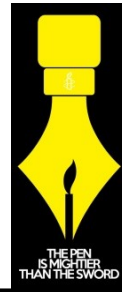


Amnesty International

Group 524

October 2020



No October Meeting

Next Meeting: Our October 20th meeting has been cancelled

Group #39 Pittsburgh has been holding virtual meetings on the Zoom platform. If any of our members would like to try meeting by Zoom or attending Group #39's please let me know.

Write for Rights 2020 Write-athon:

Plans for our local efforts in the annual Write For Rights action are still to be determined. This year there are 7 cases from countries such as Burundi, Saudi Arabia to the USA. Next month we will feature the cases and include sample letters as attachments. A note from Amnesty's report from 2019: *Write for Rights 2019 was AIUSA's second largest ever in terms of total actions, with 552,409 letters and online action petitions on all ten global cases.*

Amnesty International USA Defend Freedom Campaign

Our case actions this month come from AIUSA's Defend Freedom Campaign which is seeking that all levels of the U.S. government—including President Trump and his administration, Congress, governors, mayors, state legislators, city councils and law enforcement officers—respect, protect and fulfill human rights. They include *Pastor Steven Tendo*, a Ugandan human rights defender in ICE custody and *Andrea Sahouri*, a reporter for the Des Moines Register who was arrested and charged while working during a protest.

Amnesty International Group 524

Meeting Schedule: Third Tuesday of the month, at 7:00 p.m.

Meeting Location: Providence Heights

9000 Babcock Blvd., Allison Park, PA 15101



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).



Amnesty International USA's Defend Freedom Campaign aims to demand that all levels of the U.S. government—including President Trump and his administration, Congress, governors, mayors, state legislators, city councils and law enforcement officers—respect, protect and fulfill human rights.

- **Freedom from racism, discrimination and hate** • **Freedom to peacefully protest and dissent**
- **Freedom from police violence and gun violence** • **Freedom from arbitrary arrest and detention**
- **Freedom of the press to report the truth** • **Freedom from intimidation and guns at the polls**

Pastor Steven's Deportation Suspended

When Pastor Steven Tendo, a human rights defender seeking safety in the US and detained by ICE, was informed he would be deported back to Uganda where he would likely be killed immediately upon arrival, Amnesty sprang into action. We drove thousands of calls and emails to ICE, mobilized on social media, and alerted the press and key Members of Congress.

After extraordinary pressure, ICE Director Tony Pham agreed to suspend Pastor Steven's deportation until the federal appeal on his asylum claim is heard. As his health continues to suffer from diabetes and inadequate medical care in detention, Amnesty is renewing calls for his release so he can fight for his right to seek asylum in safety and freedom.



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Release Pastor Steven Tendo from Detention

Deborah Achim

Deputy Field Office Director Immigration and Customs Enforcement

Department of Homeland Security

1777 NE Loop 410 Floor 15

San Antonio, TX, 78217

Dear Deputy Field Office Director Achim:

I am deeply concerned about the safety of Steven Tendo (A# 201 520 012), an ordained minister, asylum-seeker, and human rights activist who was detained by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) after fleeing from danger in Uganda.

The U.S. government is under the obligation not to return individuals to a situation in which they would be at risk of torture or other serious human rights abuses. An official from Uganda had submitted a declaration confirming that Pastor Steven was tortured by Ugandan government forces and will likely be killed by security agencies if returned to Uganda. We are grateful that Pastor Steven's removal has been halted pending adjudication of his petition for federal review before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit.

However, Pastor Steven's deteriorating health necessitates more: he must be released from detention, where inadequate access to treatment has left him sicker than ever before. He has been detained for over 1.5 years with inadequate care for his diabetes, which has resulted in his loss of vision in one eye and losing vision in the other; numbness and tingling in his extremities; and recurring boils on his body. He faces life-threatening complications should he contract COVID-19.

I urge you to use the discretion you have to: immediately grant humanitarian parole to Steven Tendo while he awaits a decision on his asylum claim, including on any appeal.

Please act quickly to save Pastor Steven's life before it is too late.

Sincerely,



**Dismiss all charges against
journalist Andrea Sahouri**



On the night of May 31, police in Iowa pepper sprayed, arrested, and detained Andrea Sahouri, a journalist with the Des Moines Register, while she was reporting on a Black Lives Matter protest. She was arrested and detained despite repeatedly identifying herself as a journalist.

Andrea told Amnesty that after police in riot gear showed up and ordered protesters to disperse, people began running in multiple directions. As the police fired tear gas, Andrea ran with protesters into a busy commercial intersection and police charged at them. Even as she kept yelling, “I’m press, I’m press,” she was pepper sprayed on her arms and face twice at close range. The police arrested her and cuffed her in zip ties behind her back, and placed her in a police van.

She was cited for failure to disperse and interference with official acts. Out of six reporters in the USA Today network, she is the only one still facing charges. Send a message to the prosecutors: Reporting is not a crime. Dismiss all charges against Andrea Sahouri.

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John P. Sarcone
Polk County Justice Center
222 Fifth Avenue
Des Moines IA 50309

Dear Mr. Sarcone:

I write to urge your office to take immediate action to dismiss all charges with prejudice in State of Iowa v. Andrea M. Sahouri, SMAC 388817.

On the evening of May 31, 2020, Ms. Sahouri was covering a protest on assignment for the Des Moines Register. Despite identifying herself as a journalist, she was pepper sprayed, arrested, and detained for several hours.

In order to ensure the right to freedom of expression and the right to freedom of peaceful assembly, members of the media have a right to attend and report on peaceful assemblies, and law enforcement officials have a responsibility not to prevent or obstruct their work. This is not only a human rights obligation, it is also a bedrock of U.S. constitutional law, emanating from the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

I urge you not move forward with the prosecution of Ms. Sahouri and to dismiss immediately all charges against her with prejudice. Reporting at a protest scene as a working member of the media is not a crime. It is a right that must be protected.

Sincerely,