



Amnesty International

Group 524

October 2024



Good News - Prisoner Releases Gun Violence New Asylum Ban

Welcome

Our focus this month is gun violence legislation and a new asylum ban at the border. We hope to see you at the meeting October 15 at 6pm.

Recap-International Day of Peace Event

Our Group participated in this event on Sunday September 22. See page 2.

Prisoner Releases

Floriane Irangabiye and Tran Huynh Duy Thuc released. See page 3.

Gun Violence

A letter to Congressional leaders calling for action on legislation that would curb gun violence is on page 4.

New Asylum Ban

President Biden has implemented a new asylum ban. Amnesty's response is on page 5 and an action letter is on page 6.

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).



International Day of Peace

Thanks to Sister Carol and her Committee's effort we participated in this wonderful event. We tabled and were able to introduce many attendees to Amnesty and also to sign petitions for a cease fire in Gaza as well as some of our Banned Book prisoner efforts. An impactful day was experienced by all who were able to attend.





GOOD NEWS!

Two Prisoner Releases

Floriane Irangabiye Released

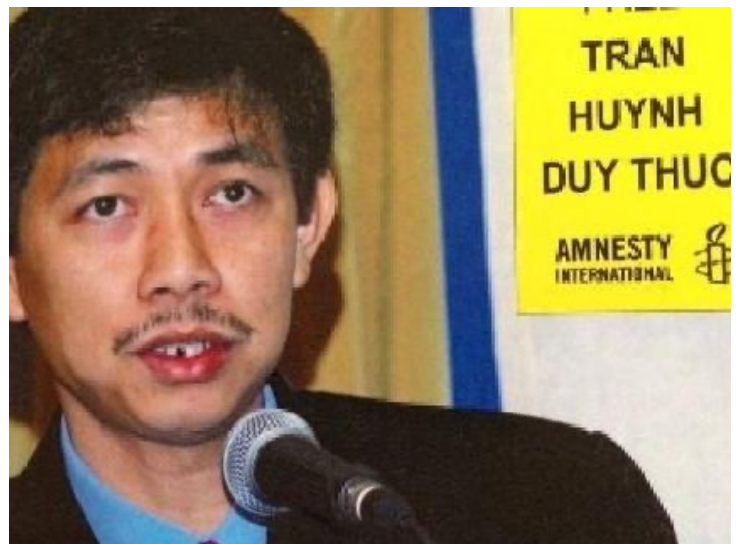
Burundi journalist Floriane Irangabiye has been released. Many will remember her case as it was highlighted in numerous [Urgent Actions](#), was highlighted in last years AIUSA [Banned Books Week](#), and also this years AIUSA [World Press Freedom Day Event](#). Floraine’s case was also going to be part of this years Write for Rights campaign.



Tran Huynh Duy Thuc Released

Tran Huynh Duy Thuc is an entrepreneur, blogger and writer who advocated for governance reform in Viet Nam. In January 2010, he was convicted of activities aimed at “overthrowing” the state. Thuc said he was tortured during pre-trial detention to force him to confess. Thuc was sentenced to 16 years imprisonment with an additional five years of probation. Amnesty International has been among those campaigning for his release ever since.

Thuc was released from prison on 20 September 2024, but he should never have been in jail in the first place. The Vietnamese government must end Thuc's probation immediately, as well as release all others jailed solely for exercising their freedom of expression.



Thank you to everyone who took action on behalf of Floriane and Thuc. Your dedication to our cause helps us raise awareness of human rights violations worldwide, and your efforts are vital to our mission.

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The Honorable Mike Johnson
568 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC, 20515-1804

Senator Chuck Schumer

322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Right now, there are numerous pieces of legislation aimed at curbing gun violence that are sitting stagnant in your respective chambers.

As 115 Americans on average die each day from gun violence, we're done with your "thoughts and prayers" – they're meaningless without action behind them. Instead, we demand your leadership.

As a human rights advocate and an Amnesty International supporter, I urge you to take action on the following:

- Pass the Assault Weapons Ban of 2024. Assault weapons were designed to kill and maim as many people as possible in the shortest amount of time possible, and yet there is currently no federal law regulating them.
- Pass legislation to enforce universal background checks. Background checks would help prevent people who pose a risk to others from having guns: running a background check before a firearm purchase helps identify people who are prohibited by federal law from owning them, such as convicted felons and domestic abusers.
- Pass the Break the Cycle of Violence, which would provide \$5 billion in funding for community violence prevention and intervention programs across the country.
- Pass Ethan's Law, which would require safe storage to protect children and others from unsecured firearms. This bill also includes incentives for individual states to pass and enforce their own safe gun storage laws.

I don't need to bombard you with statistics (though there are many) because I know that you know the truth: gun violence is an epidemic in this country. It is a human rights emergency.

We are not safe as long as U.S. leaders fail to do anything about gun violence. That's where you come in.

Sincerely,



Amnesty International Reaction to Biden Administration Asylum Rule

SEPTEMBER 30, 2024



In response to the Biden administration’s decision to cement harmful asylum policies and flout United States obligations under international human rights and refugee law, Amy Fischer, Director of Refugee and Migrant Rights at Amnesty International USA, made the following statement:

“Rather than showing any kind of moral leadership, the Biden administration remains hellbent on doubling down on deadly deterrence policies that are rooted in white supremacy and exacerbate the traumas and harms of people seeking safety in the United States.

“As the United States continues to witness the racist and anti-Black rhetoric about Haitian immigrants, we must also be equally disgusted and dismayed by policies that put Haitians, and other Black, Brown, and Indigenous people seeking safety, in danger.

“Racist rhetoric about invasions at the border and fear mongering about how people seeking safety are security threats fuel policies that deny people their human right to seek safety, force them to wait in danger in Mexico for months, jail them in inhumane conditions, and deport them back to danger.

“The policies that the Biden Administration is cementing today have been temporarily in place for months now and the results are clear: they don’t work.

“The United States, a country that was once seen as a beacon of humanitarian protection, is presenting a false choice to people fleeing for their lives and who are now at risk of kidnapping, extortion, and physical and sexual violence in Mexico: either remain in danger in Mexico for an indefinite period of time until their names are called for a lottery into the U.S., or escape the danger in Mexico and cross irregularly where they are more likely to be deported back anyway without due process.

“The Biden administration is clinging to policies of cruelty when there are solutions on the table that can both solve the issues at the border and provide meaningful relief for cities like Springfield, New York, Chicago, and Denver without human suffering and with respect for human rights and dignity.

“Instead of spending billions of taxpayer dollars to fuel cruel border policies that create heartbreaking human rights and humanitarian crises, the United States must invest in a coordinated welcome and reception system that meets the immediate and long-term needs of people seeking safety.

“Such a system must simultaneously meet the needs of state, local and tribal communities who can reap the windfall benefits of new federal funding avenues, spending power of new arrivals, and new tax revenue.

“The Biden administration must immediately end the asylum ban and the border shutdown, and restore access to asylum at the border.

“It’s time to rebuild the foundation of asylum and restore human dignity and human rights to the border by seeing those coming to seek a new life as an opportunity rather than a threat.”

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

Dear President Biden,

You came into office promising to rebuild an immigration system that would center human rights and racial justice. With this new shut down of the border, you are going back on your promises, violating international law, and setting new, historic lows on how the United States treats people seeking safety.

Amid a global refugee crisis, your administration is embracing deadly policies grounded in racist and xenophobic ideas that aim to make the exercise of seeking asylum so painful that individuals and families just give up.

I write alongside thousands of other Amnesty International supporters to urge you to reverse course and uphold human rights at the border, rather than advancing policies of hate and exclusion, and ideologies of racism and xenophobia. You must immediately restore asylum at the border and invest in a robust welcoming system that allows asylum seekers to seek asylum at the border and pursue their asylum claims outside of detention while supported by community based organizations.

This was your commitment, this is what international law requires, and we are holding you accountable.

Sincerely,