



# AMNESTY

ELY CITY GROUP

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

**May 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: Former Amnesty Chair faces prison**

In July 2020 Taner Kılıç (former Chair of Amnesty Turkey), Günel Kurşun, İdil Eser (former Director Amnesty International Turkey) and Özlem Dalkıran were convicted on terrorism-related charges following their arrest in 2017, despite the absence of any evidence of criminal activity and the fact that allegations against these defendants had repeatedly been disproven, including by the state's own evidence. The defendants appealed to the Istanbul Regional Court, which upheld the convictions. They have now appealed to the Court of Cassation. Taner Kılıç has already spent over 14 months in pretrial detention and would have approximately five years left of his original sentence. A conviction would also mean that his lawyer's licence would be revoked permanently making it impossible for him to practise as a lawyer in Turkey. All four human rights defenders could face a retrial, but it is also possible that the convictions of all four would be confirmed.

Please hold in mind or pray:

- For all four human rights defenders to be acquitted and unconditionally freed
- For Turkey to cease persecuting human rights activists
- For Turkey to cease detaining lawyers – hundreds of lawyers are believed to be in pretrial detention or serving prison terms because of the alleged crimes of their clients.

## **Morocco: Journalist faces trial**

Independent journalist Omar Radi is known for his criticism of Morocco's human rights record and his exposure of corruption and has faced judicial harassment by the authorities for years. On 29 July 2020 the Office of the Prosecutor of the first instance court in Casablanca brought a raft of charges against Omar Radi, including espionage (based on his journalistic work and research he conducted for international NGOs), as well as rape and sexual assault – all charges that Omar Radi vehemently denied. He was remanded in prison that day and has been held in unlawful pretrial detention. On 16 April he and fellow journalist Suleiman Raissouni began a hunger strike after their trials were postponed and their provisional release requests were rejected for the tenth time.

Please hold in mind or pray:

- For Omar Radi, who is being persecuted for doing his job as a journalist
- For the Moroccan authorities to ensure that no defendant is detained pretrial without compelling reasons
- For the Moroccan authorities to drop any charges against him which stem from his journalistic work and ensure a prompt and fair trial.

## **Saudi Arabia: Activist's sentence upheld**

Nassima al-Sada is an activist, human rights educator and mother of three who has campaigned for civil and political rights, women's rights and the rights of the Shi'a minority in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia for many years.

She stood in municipal elections in 2015 but was banned from participating. She has also campaigned for the right of women to drive and for the end of the male guardianship system. She was arbitrarily arrested in July 2018 and detained without charge or trial for almost a year. She was then charged with unspecified cybercrimes and sentenced in November 2020. In March 2021 the Court of Appeals in Riyadh upheld the verdict, confirming a five-year prison term, followed by a five-year travel ban.

Please hold in mind or pray:

- For Nassima al-Sada, her three children and her ailing husband
- For the Saudi authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Nassima al-Sada and quash her conviction and sentence, as she was detained and tried solely for peacefully advocating for equality for women.

### **Good News!**

On 24 March Virginia became the 23<sup>rd</sup> US state to abolish the death penalty in law. Public support for the death penalty is declining in the USA. The 2020 Gallup poll showed that 55% of respondents said they were in favour of the death penalty for a person convicted of murder. This is the lowest since 1972. A majority of Democrat voters were opposed to the death penalty while a majority of Republicans were for it. Support for the death penalty was lowest among younger age groups.

**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](http://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.