



Amnesty International

Group 524

September 2022



**No September Meeting
Mohamed Imran Released!!
Banned Books Week**

Welcome

September brings cooler evenings and a return to regular routines. This month's focus is on some good news and the Banned Books Week effort.

Mohamed Imran: Good News

Mohamed Imran, a Sri Lankan student, has been released. We featured his case in the May newsletter. See the details on page 2.

Banned Books Week September 18-24

With the recent attack on author Salman Rushdie and Pittsburgh's City of Asylum leader Henry Reese, this year's effort takes on added significance. Details and sample letters are on the following pages.

Amnesty's Ukraine Crisis Campaign

Amnesty has set up a page on their website to coordinate actions and information concerning Ukraine. <https://www.amnestyusa.org/UkraineCrisis/>.

Amnesty International Group 524

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

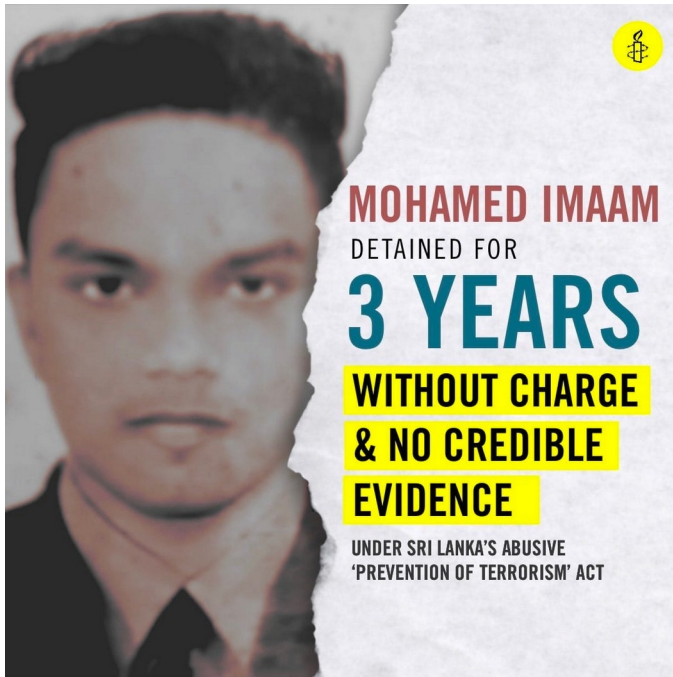
Meeting Location: Providence Heights
9000 Babcock Blvd. significance



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).



GOOD NEWS! Mohamed Imran Released on Bail



Mohamed Imran, a 23-year-old computer engineering student in Sri Lanka, was released on bail on August 31 by the Batticaloa Magistrate's Court. He had been arrested on May 9, 2019 by the police under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA). During his detention, no charges were brought against him, nor did the government produce any evidence of his having committed an internationally recognized crime.

Amnesty featured his case in our February 2022 report, "Sri Lanka: End the use of and repeal the draconian PTA," and issued an Urgent Action appeal on his case on May 12, 2022. Thanks to everyone who took action on his behalf.

We featured his case in the May newsletter this year and wrote letters on his behalf.

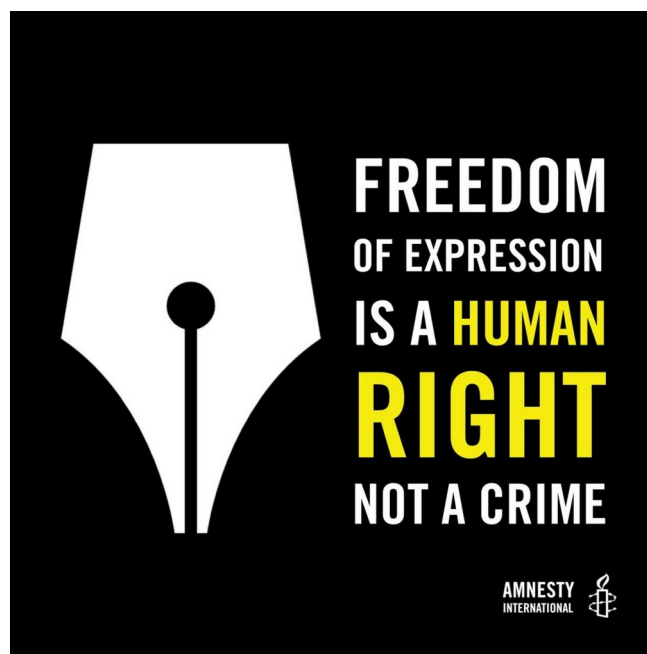


BANNED BOOKS WEEK 2022

Each year during Banned Books Week, Amnesty International draws attention to people around the world who have been imprisoned, threatened, or murdered because of their writing, art, or other published work. As a member of the Banned Books Week Coalition and in solidarity with the American Library Association (ALA) and organizations around the world, Amnesty activists work to fight challenges to freedom of expression.

Banned Books Week 2022 is September 18 – 24, but you can take action on the cases below until October 31. All six cases are available at <https://www.amnestyusa.org/banned-books-2022/> with the letters available as online email actions as well.

This month we will feature three of the six cases. All written letters can be sent to AIUSA where they can be added to other petitions before being sent to the target. Letters can be mailed to: Group Petitions c/o Megan Jirón, Amnesty International USA, 600 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE, 5th Floor, Washington, DC 20003





JEANNOT RANDRIAMANANA TEACHER AND ACTIVIST, MADAGASCAR

Jeannot Randriamanana is a 38-year-old secondary school teacher living and working in Mananjary, Madagascar. He is a father of four children. In addition to his work as a public school teacher, he also works as a communication officer for the local branch of the NGO, Independent Observatory of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in Madagascar (OIDESCM).

He has been posting on his social media about the poor state of school infrastructure in the district of Nosy Varika since December 2021 and has since been targeted for harassment and intimidation for denouncing cases of corruption on his social media account. On May 10, 2022 Jeannot, who had been arbitrarily detained for two months, was granted provisional release.

But on July 12, 2022, the Court of Appeal of Fianarantsoa upheld his conviction and two-year suspended sentence on the charges of “defamation and humiliation of members of Parliament and public servants and identity fraud.”





Dear Minister

I am writing to bring to your attention the case of Jeannot Randriamanana, a human rights defender and public-school teacher in Madagascar’s central-eastern coastal city of Mananjary. On July 12, 2022, the Court of Appeal of Fianarantsoa upheld the sentence of the Criminal Court of Mananjary that convicted Jeannot Randriamanana and handed him a two-year suspended sentence. On March 17, 2022, the Criminal Court of Mananjary sentenced Jeannot to two years of imprisonment for “defamation and humiliation of members of Parliament and public servants” (under article 20 of the 2014 Law 2014-006) and identity fraud (article 258 of the Penal Code). Jeannot was convicted simply for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression when he in late February denounced on social media the alleged mismanagement and embezzlement of humanitarian aid by several authority figures in the district of Nosy Varika, following the impact of cyclones Batsirai and Emnati.

On May 10, the Court of Appeal of Fianarantsoa granted provisional release to Jeannot — who had been in arbitrary detention for two months. The Court then held the hearing on June 14 and issued the verdict on July 12 that upheld the current sentencing. Jeannot’s lawyers filed an appeal against the sentence before the Supreme Court of Madagascar that has yet to set a date for the appeal.

I urge you to immediately drop all the charges against Jeannot Randriamanana and ensure that the verdict is quashed. We also urge you to ensure that other Malagasy human rights defenders and whistleblowers are not harassed, intimidated, or detained under trumped-up charges for exposing and denouncing cases of corruption. Finally, we also urge you to accelerate the process of adopting the law on the protection of human rights defenders.

Sincerely,



JANNA JIHAD

STUDENT JOURNALIST, OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES

Janna Jihad just wants a normal childhood. “Like any other child... I want to be able to play soccer with my friends without having tear gas canisters rain on us,” she says. But 15-year-old Janna lives in the Israeli-occupied West Bank. Life under systematic discrimination is anything but normal. When Janna was seven, the Israeli military killed her uncle. At 13, Janna was recognized as one of the youngest journalists in the world, documenting the Israeli army’s oppressive and often deadly treatment of Palestinians.

This includes night raids, demolishing homes and schools, and crushing communities who stand up for their rights. Palestinian children are particularly affected. Many have been killed and injured by Israeli forces. Israel has signed up to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, yet has failed to extend those protections to Palestinian children in the West Bank. By contrast, Israeli children are protected – even those living in illegal settlements near Janna. Today, Janna’s principled journalism has marked her out for harassment and death threats. She won’t give up. “I want to know what freedom means in my homeland, what justice and peace and equality means without facing systematic racism,” she says.





Dear Member of Knesset,

Janna Jihad just wants a normal childhood. But the 15-year-old lives in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, where systematic discrimination and oppression are the norm. Having seen her own uncle killed by the Israeli military, Janna has been thrust into the world of citizen journalism, documenting and exposing the Israeli army's oppressive and often deadly treatment of Palestinians, including children. Israel has signed up to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, yet doesn't extend those protections to Palestinian children in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Today, Janna's principled journalism has marked her out for harassment and death threats. I call on you to end discrimination against Janna, and to meet your obligations under the Convention by protecting her and other Palestinian children from harm.

Sincerely,



VLADYSLAV YESYPENKO

JOURNALIST, UKRAINE/CRIMEA



Vladyslav Yesypenko is a freelance journalist working for Krym Realii, a Crimean branch of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL). Vladyslav was arrested on March 10, 2021 by the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB), on allegations of spying and carrying ammunition.

On March 18, Yesypenko's forced confession was televised on the Russian state-owned TV channel "Krym 24" in which he says he was shooting videos for Krym Realii and sending copies to the security services of Ukraine. He was denied access to an independent lawyer for 27 days, until a remand court hearing where Vladyslav alleged that a grenade had been planted by his captors in his car and that he had been subjected to torture and other ill-treatment to extract his "confession" on video.

Vladyslav was convicted on February 16, 2022 to 6 years in prison and fined RUB 110,000. Amnesty is calling for his immediate release.





Dear Prosecutor General,

I am writing to express my deepest concern regarding the sentencing of journalist Vladyslav Yesypenko to 6 years in prison and a fine of 110,000 RUB on February 16, 2022.

Vladyslav Yesypenko is a freelance journalist working for Krym Realii, a Crimean branch of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL). On March 10, 2021, Vladyslav was arrested by the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB), while he was driving on assignment near the Angarsky mountain pass, on allegations of spying and carrying ammunition.

Vladyslav claims that the FSB officers planted a grenade on him and subsequently charged him with “illegal arms manufacturing” and “illegal arms possession” (Articles 223-1 and 222 of the Russian Criminal Code). Vladyslav didn’t have access to a lawyer of his choice for 27 days.

During this period, Yesypenko’s forced confession was televised on the Russian state- owned TV channel “Krym 24”. At the court hearings, Yesypenko said that he was beaten and electrocuted by FSB officers to extract this forced confession from him.

Vladyslav Yesypenko’s sentence should be overturned and he should be released immediately. All allegations of torture must be investigated and those responsible be held accountable in fair trial proceedings.

Sincerely,