



AMNESTY

ELY CITY GROUP

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

June 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.

Iran: Tortured and jailed

Anoosheh Ashoori is a retired British-Iranian father and husband who was arbitrarily imprisoned in Iran nearly four years ago. He was visiting his elderly mother in Tehran when he was arrested, held in Evin prison, tortured, denied a lawyer and forced to sign “confessions” when sleep deprived and without knowing what they said. After a grossly unfair trial, he was sentenced to 10 years and two years on separate charges. The UK government encouraged his family here in Britain not to speak publicly about his situation. However, as no progress has been made on securing his release, and after his wife Sherry heard of two suicide attempts, the family have now gone public.

Please hold in mind or pray:

- For Anoosheh, whose health is deteriorating during his time in prison, and his wife and two children as they wait for his return
- That the Iranian government will free Anoosheh immediately
- That the UK government will make his return to the UK a high priority

Colombia: Dozens killed in National Strike

Riot police in Colombia have used tear gas and fired live ammunition as tens of thousands of citizens took to the streets in nationwide anti-government rallies. At least 42 civilians and one police officer have been killed so far. The protesters first took to the street on 28 April, initially in response to proposed tax reforms which they feared would reduce dwindling incomes. Rising unemployment as a result of the pandemic has exacerbated Colombia’s high levels of inequality. Indigenous people, who are among the hardest hit, have joined the protests. The security forces have used force indiscriminately and there have also been reports of hundreds of people injured and disappeared and acts of sexual torture.

Please hold in mind or pray:

- For the demonstrators to have their right to peaceful protest upheld
- For the security forces to be held accountable for their actions by an independent body instead of military courts
- For a positive and peaceful outcome to the government’s negotiations with the National Strike Committee.

Russia: Opposition to be branded “extremist”

The Russian opposition politician and anti-corruption activist Aleksei Navalny was unlawfully detained and imprisoned for two and a half years in February. He had previously survived an attempt to kill him with the nerve agent Novichok, which he publicly blamed on President Putin. Now the Kremlin plans to ban all his organisations, including his anti-corruption foundation – branding them as “extremist”. The extremism laws carry punishments of up to 10 years in prison. Since the Jehovah’s Witnesses was outlawed as extremist in 2017, almost 500 followers have been prosecuted and dozens are serving lengthy sentences. Navalny’s organisations are being disbanded in a bid to protect staff and supporters from prosecution.

Please hold in mind or pray:

- For Aleksei Navalny to be immediately and unconditionally released
- For the Russian authorities to cease using extremism laws to muzzle political, anti-corruption or religious organisations

Amnesty International marks sixtieth anniversary

At a Human Rights Day event on 10 December 1961, London lawyer Peter Beneson quoted a Chinese proverb that it is "better to light a candle than curse the darkness". He had been inspired to set up Amnesty International that year, appalled to read about two Portuguese students jailed for seven years for the crime of raising their glasses and toasting liberty. Today, Amnesty has more than 10 million members in more than 150 countries and continues to shine a light on human rights defenders, political prisoners and regimes which flout their citizens' human rights.

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

On 3 July we will have a stall in the Ely Saturday market. Our focus will be on the treatment of the Uyghur in the Chinese province of Xinjiang where around one million people are detained in ‘re-education camps’. We will have letters and petitions to sign, particularly for a young man called Yiliyasijiang Reheman, who went missing while studying in Egypt – his family believe he was taken to China. Do join us anytime between 8.30am and 3.00pm.

If you are interested in what we 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.