

Amnesty International

Group 524

September 2024



International Day of Peace Event Banned Books Week Action

Welcome

Our focus this month is the International Day of Peace event and the Banned Books Week action. We hope to see you at the meeting September 17 at 6pm.

Individual At Risk Case

We have received word that our case file dossier is being prepared and we should be receiving our case soon.

International Day of Peace Event

Mark your calendars for this event in North Park on Sunday September 22. See page 2.

Banned Books Week

This newsletter features two of the cases(pages 4-6) and good news of a release in another (page 3). At our meeting we will sign petitions for the other cases. More information can be found at <https://www.amnestyusa.org/campaigns/banned-books/bbw2024/>

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's efforts we will be tabling at the **International Day of Peace Celebration in North Park's Point Grove on Sunday September 22 from 2-4pm** where we will have petitions and membership interest sign up sheets along with some free giveaways. We hope that you can join in the day's activity along with the other organizations represented.

**20th Annual
North Hills
International Day of Peace Celebration**

**INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE
21 SEPTEMBER 2024**

**CULTIVATING
A CULTURE
OF PEACE**

#peaceday

Sunday, September 22, 2024

**2:00 - 4:00 pm
North Park
Point Grove - Lakeshore Drive**

*Promoting peace & cultural diversity through entertainment, personal stories, information tables, food samplings, activities, and our annual Flag Ceremony.
Email diversity@laroche.edu for more details!*

Hosted by AAUW North Hills Pittsburgh, Sisters of Divine Providence, La Roche University, North Hills Ebony Women, Inc, Muslim Association of Pittsburgh, and Members of the North Hills Communities



Banned Books Week 2024

During the month of September, in conjunction with National Banned Books Week (Sept 22-28), Amnesty International USA will spotlight **13 cases** highlighting individuals or communities whose human rights are under attack because of their work as authors, journalists, bloggers, filmmakers, poets, novelists, photojournalists, publishers, academics, musicians, and librarians.

We have good news to share already! **Aleksandra Released!!**

ARTIST AND ANTI-WAR ACTIVIST SENTENCED TO SEVEN YEARS IN PRISON

Troubled by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Aleksandra "Sasha" Skochilenko, a songwriter and artist in St. Petersburg, decided to protest.

On 31 March 2022, she replaced price tags in a local supermarket in Saint Petersburg with paper labels containing anti-war messages.

On November 16, 2023 Aleksandra was sentenced to seven years in prison for "disseminating knowingly false information about the Russian Armed Forces".

Aleksandra Skochilenko suffers from celiac disease and heart disease and her health has deteriorated greatly during this time.

Aleksandra is a prisoner of conscience.

On August 1, 2024, Aleksandra was released from prison as part of a prisoner swap between the U.S.-Russia.

Send Aleksandra a Greeting Card

Her Birthday is September 13th!

Mail Cards to: AIUSA, 89 South Street, Boston, MA 02111





ETIENNE FAKABA SISSOKO

ACADEMIC AND AUTHOR SENTENCED TO 2 YEARS IN JAIL FOLLOWING BOOK PUBLICATION

Mali

Etienne Fakaba Sissoko, Mali was convicted on charges of defamation, damaging the state's reputation and distributing fake news. He was sentenced to two years in jail, with one year suspended, and a fine of XOF 3 million (approximately 4,500 Euros). A notable government critic and scholar, Etienne Fakaba Sissoko, was arrested after the [publication of a book](#) in which



he denounced alleged propaganda in the Malian government's public information campaign. His arbitrary detention is in violation of his right to freedom of expression. He must be immediately and unconditionally released.

KAMILE WAYIT

UYGHUR UNIVERSITY STUDENT SENTENCED IN 2023 AFTER POSTING VIDEO ON WECHAT

China

Kamile Wayit, China, is a 20-year-old Uyghur female university preschool education student. She has been detained since December 2022 and sentenced on March 25, 2023 under the charge of "promoting extremism" after posting a video on WeChat about the November 2022 "A4 protests" in China and the related nationwide peaceful protest. The protest aimed to commemorate victims of the Urumqi Fire.



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Mr Mahamadou Kassogué
Minister of Justice and Human Rights Cite administrative – batiment 12
BP 97 Bamako, Mali
Email: mamoudoukassogue@gmail.com

Dear Minister Kassogué,
I am concerned about the arbitrary detention and unlawful conviction of **Professor Étienne Fakaba Sissoko** to two years in jail, one of which was suspended.

On March 25, 2024, the Judicial Investigation Brigade arrested Étienne Fakaba Sissoko, a university professor, economist, activist, and author, at his home in Bamako. Two days later, he was charged with "harming the reputation of the state", "defamation", and "dissemination of false news disturbing the public peace". The charges are related to his book, "Propaganda, Agitation and Harassment – government communication during the transition in Mali", published in December 2023, in which he was critical of Mali's military authorities.

Amnesty International believes Etienne Sissoko was sentenced solely because of his activism and criticism, in violation of his rights to freedom of expression.

Therefore, I call upon you to ensure the Malian authorities immediately and unconditionally release Étienne Fakaba Sissoko and quash his conviction. Pending his release, I urge you to ensure that he has access to his lawyers and family.

Yours sincerely,

CC: Embassy for Mali in the United States Ambassador SEM Sékou Berthe
2130 R Street,
NW, Washington DC 20008

Email: administration@maliembassy.us

Group 524
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Ma Xingrui
Party Secretary of Xinjiang
479 Zhongshan Lu, Tianshan Qu, Urumqi, 830041,
Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, People's Republic
of China

Dear Secretary Ma,

I am writing to express concern about Uyghur student **Kamile Wayit** (卡米莱·瓦依提), who was sentenced under the charge of “promoting extremism” on March 25, 2023. A spokesperson from the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs confirmed the news of her conviction to *The Economist* magazine in early June 2023. Kamile was sentenced to 3 years in prison and is being held at Mush Women’s Prison in Kashgar.

Kamile Wayit is a former student at the Shangqiu Institute of Technology in Henan, majoring in pre-school education. She was taken away on December 12, 2022, by the police after returning home to Atush, Xinjiang for a holiday. It is believed that her detention may be related to a video she posted on WeChat in November 2022 about the protests that took place across China to commemorate the victims of an apartment fire in Urumqi. Kamile should be released immediately as she was only peacefully exercising her rights to freedom of expression.

I therefore urge you to:

Immediately release Kamile Wayit, unless there is sufficient, credible and admissible evidence that she has committed an internationally recognizable criminal offense; Pending her release, ensure that Kamile Wayit has access to adequate medical care, and she is not subjected to torture and other ill-treatment;

Yours sincerely,

CC: Ambassador Xie Fang
Chinese Embassy in the United States
3505 International Place, NW, Washington DC 20008