



Amnesty International

Group 524

November 2022



No November Meeting December Write For Rights Event! Cuban Prisoner of Conscience

Welcome

November brings thoughts of thanksgiving for the human rights we enjoy here and our work to extend those rights enshrined in the UDHR to everyone, everywhere. This month's focus is on a prisoner of conscience in Cuba and the Write for Rights event in December.

2022 Write For Rights Event!

Group 39 will be hosting the annual Write For Rights event on **December 8** and it will function as our in-person meeting as well. See the flyer on page 2 and details on page 3. The cases will be officially launched on November 14 and I will send the cases out as well as the December newsletter early, by December 1 to remind everyone.

Urgent Action: Cuban Prisoner of Conscience

José Daniel Ferrer García, leader of the unofficial political opposition group “Patriotic Union of Cuba,” who was arrested on July 11, 2021, in the context of island-wide protests and has been imprisoned ever since. Details on page 4 and a sample letter is on page 5.

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/>. A recent Amnesty press release is on page 6.

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

Meeting Location: Providence Heights
9000 Babcock Blvd.



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).



PROTECT THE RIGHT TO PROTEST



Join Amnesty International Group 39 and other human rights groups and community leaders for our 37th Write for Human Rights event.

Thursday, December 8, 2022, 6:30-8:30pm

**Calvary Episcopal Church,
315 Shady Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15206**

Write a letter. Change a life.
Come for five minutes or the whole event.
Case information, letter writing materials and
light refreshments will be provided.
Attendees are encouraged to wear face coverings.



Please visit amnestypgh.org to learn more about this event, other Group 39 activities, or to make a donation

Contact: amnesty39@gmail.com



Write for Rights is Amnesty International's largest annual human rights campaign, held throughout the fall to mark Human Rights Day on December 10th. The best thing about Write for Rights is that it works!

This year's ten cases focus on the Right to Protest:

- Bangladesh: Shahnewaz Chowdhury - Facing prison for a Facebook post
- Cameroon: Dorgelesse Nguessan - Jailed for attending her first protest
- Cuba: Luis Manuel Otero Alcantara - Artist jailed for protecting freedom of expression
- France: Zineb Redouane - Killed by a tear gas grenade
- Hong Kong: Chow Hang-Tung - Jailed for remembering victims of deadly crackdown
- Iran: Vahid Afkari - Tortured and unjustly jailed for protesting
- Morocco/Western Sahara: Nasser Zefzafi - Locked up for 20 years for demanding change
- Paraguay: Yren Rotela and Mariana Sepúlveda - Don't tell us who we are
- Russia: Aleksandra Skochilenko - She opposed the war, now she faces prison
- Zimbabwe: Joana Mamombe, Netsai Marova, and Cecillia Chimbiri - Abducted, beaten, sexually assaulted, and jailed for protesting

Ready to get started? **Sign up now at write.amnestyusa.org/signup and look for AIUSA's landing page launch on November 14!**



URGENT ACTION UPDATE: CUBA: PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE AT RISK (CUBA: UA 67.22)

October 19, 2022

José Daniel Ferrer García, leader of the unofficial political opposition group “Patriotic Union of Cuba,” who was arrested on July 11, 2021, in the context of island-wide protests and has been imprisoned ever since is once again being held with limited access to the outside world. According to his family, he intends to initiate a hunger strike as an extreme measure in demand of his rights. He is a prisoner of conscience who must be released immediately and unconditionally.

Background:

José Daniel Ferrer García is an activist and leader of the unofficial political opposition group “Patriotic Union of Cuba”. He was detained on July 11, 2021, in the context of island-wide protests, and has been imprisoned ever since.

On July 11, 2021, José Daniel tried to attend the country-wide demonstrations in Santiago de Cuba with his son. He left his house and walked past the state security officials who constantly monitor him, but other law enforcement officials stopped him a few meters ahead.

José Daniel Ferrer García and his son were detained together and initially following his detention there was no formal record of José Daniel’s whereabouts, and the authorities did not allow his family to see or communicate with him. Amnesty International believes that the concealment of his whereabouts amounted to an enforced disappearance for the purposes of Article 2 of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, to which Cuba is a state party.

For his attempt to join the protests, José Daniel Ferrer García was charged with “public disorder,” however, he has not received a trial and remains in prison. In 2020, following a different trial tainted by irregularities, José Daniel was convicted to four and a half years of house arrest. According to documents seen by Amnesty International, due to the new charges of “public disorder” a Provincial Tribunal in Santiago revoked his house arrest in August 2021, obliging him to pass that previous sentence in prison.

On July 7, 2022, the UN Committee on Enforced Disappearances informed NGO Prisoners Defenders that it had written to Cuba asking the state to provide information about the fate and whereabouts of José Daniel to his family and lawyers, and to provide the Committee with detailed information about his current access to communication with the outside world.

In July 2022, Amnesty International also raised concerns that José Daniel Ferrer García was being held incommunicado. Prior to his detention on July 11, 2021, José Daniel Ferrer García endured constant threats and harassment.

José Daniel Ferrer García has long reported suffering health problems, related to his previous long-term detentions in prison, including, among other things, serious gastric problems, and chronic headaches. According to his family, he has lost significant weight since his detention in July 2021 and is suffering various health conditions.

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Miguel Díaz Canel
President of the Republic of Cuba
Hidalgo, Esquina 6. Plaza de la Revolución
La Habana, CP 10400, Cuba
Email: despacho@presidencia.gob.cu

Dear Mr. President,

I am writing about José Daniel Ferrer García, leader of the unofficial political opposition group “Patriotic Union of Cuba,” who according to his family has been held in solitary confinement since August 14, 2021, with segregation from other prisoners and very limited access to the outside world.

José Daniel Ferrer García was last able to communicate with his family by telephone on June 4, 2022, and was last permitted only a 10-minute visit with his wife on October 11, 2022, according to his family. Additionally, his family told Amnesty International he has been held in a cell separated from other prisoners since August 2021.

Prolonged solitary confinement, segregation from other prisoners, may violate the prohibition of torture and other ill-treatment, particularly when combined with isolation from the outside world, and facilitates torture or other ill-treatment. In some circumstances, including this one, it can itself constitute torture or other ill-treatment.

Detained on July 11, 2021, before he reached island-wide mass protests, José Daniel Ferrer García, is a prisoner of conscience, imprisoned solely for his consciously held beliefs. I call on you to immediately release him and pending that, allow his family regular visits and communication with him.

Sincerely,

Ambassador Lianys Torres Rivera
Embassy of Cuba
2630 16th Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20009
Phone: 202 797 8515
Email: recepcion@usadc.embacuba.cu



RUSSIAN ATTACKS ON CRITICAL ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE IN UKRAINE AMOUNT TO WAR CRIMES

October 20, 2022

Reacting to the news that Russian attacks on energy facilities in Ukraine over recent days have led to a nationwide blackout in the country, Marie Struthers, Amnesty International’s Director for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, said:

“The strategy behind Russia’s latest warfare tactics is unmistakable. In bombing Ukraine’s critical civilian infrastructure, including energy facilities, the Russian army clearly intends to undermine industrial production, disrupt transportation, sow fear and despair and deprive civilians in Ukraine of heat, electricity and water as the cold grip of winter approaches.

“Russia’s targeting of Ukrainian civilian infrastructure is unlawful. The morale of the civilian population is not a lawful target, and carrying out these attacks with the sole purpose of terrorizing civilians is a war crime. All those responsible for ordering and committing these criminal attacks must be held to account. With Russia ramping up its efforts to terrorize civilians in Ukraine, the international community must urgently respond and condemn these heinous attacks.”

Background

On October 20, the Ukrainian authorities announced that there will be power outages across the country, after Russian attacks over recent days seriously damaged about 40% of the country’s energy facilities.

Amid efforts to repair the damaged facilities, the Ukrainian authorities have resorted to planned power outages to ensure the remaining energy infrastructure is not overloaded.

The Ukrainian authorities have also urged people across the country to minimize their electricity use between 7am and 11pm each day, while the use of street lights will also be limited nationwide starting today.

