



Amnesty International

Group 524

December 2021



No December Meeting December Write For Rights Event Write For Rights Cases

Welcome

This December newsletter is sent out early to coincide with the December 9 Write-athon. We hope you can attend. The model case letters and labels are again being sent as separate attachments to this newsletter. *If you are completing the letter actions at home, please let me know how many you send as we will add those to our Group 524 total at the Group 39 event.*

December Write For Rights Event Returns

Join Amnesty International Pittsburgh (Group 39) and many other inspiring Pittsburgh rights groups and community leaders on **Thursday, December 9, 2021, 7:00-8:30pm** at Calvary Episcopal Church for the annual Write-for-Rights event.

This year marks the **36th annual** gathering in Pittsburgh! During the event you can contribute to writing hundreds of letters on important human rights cases of our time.

Stop in and stay as long as you can. Write letters. Talk to other activists. Check out information tables about local groups working in Pittsburgh on local, national and international issues. There will be a candle-lighting ceremony at about 7:45pm.

All attendees are required to wear face coverings and are requested to be vaccinated against COVID-19. In response to the pandemic, the event will be shorter than in past years and there will not be refreshments.

Write For Rights Cases

This month we are featuring the Write For Rights cases on the following pages.

Amnesty International Group 524

Meeting Schedule: Third Tuesday of the month, at 7:00 p.m.

Meeting Location: Providence Heights

9000 Babcock Blvd., Allison Park, PA 15101



Contact John Belch (joheb@aol.com or 412-766-1894) for more information on material in this mailing, or visit the Amnesty USA web site (www.amnestyusa.org) and Group 39's Amnesty Pittsburgh web site (www.amnestypgh.org).



**These people need you.
Your letters can change lives.**

Amnesty International



Write for Human Rights

Amnesty International Group 39 invites you to the 36th Annual Write for Human Rights event in the Pittsburgh Region!

Write a letter. Change a life.
Come for 5 minutes or the whole event.
Meet members of other human rights groups and concerned individuals.

Thursday, December 9, 2021, 7:00-8:30pm
Calvary Episcopal Church, 315 Shady Ave, Pittsburgh

All attendees are required to wear face coverings and are requested to be vaccinated against COVID-19.

More info at [amnestypgh.org](https://www.amnestypgh.org).



GUATEMALA: BERNARDO CAAL XOL

Jailed for defending a sacred river

Bernardo Caal Xol has done everything he can to peacefully protect his people's land and natural resources from plunder and biodiversity loss. When the river they rely on for survival was threatened by the construction of two hydroelectric power plants, Bernardo and his people protested. He was publicly smeared with repeated and baseless accusations. In 2018, a judge sentenced Bernardo to more than seven years in prison, convicting him without any evidence.



CHINA: ZHANG ZHAN

Reporting on COVID-19 got her locked up

When Wuhan went into lockdown, Zhang Zhan was one of the few citizen journalists to report on the unfolding Covid-19 crisis. Determined to get the truth out, the former lawyer travelled there in February 2020. She took to social media to report how government officials had detained independent reporters and harassed families of Covid-19 patients. She was later detained and sentenced to four years in prison to silence her.



EGYPT: MOHAMED BAKER

Locked away for defending freedom

Human rights lawyer Mohamed Baker must do without his wife, cats, and everyone else he loves. Falsely accused of terrorism, he's in prison for defending the rights of some of the most marginalized people in Egypt. The prison authorities have treated him especially cruelly, refusing him a bed, mattress, outdoor exercise, even family photos. Defending people's freedoms should not cost him his own.



MEXICO: WENDY GALARZA

Shot while protesting violence against women

For Wendy Galarza, helping to raise young children is the best way to create a fairer world. It's a goal she works hard for in Mexico, where women are often abused and killed for being women. In November 2020, she joined a march protesting the murder of a woman known as Alexis. During it, police red shots and Wendy was wounded. She launched a case against the police, but those responsible for the violence have not been brought to justice.



UKRAINE: SPHERE

Attacked for defending LGBTI & women's rights

Sphere NGO have been championing LGBTI and women's rights since 2006, and are among the oldest organizations of their kind in the country. Founded by activists Anna Sharyhina and Vira Chernygina, they provide a safe space for women and LGBTI people in Kharkiv, Ukraine's second largest city. In recent years, however, they have suffered dozens of attacks by violent anti-LGBTI groups. Anna and Vira report these incidents, but the police have failed to hold anyone accountable.



ERITREA: CIHAM ALI

Taken at 15 and never seen again

Born in Los Angeles and raised in Eritrea, Ciham Ali wanted to be a fashion designer. But at 15, her ambitions were cut short when she was arrested trying to see Eritrea – and never seen again. The authorities appear to have taken her in retaliation against her father's suspected involvement in a coup attempt on the government. Nine years on and no one knows where Ciham is being held. Meanwhile, the US government has been silent on their citizen's plight.



NIGERIA: IMOLEAYO MICHAEL

Facing trumped-up charges for protesting police violence

When young people took to Nigeria's streets in October 2020, Imoleayo Michael joined them. They were protesting against the Special Anti-Robbery Squad – or SARS – a police unit notorious for violence. The young computer programmer promoted the protests on social media, using the hashtag #EndSARS. Two weeks later, armed men took him from his home and locked him in an underground cell for 41 days. He's facing trumped-up charges and years in prison.



OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES: JANNA JIHAD

Harassed for exposing Israeli violence

Janna Jihad just wants a normal childhood for herself and all other Palestinian children. But the 15-year-old Palestinian teen lives in the Israeli-occupied West Bank – and life under systematic discrimination is anything but normal. Having begun documenting military violations at the age of seven, Janna’s principled journalism has attracted unwanted attention. She’s been harassed and threatened with death, but she won’t give up – not until institutional racism against Palestinians ends.

THAILAND: RUNG PANUSAYA

Facing a life sentence for peaceful protest

Once a shy, quiet teenager, Panusaya – known as “Rung”, meaning “rainbow” – has become a leading voice in Thailand’s democracy movement. The university student, a vocal proponent for equality and the right to freedom of expression, opposes the use of the lèse-majesté law to silence government critics. In March 2021, the authorities jailed her for 60 days under this law. She went on hunger strike for 38 days and was released. Today, she faces dozens of charges against her and life imprisonment.



BELARUS: MIKITA ZALATAROU

Teen beaten, electrocuted, and jailed

Mikita Zalatarou was waiting for a friend when he was swept up in a crowd of protesters and straight into a nightmare. Within 24 hours, officers arrested the 16-year-old at his home, accusing him of throwing a Molotov cocktail at riot police. They locked him up and allegedly tortured him. Despite a lack of evidence, Mikita – who also has epilepsy – was convicted and jailed for five years.