



Amnesty International

Group 524
April 2024



Iran/Nowruz Card Action Prisoner Release Cameroon Activist Sudan

Welcome

I hope everyone had or is having an uplifting spring holiday season. Our focus this month is an activist in Cameroon and the situation in Sudan. We hope to see you at the meeting April 16 at 6pm.

Gaza/Israel

We continue to advocate for a cease-fire in the Gaza/Israel war. Additional actions you may take are on page 2.

Iran/ Nowruz Card Action Prisoner Release

We have good news concerning the release of one of the prisoners we signed cards for last month! See page 3.

Cameroon Activist Imprisoned/ Sudan Emergency

Dorgelesse Nguessan was imprisoned for attending a protest in Cameroon. Details are on page 4 and a sample letter is on page 5. A humanitarian emergency is occurring in Sudan. Details are on Page 6 and an action letter on page 7.

Individual At Risk Case

As we discussed last month, I have completed and submitted a request for an individual case assigned to our Group. I have not heard back as of yet but I will be attending an online Issue Briefing meeting concerning IARs later that evening after our meeting on 4/16.

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 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).



The crisis in the Occupied Gaza Strip and Israel has officially surpassed the horrific milestone of six months. AIUSA continues to do everything possible to pressure President Biden for an immediate and permanent ceasefire and to stop arms transfers to Israel. We need all our Amnesty members, student groups and supporters to keep our voices loud and our momentum strong.



Let President Biden know how shameful it is that he just sent more bombs to Israel and urge him to do three things: Oppose the impending ground invasion in Rafah, stop providing weapons to Israel, and support an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza.

Local Groups can mobilize community members to **take and repeat these actions:**

- Call the White House Comment Line:** Demand President Biden oppose the impending ground invasion in Rafah, stop providing weapons to Israel, and support an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza. Call (281) 572-5571. The phone line is open Tuesday-Thursday from 11am to 3pm ET.
- Post on Social Media:** Share messages calling for an immediate and permanent ceasefire. All states have the obligation to protect populations from atrocity crimes, especially the United States. The United States must not continue to be complicit and must stop sending weapons for war crimes. Call for an immediate and permanent ceasefire and no weapons for war crimes. **Tag @potus, @vp, and @AmnestyUSA on all your posts.**

I will bring responses to our previous letters from Senators Casey and Fetterman to the meeting.



Nowruz Card Action – Nilofar Bayani Released

We signed a Nowruz greeting card for her last month.



We have fabulous news! Nilofar Bayani, a wildlife conservationist, was sentenced to ten years in prison solely for her peaceful scientific and conservation activities, such as research on Iran's endangered wildlife. She and eight other conservation scientists had been arrested and accused of espionage in January 2018. Nilofar was featured in our annual Nowruz action since then and she was finally released from prison on April 8, 2024! Although it is always hard to draw a clear line between our activism and a happy outcome, we firmly believe that all the ceaseless advocacy on her behalf over the years really made a difference and contributed to this wonderful event. We believe her release is a testament to the efficacy of committed and persistent human rights advocacy. Your efforts really matter. Nilofar is a nature lover and we hope she will now be able to seek peace and solace from the natural world after her six year ordeal. Thank you again so much!





JAILED FOR ATTENDING HER FIRST EVER PROTEST

Dorgelesse Nguessan always dreamt of owning a thriving beauty institute. Two years ago, the single mother and hairdresser was just starting to expand her hairdressing business to include manicures.

On September 22, 2020, Dorgelesse’s dream was shattered when she was arrested during a protest in Douala, Cameroon. This was the only protest she had ever attended. Dorgelesse was not politically active, but her concerns about the state of Cameroon’s economy led her to join the demonstrations.

When the peaceful protest began, security forces fired rubber bullets, tear gas and water cannons to disperse protesters. As Dorgelesse turned into an alleyway, police followed her and fellow protesters and blocked them in. They arrested her and took her to a police station, where she was held in terrible conditions for exercising her right to free speech, in a cell with 22 other people.

On September 29, 2020, Dorgelesse was transferred to Douala Central Prison, where she remains. She was charged with “insurrection, assembly, meetings and public demonstrations” and tried by a military court. She was sentenced to five years in prison on December 7, 2021.

Dorgelesse is the breadwinner of her family. Her son has sickle cell anaemia, and the family are struggling to pay for his medication. Dorgelesse and her family are desperate to be reunited.

Take action to free Dorgelesse now.



Group 524
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His Excellency Paul Biya
President of the Republic of Cameroon
Office of the President
P.O. Box 100
Yaoundé
Republic of Cameroon

Your Excellency,

I am writing to demand the immediate and unconditional release of Dorgelesse Nguessan, who is detained solely for the peaceful exercise of her rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly.

Dorgelesse was arrested in Douala, while attending her first ever protest. She had never been politically active, but her concerns about the state of Cameroon's economy led her to join the demonstrations.

Dorgelesse was found guilty of "insurrection, assembly, meetings and public demonstrations" and after an unfair trial by a military court she was sentenced to five years in prison. She must be freed and returned to her family, who rely on her as the main wage-earner.

Yours sincerely,



EMERGENCY IN SUDAN

During negotiations for a new transitional government in April 2023, violence escalated after weeks of tensions between the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) over security force reform. Since then, over 8 million people have been displaced, and over 14,000 have been killed.



In a report published in August 2023, [**'Death Came To Our Home': War Crimes and Civilian Suffering In Sudan**](#),

Amnesty International documented extensive war crimes being committed by the SAF and RSF in the conflict. Many ethnic Masalit people who fled to Chad from West Darfur told Amnesty International that their towns had been attacked by RSF and heavily armed Arab militias in ethnically motivated violence.

Update: More than 10 million people have been displaced, and 14 million children — half the country's children — are in desperate need of humanitarian assistance.

There's no time to waste: we have to do all we can to prevent further atrocities and loss of life. **Please call on President Biden to address the crisis.**

At our meeting we will sign letters to President Biden as well as similar letters to our Congressional representatives to influence the Administration to act.



President Joseph Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden,

I urge you to speak out on the crisis in Sudan. Since April 2023, the ongoing fighting between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) has devastated the country, with countless atrocities and millions forcibly displaced and in dire need of humanitarian assistance. Many in Sudan are at the brink of famine, if not experiencing these horrors already.

In December 2023, your Secretary of State Antony Blinken made an official atrocity determination on Sudan, citing that members of the SAF have committed war crimes and that members of the RSF and allied militias have committed war crimes, crimes against humanity, and ethnic cleansing. The ethnic based targeted killing in Darfur, in particular, echoes the atrocities in Darfur that caught the world's attention some 20 years ago. The threat of violence against civilians remains and the risk of widespread hunger grows.

It is clear that urgent action is needed to prevent further atrocities and loss of life. I urge you to:

- Fully support your appointed Special Envoy for Sudan in strengthening diplomatic efforts to protect civilians and secure humanitarian access.
- Call out governments implicated in arming those responsible for committing atrocities against civilians, and in violation of the UN Security Council Sudan Arms Embargo
- Work with other donor countries to scale up humanitarian assistance, including through local Emergency Response Rooms and other mutual aid groups led by Sudanese civilians
- Support evidence collection, documentation efforts, and accountability measures in Sudan including through the UN Fact-Finding Mission for Sudan, the International Criminal Court, and any future credible accountability process within Sudan
- Engage and support the governments of neighboring countries to ensure aid and refuge is offered to those fleeing hunger and violence in Sudan.

Most urgently, Mr. President, I urge you to speak out on the crisis in Sudan. Address the nation and the world to bear witness to the tragedy unfolding in Sudan, to mobilize international support for Sudanese civilians, and to prevent the further loss of civilian life.

Sincerely,