



AMNESTY

ELY CITY GROUP

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

March 2021

“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.

Turkey: Veteran human rights lawyer sentenced to jail

Eren Keskin has been an outspoken defender of human rights for over 30 years. She is the Co-Chair of the Human Rights Association. She is also the founder of the Legal Aid Bureau against Sexual Harassment and Rape in Custody. The lawyer has been threatened with death, has received physical attacks and been convicted on numerous occasions, largely because of her work defending Kurdish rights. On 15 February she was sentenced to six years in jail for 'membership of an armed terrorist organisation'. 'I have been prosecuted many times and jailed for my thoughts. I'm still here. I'm not going anywhere,' Eren Keskin tweeted after she was sentenced. The verdict is subject to appeal and Eren has not been detained.

Please hold in mind or pray:

- For the authorities to drop this absurd charge against Eren who has been threatened and harassed for her legitimate and peaceful work in the defence of human rights
- For the authorities to put an end to all forms of harassment, including at the judicial level, against human rights defenders in Turkey and ensure that they are able to carry out their human rights activities without hindrance and fear of reprisal.

France: Threat to deport Chechen refugee

A.S. (name withheld for privacy reasons) has been living in France for over 10 years, having obtained refugee status in 2009, with his wife, five children and his father. He has no criminal record in France and has never been investigated, charged or prosecuted for any terrorism-related offence. His refugee status was stripped on the basis that he knew another Chechen man who has had his refugee status revoked on national security grounds. On 15 January A.S. received a deportation decision and is being held in an immigration detention centre. His return will place him at real risk of torture and other ill-treatment.

Please hold in mind or pray:

- For A.S. and his family
- For the French authorities to comply with their legal obligations under international human rights law and halt the deportation of A.S. to a place where he will be at real risk of torture
- For the French authorities to release A.S. so he can pursue his right to seek asylum.

Pakistan: Human rights worker disappeared

Idris Khattak was a dedicated human rights researcher, investigating forced disappearances in Pakistan for organisations like Amnesty International. In November 2019 he was disappeared. A witness describes his car being intercepted and a black sack being thrown over his face. His daughter Talia began campaigning for his whereabouts. In June Pakistan authorities admitted he was in their custody, but they would not reveal where he was. In November his daughter was finally allowed to meet him for 20 minutes. He has not been allowed to see a lawyer. The authorities say they are charging him in a military court under the Official Secrets Act. If convicted, he could face a long prison sentence or even a death sentence.

Please hold in mind or pray:

- For the authorities to release Idris unless there is sufficient and credible evidence that he has committed an internationally recognised crime
- For the authorities to grant Idris access to a lawyer and regular access to his family
- For the Pakistan authorities to stop forced abductions by the security forces.

Good News!

Saudi women's rights activist Loujain al-Hathloul has been released from prison after 1,001 days in custody, subject to a three-year ban on discussing her ordeal in prison (which included torture, sexual harassment and ill-treatment), and a five-year travel ban. If she breaks the terms of her release she will be returned to jail. Other Saudi women's rights activists have also been temporarily released or expect to be released soon.

Sources for cases: Amnesty International

'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 keep this sheet to hand 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.