

**WRITE FOR RIGHTS**  
**2022**  
*Campaign Report*



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# WRITE FOR RIGHTS 2022 – SOME FACTS

For the twenty-second consecutive year, Write for Rights activities took place across the world. While online actions continued to increase, we also saw a major return to offline events, as Covid 19 restrictions were lifted in most countries. From running marathons in Zimbabwe, to music concerts in Mongolia, on the ground campaigning was very much back on track.

Collaborating with Amnesty International's newest global campaign, national entities drew attention to the world's need to protect the right to protest.

As we rapidly head into work on Write for Rights 2023, now we take the time to reflect on what we all did together and the amazing ways we worked for positive human rights change in the lives of 13 individuals at risk. Here are some facts about Write for Rights 2022:

At least...

**5,320,261** actions worldwide

For the first time since the global pandemic, together we achieved

**OVER FIVE MILLION ACTIONS** ...

... a **14.2% INCREASE FROM 2021**

2022 saw **THE INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT** digitally collect almost **DOUBLE** the numbers of actions from 2021

Of the total numbers of actions, at least **234,801** were **SOLIDARITY LETTERS & CARDS**

National Entities reported an astounding **58% INCREASE IN SUPPORTERS**

**ALMOST 250,000 ACTIONS** were taken for individuals at risk outside the global 10

# NUMBER OF ACTIONS FOR EACH INDIVIDUAL

INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP	COUNTRY	ESTIMATED NUMBER OF ACTIONS
Dorgelesse Nguessan	Cameroon	525,821
Cecillia Chimбири, Joanah Mamombe and Netsai Marova	Zimbabwe	510,430
Luis Manuel Otero Alcántara	Cuba	467,925
Yren Rotela and Mariana Sepúlveda	Paraguay	316,349
Chow Hang-tung	Hong Kong	479,279
Shahnewaz Chowdhury	Bangladesh	526,773
Aleksandra Skochilenko	Russia	594,401
Zineb Redouane	France	374,585
Vahid Afkari	Iran	446,173
Nasser Zefzafi	Morocco	386,405

These numbers are based on data reported by participating Amnesty International national entities as well as information collected on digital actions taken by individuals based in countries where Amnesty International does not have a presence.

Not all entities were able to share their data, and some were not able to collate accurate or complete numbers. There are likely many more actions taken around the world without us being able to track them. You will notice that the total number of actions for each of the individuals does not correspond with the global total of actions recorded for Write for Rights 2022. This is because the total includes actions that were recorded, but where entities were unable to differentiate which individuals the actions were taken for.

## A Note on Language and Terminology

Please note that we do not use the word “case” when referring to a person featured in the campaign, as this would be dehumanizing. However, we do occasionally say “the case of (individual at risk’s name)”, to refer to the specific Write for Rights campaigning and associated outputs that we do with and for an individual or group, but it is not intended to be seen or used as a synonym for the person whose campaign we are talking about.

# HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

On the following pages you will find the impact assessments for each of the ten individuals and groups featured in the campaign. The assessments give a brief overview of the individual or group's story, and how they were came to be selected to be a part of the campaign, any changes to the situation of the individual or group, some information on the wider context of human rights issues happening in the countries/regions at the same time that may have had an impact, and lastly, how Amnesty International intends to keep up work with and for the individual or group featured after the close of the campaign.

Impact assessments are carried out in several ways, including interviews with the individuals and groups themselves or their representatives, with family members and local non-governmental organisations also working with them. In addition to this, country experts look at signs of impact from the authorities, such as big obvious changes to laws or official procedures, to more incremental changes such as differences in the treatment of the individual or group themselves. Since this assessment has been carried out shortly after the end of the campaign, we are still unable to see the full impact. For a full assessment of the impact, national entities can keep following the individuals or groups' casefiles on the Individuals at Risk Platform and keep an eye on the Write for Rights Podio space.

# DORGELESSE NGUESSAN – CAMEROON



## Introduction

Dorgelesse Nguessan is a 38-year-old single mother and hairdresser. She had never been politically active, but her concerns about the state of the economy in Cameroon – and the country as a whole – led her to join a protest organized by the leading political opposition party (Mouvement pour la Renaissance du Cameroun - MRC) on 22 September 2020 in the city of Douala. It was her first ever protest. The security forces responded to the protest by firing rubber bullets, teargas and water cannons to disperse the protestors. They arrested over 500 people, including Dorgelesse. She was taken to a police station and a week later transferred to Douala's central prison. She was subsequently charged with 'insurrection, assembly, meetings and public demonstrations' and tried by a military court. On 7 December 2021, the court found her guilty of the charges and sentenced her to five years in prison. Her lawyers appealed the verdict, but the appeal was not scheduled immediately.

Amnesty International had documented the arrests of the protestors at the MRC demonstrations in both Douala and Yaoundé, and went on to campaign against the arbitrary

detention of those protestors, as well as those arrested at peaceful protests calling for an end to the perceived marginalization of the country's Anglophone regions. The 'Don't Shut Them Up' campaign ran from January to March 2022, and Dorgelesse's story was one of four that featured prominently.

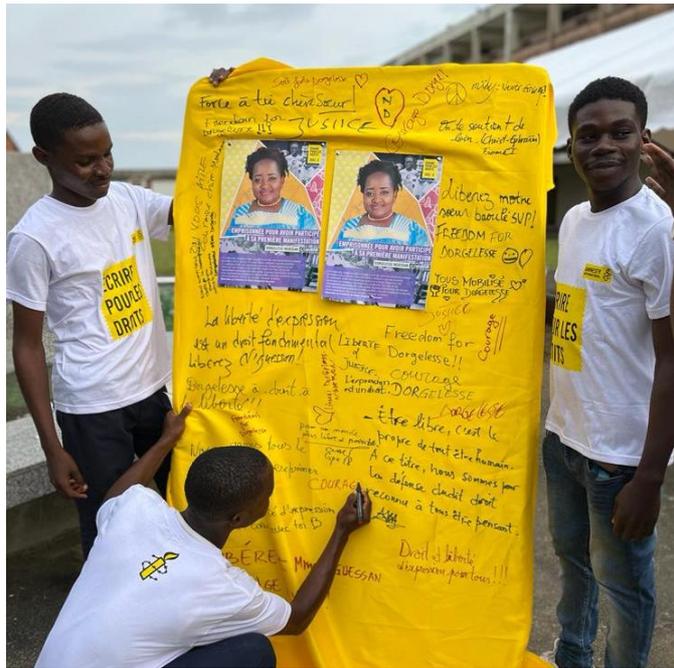
Dorgelesse was responsive to answering our questions about her situation via her lawyer, so Amnesty International had access to relevant documents and a very detailed account of her experiences. Furthermore, from the evidence available in her case it was very obvious that she should not have been prosecuted. Amnesty International wanted to build on the pressure generated by the 'Don't Shut Them Up' campaign and show the Cameroonian government that it wouldn't be giving up on trying to get Dorgelesse and others like her released. Indeed, for the Cameroonian civil society organizations Amnesty International works with Dorgelesse's Write for Rights campaign was a continuation of the campaign launched earlier in the year. Although Write for Rights focused on Dorgelesse's case, it allowed Amnesty International to raise and advocate against the same human rights violations (i.e. crackdowns on freedom of expression and freedom of peaceful assembly, and arbitrary detention) that affect a large number of people in Cameroon. Amnesty International hoped that the global pressure placed on the Cameroon government would force them to release Dorgelesse and those detained in similar circumstances.

## Context of human rights concerns in Cameroon

The Cameroon government is fighting Anglophone armed separatist groups in the Northwest and Southwest regions, as well as Boko Haram in the Far North. It also has a 90-year-old President who has ruled the country with an iron fist for over 40 years; as such the country faces a power struggle between factions of the political elite over who will take his place. Despite this, there is a broad consensus among the elites that the status quo must be maintained, and that critics and dissenters must be silenced in order to keep the country under control. Indeed, there has been a brutal crackdown in recent months against journalists, in particular those exposing corruption among the ruling classes. Various members

of the government are trying to position themselves as strong future leaders, capable of managing the country's crises with a firm hand. Subsequently, few are willing to make concessions and release people arbitrarily detained for participating in protests alongside the leading opposition party.

Across the West and Central Africa region, crackdowns on protest are both increasingly common and increasingly tolerated by the international community, including countries that act as financial and technical partners, perhaps because of global power struggles to expand or maintain influence in Africa. Indeed, western countries that used to wield their influence over African leaders to urge them to respect human rights are now more reluctant to do so, for fear that their partnership will be spurned in favour of economic partnerships with Russia or China.



These factors have been obstacles to Dorgelesse's release so far. However, there have been many situations in Cameroon where international pressure on the President and other authorities have yielded positive results, as in the release of MRC leader Maurice Kamto (2019), or arrests of high-profile people allegedly involved in the murder of journalist Martinez Zogo (2023). Amnesty International hopes that when the Cameroon government sees that we are not giving up talking about Dorgelesse (indeed, many national entities are continuing to plan actions), it will eventually result in Dorgelesse's release.

## A chronology

Amnesty International came into contact with Dorgelesse via the lawyer that represents all those arrested at the MRC protests. She was very responsive to our interest and provided a lot of detailed responses to our questions. The team working on Cameroon had such a clear sense of her case, and details of her personal experience of what happened, that they were sure that her story would resonate with audiences. Contact was mainly between the Central Africa Campaigner, and Dorgelesse's lawyer and family members.

## Highlights

Some highlights from Dorgelesse's campaign included:

- Seeing Dorgelesse depicted in art by activists in Spain and Hungary – her image was so skilfully and sensitively drawn;
- Having thousands of beautiful, individualised letters of solidarity with Dorgelesse flood into the Amnesty International Regional Office in Dakar from all over the world;
- Translating solidarity messages collected via a webpage in Australia and conveying them to Dorgelesse. She was very moved and said she couldn't stop reading them;
- Seeing photos of Amnesty International Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana and Benin's letter-writing marathons and petition-collection stalls campaigning for Dorgelesse;
- Sending on artwork and messages of encouragement and strength to Dorgelesse from members in Canada;
- Seeing Amnesty International UK publish media articles and lobby the Cameroon Embassy in relation to Dorgelesse's case;
- Being in touch with so many national entities at once, whether by talking through Dorgelesse's

case with them all at a well-attended meeting, sending talks on Dorgelesse's case from the Central Africa team to national sections, or updating the Podio platform with news on Dorgelesse and responding to questions and comments from sections. It was heartening to have so much contact with the Amnesty International movement – and inspiring to see so much concern and attention towards Dorgelesse's situation and for her as an individual.

- Sending 40kg of boxes of letters received by the Regional Office to Dorgelesse's lawyer, to be delivered to her in person.

Through her lawyer, Amnesty International would regularly update Dorgelesse about the letters, actions, meetings and materials being developed and delivered for her campaign, and she was always genuinely thrilled and encouraged to hear about them. She managed to 'participate' a little, by sending answers to specific questions from national entities, such as a question about her experience of Christmas since she had been in prison. She and her family always expressed their immense gratitude for Amnesty International's work and said how much it boosted their morale and sense of being supported.

### Outcomes of Dorgelesse's campaign

In early November 2022, as the campaign was already getting international attention, Dorgelesse's case came to the attention of the Cameroon authorities. In an unusual move, Dorgelesse was summoned by the prison authorities on 9 November to discuss how she was, her prison conditions and her health. She was also taken to see the general doctor of the hospital for a medical check. The following day, she had a visit from an external official who asked questions about her case. None of this was typical.



Also in early November, the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention issued a decision that the arrests and detentions of MRC leaders (whose lawyers had submitted their case to the Working Group) were arbitrary. Some of those individuals had been arrested and detained at the same protest as Dorgelesse. Following this ruling, Dorgelesse's lawyer submitted habeas corpus requests to free Dorgelesse and 22 of her fellow detainees in Douala, as well as 37 in Yaoundé, on the basis that they were arrested and detained in circumstances similar to those whose detentions were deemed arbitrary by the UN experts.

The habeas corpus hearings started in December, and on 25 January 2023 the request for their freedom through this channel was eventually denied. The State Prosecution had argued that the offences committed by the detainees were punishable as provided for in the Penal Code and that they were judged and sentenced accordingly. The Prosecution argued that they had already exercised their right to appeal and that the habeas corpus judge was not an appeals judge. The habeas corpus judge ruled against releasing them, in line with the arguments of the Prosecution Service (representing the State). Interestingly though – according to Dorgelesse, the habeas corpus judge noted the attention to these cases and the pressure for their release recently generated by the 'human rights community' and the US government (a key advocacy target of ours).

While the habeas corpus case was ongoing, at 7pm on 18 January, just after the State Prosecution made its arguments, Dorgelesse's lawyers received news that the appeal for the 23 detainees would begin the following day. They had filed an appeal against the conviction of all the protestors back in 2020, and had pushed for it to be scheduled, but it never had been, so they were surprised by the sudden, last-minute announcement. The initial hearing took place on 19 January, and the next hearing will take place

on 10 April 2023.

Amnesty International welcomes the move to schedule the appeal and hopes it could lead to the release of Dorgelesse and her co-defendants.

It is difficult to determine exactly what level of pressure Cameroonian government has been facing and what impact that is having, if any. Diplomatic missions in the country did not issue public statements on Dorgelesse's case, although Amnesty International did receive responses to our letters from the British High Commission and the EU delegation. However, it is likely that they did raise the case privately, given that Amnesty International raised it with them both in meetings and letters, and given the likelihood that news of the global campaign reached the diplomats via other channels. Amnesty International had no response from the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, nor from the UN Special Procedures to whom it had sent letters regarding Dorgelesse's case. The sheer volume of letters received from activists around the world by the Regional Office for Dorgelesse suggests that the Cameroonian authorities received large numbers of letters too, in line with campaign strategy followed by Amnesty International. Through her lawyer, Dorgelesse has repeatedly conveyed to Amnesty International things like: 'All the prisoners here are talking about my case', 'Everyone wants to have Amnesty working on their case', and 'The pressure is working'. She was very hopeful about the prospects for her release via the habeas corpus case and was convinced it was due to the Write for Rights campaign. Now hopes rest on the appeals process (due to continue in April 2023).

**Dorgelesse:** *'I will never forget what Amnesty did for me. I will remember it all my life. Even here in prison, people were coming up to me and saying, "I know who you are, I've seen you in Amnesty publications and in the news." People were talking about it. They even said, "I've signed your petition". Everyone was signing the petition; everyone was talking about it. It's encouraged me so much.'*

*'I wonder what would have happened if I hadn't been supported by Amnesty. I felt lost. I don't want you to stop campaigning for me: please keep going until I am free.'*

**Dorgelesse's lawyer:** *'According to the discussions and comments I've been seeing online, everyone here is well aware of the Amnesty campaign and everyone trusts Amnesty. In terms of the effects – the Cameroon authorities are also very aware that the case of Dorgelesse and her co-detainees are being monitored and I believe their prison treatment has changed somewhat as a result. All the political prisoners have actually been noting to the prison authorities that their conditions have improved. So I can say the Amnesty International campaign has made the prison authorities more cautious. We no longer see the abuses we saw at the beginning of their detention – there are no longer serious incidents. So the campaign has done well in terms of prison treatment. In terms of the effect on government and judges... they are still being prudent – no one wants to take responsibility and tell the truth. But it's also not because of individuals – there is widespread dysfunction across institutions in Cameroon at the moment. We end up not knowing where we can turn to.'*

**Dorgelesse's mother:** *'Greetings to all the members of Amnesty International. I thank you all so much for what you have done for my daughter and my grandson. We had done everything we could to beg and pray for the release of Dorgelesse. She worked so hard to support us (myself with my health problems and her son, who has sickle cell anaemia). It's been so hard with her gone. But no one listened to us – we felt alone, abandoned. But then – thank God! Amnesty heard our prayers. Your support brought us so much courage, so much relief. Thank you for all your efforts! We know now that we are not alone.'*

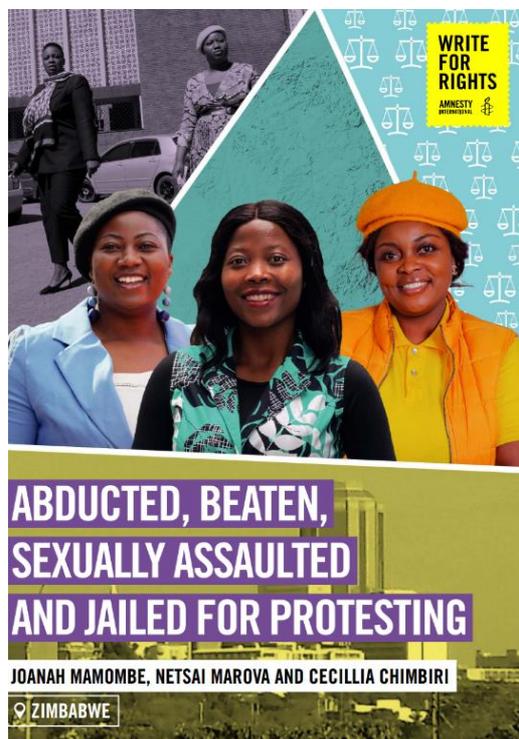
## Next steps

Amnesty International's West and Central Africa Regional Office in Dakar has sent 40kg of boxes of correspondence for Dorgelesse to her lawyer, and he plans to deliver these to her in prison. A letter from the Regional Director to accompany the handover of the petition signatures to the President of Cameroon is also being prepared.

A strategy to continue campaigning has already been developed; this will soon be shared on the IAR platform. Efforts to support Dorgelesse by national entities continue: the Central Africa team is still working with various national entities on events and solidarity actions (such as sending art and messages of hope to Dorgelesse).

The Central Africa team's next report on Cameroon will examine human rights abuses and violations committed in the context of the Anglophone crisis, and this will include a focus on the crackdown on the right to freedom of expression, describing cases of people harassed or arbitrarily detained for speaking out about the crisis. Therefore, advocacy and campaigning will continue around the need to free people arbitrarily detained in Cameroon for protesting or speaking out, and Amnesty International's efforts towards structural change, such as calling for reforms of laws that criminalize the right to freedom of expression, will have an impact on all such cases, whether in the Anglophone context or otherwise. Therefore, Amnesty International's work will remain pertinent to the human rights issues at play in Dorgelesse's situation.

# CECILLIA CHIMBIRI, JOANAH MAMOMBE AND NETSAI MAROVA – ZIMBABWE



## Introduction

Joanah Mamombe, Cecillia Chimbiri, and Netsai Marova, three activists, were arrested on 13 May 2020 for leading an anti-government protest taking place that day over the authorities' poor handling of the Covid-19 outbreak and widespread hunger in Zimbabwe. They were forcibly disappeared from police custody on the same day and were missing until 15 May 2020. During their abduction they were sexually assaulted and tortured with their clothes torn. On 15 May 2020, they were found abandoned in Bindura, about 87km from Harare. Subsequently they were hospitalised. On 26 May 2020, police charged the activists with gathering with intent to promote public violence and breach of peace in violation of Covid-19 regulations. They were also charged with 'publishing or communicating false statements prejudicial to the state'. Both charges carry prison sentences. No investigation has been initiated into their disappearance and their credible allegations of torture, including sexual assault. Instead, they have suffered great emotional and physical pain at the hands of the state and the judiciary.

Amnesty International aimed to expose the state apparatus of abduction and enforced disappearances. Zimbabwe has a history of abductions and enforced disappearances. Many victims are forcibly disappeared. The few who are released are tortured and threatened not to report their ordeal. In most cases, the narrative is now turned against them; that they forcibly abducted themselves to tarnish the image of the state or to get Western sympathy. The fact that Joanah Mamombe, Cecillia Chimbiri and Netsai Marova were bold enough to speak about their ordeal by narrating what happened to them made them victims of state orchestrated persecution.

Amnesty International aimed to get general global solidarity for the three women. Sexual and Gender based violence (SGBV) in Zimbabwe is a big problem. Instead of supporting victims of SGBV, some sectors of society are quick to apportion blame on the victim for putting themselves in such situations and in some cases, victims are labelled as prostitutes. The three women were portrayed as sex workers who had a misunderstanding with their clients. In many cases of victim blaming, victims find themselves with limited to no solidarity. This case was put forward to generate solidarity with the three women.

Amnesty International also aimed to disrupt the state's narrative: They were gagged, yet the state continued to speak, controlling the narrative against them. It was shocking that some civil society organisation leaders believed the narrative of the state over them. The stringent bail conditions ensured that the three could not tell their story in their own voice, which is a violation of their freedom of expression.

Furthermore, Amnesty International aimed to get justice. The charges were ridiculous and the persecution at both the hands of the state and judiciary showed that there was no justice in sight.

## Context of human rights concerns in Zimbabwe

In the background of Joanah, Cecillia and Netsai's campaign, Zimbabwe is approaching a high stakes election in August 2023, thus the country is in full election mode. The political and electoral playing field remains deeply uneven and largely in favour of the ruling party, Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU PF). ZANU PF has ramped up its campaign through clamping down on civic space, use of political violence against opponents, arrests and arbitrary detention of activists, as well as the amendment of laws to secure ruling party victory.

A Private Voluntary Organisation Bill was passed in February 2023. This bill, if signed into law, would impose serious restrictions on the rights to freedom of association and expression and threaten the existence of organisations working on human rights in Zimbabwe. President Emmerson Mnangagwa has on several occasions threatened to expel groups. The timing of the law is also worrying considering the role of civil society in voter education.

The ruling party has also insinuated the need to change the electoral law to prohibit anyone convicted of with current case in court from participating in the elections. Many dissenting voices including members of the opposition have been arrested and have slapped with frivolous charges. Cases have taken long to complete and if these amendments are made, they would possibly target a person like Joanah from running for political office.

This political backdrop has a direct impact on the three women's case. The ruling party has attempted to thwart any form of dissent from journalists, human rights defenders, civil society organisations and political opponents. This means a hostile response to any threats to power. Evidence of judicial interference is there since 2017 when Emmerson Mnangagwa took power from Robert Mugabe. Magistrates and judges are now appointed based on political proximity and the magistrates appointed to hear the case of the three have been accused of being impartial extensions of the ruling party.



Urgent Action, calling for their release.

When they were found, Amnesty International worked with the lawyers and doctors' association that was responsible for medical and legal documentation and worked with a forensic team in South Africa to document evidence, since the one lab that could do testing in Zimbabwe is government-owned.

## A chronology

The case of Joanah Mamombe, Cecillia Chimhiri and Netsai Marova became known to Amnesty International because one of the priorities of the country team working on Zimbabwe is in abductions and enforced disappearances. When Joanah, Cecillia and Netsai were removed from state custody, Amnesty International issued a statement and made contact with their close family to get any updates. Amnesty International also issued an

After they were released from hospital, a friend of the three women reached out to Amnesty International requesting our intervention, as the persecution continued. Amnesty International, through the Zimbabwe Campaigner, eventually managed to form a WhatsApp Group with the three and get a detailed account of their ordeal. Amnesty International then started tracking their court appearances and persecution.

## Highlights

Some particular highlights of Joanah, Cecillia and Netsai’s campaign included:

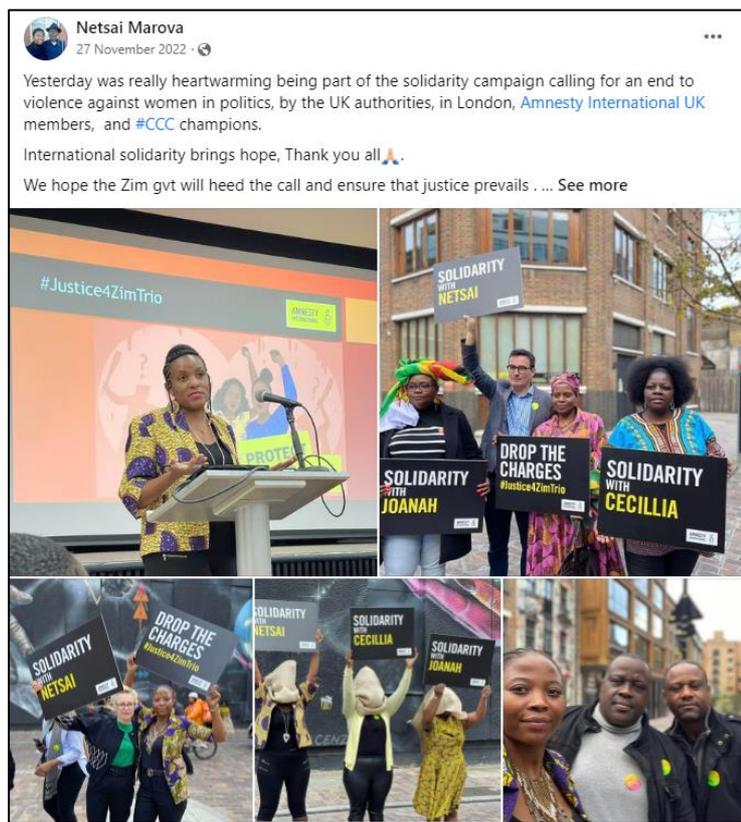
- Amnesty International Zimbabwe were champions of this campaign on the ground. They held two letter writing events in country, where members and supporters took action on the campaign.
- Netsai is based in Norway and spoke at a letter writing and action taking event hosted by Amnesty International Norway in November 2022. She gave her harrowing account of what had happened to her and her friends. This was an incredibly powerful moment in the campaign and support online was immense. Netsai said it was heart-warming to see solidarity, support and action being taken on a global level.
- Netsai was also hosted by Amnesty International UK on International Women Human Rights Defenders Day. While in the UK she managed to visit the House of Lords and also participated in demonstration outside the Zimbabwe Embassy. Amnesty International UK, working collaboratively with Netsai’s friend, Chenayi, was able to mobilise some Zimbabwean people living in the UK to attend the protest.
- Other Amnesty International entities including Amnesty International Ireland hosted online activities which Netsai was able to attend virtually
- Amnesty International Chile held an embroidery workshop, with participants creating a beautiful canvas which will soon be sent to Joanah and Cecilia.

## Outcomes of Joanah, Cecillia and Netsai’s campaign

At the moment, the case against Joanah and Cecilia has been postponed indefinitely in court. This perhaps can be attributed to the pressure authorities are receiving from Write for Rights. With judicial interference, this pressure received by authorities might have been translated to the courts.

Increased solidarity on their case has brought some relief to Joanah, Cecilia and Netsai, who all along thought they were alone and that no one wanted to associate with them.

Moreover, the actions by Amnesty International have generated in-country support. A Twitter user was inspired to mobilise local activists to provide solidarity by attending their court sessions. Joanah and Cecilia informed Amnesty International that there were moments when there was no one else in court except their parents. Now the solidarity in court



has grown.

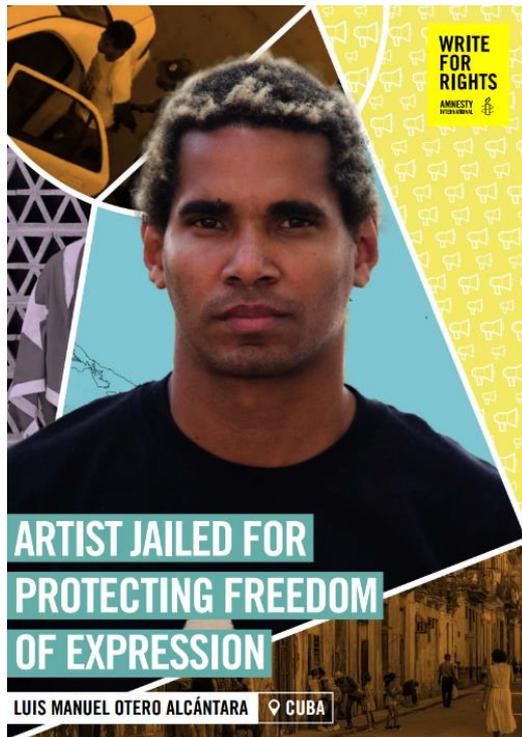
### **Next steps**

Petitions will be delivered to the Office of the President by Amnesty International Zimbabwe. This will be done in batches. National entities can continue to send petitions directly to the Zimbabwean authorities.

Solidarity messages will be delivered through a handing over ceremony that is being organized by Amnesty International Zimbabwe.

A campaign strategy is in available and will enable members to continue working on Joana, Cecilia and Netsai's case. This will allow activists around the world to put continued pressure on the Zimbabwean authorities.

# LUIS MANUEL OTERO ALCÁNTARA – CUBA



## Introduction

Luis Manuel Otero Alcántara is an afro-Cuban artist and a key figure of the San Isidro Movement, a diverse group of independent artists, journalists and activists that defend freedom of expression in Cuba. Luis Manuel has been named prisoner of conscience multiple times, and was most recently charged, detained, and imprisoned in the context of the historical 11 July 2021 protests, when thousands of people took to the streets across Cuba to exercise their freedom of expression and assembly in a way that had not been witnessed in decades. Luis Manuel was detained on July 11, soon after posting a video expressing his intention to join the protests.

In May of last year, Luis Manuel's trial began behind closed doors, without any international media, independent human rights organizations, or embassy representatives allowed access to the court. In June 2022, he was sentenced to five years in prison, after a trial behind closed doors. According to those close to him, authorities permit family visits every 15 days, and approximately three or four minute phone calls twice a

week. However, according to his friends, authorities have routinely denied his visit and call rights many times during his detention. He remains in the Guanajay maximum security prison.

Luis Manuel was chosen as part of the Write for Rights campaign based on the assessment that international pressure and solidarity could be key in catalysing his immediate and unconditional release. Luis Manuel is also a symbol of resilience towards the policy of repression that remains in place in modern-day Cuba, and Luis Manuel is just one of many hundreds of people who have been criminalized simply for peacefully protesting in Cuba since July 2021.

## Context of human rights concerns in Cuba

The Cuban authorities have continued to act on old patterns of repression with the aim of silencing dissent in the country. In early December, a press release was published, highlighting our concerns over Cuba's new Penal Code, which came into force on 1 December, and [Amnesty International believes](#) risks further entrenching long-standing limitations on freedom of expression and assembly.

## A chronology

Amnesty International has been in contact with Luis Manuel and Movimiento San Isidro (MSI) since at least 2018, when we began documenting the arbitrary detentions of Cuban artists protesting [Decree 349](#), which limited freedom of artistic expression in Cuba. From that point





forward, we have monitored the continued [harassment](#) and intimidation of members of the MSI by authorities and maintained communications with Luis Manuel, who was jailed for two weeks in March of 2020, and named prisoner of conscience by Amnesty International for [the first time](#).

On 26 November 2020, following a police raid on the headquarters of the movement in Old-Havana, authorities took Luis Manuel into custody for several days. Following this event Amnesty International named Luis Manuel prisoner of conscience for a [second time](#). In May of 2021, state security officials took Luis Manuel from his home, the headquarters of the San Isidro Movement, where he was carrying out a new hunger strike. According to information from the NGO Cubalex and state media, he was taken to the emergency ward of the Hospital Universitario “General Calixto García” in Havana.

On [11 July](#), thousands of people in Cuba took to the streets in one of the largest demonstrations seen in the country in decades. Luis Manuel was detained on that day after posting a video stating his intentions to join the protest and has been held in prison since then. In August,

Luis Manuel was named prisoner of conscience [again](#). Amnesty International has continued to follow Luis Manuel’s case since and has been in close contact with his agent and representative, Claudia Genlui.

## Highlights

- Amnesty International Canada organized an in-person event in early December and shared a video of Coco Fusco, a renowned Cuban artist and curator, speaking about Luis Manuel’s case and how it highlights the issue of freedom of expression in Cuba. Organizers of the event from Amnesty International Canada personally wrote to Amnesty International’s Americas Regional office to say how powerful the video sent by Coco had been at the event, and what a positive response it had received.
- In early December, Amnesty International Spain took part in the solidarity action planned for Luis Manuel’s birthday. They commemorated Luis Manuel’s birthday at an [event](#) in front of the Cuban embassy in Madrid, with participants dressing in bright pink, Luis Manuel’s favorite colour. Various Cuban activists currently living in Madrid participated in the solidarity action, and Amnesty International Spain posted a video of the event on their Instagram page.
- At the end of November, a video that was filmed as part of the commemoration of the first anniversary of the July 11 protests featuring Cuban-American celebrities was re-edited in order to highlight [Luis Manuel’s case](#) and featured on social media.
- On International Human Right’s Day, Luis Manuel’s case was raised by two [MP’s](#) in the UK Parliament, after lobbying by Amnesty International UK.

## Outcomes of Luis Manuel’s campaign

Amnesty International is not aware of any movements, either positive or negative, in Luis Manuel’s case. Given the restrictions on receiving information related to Cuba and Cuban prisoners, Amnesty International has not been able to assess the impact of the Write for Rights campaign on Luis Manuel’s case.

## **Next steps**

Amnesty International's Americas Regional Office is arranging for a group of artists to help bring to life a piece of art using letters that were sent in solidarity with Luis Manuel from all corners of the world. The artistic initiative would take place in the context of Cuba's Universal Periodic Review, that is taking place this year. Amnesty International will continue to campaign for Luis Manuel and a campaign strategy has been developed to guide this.

# YREN ROTELA AND MARIANA SEPÚLVEDA - PARAGUAY



Since their childhood, both Yren and Mariana have undertaken the process of constructing their identity as transgender women, a process that in the case of Yren began at the age of eight and that she embraced completely at the age of 13. For Mariana this process began at the age of seven; she began her hormonal treatment at the age of 11 and at the age of 15 she finished embracing completely her identity as a trans woman. This is not an easy process to carry out in an environment as conservative as the one in Paraguay, where a patriarchal and heteronormative system is firmly entrenched, and surrounded by violence and discrimination in social, family, school and institutional spheres.

Yren and Mariana believe that as part of the journey towards ensuring that transgender people in Paraguay enjoy a dignified and equal life it is essential that the Paraguayan state and its institutions recognize the identities of transgender people; that is, that they guarantee laws and procedures that allow transgender people to change of their names in law, if they so wish, to bring them into line with their self-identified gender identities.

For this reason, Yren and Mariana initiated a judicial process in 2016 requesting a legal change of their names and amendments to their birth certificates, expressly invoking the rights guaranteed by the American Convention on Human Rights.

Between 2017 and 2018, the court issued its rulings on the appeals of Yren and Mariana and ordered the Civil Registry to amend the registration of their names. However, the Paraguayan Public Prosecutor's Office filed an appeal to overturn this decision, so the appeal and subsequent judicial ruling have yet to be confirmed or implemented. After four years of procedural delay and stagnation, the Civil and Commercial Appeals Chamber sent the files of Yren and Mariana to the Constitutional Chamber of the Supreme Court of Justice to determine constitutionality and applicability in the cases.

In 2022, Yren and Mariana sought the support of the Paraguayan Human Rights Coordinating Committee (Coordinadora de Derechos Humanos del Paraguay, CODEHUPY) and, after analysing the situation and the possibilities for advocacy, it was decided to present an individual communication, as provided for in the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, before the UN Human Rights Committee, in the hope that this international body would issue a recommendation to the Paraguayan state to recognize the legal identity of Yren and Mariana and thus set a precedent for advancing the rights of transgender people and the LGBTIQ+ community in the country.

Yren and Mariana's case was selected for Write for Rights 2022 because they represent many transgender women and LGBTIQ+ people's realities with regards to the challenges they face in getting their human rights recognized and guaranteed.

## Context of human rights concerns in Paraguay

As part of the preparation of the campaign, a public conference was held in September 2022 to publicise the presentation of the cases of Yren and Mariana to the United Nations Human Rights Committee.

On 17 October, Paraguayan transgender organisations presented to National Congress a draft bill, as a day of recognition, promotion and protection of the rights of transgender people.

In November, the press published a leaked internal circular from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs asking the Paraguayan diplomatic corps to avoid mentioning issues referring to "gender issues", as well as using terms such as "diversity", "intersectionality" and "sexual and reproductive rights". The Ministry of Education and Science publicly called on teachers and school managements to continue to abide by a 2017 resolution banning gendered teaching materials and urged teachers to file official complaints if such materials were found.

In December, after four years of stalling the judicial process in one of the cases, the judicial authorities unlocked the case of Mariana Sepúlveda so that the case of Mariana Sepúlveda could take its course. Also in December, the State responded to the presentation made to the UN Human Rights Committee. The UN Human Rights Committee itself is acting with unexpected agility in processing the various transfers.

In March 2023, the human rights report of the US State Department was issued, which reflected the situation faced by these trans women and other trans people. Also in March, comments were submitted to the State's response to the UN Human Rights Committee.

## A chronology

Since its beginnings in Paraguay, Amnesty International Paraguay has supported the struggle of the LGBTIQ+ community, and since 2018, it has been part of a consortium with other entities in the Americas working for the development and implementation of a project whose objective is to empower and mobilise activists campaigning for the rights of LGBTIQ+ people.

Amnesty International Paraguay decided that, considering that the trans population is the most vulnerable within the LGBTIQ+ community, a campaign in favour of the trans community should be carried out. Thus, in 2021, a partnership was formed between Amnesty International Paraguay, the Panambi Association, which defends the rights of trans people, and the Human Rights Coordinator of Paraguay, who promoted the Name Change project.

Ten trans people were demanding that the Paraguayan state adopt their real name as their legal name. Amongst them were Yren and Mariana, who agreed to be part of the Write for Rights campaign.



## Highlights

Write For Rights was launched locally in Paraguay with a solidarity action by renowned comedian Mani Delvalle.

During the following days, well-known and recognised public figures joined in with posts on their social networks. Amnesty International Paraguay also publicised the case of Yren and Mariana on a media tour and in the streets, collecting signatures for the petition calling on the Paraguayan

Supreme Court to speed up the requests for name changes.

In addition, Kimberly Ayala and Mariana Sepúlveda did an International Write for Rights Tour, raising awareness of the situation of the transgender community in Paraguay. Some highlights of Kimberly and Marian's time in Brussels, Luxembourg and Amsterdam include:

- They participated in the Write for Rights events and solidarity letter-writing marathon activities.
- They attended the 25N march in Brussels.
- They held meetings with authorities of these countries and the European Union.
- They had meetings with activists.
- They held meetings with allied organisations working in the defence of human rights.

Amnesty International Paraguay handed over the signatures collected in Paraguay, which are added to the thousands from all over the world that the representatives of the Justice System received, demanding Yren and Mariana's requests for the legal and official change of their names were dealt with quickly.

Finally, Amnesty International Paraguay carried out a closing action of the campaign in which Yren and Mariana thanked their supporters around the world for the solidarity received through messages, letters and actions. More than 140,000 signatures were sent to the Paraguayan authorities.

### Outcomes of Yren and Mariana's campaign

The Write for Rights campaign had a significant impact on Yren and Mariana's daily lives, as well as on trans and LGBTIQ+ organisations, activists from Amnesty International Paraguay and allied organisations, and finally on specific authorities.



Yren and Mariana said they had never felt so much support, encouragement and love from so many people. The avalanche of letters was impressive and they were read with great emotion. Mariana and Kimberly Ayala, a transgender lawyer who participated in the tour, said that they had grown a lot as activists and leaders of their organisation, and that because of the support they were able to discover new skills and be proud of their struggle.

Yren and Mariana's campaign was met with a wide-reaching and positive response in Paraguay. Organisations that do not normally join trans campaigns, such as peasants and indigenous people's organisations, heard about these demands, got informed and joined in.

The authorities could not avoid the campaign. Some congratulated the initiative, and most importantly, after four years of stagnation, the case Mariana Sepúlveda was finally unblocked and passed to the relevant national level.

**Mariana Sepúlveda:** *"The tour awakened my abilities that were dormant, now I can speak in public without fear to continue demanding my rights".*

**Yren Rotela:** *"I really have to say that the love that I once did not feel, today is something very strong and that is why I always say that there is no time for more hate, we only have time to love".*

## Next steps

Amnesty International Paraguay held a closing action in front of the Palace of Justice and shared the letters of solidarity received for Yren and Mariana and the total number of signatures collected around the world.

The campaign will continue, because in addition to the cases of Yren and Mariana, Amnesty International Paraguay is working on seven more cases through the Soy Real #MiNombreDebeSerLegal (I Am Real #MyNameMustBeLegal) campaign.



# CHOW HANG-TUNG – HONG KONG



## Introduction

Chow Hang-tung is a long-term human rights defender. Prior to becoming a human rights lawyer, Chow was an advocate for labour rights and human rights defenders in China. As a barrister in Hong Kong, she has defended political activists targeted by the National Security Law even though Chow knew this would increase her own risk of being targeted by the authorities.

Chow was first arrested in June 2021, and between December 2021 to January 2022 she received sentences amounting to 27 months imprisonment on two charges related to her peaceful activism in commemorating the 1989 Tiananmen Crackdown. The jail time she will need to serve is a total of 22 months, as five months of the second conviction can be served concurrently.

On 9 September 2021, Chow was also charged with “inciting subversion” under the new National Security Law and faces a potential of 10 years’ imprisonment. At the time of being charged, she was the vice-chair of the

Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements of China (the Alliance), the organizer of the annual Hong Kong vigil commemorating the 1989 Tiananmen crackdown, held since 1990. Chow Hang-tung was exercising her fundamental human right to freedom of expression through peaceful means, and charges against her must be dropped and she must be released immediately.

For three decades, the Hong Kong Alliance organized the world’s biggest commemoration of the Tiananmen crackdown, which took place on the evening of 3–4 June 1989, when hundreds – possibly thousands – of people were killed in Beijing when troops opened fire on students and workers who had been peacefully calling for political and economic reforms as well as an end to corruption. Every year on 4 June since 1990, tens and sometimes hundreds of thousands of people joined a candlelight vigil in Hong Kong’s Victoria Park to remember those killed. They called on the Chinese authorities to reveal the truth about what happened and take accountability for the fatalities. For the past two years, the vigil was banned on the grounds of Covid-19 restrictions.

*‘To say I’m not afraid would be false, a lie, but I’m not so afraid I dare do nothing, dare not act’,* Chow said in one of the interviews, showing her bravery despite being aware that she might be at risk and targeted by the authorities.

## Context of human rights concerns in Hong Kong

Amnesty International has closely monitored the situation in Hong Kong since the enactment of the



National Security Law (NSL) in June 2020, as there has been sharp deterioration in freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association, and other human rights. Over 100 civil society organizations disbanded or left Hong Kong in response to the threat posed by the vaguely worded NSL.

## A chronology

After Chow was first arrested on 4 June 2021, Amnesty International monitored Chow's situation closely and started to work on her case once consent was obtained.

## Highlights

It was very encouraging to see many national entities and groups working on Chow's case during Write for Rights this year. The team leading on Chow's case received invitations to speak to supporters from diverse backgrounds and many national entities and groups promoted Chow's case in creative ways. It was also great to see that some supporters who wrote to Chow were able to receive replies by letter from Chow herself.

## Outcomes of Chow's campaign

Through Write for Rights Amnesty International has been able to increase awareness of the human rights violations in Hong Kong, especially on the rights to protest, and breathe new life into and repower the remembrance of June Fourth. Chow is not the only individual facing prosecution. There are many more individuals in Hong Kong that are currently facing intimidation, and charges and some are already serving their jail terms. Furthermore, through Write for Rights, Amnesty International can demonstrate a strong commitment to continue work on Hong Kong, especially since both the Amnesty International Section and the regional office in Hong Kong were closed for security reasons.

On 14 December 2022, Chow [won the appeal](#) against her conviction on the charge of 'inciting others to take part in an unauthorized assembly'. This is a positive decision that highlights the Hong Kong police's failings around the city's Tiananmen vigil. Authorities wrongly issued a blanket ban on the 2021 vigil, using Covid-19 as an excuse to stifle freedom of expression, when they had an "active responsibility to allow and facilitate assemblies where feasible".

However, Chow is also accused of 'inciting subversion' through her entirely peaceful actions and could face ten years' imprisonment.

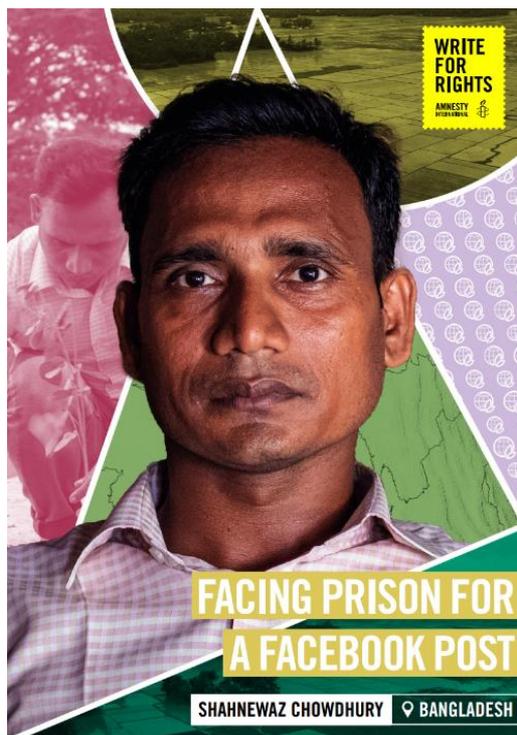
**Chow to supporters in Taiwan:** *"Thank you for your letters. It feels so familiar to see postcards from AI. I wrote a lot of postcards back then (I initiated the AI letters writing group when I was at the university). Life works in mysterious ways, I never thought I would become the recipient of AI's letters now. The dinosaurs, cats, and alpacas that you drew are really cute, and I especially like the cat that is all black except for the two eyes (just like the one I have at home). With your support, how could I give up?"*

## Next steps

The trial related to the charges of 'inciting subversion' is yet to begin. Amnesty International will continue to monitor and work on Chow's case. It is very important that her case continues to receive international attention. A strategy to continue campaigning is available on the IAR Platform.



# SHAHNEWAZ CHOWDHURY - BANGLADESH



## Introduction

Engineer and Environmental activist Shahnewaz Chowdhury, 37, was arrested in his Gandamara residence in Banshkhali, a sub-district in the southeast of Bangladesh, at 12:05am on 28 May 2021. Police lodged a case against him under the draconian Digital Security Act (DSA) for a Facebook post where he shared his personal opinion that was critical about a power plant in his area. Shahnewaz’s fight against the coal powerplant was not a single act of resistance, but part of the global movement against coal and fossil fuel, which was recognised by the Write for Rights campaign, when members who participated drew parallels to the actions done in their countries, and the impact they would face as a result of use of coal and fossil fuel anywhere in the world.

In the Facebook post, he stated, “Breaking News: The people of Banshkhali thought that the environmentally destructive coal power plant, which became the cause of the killing of 12 people, would have set afloat the Gandamara Union in the tide of development. But in reality, Gandamara is drowning in the tidal surge. The

youth of Banshkhali must resist injustice and support development through fearless writing.”

For this, he has been accused of posting “false and offensive information”, “tarnishing the reputation of the power plant” and “creating animosity, instability and chaos” under sections 25, 29 and 31 of the draconian Digital Security Act (DSA). He could face up to 10 years in prison, if convicted.

The DSA is being used by the authorities to target critical voices and silence dissent. Shahnewaz Chowdhury is being punished simply for sharing his personal opinion online. Expressing an opinion is not a crime. His arrest is a clear violation of the right to freedom of expression under international human rights law including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Bangladesh is a state party.

Shahnewaz’s case was put forward for the Write for Rights campaign in order to mobilise people around the world to call on the Minister of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs to drop all charges against Shahnewaz, and to repeal or amend Bangladesh’s Digital Security Act.

## Context of human rights concerns in Bangladesh

Shahnewaz’s Write for Rights campaign has highlighted significant concerns regarding Bangladesh’s Digital Security Act (DSA). Introduced in October 2018, it is increasingly being used to stifle dissent on social media, websites, and other digital platforms, with punishments that can extend to life imprisonment. The law contains vague and overbroad provisions that are increasingly being used to target people from all walks of life solely for expressing dissent and exercising their right to freedom of expression online.

## A chronology

Following Shahnewaz’s arrest on 28 May 2021, Amnesty International did an Urgent Action on 2 June

2021, calling on the Prime Minister to immediately release Shahnewaz. A social media campaign ran alongside the Urgent Action.

After 80 days in prison, Shahnewaz was released on bail and his case was picked up for Write for Rights. Contact with Shahnewaz was mainly with members of Amnesty International's South Asia Regional office.

## Highlights

There were various activities undertaken as a part of campaigning for Shahnewaz. Solidarity actions, media interviews, letter writing, social media updates, webinars and podcasts to name a few. Some highlights included:

- Amnesty International Luxembourg and Sweden held events with youth groups in support of Shahnewaz.
- Amnesty International Korea held a Climate x Human Rights webinar where Shahnewaz spoke about his trials and tribunals.
- A Canadian organization reached out after one of their members saw Shahnewaz's story in the Write for Rights campaign, and invited Shahnewaz to participate in their podcast.
- Shahnewaz's story was picked up by news outlets around the world, from Canada to South Korea.

While each of these activities played a key role in highlighting Shahnewaz's story and the challenges he faces, the podcast episode was an interesting and new way of engaging with young people specifically. The podcast is organized by Jobs People Do, a Canadian organisation that works with schools and students. Shahnewaz's episode was posted on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Spotify and listened to by people from countries across the world, including the USA, Bangladesh and Israel

## Outcomes of Shahnewaz's campaign

Unfortunately, there has not yet been any movement in Shahnewaz's case. There was a trial for Shahnewaz's case in July 2022, details of which Shahnewaz prefers not to disclose yet as the case is still being heard and the case hearing is likely to be completed within a year's time. Despite this lack of movement, Shahnewaz believes that the letters sent from people all around the world to the Bangladeshi government are extremely valuable, given the mounting international pressure on them to drop the charges against him.



The global solidarity actions definitely helped highlight Shahnewaz's story. He said he is immensely grateful to receive the letters and cards from the movement. Further, he believes that the letters and emails sent to the government would have notified the authorities that he is not alone, and there is the international community watching what is happening to the case, ready to back him up.

Meanwhile, Shahnewaz continues his work on climate change. He continues to protest against the coal



powerplant in his area, carries out media interviews, and awareness programmes by giving talks and lectures.

**Shahnewaz:** *“I am very happy that an international organization like Amnesty International has started campaigning all over the world for withdrawal of my case and permanent release. The campaign has caught the attention of international human rights organizations and leaders. I believe this has resulted in letters, emails and requests reaching our government through various channels from all over the world and hope that the government will withdraw my case considering the issue of freedom of speech. Even if the government does not drop the case, I hope Amnesty International will stand by me until the case is dropped or my permanent release.”*

### **Next steps**

Many of Amnesty International’s national entities plan to deliver petition signatures in support of Shahnewaz to the respective Bangladeshi embassies in their countries. A handover will also be organised to deliver petition signatures from the global campaign to the authorities in Bangladesh.

Amnesty International will continue to demand justice and support Shahnewaz until the charges against him have been dropped. A casefile has been developed to support this campaigning.

Furthermore, Amnesty International’s South Asia region will continue their work putting pressure on the Bangladesh government to repeal the Digital Security Act.

# ALEKSANDRA SKOCHILENKO – RUSSIA



## Introduction

Aleksandra Skochilenko, an artist in St. Petersburg, replaced price tags in a local supermarket with little notes containing information about the Russian invasion of Ukraine, such as the bombing of an arts school in Mariupol, on 31 March 2022. On 11 April, officers of the Investigative Committee arrested her and charged her with “disseminating knowingly false information about Russian Armed Forces”. She was placed in pre-trial detention despite her health condition (celiac disease, as well as bipolar affective disorder), which requires a special gluten-free diet that Russian pre-trial detention centres are unable to provide. Her trial started on 15 December 2022. She remains in detention and is facing up to 10 years’ imprisonment if convicted.

Aleksandra’s case was precedent-setting and emblematic of repression of anti-war activists in Russia. She was one of the first to be detained under the newly introduced Article 207.3. As an artist, musician and young woman, her story appeals to a broad audience of Amnesty International’s supporters who are concerned by

violations of the right to freedom of expression in Russia.

## Context of human rights concerns in Russia

Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022 was accompanied by escalating repression against dissent within Russia. Peaceful anti-war protests are dispersed, often forcibly, and those speaking out against the war face prosecution. On 4 March, Russian authorities passed amendments that made “disseminating knowingly false information about the Russian Armed Forces” and “discrediting the Armed Forces” criminal offenses. As of now, around 200 individuals have been prosecuted on these charges. Several critics of the Russian aggression against Ukraine have already been given various prison sentences.

Torture and other ill-treatment remain endemic in places of detention and fair trial standards are repeatedly violated.

## A chronology

Aleksandra Skochilenko was arrested on 11 April 2022. On 13 April, a court ordered her to be placed in pretrial detention, and Amnesty International [issued a quote](#) calling this an “attempt to silence criticism of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine” and demanding her immediate and unconditional release.

On 27 April, Amnesty International launched an Urgent Action calling on the Russian authorities to release



Aleksandra Skochilenko and, pending that, provide her with the necessary health care, diet and conditions in detention. This was in reaction to reports that Aleksandra was not receiving the food she needs due to her celiac disease (this has been a recurring problem throughout her detention). Around the same time, she was nominated for the Write for Rights campaign.

On 8 May, a solidarity campaign was launched with a call for national entities to send letters directly to Aleksandra Skochilenko at the detention centre, and to her friend, and to share solidarity messages on social media.

On 21 June, Amnesty International determined (internally) that Aleksandra Skochilenko qualified to be considered a prisoner of conscience.

In December, the BBC named Aleksandra Skochilenko among the [100 inspiring and influential women of the year](#).

On 15 December, the trial of Aleksandra Skochilenko started. It continues as of March 2023. Amnesty International encouraged diplomats from the EU and like-minded countries to attend the hearings. Sofia Subbotina, the partner of Aleksandra Skochilenko, is in many ways the voice of Aleksandra while she is in detention. She has given numerous interviews and comments about the case to domestic independent and international media. Aleksandra Skochilenko's friends are also very active in raising awareness of her situation and helping her in all other ways. Among other things, they maintain a website and social media resources dedicated to her case. Those of them who are based in Russia, do so in spite of serious personal risk.

## Highlights

Aleksandra's case was extremely popular around the world, with more than 594,000 actions taken to support her. Thousands of solidarity letters and cards were sent to Amnesty's International Secretariat office in London, to be sorted and posted to Aleksandra in Russia, with hundreds of beautiful drawings and paintings of cats, inspired by Aleksandra's cats Lucy and Maude (see above). Another highlight was an action in Portugal where activists changed labels in supermarkets to promote Aleksandra's case, inspired by Aleksandra's own brave action using labels in a supermarket in St. Petersburg to raise awareness of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.



## Outcomes of Aleksandra's campaign

Conditions of Aleksandra Skochilenko's detention appear to have improved somewhat since April 2022. Although the detention centre still does not provide her with all the food necessary for her health, it no longer prevents her from receiving food parcels sent to her from outside. Psychological pressure and threats she initially faced from her cellmates have also ceased. However, her health is still at risk and the medical help she receives cannot be considered sufficient. Most importantly, of course, her prosecution and her detention continue despite obviously being in violation of international law.

Amnesty International's campaign for Aleksandra contributed to raising the profile of her case. The remaining independent media and many foreign diplomats attend her court hearings, which helps protect her from abuse and may help ensure a less strict sentence (although acquittals are sadly almost impossible in such cases).

Perhaps the most noticeable and direct impact is moral support that the solidarity campaign provides. This support is particularly important in this case where the individual is especially vulnerable: Aleksandra Skochilenko had never been under arrest before, she has serious health conditions and faced pressure and even violence from her cellmates, all of this in addition to the stress she felt because of the ongoing war that she protested against. Aleksandra Skochilenko has not been allowed to talk to her partner since her arrest, visits by family and friends are restricted, and letters remain almost her only connection with the outside world.

Aleksandra [wrote in a letter](#) to Russian independent outlet MediaZona that she had “benefited from the titanic support of civil society, publications about me in the media, the undying devotion and love of my soulmate, and the unprecedented dedication of my friends”.

### **Next steps**

Arguably, the most important part of the campaign has been sending letters of solidarity to Aleksandra Skochilenko. Amnesty International will continue to closely monitor Aleksandra’s case and remain in touch with Aleksandra’s friends regarding her trial, conditions of detention and other issues, and will also continue to encourage diplomats to attend the hearings and the media to cover it as widely as possible.

# ZINEB REDOUANE – FRANCE



## Introduction

Zineb Redouane's case is emblematic of the lethal use of force by police during protests in France in recent years. 80-year-old Zineb died in hospital on 2 December 2018, after she was hit by a tear gas grenade shot by the police. Zineb was shot while closing the windows of her fourth-floor apartment, to protect herself from tear gas used in the policing of a protest that was passing by in the street below. Her death was the result of compounding forms of unlawful policing of assembly, including the reckless use of less lethal weaponry. After four years of mobilisation by local associations working on Zineb's situation, and even though the shooter has been identified, no one has been charged or suspended over the killing. Given the political nature of this situation, it was decided that only international pressure could contribute to moving the case forward.

## Context of human rights concerns in France

Excessive use of force against protesters by police and gendarmerie has been a concern for several years in

France.

In 2015, during the review of France's fifth periodic report, the United Nations [Human Rights Committee](#) expressed concern about "allegations of ill-treatment, excessive use of force and disproportionate use of intermediate force weapons, in particular during arrests, forced evacuations and law enforcement operations." In 2016, the United Nations Committee against Torture stated in its [Concluding Observations](#) on the seventh periodic report of France that it was "concerned about allegations of excessive use of force by police and gendarmerie officers that have, in some cases, resulted in severe injury or death." In 2017, [Amnesty International France documented cases](#) of unlawful use of force in the context of demonstrations against a new labour law, including cases of police violence against journalists. Since 2018 and the "yellow vest" movement, France has witnessed an unprecedented number of people injured, including 30 people mutilated (loss of an eye or hand) during protests. The Human Rights commissioner at the Council of Europe, UN experts and many NGOs (including Amnesty International) voiced their concerns about this excessive use of force against protesters and called for investigations. Despite alerts from several HR organisations and calls to ban the use of certain weapons, the authorities did not engage any in-depth reforms of French policing strategies and confirmed their repressive approach in their "new policing scheme" [published in September 2020, and updated in December 2021](#).

Cases of excessive or unnecessary use of force have continued beyond the "Yellow vest" movement. Amnesty International France denounced the intensive firing of tear gas on a crowd of mainly peaceful protesters during a [climate march in September 2019](#). Amnesty International France also denounced the [repression of a "teknival" in Redon](#), western France, in June 2021, during which more than 1,900 tear gas grenades, including grenades likely to maim, such as stingball grenades, were thrown at night at a crowd of youth partying in a field. One young man had his hand blown off. In March 2022, the public prosecutor in Rennes dismissed the complaint of the 22 year old.



Victims of excessive use of force by the police and gendarmerie in France have difficulties obtaining justice and appropriate remedies, and sanctions against the police are extremely rare. In December 2022, the police officer who had shot a protester in the eye with a grenade, resulting in the loss of the eye, during a demonstration in 2016 was acquitted.

### A chronology

Thanks to the help and the input from Zineb’s family and legal team, an international campaigning strategy was created and events were organized in Marseille, including a commemoration event organized by other local collectives and attended by Amnesty International France. This work has been very much appreciated by Zineb’s family, who have felt supported despite the judiciary not advancing Zineb’s case in over four years. These solidarity actions were a very important objective for the campaign.

### Highlights

In France, solidarity postcards were created to show support to the family. All around the world, at least thousands of people have already sent solidarity messages to the family!

The petitions demanding the French authorities bring justice have received almost 375,000 signatures so far. All petitions will be sent to the authorities soon, with the hope that this will have a big impact and make a difference to the case.

2 December 2022, the 4-year anniversary of Zineb’s death, also marked the launch of the Write for Rights campaign in France. A commemorative event was held in Marseille with local activists, Zineb’s spokesperson, and local associations working on police brutality. The goal was to bring local media attention to Zineb’s situation and put pressure on the two investigating judges in charge of Zineb’s case. A meeting was held with five journalists, allowing our spokespeople, Fanny Gallois from Amnesty International France and Yassine Bouzrou the lawyer for some members of the Redouane family, to brief the journalists on Zineb’s situation. The journalists were then taken to the building where Zineb lived, on which a huge image of Zineb’s face with the message “Justice for Zineb” was projected. The local associations were also holding a commemorative gathering just beneath the projection, which was very moving. The same image was projected on the facade of the law court of Marseille. After these projections, a screening of the film *Nos frangins (Our Brothers)*, supported by Amnesty International France, was held. The film tells the story of Malik Oussekiine, a French-Algerian student who was beaten to death by police in 1986 while walking near student protests in Paris. Though uninvolved in the demonstration, Oussekiine was chased by police and beaten to death. The screening of this film made





parallels between his situation and Zineb's and was followed by a talk by Fanny Gallois and Yassine Bouzrou. The next day a solidarity march was organized by local associations, which Amnesty International France France joined. The main goal was to raise press awareness on Zineb's situation, and this was mainly achieved as there was a good amount of press coverage, with even some MPs on site who tweeted about the action.

### **Outcomes of Zineb's campaign**

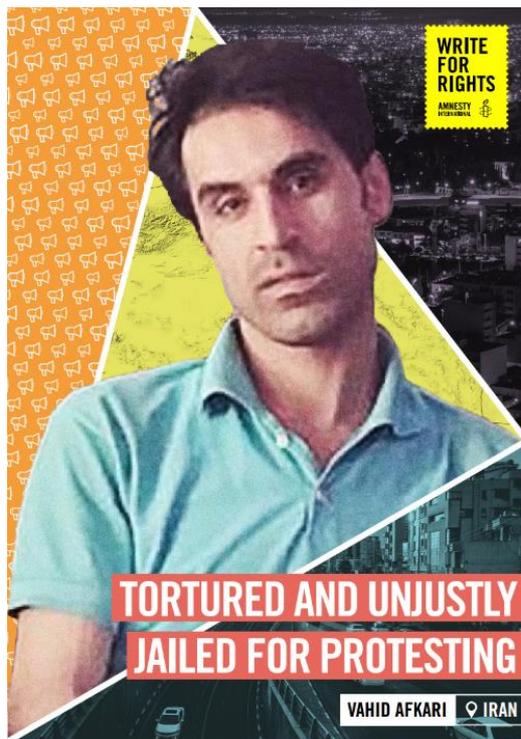
The work on Zineb's situation within the Write for Rights campaign has had a positive impact by contributing to publicizing Zineb's case and re-shining a light on her situation, which has otherwise been generally forgotten by the media and within public opinion. All the solidarity actions from all over the world were also a great way to show Zineb's family that they are not alone and were hugely appreciated.

**Yassine Bouzrou, lawyer for Zineb's family:** *"It is important to mobilise, but above all, to inform the public so that Madame Redouane's name is not forgotten. And above all, so that the police officer who killed her can one day be held accountable before the courts."*

### **Next steps**

Amnesty international will continue to campaign for Zineb and her family, until justice is achieved. A case strategy is being developed for continued international campaigning.

# VAHID AFKARI – IRAN



## Introduction

Between September and December 2018, Iranian authorities arbitrarily arrested brothers Vahid Afkari, Navid Afkari, and Habib Afkari in the aftermath of their peaceful participation in protests in their hometown of Shiraz, Fars province, in 2016, 2017 and 2018. Slogans chanted at these protests expressed a mix of economic and political grievances, ranging from complaints over poverty, high unemployment, corruption and inequality, to demands for the release of prisoners held for politically motivated reasons and outright rejection of the Islamic Republic system.

Following their arrests, the brothers reported in written complaints and in court that between their arrests and the completion of the investigation stage, they were repeatedly tortured and otherwise ill-treated to “confess”. They said they were held in prolonged solitary confinement, repeatedly punched, kicked, and beaten with sticks and cables while blindfolded, and psychologically tortured, including through death threats and threats to imprison, kill, sexually assault, or otherwise harm their family members. Vahid Afkari

attempted suicide on 26 October 2018 and 2 April 2019; both times, authorities failed to provide him with adequate physical and mental health care and prematurely interrupted his hospital treatment against written medical warnings. The brothers’ repeated requests for their allegations of torture to be investigated were dismissed and ignored.

Following grossly unfair trials, the three brothers were convicted of politically motivated charges for their peaceful participation in protests. Vahid Afkari and Navid Afkari were also convicted of a baseless accusation involving murder of a security official. The authorities unjustly sentenced Navid Afkari to death, and Habib Afkari and Vahid Afkari to prison terms and 74 lashes each. Following extensive review of court documents and other legal documents pertaining to Vahid Afkari and Habib Afkari’s cases, Amnesty International [concluded](#) that their convictions and sentences are flagrantly unjust and amount to a miscarriage of justice. In June 2022, the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention [held](#) that “that the deprivation of liberty of Vahid [Afkari] and Habib Afkari lacks legal basis and is thus arbitrary...[and] the breaches of the fair trial and due process rights... are of such gravity as to give their deprivation of liberty an arbitrary character” and called for their immediate unconditional release and for them to be accorded reparations in accordance with international law.

Following domestic and global outrage over the brothers’ unjust convictions and sentences, in reprisal, the Iranian authorities moved the brothers to solitary confinement cells in early September 2020 where the authorities demanded the brothers publicly admit to their “crimes” and make statements against people in Iran and around the world who supported them, which they refused. On 12 September 2020, Navid Afkari’s death sentence was carried out in secret, igniting outrage in Iran and throughout the world and escalated campaigning for Habib Afkari and Vahid Afkari. Habib Afkari was released from prison in March 2022, after over 550 days in solitary confinement. Vahid Afkari is being subjected to torture and other ill-treatment in prolonged solitary confinement completely isolated from other prisoners in Adelabad prison in Shiraz, where he is also being deliberately denied adequate healthcare, including for torture-related injuries.



While preparation for the launch of Write for Rights began months before the nationwide protests in Iran which erupted after the death in custody of 22-year-old Mahsa (Zhinah) Amini at the hands of Iran’s “morality” police on 16 September 2022 resulting in an unprecedented popular uprising, the plight of Vahid Afkari and his family is illustrative in shedding light on the grievances that drive protests and also emblematic of the response to ongoing protest movements in Iran and the Iranian authorities’ brutal response to the protest movements, which has involved the commission of crimes under international law and other grave human rights violations. On 10 November 2022, Elham Afkari, Vahid Afkari’s sister, was arbitrarily arrested and detained by Ministry of Intelligence agents and, according to state media at that time, her arrest was in connection to the wave of protests sweeping the country. Moreover, just as the Afkari family continues to seek truth and justice for the death of Navid Afkari at the hands of the Iranian authorities, many other families in Iran have sought justice in Iran for protesters

killed, injured, tortured, arbitrarily imprisoned or otherwise harmed during protest crackdowns.

## Context of human rights concerns in Iran

The death in custody of 22-year-old Mahsa (Zhinah) Amini at the hands of Iran’s “morality” police on 16 September 2022, sparked an unprecedented popular uprising across the country. In response to nationwide protests, the Iranian authorities extensively and unlawfully fired live ammunition, metal pellets and teargas at protesters and bystanders, and subjected many to severe beatings. Amnesty International recorded the names of hundreds of protesters and bystanders unlawfully killed by security forces, including at least 44 children. Hundreds of others have been blinded or sustained other serious eye injuries due to security forces firing metal pellets. Thousands more have sustained injuries for which many did not seek medical care due to fear of arrest.

National entities campaigned for Vahid Afkari’s release and highlighted how he, too, was targeted by the Iranian authorities for peacefully protesting in prior years, which resonated with activists and supporters. By campaigning for Vahid Afkari’s immediate release as part of Write for Rights, Amnesty International supporters around the world took action for Vahid Afkari and his family, and also stood in solidarity with protesters in Iran taking to the streets to protest against inequality, widespread repression and unlawful killings. As part of Write for Rights, Amnesty International activists shined a global light on the abuses committed by the Iranian authorities against protesters like Vahid Afkari in a cycle of protest bloodshed.

Through global actions from so many places and languages, from letters by school children to street actions to news articles in national media, the movement was united in loudly and firmly calling on the Iranian authorities to immediate release Vahid Afkari and accountability for the Afkari family.

## A chronology

Amnesty International first learned about the plight of the Afkari brothers in September 2020 when the Iranian authorities moved the brothers from the general ward of Adelabad prison to then unknown locations – later found to be solitary confinement cells in the prison — sparking global concerns that Navid Afkari was at [imminent risk](#) of having his unjust death sentence carried out in secret. Horrifically, on 12 September 2020, the Iranian authorities [arbitrarily executed](#) Navid Afkari in secret without prior notice to him, his family or lawyer. As the Afkari family sought truth and justice for Navid Afkari, Amnesty International issued a [detailed analysis](#) documenting the details of torture and other ill-treatment inflicted on Vahid Afkari and Habib Afkari since their arbitrary arrest, and showing how Iran’s prosecution and judicial authorities ignored or dismissed the numerous complaints that they have filed from inside

prison in search of truth, justice and reparation. The organization also issued an [Urgent Action](#) mobilizing Amnesty International's global network of activists to target the Iranian authorities calling for the immediate release of Habib Afkari and Vahid Afkari.

## Highlights

Campaigning by national entities and supporters from countries with no ties to Iran and that are not historically the most active on Iran was particularly appreciated, as was including Vahid Afkari's plight amongst human rights materials for secondary school children.



## Outcomes of Vahid's campaign

The Write for Rights campaign elevated the profile of Vahid Afkari and the Afkari family around the world. Amnesty International registered 446,173 actions taken for Vahid Afkari, which included stunts, solidarity actions, appeal letters to Iranian authorities, petition signatures and much more. Amnesty International national entities were highly innovative in the way they paid tribute to and showed solidarity with Vahid Afkari.

The campaign was welcomed by Iranian human rights activists around the world and reached audiences inside Iran via Amnesty International's Persian-language social media channels. The Iranian diaspora mobilized globally and engaged with campaigning for Vahid Afkari's release, which resonated with the movement as Write for Rights 2022 launched at the height of the popular uprising across Iran where thousands of men, women and children are protesting unlawful killings and

widespread repression and calling for a more rights-respecting future.

During the campaign, on 10 November 2022, Elham Afkari, Vahid Afkari's sister, was [arbitrarily arrested](#) and detained amidst the authorities' crackdown on the popular uprising sweeping the country since mid-September and their systematic repression of families seeking accountability for the unlawful killings of protesters and other flagrant violations of the right to life by the authorities. Following a grossly unfair trial before a Revolutionary Court in Shiraz, Elham Afkari was convicted of "gathering and colluding to commit crimes against national security" and sentenced to five years in prison. Officials made baseless and false accusations in Iranian state media that Elham Afkari had ties to Persian media based outside of the Iran and the protest movement, while her arrest and unjust conviction was the latest reprisal by the authorities against the Afkari family for seeking truth and justice for the unlawful killing of Navid Afkari at the hands of the Iranian authorities and an attempt to intimidate the other families whose loved ones were unlawfully killed by the Iranian authorities. On 12 March 2023, Elham Afkari was released from prison and ordered to complete her sentence under house arrest with an electronic ankle monitor.

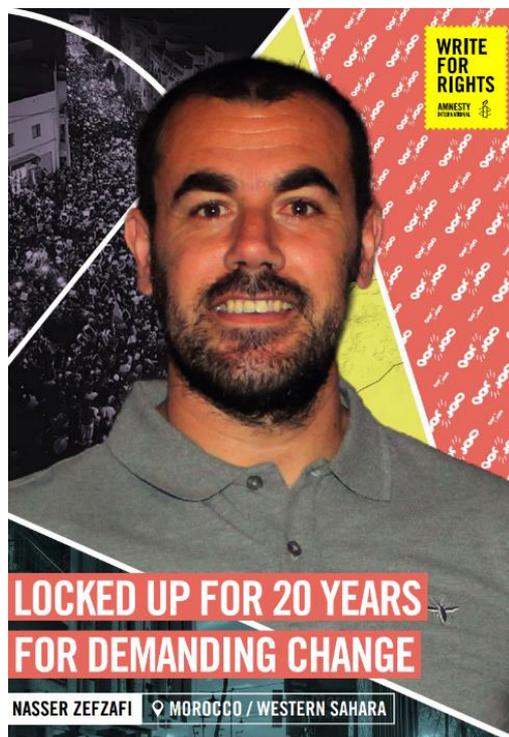
## Next steps

National entities have started delivering letters and actions to the Iranian authorities and embassies, and all remaining national entities are encouraged to deliver any remaining actions to the Iranian authorities.

Amnesty International continues to campaign for the immediate release of Vahid Afkari and others arbitrarily detained solely for peacefully protesting.

# NASSER ZEFZAFI – MOROCCO

## Introduction



Nasser Zefzafi is one of the key figures of the Moroccan socio-economic protest movement known as “Hirak El-rif”, and which erupted in 2017 in Al Hoceima, Nasser Zefzafi's hometown. Nasser's story is an emblematic one as it encompasses many human rights violations and issues affecting Morocco more broadly. Nasser, like many in the Rif region, took to the streets in 2017 to protest the poor socio-economic conditions and the marginalization of the Rif people. He was arrested that same year and, one year later, was sentenced by a Casablanca court to 20 years in prison for his activism. His health has been deteriorating since.

It was decided that global campaigning would be good to help bring back attention to Nasser's situation, as he has been one of the forgotten cases in Morocco. There has been much work done in recent years with those detained for expressing their right to free expression and assembly in Morocco, and while many of these cases, like Nasser's, garner a lot of attention and support initially, this momentum and interest often fades away as they languish in jail. Shining a light on Nasser's case through Write for Rights would draw attention back to Nasser's situation and alert the global movement, and in turn the general public,

to the ongoing fight for the rights to protest, free speech, freedom from torture and fair trials in Morocco.

## Context of human rights concerns in Morocco

Morocco is rife with repression. Authorities' crackdown on journalists, human rights defenders and activists is showing no signs of abating and unfair trials and ill-treatment in prison continue to be used against people who dissent through expressing their right to free expression or assembly.

## A chronology

Amnesty International initially documented Nasser Zefzafi's story in 2017 when the Rif protests and trials were documented. The team working on Morocco made contact with Nasser's family and they have been the main point of contact for all work on Nasser's case.

Amnesty International's first output about Nasser Zefzafi was a [press release](#) in June 2017





which discussed the wave of mass arrests against Rif protesters.

In November 2017, another [press release](#) was published calling for the release of those detained over the Rif protests.

In June 2018, Amnesty International called for the guilty verdicts in the Hirak El-rif trials to be overturned

In December 2018, Amnesty International [condemned the unfair trial](#) of the Hirak El-rif protesters.

### Highlights

More than 385,000 actions were taken by people all over the world in support of Nasser. Some highlights include:

- Amnesty International Morocco carried out different activities for Nasser, including awareness raising workshops in the field, activities in schools, round tables and artistic activities and online workshops.
- Public events were held all over Italy, including promotional actions, gathering signatures and sending appeals in support of Nasser.

### Outcomes of Nasser’s campaign

Unfortunately, there has been no movement on the case yet, but Nasser’s family have expressed how grateful both they and Nasser are for the hundreds of thousands of actions taken for Nasser and the solidarity they have received.

### Next steps

National entities are encouraged to send letters to Amnesty International Morocco. These will then be passed onto Nasser and his father.

# ACTIVITIES AROUND THE WORLD



## ALGERIA

The section focused their work on online activism, because the general climate does not allow for too much activity on the ground. They marked the launch of the campaign on December 10 at their national headquarters with an open house, a petition signing booth, a letter writing workshop, and a solidarity photo booth.



## AMERICAS REGIONAL OFFICE, INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT

The Americas Office team was proud to have a campaign that featured an individual from Cuba, a country that typically receives very poor attention from the international community and more specifically from Latin America. It was a great opportunity to think creatively about how to involve a large group of friends and family members of Luis Manuel, willing to defend and protect him. Media coverage and social media campaign uptake was indeed great. For Paraguay, it was amazing to feature the strong link between a historical struggle of transwomen in the country as their very right to protest a government that insists on imposing them a gender identity they don't have. Finally, the regional office promoted both campaigns on its regional channels, and organized a Twitter Space with Wendy, a W4R campaign "Alumni" and who coordinated a very moving chat with both Luis Manuel's representative and with Yren and Mariana from Paraguay.

## ARGENTINA

In Argentina the campaign involved different strategies to get people involved via different actions. The section focused on the Individuals that most aligned with work already taking place at the Section, and those that were felt to be able to generate the most interest from their audiences. Emphasis was placed on digital and communications work, however face-to-face actions were also held and included a marathon where people were invited to



"correr por las injusticias".

Workshops were held in schools and universities, inviting young people and teachers to reflect on human rights and the right to protest. The Growth team analysed the performance of each IAR, and a microsite was created to direct people to sign a digital activist pledge and create their own content. The Communication Team worked to place articles about the individuals at risk in the local media and in the section's social networks through continuous dissemination and strategic alliances with local media.

Despite this work, the section found it difficult to work on some IARs, as they were too far removed from the interests and concerns of their audiences. To combat this, they featured a local IAR, which performed the best and helped actions to be driven to global cases.

## **AUSTRALIA**

Write for Rights is established as a fully integrated campaign across the organisation. Over 120,000 supporters took at least one action, of which more than 70,000 people were new to Amnesty (40% more than last year and highest ever figure). Top-of-funnel ads reaching 1.8 million people, as well as selecting seven additional cases which resonate with local audiences were an important part of the strategy.

The total action number was down by 50,000 from last year. The global 10 cases were difficult to engage with audiences online, which is where the bulk of the actions come from. However, some supporters' involvement was deepened with almost 3,000 actions being online step-ups from just signing a petition (write a message, send an email) for four of the cases.

Over 50 events were held - both online and offline. Most of these were organised by activists in their local areas, and seven attracted media coverage with a reach of 635,000. A highlight event organised by staff was the relaunch of the Amnesty Parliamentary Friendship Group in Parliament House, Canberra - the group had lapsed under the previous parliament and Write for Rights brought them back together again.

## **AUSTRIA**

AI Austria had a successful Write for Rights 2022, with an unprecedented number of activists expressing their interest in Write for Rights - as well as requesting action material to participate in the campaign. Many workshops were held in schools, with many actions carried out by and with activists. The Section conducted several creative workshops for activists to learn and improve their skills to express solidarity in imaginative ways. They produced several media outputs including tv and cinema screenings. Additionally, the Section increased the outreach of Write for Rights in places such as cinemas and bookstores.

## **BELGIUM (FLEMISH)**

AI Belgium (FI) had a successful campaign in 2022 which started on 26 November with a kick-off event in Antwerp where Mariana and Kimberley from Paraguay were guests. There were more letters, cards and signatures collected than in 2021.



## **BELGIUM (FRENCH-SPEAKING)**

The Write for Rights campaign at AI Belgium (Fr) was more successful in 2022 than in previous years, which had been marked by COVID-19 restrictions. An event on the Grand-Place in Brussels, organized on 10 December, made it possible to further mobilize the public and be even more visible.

## **BENIN**

AI Benin's Write for Rights campaign ran from 26 November to 17 December 2022. A total of 38 groups from the north to the south participated. The section trained all the coordinators beforehand to explain the different cases chosen by the section and what was expected from the groups. The groups were given the necessary materials and proceeded to collect digital signatures for the 4 cases selected, through the streets, schools, universities, public places, social centres and others. At the end of the campaign, a total of 153,614 signatures were collected.



## **BRAZIL**

Write for Rights was a success at AI Brazil. They launched the campaign on 10 December at the Festival Todo Mundo Tem Direitos. They chose 6 IAR cases to work on during the campaign, the ones that spoke most to their audiences. They also worked for greater activism engagement in actions, with a focus on offline and engagement on social networks.

## **BURKINA FASO**

From 20 November to 20 December 2022, Amnesty International Burkina Faso participated in the 22st edition of the Write for Rights Campaign. Despite the enormous security and humanitarian challenges facing the country, the section demonstrated resilience in planning and implementing their activities.

They have developed new strategies for mobilisation, human rights education, and petition collection. For this edition, with the help of the International Secretariat and the Regional Office, they set up an online signature collection platform and shared campaigns through Facebook. These digital tools allowed them to collect more than 12,000 online petition signatures, which is more than 26% of the total number of signatures collected by the section. Thanks also to the resilience of their local groups and multipliers, they carried out activities in 11 of the 13 regions of Burkina Faso and collected more than 33,000 signatures with offline petitions.

Several symbolic actions were also carried out by their members and supporters for the people selected for the campaign.

## CANADA (ENGLISH SPEAKING)

Despite a major security breach initiating a full system lock-down and causing a backlog of work and delay to the start of the campaign, the section launched on 24 November. The shorter period to promote and do outreach caused lower engagement than previous years. However, groups, volunteers, and members who have engaged before continued organizing activities - showcasing the importance of people-powered movements. In total 132 events across Canada were initiated, 599 people registered to write on their own, and over 35,000 actions took place, varying from letters, solidarity messages, petitions, and e-actions.

They Section held an event for participants to familiarize themselves with the campaign and the resources available. It was a privilege to have Bernardo Caal Xol attend the session and share his experience. A heart-warming moment came when Bernardo spoke of how the solidarity letters he received while in prison re-ignited his hope and inspiration. Coco Fusco, long-time activist, and friend of Luis Manuel joined online, and Sarah Mathewson, Amnesty International's Central Africa Campaigner. The speakers shared their own personal experiences with Luis and Dorgelesse and spoke of the impact Write for Rights can yield. Members also created a 'Tree of Peace' for Dorgelesse filled with solidarity messages. A poster of this will be delivered to Dorgelesse and photos were shared online before her appeal hearing to increase public pressure to free Dorgelesse.

## CANADA (FRENCH SPEAKING)

AI Canada (Fr) organised a major letter writing event on 10 December, and 243 letter writing events were organised by over 100 local groups and schools. The campaign also had some media interest, with groups organising their own writing events being interviewed.

## CENTRAL ASIA HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION, INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT

In 2022, the Human Rights Education Team launched the Write for Rights campaign together with teachers, human rights defenders and activists in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and for the first time in Uzbekistan. They prioritized growing their target group of multipliers among activists and teachers by looking for new partnerships among NGOs, reaching out to Kyrgyz and Kazakh-speaking communities with offers of blended-learning training and enhancing cooperation with activists and students from Uzbekistan. In 2022 - teachers and activists conducted 99 lessons in schools and universities and 22 events by partners in three countries - Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan with a total reach of 3189 people (1276 supporters who wrote the letters and 1913 followers.)



## CHILE

This year AI Chile worked for Yren and Mariana from Paraguay, and for Cecilia, Netsai and Joana from Zimbabwe, as well as Renzo Inostroza from Chile (victim of a serious eye injury after being shot by Carabineros during the social outbreak of 2019).

They focused on making their stories and demands visible via radio programs, opinion columns and face-to-face activities. They focused on generating messages of solidarity through screen printing and canvas embroidery.

The campaign is not over in Chile and a Kickboxing, Muay Thai, Boxing and Human Rights tournament is planned as a closing activity in solidarity with Renzo Inostroza (who practices these disciplines), where there will also be a discussion on police reform.



### **CÔTE D'IVOIRE**

The campaign began on Wednesday, November 23, 2022, with a large stand at the Felix Houphouët Boigny University of Abidjan-Cocody with members of the university pre-group, the Executive Directorate, youth and women's commissions, local groups and supporters of Amnesty Côte d'Ivoire.

On this day members and supporters took actions such as signing petitions, writing of messages of support, taking photos of support for Dorgelesse Nguessan. More than 2,556 actions were collected.

### **CZECH REPUBLIC**

AI Czech Republic successfully coordinated Write for rights 2022, motivated the members of public to organise letter writing events which was supported by several ambassadors, who additionally helped with promoting the campaign. This year AI Czech Republic provided support and necessary materials for Shahnewaz Chowdhury, Aleksandra Skochilenko, Luis Alcántara, Yren Rotela and Mariana Sepúlveda, Vahid Afkari and Chow Hang-tung. The materials which the office provided included case cards, sample letters and posters in numerous languages. The campaign was similarly successful as the previous year.

### **DENMARK**

AIDK had another successful W4R campaign, where schools, activists and members took action all over the country. The Section saw an incline in members writing letters in 2022.

### **EAST AND SOUTH EAST ASIA REGIONAL OFFICE, INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT**

The regional office focused on the cases of individuals from Hong Kong, Iran, Russia, Bangladesh and Zimbabwe in its campaigning efforts in four regional languages. It was the office's first attempt to run W4R paid acquisition campaigns targeting Vietnamese, Burmese and Hong Kong audience. The results proved the Vietnamese and Burmese audiences are more willing to take action than Chinese audience. In total 1,167 signatures were gathered from the simplified Chinese audience, 1,201 from the traditional Chinese speaking Hong Kong audience, 8,279 from Vietnamese audience and 11,251 from Burmese audience.

Cecillia, Joana and Netsai's (Zimbabwe) case performed the best with Vietnamese audience, and Vahid Afkari's (Iran) case performed the best with Burmese audience. Chow Hang Tung's case performed well with Hong Kong audience. In general videos performed better than graphics.

One of the major learnings from this year's W4R is to plan ahead. The office didn't think about running campaigns in Vietnamese and Burmese until the end of November, and had to commission translation of action text and social media assets in a hurry. As a result, some golden opportunities of campaigning may have been missed in November. There also wasn't much capacity to check the comments in these languages and get some basic understanding of users' sentiments. Hopefully these can all be improved in the 2023 campaign.

### **EUROPE REGIONAL OFFICE, INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT**

The regional office did not organise events on W4R as there is already a large presence of national entities prioritizing Write for Rights in the region. The regional office also does not have its own regional channels for social media and communications; therefore it is limited in its outreach to membership. However, this year, the regional office's role was focused on providing support to AI France who directly managed the case, including supporting in the strategy

developments, assets reviews and approvals. The regional office also supported the creation and delivery of the human rights education toolkit for Zineb's case which proved a valuable asset for sections working on the case globally, as well as for partners in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

## **FAROE ISLANDS**

AI Faroes had less Write for Rights activities than in previous years. They held one physical event, had online petition and had a movable stall to place in libraries.

## **FINLAND**

In 2022, Amnesty Finland campaigned to support Chow Hang-tung, Luis Manuel Otero Alcántara, Aleksandra Skochilenko and Dorgelesse Nguessan. The core of the campaigning in Finland was activists, supporters and school students writing solidarity messages and petition letters. It was also possible to join the campaign by signing a petition or writing a solidarity message on the campaign website.

Comprehensive human rights education material was produced for secondary and upper secondary schools, both as an online and printed version. Teacher's manuals were again provided both in Finnish and in Swedish. The number of schools and young students participating in the campaign was high.

An action tool kit for activists and supporters was provided both as an online and a printed version. Online campaign trainings were provided to support campaign participants writing letters and teachers holding campaign related lessons. The number of activists and supporters participating in the campaign increased moderately compared to 2021.

The campaign was celebrated on Human Rights Day with a national online event and local 'get-togethers' organized by Groups.

## **FRANCE**

This year AI France collected over 627,000 actions, with over 3,000 being in solidarity, and at least 300 organised events took place across France.

At least 2 million people in France were made aware of the campaign, thanks to media partnerships and other organizations, as well as sharing on social networks.

On 2 December, the Section participated in an event to commemorate the homicide of Zineb Redouane in Marseille, organized by non-Amnesty local activists from Marseille at the building where Zineb was shot. They projected the Zineb's face, accompanied by the message "Justice for Zineb", on the building where she lived and on the courthouse of the city.

On the same day, an event was organized with the family's lawyer, as well as a film screening followed by a debate concerning Zineb's situation.



## GERMANY



In 2022 Write for Rights again grew at the German section. As in previous years, this is mainly thanks to the campaign taking place in schools. Numerous schools participated and for many teachers Write for Rights has become an integral part of the curriculum. The Section sees great growth potential here, which they want to tap in to in the future. In addition, they succeeded in bringing volunteer activities back up to pre-Covid levels. Online, there was a decline, mainly due to it being a busy period for campaigning, with many activities on Qatar, the climate summit and other issues.

## GHANA

Al Ghana had a successful Write for Rights in 2022, the event was launched in a Senior High School, and writing activities were organized in all the 16 regions, led by the regional Coordinators.



## GREECE

AI Greece communicated the campaign to the wider public through its activist networks, that highlighted the demands and struggles of Human Rights Defenders, and the violations they are facing, through street activism or public protests or through artistic awareness-raising actions.

AI Greece also worked on the campaign via its human rights education program which mobilizes students to learn about fundamental rights such as freedom of expression, gender justice, the right to protest and the right to a sustainable environment.

## GUINEA

In general, the Write for Rights campaign in Guinea went well with the participation of all the members in implementing the strategies. However, they faced difficulties with school and university authorities regarding press conferences, HRE events, as well as the restriction of civic space, particularly for activities for the general public.

## HUNGARY

Write for Rights in Hungary was bigger and very different than in previous years. The Section worked on more cases, created a unique campaign design (including an interactive Christmas calendar, where photographs and information on each IAR was placed in a window, and the windows dated until the 10 December).

Working with a creative team, they incorporated a public relations plan which included press releases, interviews, individual articles, and the use of influencers.

They also developed a new feature in their website system that enabled their supporters to sign all nine cases at once. The Section also held workshops and separate events. All this was extremely useful, because the Section were able to learn a lot in the process and managed to draw important conclusions from using so many new tools. This resulted in having a better campaign than last year.



## ICELAND

Amnesty Iceland had a successful Write for Rights 2022. Individuals in 13 places all over Iceland organised events to collect signatures, online and offline. Twenty-six schools also took part, mostly online. Amnesty Iceland collaborated with 50 artists on the 23 November to hold a major event/stunt at the biggest shopping centre in Iceland to raise awareness of the individuals at risk in Write for Rights and violations on the right to protest. Fifteen youth activist collected signatures on iPads. The event was a huge success. In total the media in Iceland covered Write for Right 11 times.



## INDONESIA

In 2023, Amnesty Indonesia worked with two educational entities - Green School Bali and BINUS University and held separate writing workshops with them. The Section's engagement with Green School Bali continues to be a success, with the school setting up their own booth, while BINUS was impressed with the workshop that they agreed to work again with AI Indonesia in the near future.

## IRELAND

Amnesty Ireland put more emphasis this year on reaching and engaging new and wider audiences through a campaign launch to generate media interest, and a series of in-person events and actions. This resulted in Write for Rights media coverage for the first time in recent years, and in bringing in new audiences and partners through the Protect the Protest theme, and on the specific cases of the individuals at risk.

Letter-writing increased by 33%, groups participating increased by 20%, and there was a 21% increase in digital traffic and engagement with campaign assets. Amnesty Ireland reached targets for new income and engagement in emails which led to a higher number of online signatures and new leads.

## ITALY



Write for Rights in Italy was a great success in 2022. Many public events were held all over Italy, including promotional actions, gathering signatures and sending appeals in favour of Vahid, Aleksandra, Nasser, Luis Manuel, Joana, Cecillia and Netsai. The Section also collected 3,848 postcards of solidarity for Aleksandra from about 75 schools.

## JAPAN

AI Japan's fantastic volunteers gathered throughout the whole country to write letters, postcards, solidarity messages and more for all ten IAR cases. Youth activists organized their own Write for Rights at their schools, and many joined for the first time. An online talk event was organized to learn more about the situation in Iran, with a very inspiring guest speaker from FEMENA.

Many supporters wrote solidarity messages to Chow in collaboration with other sections. Write for Rights concluded with an online social gathering of staff and activists from AI Japan and various other sections from the Asia Pacific region to talk about the campaign, human rights in general, share ideas and make new connections.



## KENYA

Amnesty Kenya had a successful Write for Rights campaign in 2022. The team managed to involve more member demographics in the campaign than in previous years, where the campaign was taken up mostly by students who are members of Amnesty Clubs.

The team organized and mobilized 'circles of conscience' to take part in the campaign. This was preceded by capacity building and creation of relevant campaign materials that increased uptake of the campaign. The campaign materials consisted of video testimonial from one of the beneficiaries of write for rights, calling out young people to utilize the power of their voice even if it means using just a pen and a paper to make a difference in other people lives, they likened the power of Write for Rights to the power of love which does not discriminate instead seeks to do good to another person regardless of where they are from.

## LUXEMBOURG

The Write for Rights 2022 campaign was officially launched on November 10, 2022 in Luxembourg and closed on January 31, 2023.

The section was able to mobilize the public in Luxembourg, both on the digital side (more than 8,000 online petition signatures submitted to the authorities, together with the paper petitions) and during the activities organized throughout these months of campaigning. In particular, the Luxembourg section of Amnesty International offered a week of educational workshops for secondary schools organized around 10 December.

To celebrate International Human Rights Day, the Section resumed their traditional Human Rights March after two years of absence due to Covid health restrictions. The event was a great success, beating its attendance record (more than 250 people marched, with torches and candles in hand).

The Section was also very happy to have Yren Rotela and Kimberly Ayala visit, they participated in many activities, including meeting with the Prime Minister, Xavier Bettel; with Madame Cahen, Minister of Family and Integration within the framework of the National Action Plan for the promotion of the LGBTI rights; with civil society associations and finally with the Luxembourg public alongside Germain Rukuki, who featured in Write for Rights in 2020.

At the end of our campaign, the Section were received by the French Ambassador to Luxembourg, Ms Claire Lignieres-Counathe, to hand over our documents and discuss the situation of Zineb Redouane.



## MALAYSIA

AI Malaysia launched its Write for Rights activities on 26 November 2022, in conjunction with its annual Youth Assembly. They were joined virtually by Rung Panusaya, a Thai activist that AI campaigned for during Write for Rights 2021. Rung spoke about the positive, motivating, and powerful impact of Write for Rights on her life, and the strength it brought her to receive so many messages of solidarity from supporters around the world. Attendees were certainly inspired to continue to take action, and let human rights defenders know that we stand with them.

In December, the Section celebrated Human Rights Day by setting up a Write for Rights booth at the Malaysian Bar Council's Human Rights festival, where they engaged with members of the public and encouraged them to sign petitions to the governments of Cameroon, France, Bangladesh, and Zimbabwe.

All through January, local groups and school clubs mobilised to collect both physical and online actions; activities included organising events at their schools and coordinating with teachers and principals for actions during the school assembly.

Ending it with a bang, AI Malaysia hosted its first Write for Rights Picnic on 18 February at the Perdana Botanical Gardens in the heart of Kuala Lumpur, where over a hundred participants engaged in activities such as flower crafts, cricket, board games and nail art (chosen as they were dear and personal to Zineb, Shahnewaz, Joanah, Cecillia, Netsai and Dorgelesse), enjoyed food and live music, and participated in human rights discussion circles on freedom of expression, and the intersections with the climate crisis, gender and protests.



## MALI

AI Mali had their best Write for Rights campaign in 2022, involving all their coordinators from local groups in five regions. They mainly organized events for the individuals from Cameroon and Zimbabwe. Various cultural events, such as days of actions to mobilize people, talk to them about the campaign, and the individuals at risk featured garnered more than 10,000 petition signatures. They tracked all their actions on Facebook, where there were 5,235 likes, 259 shares and 489,355 views. AI Mali's members told them that the 2022 edition of Write for Rights was exceptional, and mobilized and involved members, activists, and supporters more than any other year.

## MEXICO

This year's Write for Rights campaign went very well for the Mexican section. AI Mexico wanted to start the campaign early to gather as many signatures and solidarity messages as they could, so their local launch took place at the end of October. In preparation for the campaign, the Mexican section strategically selected 5 cases out of the 10 cases that were going to be made visible this year. AI Mexico chose to work in the cases from Bangladesh, Hong Kong, Paraguay, Russia, and Zimbabwe. Additionally, they made a very nice landing page that served as the main tool to gather signatures.

They started out with a soft launch in the last weeks of October by publishing images and some videos on their social media pages (specifically Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter), but they were particularly looking forward to doing offline actions since they were not able to since the start of the pandemic. As such this year was particularly special for their staff and activists.

The Section also engaged in advocacy actions, such as sending letters to embassies, activists facilitated workshops, organized offline events and with a very effective social media strategy they were able to gather a historic number of signatures in 2022.



## MOLDOVA

Despite the aftermaths of the Covid19 pandemic and the war escalating near the Republic of Moldova, Amnesty International Moldova's activists continue to support and fight for human rights. The youth are very aware that their engagement matters. During Write for Rights AI Moldova managed to involve more than 35 schools. Several initiative groups reported increases (?) not only in numbers, but also in terms of actions. To increase the visibility of the campaign and empower youth to take part, they organized a social theatre on Aleksandra Skochilenko's case that helped raise awareness.

## MONGOLIA

AI Mongolia was able to organize offline letter-writing events after 2 years of pandemic lockdown, they organized several events to reach different target groups. They reached about 58,000 people through online platforms and offline events, with thousands of letters sent to the target countries. They worked on all ten global cases and collected more than 3,400 signatures on a petition to call the Mongolian authorities to withdraw draft laws that restrict civic space and to reconcile the law on peaceful assembly with international human rights standards.

AI Mongolia organized an offline letter-writing marathon in 6 cities, Zavkhan, Arkhangai, Bayan- Ulgii, Darkhan-Uul, Erdenet, and the capital city Ulaanbaatar. Mobilizing their young activists, AI Mongolia reached young people by organizing events in 25 high schools and universities. A full-day event including activities engaged in an art performance, open mic, a Write for Rights quiz, and letter writing booths were organized at the community centre of one of the biggest universities on 8 December and attracted many young people. In collaboration with local theatre, activists promoted the campaign, which allowed them to reach people from different age groups.



## MOROCCO

AI Morocco decided to focus its work on two cases, Zineb Redouane and Nasser Zefzafi. The section set up an action plan, bringing together different activities (awareness raising workshops in the field, activities in schools, round tables, artistic activities etc.) However, the repercussions of strained relationship with the authorities in Morocco, including smear campaigns against Amnesty in the country, restrictions to freedom of assembly and access to public spaces, and the harassment of human rights defenders by the authorities, have restricted our presence on the ground. Because of these, the Section's activities mainly focused on varying methods of online activism (workshops held online, campaign on social networks, mass mailings by email and text messages, etc.) to publicize the launch of the Write for Rights 2022 campaign and collect solidarity actions.

Activists organized online events, with young activists utilising social networks to raise awareness among their peers and the public. More than twenty events were organized nationally in at least 9 cities thanks to the mobilization and activism of local groups and youth clubs, as well as individual members and partner schools of the section. All actions and events were coordinated, individually or in partnership with members of civil society, partner schools and universities and certain artistic groups. The Section recorded different categories of the population as supporting the campaign in 2022.



## NEPAL

Write for Rights 2022 was a huge success for AI Nepal, mobilizing hundreds of Amnesty activists. The high number of creative and enthusiastic youth members who participated in the campaign activities was particularly encouraging.

Prior to the launch of the campaign, AI Nepal held a planning workshop to train and empower its members to take the campaign to local communities in Nepal. During the program, activists planned strategies to reach out to larger and previously unreached audiences.

Human Rights Education programmes accompanied the campaign, which helped explain to young people in schools and colleges the rights that were violated.

AI Nepal campaigned for five individuals at risk. A petition to the Prime Minister of Nepal for investigations into custodial deaths was also included as a national case. This case was able to draw a lot of attention and became the most successful one for the entity with the highest number of petitions.

## NETHERLANDS

In 2022, Write for Rights took place in the Netherlands for the tenth time, and after two years of covid restrictions, all this could finally be organized in physical form again. Almost 400 local writing campaigns were organized throughout the country, in libraries, places of worship, community centres and living rooms. In addition, 410 schools with a total of 57,500 students participated via a special teaching package.



At least 361,000 letters and cards were written (or signed online) by all participants. The target was 365,000. Because not every organizer or participating school uses the form to report the numbers of written letters and cards afterwards, the actual number is higher.

Especially for the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, a PR agency developed a promotional concept around a yellow suit with which W4R ambassadors toured various media as a 'walking letterbox and/or writing desk'. This did not generate mass media attention but was particularly popular with influencers. There was also local press coverage in Amsterdam newspaper *Het Parool* and various other regional/local news media, thanks to the efforts of local organizers who modified and sent out a template press release.

A large-scale writing event was also organized in the Amnesty House in Amsterdam, on December 10 from 10:00 to 22:00, which attracted around 600 visitors.

## NEW ZEALAND AOTEAROA

Supporters in New Zealand organised letter-writing events, fundraising events, stands in public libraries and other offline actions for Write for Rights. Supporters that could not attend the public events decided to take-action from home with their family and friends. The Section had other organisations supporting the campaign by encouraging their staff to take-action or include information about the campaign at their events. AIANZ decided to focus their end of year appeal on Write for Rights, specifically in support of Vahid Afkari, Chow Hang-tung and Shahnawaz Chowdhury.



The Section launched a new campaign website where supporters could register, download resources, confirm their attendance at events or add their own events; and engage with diverse online actions like online petitions and solidarity actions.

## **NIGERIA**

AI Nigeria, with the support of its volunteer network, held 18 Write for Rights activities in 20 states across Nigeria. The first activity was a football and all-girls basketball tournament tagged *Write for Rights football and Basketball tournament*. It featured football teams from six high schools located in the capital city of Abuja. The players, students, and teachers had the opportunity to sign petitions and write solidarity messages for all the people featured in Write for Rights 2022. Other activities included a Write for Rights Walk, "Footballers Write for Rights" and Solidarity Wall sign-up and Screening of Write for Rights videos.

2022 Write for Rights events provided a great opportunity to popularize the campaign across Nigeria. Over 2,000 people joined the campaign across all locations. A total number of 30 letters and 17, 580 signatures were collected on behalf of the individuals at risk.



## **NORWAY**

Overall, the campaign was a success at AI Norway, especially regarding solidarity letters. In 2021, the Section received fewer solidarity letters, mainly because of the pandemic, and it was good to see this changing for the better. The Section was also successful in reaching out to a large number of young people through human rights education activities. The Section very much enjoyed meeting Netsai, from Zimbabwe. She made a huge impression on the activists that were able to meet her in person and the Section were able to make a video with her. The feedback from students learning about Write for Rights in schools proves that such videos are very important, as the students feel closer to the people they learn about.

## **PARAGUAY**

Work was carried out prior to the launch with a renowned local influencer. On the day of the launch the Section had a live broadcast with the influencer and Mariana and Yren, where the strategy for the campaign was revealed. Signatures were collected on public roads and online via social networks. Delivery of signatures to the Paraguayan authorities were carried out and the closing of the campaign was live streamed.

## PERU

In Peru, the Write for Rights campaign created a lot of attention, especially in schools. Write for Rights 2022 demonstrated yet again what a great opportunity the campaign is to raise awareness, educate and mobilize children and adolescents of school age. The campaign also generated a lot of commitment from groups, which meant the Section was able to carry out some actions in a decentralized manner within the country.

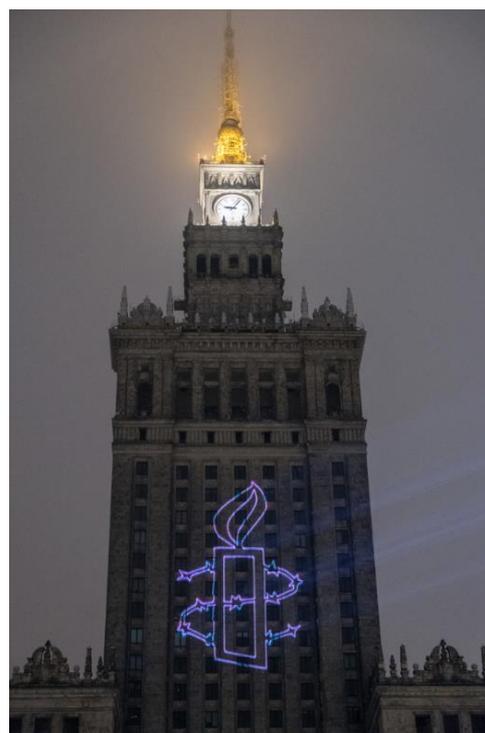
## PHILIPPINES

AI Philippines was back on track with its activism and mobilization for Write for Rights 2022. After the pandemic and recent national elections created a challenging environment for human rights action, it was through this familiar global event that members and activists channelled their fire to not only take action for human rights but bring back the sense of community within the movement. Write for Rights 2022 saw the first in-person events the section has had since the pandemic. Members set-up action booths in schools, community centres, and pubs; organized motorcades that brought together human rights groups from across provinces; went house-to-house to gather petitions; created artwork and took photos of cats with their neighbours and friends (for Aleksandra); and guided students as they wrote letters to Dorgelesse, Aleksandra, Yren and Mariana, and Shahnewaz. Through the activists' collective action, the section was able to gather over 15,000 letters and signatures.

## POLAND

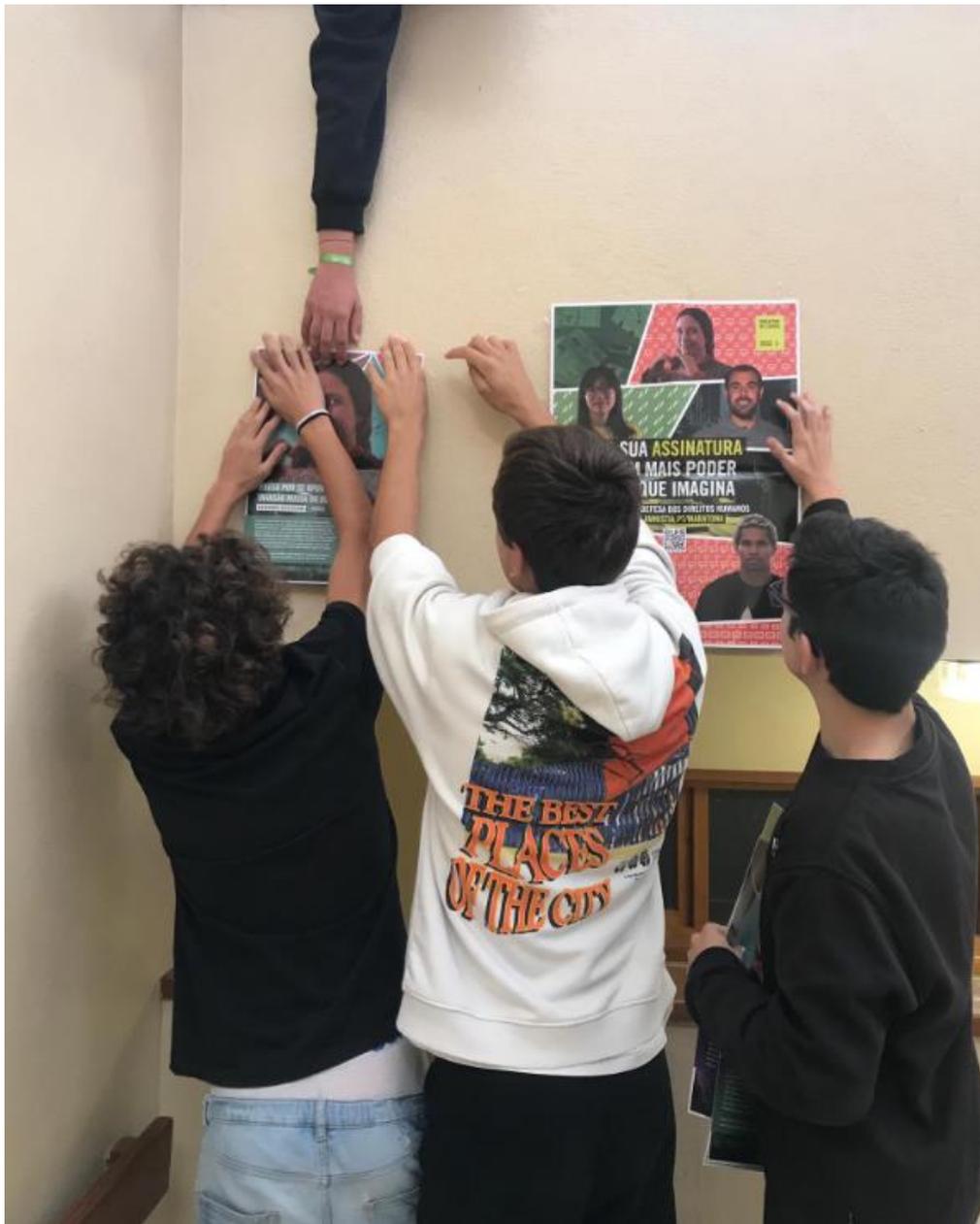
Write for Rights in Poland is already very well known! AI Poland does its best to popularize it even more. As in previous years, in Poland schools were among main driving motors of Write for Rights. Over 520 schools throughout the whole country organized Write for Rights actions, with young people writing letters, learning about human rights through action and educational workshops, engaging in and developing creative activities. Events were also held by AI Local Groups, institutions, universities, in libraries, cafeterias, or by individuals, showing that the campaign can be held virtually anywhere, the sky is the limit!

The central event was held in Warsaw on International Human Rights' Day on 10 December in the Palace of Culture and Science, the emblematic building of the capital, and was joint with Human Rights' Youth Congress. Participants of both events had a chance to write letters, but also take part in a debate on the right to protest and join in in the spreading of a gigantic flag stating "Freedom" right in the heart of the city, on the main square near the Palace. Even the Palace itself was illuminated on this very day to show support for human rights!



## PORTUGAL

At AI Portugal, this year's Write for Rights was all about new challenges and dreams. The conversation around the campaign started in June, with an online event with Bernardo Caal Xol. From that moment onwards, the planning and the implementation process with the entire staff went through their usual timelines, with everyone involved. The Section organized a first 'moment' dedicated to their membership, with a strategy that involved sending e-mails, text messages and even a special card through post, to organize a "chain of signatures". The idea behind this was for their members to be the first ones to set this year's Write for Rights tone and be the first ones to act. This involved creating new materials, working closely with the fundraising department, and creating a new and exclusive landing page on the website. After that, and on 1 November the campaign followed the usual dynamics, focusing on online signatures, up until 31 January 2023. Lastly, they would also like to highlight the solidarity action for Aleksandra Skochilenko where, with activists from different cities, replaced price tags in supermarkets with information about case and asking people to act.



## **PUERTO RICO**

The Section began Write for Rights by taking all the campaign to four universities in four different regions of Puerto Rico. Simultaneously, they were promoting the cases digitally. Then on December 10 the Section launched Write for Rights during the human rights festival in Puerto Rico. Students have continued collecting signatures into January and February 2023. Yren and Mariana's case, from Paraguay, proved the most successful at AI Puerto Rico.

## **SENEGAL**

The Write for Rights campaign mobilized 80 activists from the section for three weeks. In all regions, all departments of the country, activists mobilized to collect signatures, spreading Amnesty International's message, and recruiting new activists. Amnesty Senegal groups are competitive with each other! Each group adopts a strategy adapted to its environment to collect the maximum number of signatures. In addition, the collection of signatures is done online on our platform dedicated to the campaign.

## **SLOVAKIA**

Write for Rights 2022 in Slovakia was relatively successful. More than 50 schools organized events on their grounds, and the team at AI Slovakia organized more than 17 workshops in schools across the country. The Section collected almost six thousand online and offline actions. The highlight of the events was the celebration of Human Rights Day, attended by dozens of Amnesty supporters and members of the public. During the campaign they collected solidarity actions with nine individuals from abroad. As well as the global people featured in the campaign, AI Slovakia also advocated for a national case of Juraj and Matus, two LGBTI+ people murdered in a terrorist attack in Slovakia in October 2021. Some other sections collected signatures for their case as well.

## **SLOVENIA**

AI Slovenia launched their Write for Rights 2022 public campaign as a build up to Human Rights Day on 10 December. Each day was devoted to one of this year's individuals/groups at risk, where their story and call to action needs were presented. The period also included some in person letter writing and mobilization schools actions and events and the Section are happy with their final gathered numbers. There were also over 40 schools involved in the campaign.

## **SOUTH AFRICA**

In 2022, Amnesty International South Africa (AISA) was able to engage thousands of supporters in Write for Rights activities. Given the current context of South Africa, where human rights defenders and whistle-blowers receive little to no protection from the government and where many killed are killed, intimidated, or harassed, AISA decided it was important to identify a national case to shine a spotlight on the issue and identified Fikile Ntshangase. Fikile was an environmental and human rights defender who was shot six times and killed for speaking out against the expansion of mining operations in her community. Due to the pressure garnered on Fikile's case, the Minister of Police spokesperson was forced to provide a public update in the media on progress made on her case. AISA will continue to push for justice until the family has answers. AISA also mobilised supporters and members on Vahid Afkari and Dorgelesse Nguessan case. In total over 90,000 actions were taken.

## **SOUTH ASIA REGIONAL OFFICE, INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT**

The regional office mainly focussed on digital campaigning for W4R especially in the absence of ground presence as well as the absence of the campaigner from the country. The regional office has constantly been talking of W4R in general as well as Shahnewaz's case specifically which had very good engagement and response on social media. In collaboration with Amnesty Sweden, an online event was organized for the youth to support Shahnewaz. With Amnesty Korea, a webinar was organized on Climate Change and Human Rights where Shahnewaz spoke of his work and challenges. Jobs people do, a Canadian Organization got in touch with the team after they read about W4R and invited Shahnewaz for a podcast that will soon be broadcast. These events also resulted in local media coverage.

## **SOUTH KOREA**

AI Korea conducted several events and campaigns for Write for Rights 2022. For offline Events, AIK carried out Letter Night, which was prefaced with an exhibition for Write for Rights and streamed live. They also carried out a rally with local CSOs for Chow Hang Tung in front of the Chinese Embassy.

For Online events, AIK conducted a webinar with Shahnewaz which was also streamed live on YouTube. In addition, the Section carried out multiple digital campaigns and advertisements. Thanks to the successful campaigning and advertisements, the number of the online participants more than doubled.

## **SPAIN**

This year, AI Spain's Write for Rights campaign worked on 5 individual cases: Chow Hang-tung, Dorgelesse Nguessan, Luis Manuel Otero Alcántara, Nasser Zefzafi and Aleksandra Skochilenko.

Different activities were held for them, including solidarity actions (for three of the individuals, postcards were created to send words of encouragement and solidarity, including by artist Lydia Mba) and an action on their website to collect messages.



Local Groups had a presence on the street around 10 December, collecting signatures addressed to authorities.

### SWEDEN

AI Sweden had a successful Write for Rights-campaign, both in scope and in results. The Swedish section focused on restarting student and group activism, and the campaign made good use of the material provided by the International Secretariat, and communication with other sections. AI Sweden intend to continue lobbying the situation of the five individuals included in their campaign by raising their cases with the parliamentary human rights group.

### SWITZERLAND

AI Switzerland was present on the streets, at events and online supporting eight persons from five countries (Iran, Hong Kong, Zimbabwe, Paraguay, and Russia). Activists sent 10,000 letters. Digitally they collected 28,000 signatures.

### TAIWAN

AI Taiwan had a fruitful Write for Rights 2022. They held four letter-writing events around the island - Taipei, Taichung, Taitung and Tainan - in these two-day weekend events people write letters for the individuals featured in Write for Rights. Music performances, artists' drawings and human rights speeches were also presented at the venue.

*Run for Rights* Marathon was also held in New Taipei City to highlight the importance of taking action for human rights. Moreover, AI Taiwan welcomed educators/activists to join their teachers' plan/party plan and take action with their students/friends and families.

In the end, over 5300 people joined the offline events; over 1000 educators brought over 650 schools to participate; over 170 individuals held their own parties, writing letters with their friends and families.

Almost 60,000 letters in total were sent out from Taiwan to show solidarity and to hold abusers accountable.



## THAILAND



AI Thailand's Write for Rights 2022 met with the expectation of this year's planning as they designed activities in different approaches, including organizing public booths, movie screenings, and seminars, and engaged Write for Rights in HRE classes in schools and universities.

The Write for Rights campaign has become well known to the public since the last year's case of Rung Panusaya made a history in Thailand, and it has proved that the Write

for Rights campaign works in many directions. Rung also shared her thoughts on the impact and invited other activists to take part in the action as well.

The Section also strengthened Thai activist network as they support Amnesty Thailand in distributing petitions across Thailand. Online the Section still receives low numbers of engagement, though they shared various content relating to Write for Rights; interviews, videos, calls for petition signing, case situation updates and online articles.

In 2022 they concluded that people engaged much better when they organized public events, as they were able to explain the case situations to petition signers, which related to freedom of expression, public assemblies, and LGBTQ rights. These actions were better conveyed people to sign the petitions than signing the petitions on an online website.

## TOGO

The Write for Rights 2022 campaign took place in Togo from 26 November to 13 December 2022. This year the launch was started with a Photo action at "The Dove of Peace", a symbolic place in the city of Lomé. As usual, members, activists, supporters, and others mobilized around the campaign by going to the field to publicize the event and collect as many signatures as possible. Groups organized events in their locations to raise awareness of the campaign in the



community and collect signatures. The objective was also to share the story of the people supported this year within the framework of the campaign. Online, the Section used a dedicated website for the campaign. In total the Section collected almost 170,000 signatures from schools, high schools and with partners.

## **TUNISIA**

As part of the commemoration of the 74<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, AI Tunisia organised a screening of the film 200 Metres by Palestinian director Amin Nayfa, followed by a debate involving journalists, film professionals and human rights activists, and a presentation of cases from the Write for Rights campaign. AI Tunisia also dedicated a street action in support of Egyptian-British political activist Alaa Abdel-Fattah during which dozens of passers-by wrote messages of support for the activist. AI Tunisia also shared the 10 cases of activists that Amnesty supported in Write for Rights on its Facebook page followed by calls for signatures.

## **TURKEY**

The W4R campaign started strong in Turkey. There were two big events covering all the cases and the campaign received different press coverage. However, with the devastating earthquake that happened on 6 February, AI Turkey stopped all other campaign actions.

## **UK**

AI UK had a successful Write for Rights 2022, with many activists organising writing and fundraising activities across the country. In these events, AI UK worked with diaspora groups and activists who are country specialists, to ensure the events were meaningful and impactful for the individuals, and to achieve a deeper awareness of the situations the individuals are facing. Additionally, AI UK ran events to engage advocacy targets with the campaign and broader human rights work, where a lot of support was received and resulted in all individuals and the campaign being named in a debate in Parliament.

Apart from engaging people with the events and the many letter writing events across the UK, over 68,000 people were mobilised to take action online.

## **URUGUAY**

A digital strategy was developed for Write for Rights in Uruguay which included different types of actions and content. The section sought to link the cases with local situations. With international solidarity at the heart of the campaign, the section involved artists and activists in the delivery of the campaign.

## **USA**

AI USA had a successful Write for Rights in 2023, working on all 10 cases, sharing them online through their website, emails, and social media. Write for Rights information was also shared with members through snail mail in direct mail campaigns. Local and Student Groups contributed to W4R by writing letters, holding events, and sharing information. Numerous cases were shared with coalition partners, who then raised the cases themselves in their own meetings, and advocacy efforts. Lobbying and advocacy meetings have been held by AI USA staff on a few of the cases as well.

## **VENEZUELA**

AI Venezuela was present at festivals, fairs and universities where they publicised the 10 cases of Write for Rights 2022. They were also able to access some student centres where they were able to generate empathy for the individuals featured in the campaign and raise awareness of human rights.

## **ZIMBABWE**

In 2022, AI Zimbabwe adopted 5 cases out of the 10 available. A letter-writing event was held in Bulawayo and Harare. On International Human Rights Day on Saturday 10 December 2022, AI Zimbabwe held a marathon running event, the #RunforRights. At each water point runners could stop to sign petitions. A letter-writing marathon was held alongside. During the letter-writing marathon activists wrote letters and designed postcards in solidarity with the selected individuals at risk. They also held a mock protest and photo actions taken showing that protests are not always violent and that every human being has a right to protest.

# PHOTO CAPTIONS

## From top to bottom:

Front Cover

\* AI Mongolia's Letter writing event in Ulaanbaata © Dashochir

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\* Activists at AI Cote d'Ivoire taking action for Dorgelesse © AI Cote d'Ivoire

Page 6:

\* Activist in Ghana in solidarity with Dorgelesse © AI Ghana

Page 10:

\*Netsai speaks at AI UK event in London © Netsai Marova

Page 10:

\* Activists in Taiwan in solidarity with Cecillia, Joana and Netsai © AI Taiwan

Page 11:

\* Netsai Marova's Facebook post with images of the event at AI UK

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\* Activists in Zimbabwe take action for Luis Manuel © AI Zimbabwe

Page 14:

\* Activist in Togo in solidarity with Luis Manuel © AI Togo

Page 17:

\* Mariana and Kimberly visit a school in the Netherlands © AI Netherlands

Page 18:

\* Activists in Nepal take action for Yren and Mariana © AI Nepal

Page 19:

\* Mariana and Kimberly at AI Paraguay's W4R launch © AI Paraguay

Page 20:

\* An action for Chow in a New Zealand coffee shop W4R launch © AI New Zealand

Page 21:

\* Activists in Taiwan take action for Chow © AI Taiwan

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\* Activists in Nepal in Solidarity with Shahnewaz © AI Nepal

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\* Activist in Togo in Solidarity with Shahnewaz © AI Togo

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\* Drawings and letters for Aleksandra

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\* An action for Aleksandra in a Portuguese supermarket © AI Portugal

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\* An action for Zineb by AI France © Clément Mahoudeau / Hans Lucas

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\* An activist in solidarity with Zineb in Cote d'Ivoire © AI Cote d'Ivoire

Page 30:

\* A Moroccan activist supporting Zineb © AI Morocco

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\* An Italian activist in solidarity with Vahid © AI Italy

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\* A poster for Vahid at an event in Taiwan © AI Taiwan

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\* An Algerian activist takes action for Nasser © AI Algeria

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\* An activist in Nigeria takes action for Nasser © AI Nigeria

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\* Event held at AI Algeria in Algiers, 10 December 2022 © Amnesty International

\* A marathon organised as part of Amnesty International Argentina 's offline actions in 2022 © AI Argentina

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\* A letter writing event held by AI Belgium (Flemish) in Antwerp, 26 November 2022 © Amnesty International

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\* The launch of the Write for Rights 2022 campaign in Benin, 26 November 2022 © Amnesty International Benin

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\* Screen printing and human rights workshop in Chile, 27 November 2022 © Amnesty International Chile

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\* Youth activists collect signatures in Grand-Bassam, 3 December 2022 © Amnesty International Côte d'Ivoire

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\* An event in Marseille, Paris, to remember Zineb Redouane, 2 December 2022 © Clément Mahoudeau / Hans Lucas

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\* Poster for the Write for Rights campaign in Germany © Amnesty International Germany

\* Members and supporters of AI Ghana at the launch of Write for Rights 2022 in Accra, November 2022 © Amnesty International

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\* Amnesty Hungary's innovative Christmas calendar featuring the individuals in Write for Rights 2022 © Amnesty International Hungary

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\* An event at Iceland's largest shopping centre, for Write for Right 2022 © Amnesty International Iceland

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- \* A solidarity letter created by a school student in Italy for Aleksandra © Amnesty International Italy
- \* Letter writing event run by volunteers at AI Japan © Amnesty International

Page 47:

- \* A poster for the March for Human Rights held in Luxembourg on 10 December 2022 © Amnesty International Luxembourg

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- \* AI Malaysia concluded its Write for Rights 2022 with a picnic in the park, Kuala Lumpur, 18 February 2023 © Amnesty International Malaysia

Page 49:

- \* Social media advert from AI Mexico for an event on Human Rights Day, 10 December 2022 © Amnesty International Mexico

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- \* Write for Rights action by AI Mongolia, their first offline even since the Covid pandemic © Amnesty International Mongolia

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- \* Members and activists at the launch of AI Morocco's Write for Rights campaign, which took place during the Section's annual national youth forum © Amnesty International Morocco

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- \* Write for Rights HRE event run by AI Netherlands at a school in Bergen, 8 December 2022 © Karen Veldkamp
- \* Write for Rights posters in New Zealand © Amnesty International Aotearoa New Zealand

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- \* International members promotion of Write for Rights in Nigeria, December 2022 © Anyanwu Joseph

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- \* The Amnesty logo and words "human rights" projected onto the facade of the Palace of Culture and Science in Warsaw, Poland, on 10 December 2022 for Write for Rights © Grzegorz Zukowski

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- \* Students in Portugal hang posters for Write for Rights 2022 © Amnesty International Portugal

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- \* Solidarity post card for Luis Manuel created by Spanish artist Lydia Mba © Lydia Mba
- \* Letter writing event in Taiwan for Write for Rights 2022 © Amnesty International Taiwan

Page 58:

- \* Public campaigning event in Thailand © Amnesty International Thailand
- \* A Write for Rights event in Togo © Amnesty International Togo