his trial.

Anyone below 18 years of age at the time they were involved in a crime, must not be sentenced to death, let alone be executed. How old they are at the time of trial or sentencing is not relevant. The use of the death penalty against people like Magai is strictly prohibited by Section 21(2) the Transitional Constitution of the Republic of South Sudan, 2011 and under international human rights law (Article 37(a) of the Convention on the Rights of a Child, to which South Sudan is a party.

Last year, seven people were hanged in South Sudan: one of them, like Magai, was just a child. This must stop and Magai's death sentence must be cancelled.

Yours sincerely,