



# Amnesty International

## Group 524

### December 2023



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## More Prisoner Release News

## December Write For Rights Event

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### Welcome

I hope everyone is well and anticipating the holiday season. We have good news concerning an Iranian prisoner and our focus this month is the annual Write For Rights worldwide action. We hope to see you at the event if possible. If not we'll see you in January!

### Prisoner Release News

Iranian Toomaj Salehi, who was part of our Banned Book Action in September was released on bail. Details are on page 3.

### December Write For Rights Event

Group 39 Pittsburgh is sponsoring the annual Write For Rights event on December 11. ***This event will take the place of our regular December meeting.*** Their informational flyer is on page 2. The cases for this year's action are detailed on pages 4-8.

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Amnesty International Group 524

Meeting Schedule: Third Tuesday of the month, at 6:00 p.m.

Meeting Location: The Commons Residence Providence Heights  
9000 Babcock Blvd.



Contact John Belch ([joheb@aol.com](mailto: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](http://www.amnestyusa.org)) and Group 39's Amnesty Pittsburgh web site ([www.amnestypgh.org](http://www.amnestypgh.org)).

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**Your letters can change lives**



Join Amnesty International Group 39 and other human rights groups and community leaders for our 38<sup>th</sup> Write for Human Rights event.

**Monday, December 11, 2023, 6:00-9:00pm**

**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](https://amnestypgh.org) to learn more about this event, other Group 39 activities,  
or to make a donation

Contact: [amnesty39@gmail.com](mailto:amnesty39@gmail.com)



## Amnesty Success

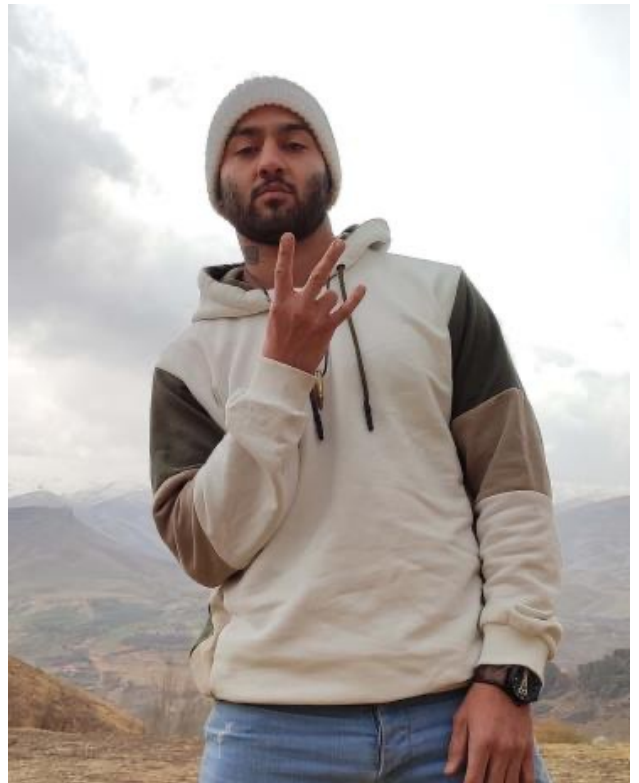
*We wrote letters of support two months ago.*

### Iran: Good News - Toomaj Salehi Released on Bail

Amnesty International welcomes the release on bail of Iranian rapper and Hip Hop artist Toomaj Salehi, who has been an inspiration to millions of people both in Iran and around the world. He had been targeted by Iranian authorities solely because of his courage in supporting peaceful protesters in Iran and for standing up for human rights and freedom.

Toomaj Salehi was highlighted during Amnesty International USA's recent **Banned Books Week Action** and during this campaign, thousands of AIUSA activists sent messages to the Iranian authorities urging his release. We continue to call for all charges against him to be dropped and that his release be unconditional.

In the meantime we celebrate with Toomaj, his family, friends and admirers, and thank all the people who supported him during his 13-month long ordeal. Thank you to those who participated in this action!





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## **CHAIMA ISSA FACING YEARS IN PRISON FOR SPEAKING OUT TUNISIA**

In the two years since President Kais Saied's power grab, human rights in Tunisia have crumbled, many courts lack independence, and freedom of expression is under assault. Anyone who criticizes the president risks arrest and detention. But Chaima Issa is a woman who will not be silenced. After publicly opposing Kais Saied's actions, Chaima was arbitrarily arrested and detained for over four months. She faces decades in prison for her peaceful political activism.



**Demand Chaima Issa's full freedom.**

## **ROCKY MYERS THREE DECADES ON DEATH ROW DESPITE FLAWED PROCEEDINGS USA**

Rocky Myers, a Black man with an intellectual disability, has spent three decades on death row in Alabama for murder. Assigned ineffective legal representation, Rocky was convicted following testimonies blighted by inconsistencies and alleged police pressure. Sentenced to death by a judge who imposed a death sentence against the jury's wishes, Rocky was abandoned by his post-conviction lawyer, meaning he missed key dates for his appeal. Now he needs your help.



**Tell the governor of Alabama to grant clemency to Rocky Myers.**





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**AHMED MANSOOR  
SENTENCED TO  
10 YEARS IN PRISON FOR  
SPEAKING OUT  
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES**

Ahmed Mansoor is a father and husband. He's a poet, blogger and human rights defender. Before his arrest, Ahmed regularly raised concerns about the detention, torture and unfair trials of dissenting voices in the UAE. He spoke about problems within the justice system and of domestic laws that breach international ones. Now, he too is locked away, held in an isolation cell without a bed.



**Demand the UAE immediately and unconditionally release Ahmed Mansoor.**

**RITA KARASARTOVA  
FACING 15 YEARS IN PRISON  
FOR PEACEFULLY PROTESTING  
KYRGYZSTAN**

Rita Karasartova loves yoga, traveling and sewing traditional Kyrgyzstani jackets with her daughter. Now she is under house arrest, having spent months detained in a cramped cell unable to see or speak to her family. Worried about her people's access to water, Rita peacefully opposed a border agreement giving control of a freshwater reservoir to Uzbekistan. She has been charged with attempting to "violently overthrow the government" and faces 15 years' imprisonment.



**Demand Rita Karasartova's freedom.**



## **THAPELO MOHAPI THREATENED FOR DEFENDING HIS COMMUNITY SOUTH AFRICA**

Thapelo Mohapi loves listening to jazz and supporting his favorite football teams. But since 2021 he has been in hiding because of threats to his life. He is being targeted because he is a leader of Abahlali baseMjondolo (AbM), a grassroots movement working to improve the lives of people in South Africa, including eKhenana – a community which suffers from many challenges, including economic insecurity, lack of access to adequate housing and police brutality. In 2022 alone, three AbM members were killed in eKhenana.



**Tell the police to thoroughly and effectively investigate the harassment and killings of AbM members.**

## **ANA MARIA SANTOS CRUZ A MOTHER'S FIGHT FOR JUSTICE BRAZIL**

Pedro Henrique organized “Walks of Peace” in Tucano, Bahia, Brazil, bringing people together to speak out against police abuses. His activism was met with threats and violence from the police. In December 2018, Pedro Henrique was shot by hooded men. He died, aged 31. The police officers suspected of the killing are still working and a trial has yet to begin. Despite her grief, Pedro Henrique’s mother, Ana Maria, is bravely fighting for justice for his death.



**Support Ana Maria in her fight for justice.**





## **MAUNG SAWYEDDOLLAH TAKING ON FACEBOOK FOR ITS ROLE IN MYANMAR ATROCITIES MYANMAR**

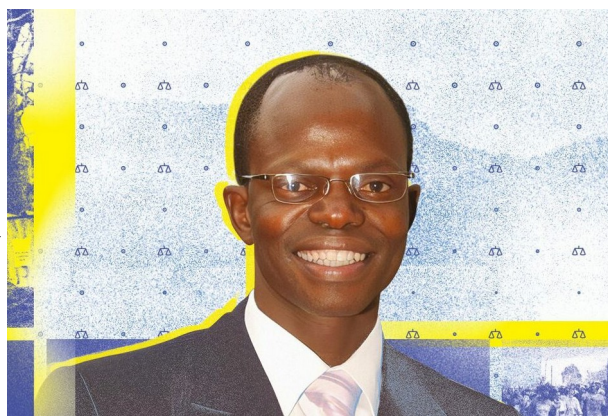
Maung Sawyeddollah was 15 when Myanmar's military unleashed a campaign of killings and violence against people from the Rohingya ethnic group. Incitement circulated on Facebook, and amplified by the platform's algorithms, fed into these attacks. Fearing for their lives, Sawyeddollah and his family fled to Cox's Bazar refugee camp in Bangladesh. Now, Sawyeddollah and others from his community are calling on Meta, owner of Facebook, to pay reparations for its role in the atrocities, including funding for educational programmes in Cox's Bazar.



**Demand Meta provides an effective remedy to Sawyeddollah and Rohingya communities.**

## **THULANI MASEKO KILLED FOR SPEAKING TRUTH TO POWER ESWATINI**

Thulani Maseko was a loving father and husband who dedicated his life to the people of Eswatini, a country ruled by a wealthy absolute monarchy and where approximately 60% of the population live under the poverty line. Openly critical of the country's use of repressive laws and state violence, on 21 January 2023 Thulani was shot dead in front of his wife. To date no one has been held accountable.



**Demand justice for Thulani Maseko.**

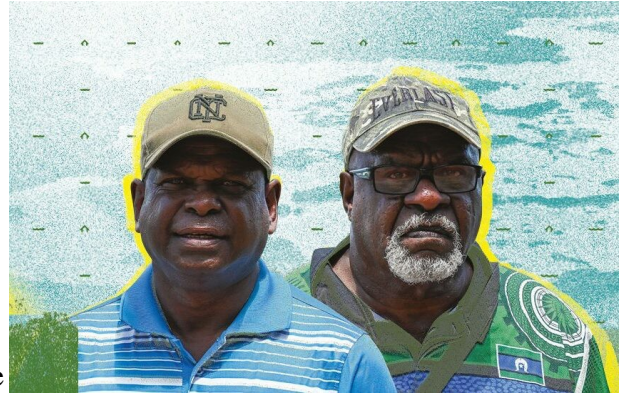


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## **UNCLE PABAI AND UNCLE PAUL FIGHTING TO SAVE THEIR ANCESTRAL LANDS AUSTRALIA**

Uncle Pabai and Uncle Paul's ancestors have lived on islands of the Torres Strait, the northernmost part of Australia, for thousands of years. Now their whole way of life – which as Indigenous Peoples is deeply connected to land, sea and sky – is at risk because of climate change. If the islands become uninhabitable, they will be forced to break these connections and leave their homelands.

**Call on Australia to take urgent climate action.**



## **JUSTYNA WYDRZYŃSKA PROSECUTED FOR DEFENDING SAFE ABORTION POLAND**

Activist Justyna Wydrzyńska felt compelled to help a woman in an abusive relationship access a safe abortion. But it is a crime in Poland to help a woman access an abortion outside the two remaining legal grounds, in the case of pregnancy resulting from an illegal act such as rape or incest, or danger to a woman's health or life. Now Justyna has been convicted, setting a dangerous precedent and making access to safe abortion even harder for those who seek one.



**Demand the prosecutor general take all necessary measures to ensure that Justyna's unjust conviction is overturned.**