



AMNESTY

ELY CITY GROUP

**Remembering those experiencing injustice,
A time for contemplation.....
July 2020**

“Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners. And those who are ill-treated as if you yourselves were suffering.” Hebrews: 13:3

A special time is usually set aside in Bishop Alcock’s Chapel on the first Sunday of each month from 9.00 - 10.15am. Here we hold in mind or pray for the people whose cases are highlighted for the current month.

Though we cannot gather in person due to present circumstances, we invite you to remember the cases here and any others for whom you have a particular concern.

CROATIA: Refugees tortured and abused

On 26th May about 16 Pakistani and Afghan asylum seekers were apprehended by the Croatian police as they tried to cross the border from Bosnia. They were bound, brutally beaten and tortured by police officers who mocked their injuries and smeared food on their bleeding heads to humiliate them. Ten men suffered serious injuries that night. After almost five hours of continuous abuse, the migrants were handed over to the Croatian Border Police who transported them close to the border with Bosnia and Herzegovina in two vans before ordering them to walk. “We were drenched in blood and very shook up. We could barely stand, much less walk for hours to Bosnia. They told us to carry the guys who couldn’t walk and just go.”

Please hold in mind or pray:

- For all those who seek sanctuary but often meet abuse and brutality
- For the Croatian authorities to carry out independent and effective investigations into reported abuses and hold its officers to account
- For the EU to hold Croatia to account for the human rights abuses at its border.

IRAN: Human rights defenders jailed

Women’s rights defenders Monireh Arabshahi, Yasaman Aryani and Mojgan Keshavarz have spent almost a year in prison for peacefully protesting against forced veiling laws. They were arrested in April 2019 after a video shot on International Women’s Day showing them without their headscarves, distributing flowers to female passengers on a Tehran train, and discussing women’s rights was widely shared on social media. Within days they were charged with a series of sham offences, including inciting ‘corruption and prostitution’. At their trial on 31st July, they were denied access to a lawyer of their choosing and reported being verbally abused and threatened by the judge. All three were convicted: Yasaman and her mother, Monireh, received 16-year sentences – later reduced on appeal to nine years and seven months – and Mojgan received a term of 23 years and six months.

Please hold in mind or pray:

- For Monireh Arabshahi, Yasaman Aryani and Mojgan Keshavarz
- For the Iranian authorities to immediately and unconditionally release the three women
- For the Iranian authorities to ensure the women have regular contact with their families and lawyers of their own choosing

POLAND: Human Rights defender facing jail

When police raided the house of human rights defender Elżbieta Podleśna they allegedly found copies of posters depicting the Virgin Mary with a halo around her head and shoulders in the rainbow colours of the LGBTI pride flag. She has been charged for 'offending religious beliefs', which could carry a two-year prison sentence. The police also confiscated her laptop, mobile phone and drives. Owning, creating or distributing posters such as these should not be a criminal offence and is protected under the right to freedom of expression.

Please hold in mind or pray:

- For Elżbieta Podleśna who is being targeted for her LGBTI+ rights activism
- For the police to return all of her belongings
- For the Polish authorities to drop this ludicrous investigation immediately.

Good news!

Bahrain activist Nabeel Rajab was sentenced in 2018 to five years in prison over social media posts criticising Saudi Arabia's war in Yemen. He had been in jail since 2016 and served another two-year term for torture allegations he made in a news interview. Rajab also faced a number of other cases, and it was unclear how much time he had left to serve. On 9th June a court decision allowed him to serve out the remainder of his prison term at home.

Sources for cases: Amnesty International UK, BBC

‘I pray for all of us, oppressor and friend, that together we may succeed in building a better world, through human understanding and love, and that in doing so we may reduce the pain and suffering of all sentient beings.’

Dalai Lama XIV

“To clasp one’s hands in prayer is the beginning of an uprising against the disorder of the world.”

Please take this sheet away with you and use it in prayer or meditation, and any action you feel and find possible.

Your local Amnesty group can be contacted at
www.amnestyelycity.org.uk

ELY AMNESTY NEWS

All of our forthcoming events and regular meetings have been postponed or cancelled until further notice due to the Coronavirus / COVID-19 outbreak.

If you are interested in what we normally do, or would like to find out ways that you can continue to support Amnesty from home, then please feel free to get in touch with us through the above website.