



Amnesty International

Group 524
July 2024



IAR Case/Prisoner Release and News Leonard Peltier Denied Parole Summer Postcard Action

Welcome

Our focus this month is again, Leonard Peltier, the Summer Postcard Action and additional case work. We hope to see you at the meeting July 16 at 6pm.

Individual At Risk Case

We are awaiting a case to be assigned.

Leonard Peltier Clemency

We have written in support of Peltier's case for many years. His parole was denied this month. Details are on page 2 and a sample letter is on page 3.

Prisoner Releases

We have good news concerning the release of a Write For Rights 2023 featured prisoner Rita Karasartova. See page 4.

Ramiro Gonzales Executed

Despite our advocacy last month, Ramiro Gonzales was executed on June 25. See page 5.

Summer Solidarity Postcard Action

This year's action concerning three cases is featured 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).



Individual At Risk Case News

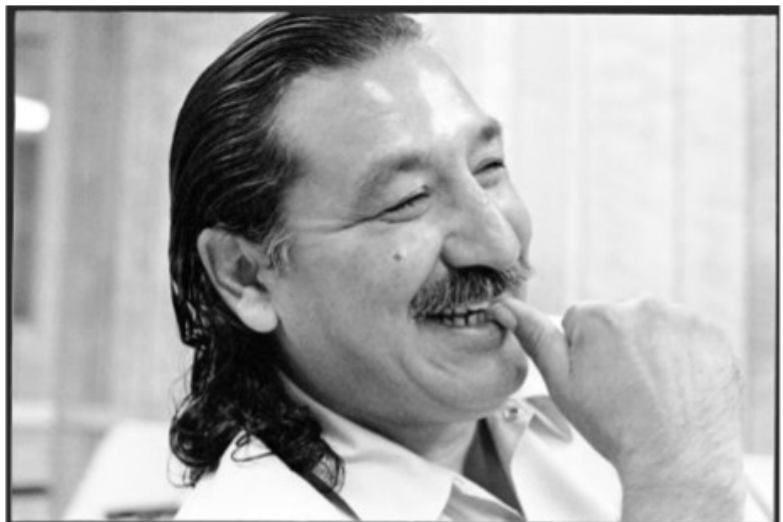
Amnesty International USA helps to free prisoners of conscience, protect human rights defenders, and support individuals and communities who are at risk of having their human rights violated.

As of this writing we have not heard any further on a case being assigned to our group

Thanks to Sister Carol's efforts we will be tabling at the International Peace Celebration in North Park on September 22 and we hope that our case can be a focus of our work that day.

UPDATE U.S. Parole Commission has Denied Parole for Leonard Peltier

Leonard Peltier's parole hearing took place on June 10th, but he was denied parole. Leonard, now 79 years old, has been imprisoned in the USA for nearly 50 years. He contracted COVID-19 in 2022 and suffers from several chronic health ailments, including one that is potentially fatal. Despite these circumstances, he was denied parole on July 2, 2024.



Paul O'Brien, executive director of Amnesty International USA, called Peltier's prolonged imprisonment "a human rights travesty."

"Not only are there ongoing, unresolved concerns about the fairness of his trial, he has spent nearly 50 years in prison, is approaching 80 years old, and suffers from several chronic health problems," O'Brien said in a statement. "We are now calling on President Biden, once again, to grant Leonard Peltier clemency on humanitarian grounds and as a matter of mercy and justice."

We must urge President Biden to grant Leonard Peltier clemency on humanitarian grounds and as a matter of justice. See sample letter on page 3

Group 524
July 2024



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

Dear President Biden,

Leonard Peltier is a member of the American Indian Movement (AIM), which promotes Native American rights. In 1975, during a confrontation involving AIM members, two FBI agents were killed. Leonard Peltier was convicted of their murders but has always denied killing the agents.

There are serious and ongoing concerns about the fairness of trial and conviction, including for example the prosecution's withholding of evidence that might have assisted Leonard Peltier's defense. In light of these concerns, the former US Attorney whose office handled the prosecution, James Reynolds, has since called for clemency.

Leonard Peltier was denied parole on July 2, 2024, after a hearing in which the government reportedly limited the witnesses, he could call to two and selected who those witnesses would be, raising serious concerns about the fairness of parole process.

Leonard Peltier is now 79 years old, has spent nearly 50 years in prison and there are serious concerns about his deteriorating health.

I urge you to grant Leonard Peltier clemency on humanitarian grounds and as a matter of justice.

Yours sincerely,



GOOD NEWS From Kyrgyzstan-Rita Karasartova was acquitted!

Rita's case was part of the Write For Rights 2023 action where we wrote in support of her freedom.

Alongside 26 others, Rita was arrested for opposing a new border agreement that gave control of a fresh water reservoir to Uzbekistan. The group called for people to peacefully demonstrate against the agreement, demanding transparency from the government. Like others, Rita feared Uzbekistan would restrict or prohibit access to water, a scarce resource in the region where loss of access could have devastating consequences. Rita and the others were initially detained for organizing “mass disorder”, and she was charged with attempting to “violently overthrow the government”, which carries a maximum sentence of 15 years’ imprisonment.



Victory! The court acquitted Rita Karasartova and all the other defendants in the Kempir-Abad case.

This is a great happiness for the entire civil society of Kyrgyzstan and a great victory for us.

Thank you to everyone who worked on Rita Karasartova's case!





The death row prisoner we wrote in support of last month was executed on June 25.

Texas Executes Ramiro Gonzales, Despite Reversal From Doctor Who Helped Send Him To Death Row

Jessica Schulberg

Senior Reporter, HuffPost

Gonzales “does not pose a threat of future danger to society,” psychiatrist Edward Gripon wrote after his 2022 reevaluation.

Texas executed Ramiro Gonzales on Wednesday [despite a stunning reversal](#) from a psychiatrist who helped send him to death row 17 years ago.

Gonzales, 41, was killed by lethal injection at 6:50 p.m. Central time as punishment for kidnapping, raping and murdering Bridget Townsend when they were both 18. At the time, Gonzales was struggling with drug addiction. He killed Townsend, his drug dealer’s girlfriend, while trying to steal drugs. He had turned 18 two months before the killing, making him barely old enough to be legally eligible to be sentenced to death.

In his [final words](#), Gonzales apologized to the Townsend family. “I’m sorry I can’t articulate, I can’t put into words the pain I have caused y’all, the hurt, what I took away that I cannot give back. I lived the rest of this life for you guys to the best of my ability for restitution, restoration, taking responsibility ... I’m sorry.”

“The Ramiro who the state of Texas killed tonight was not the Ramiro who committed these crimes twenty years ago,” Gonzales’ lawyers, Thea Posel and Raoul Schonemann said in a [statement](#). “The Ramiro who left this world was, by all accounts, a deeply spiritual, generous, patient, and intentional person, full of remorse, someone whose driving force was love. He sought to spread and embody love in all aspects of his life, even in the deprivation and physical isolation of death row where he lived for the past 18 years.”

“Ramiro knew he took something from this world he could never give back,” Gonzales’ lawyers said. “He lived with that shame every day, and it shaped the person he worked so hard to become. If this country’s legal system was intended to encourage rehabilitation, he would be an exemplar.”



Summer Postcard Action 2024



Send a Message of Support and Encouragement

For many people, summer is a time for vacations, picnics and recreation. But for individuals at risk or those who defend human rights in many countries, summer brings no relief from the potential danger and sense of isolation they may face. By simply sending a postcard, however, you can help support them.

- Keep messages simple, such as: "We are thinking of you, and hope you are well."
- Don't discuss the politics of the country or the accusations against any prisoners.
- Please be sensitive to different cultural and religious customs.
- Picture postcards are good to use, but revealing pictures of people or references to alcoholic drinks could be offensive.

Postcards will be sent to Amnesty's Boston Office where they will be forwarded to each of the individuals (*please see below for how to address the postcard*):

"Insert name of individual"

c/o AIUSA, 89 South Street, Suite LLO1,
Boston, MA 02111

June-August 2024

Send Solidarity Postcards to:



Floriane Irangabiye, is a journalist and mother of two young children who was arbitrarily detained and convicted this January in Burundi for what the government called "undermining the integrity of the national territory." She was sentenced to ten years in prison and a one million Burundian francs fine by the High Court of Mukaza in Bujumbura.

Floriane Irangabiye's unfair prosecution is motivated by continuous efforts by Burundian authorities to clamp down on peaceful dissent, despite multiple promises by President Evariste Ndayishimiye to improve the country's human rights situation.



Ilham Tohti, an economics professor at Central University for Nationalities in Beijing, the founder of "Uighur Online" website, and a well-known critic of China's ethnic and religious policies in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, was sentenced to life imprisonment on September 23, 2014. Ilham was charged with "separatism", a charge that has often been used against Uyghurs who speak out against human rights violations. He is a prisoner of conscience.

** Please note that religious imagery/messaging should not be used!*



Vahid Afkari has been sentenced to more than 33 years in prison and 74 lashes after being convicted in an unfair trial on baseless charges in connection to his peaceful involvement in protests in his hometown of Shiraz in 2017 and 2018. His brother Navid was executed in 2020, also for exercising his right to freedom of expression and assembly.