



# AMNESTY

ELY CITY GROUP

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

**September 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**

*Once again, a special time has been set aside in Bishop Alcock's Chapel between the two morning services on the first Sunday of each month from 9.00am to 10.15am. Here we can hold in mind or pray for the people whose cases are highlighted for the current month. This meditation is open to those of all faiths and none. .*

## **Hong Kong: Barrister charged**

Chow Hang-tung, a human rights lawyer and an organiser of the annual Hong Kong vigil commemorating the 1989 Tiananmen Massacre, was arrested on 4 June and charged with 'advertising or publicising unauthorised assembly' after she urged people to light candles individually because the public vigil was banned. This is yet another example of the chilling effect on freedom of expression and peaceful assembly in Hong Kong as authorities increasingly use the Public Order Ordinance to target activists and human rights defenders. After over a month in custody, she has been released on bail. Her trial is scheduled for 5 October.

Please hold in mind or pray:

- For the Hong Kong authorities to immediately drop all charges against Chow Hang-tung and release her unconditionally
- For the Hong Kong authorities to end the practice of bringing criminal charges against those who have peacefully exercised their right to freedom of expression.

## **USA: Cleared detainee still in Guantánamo**

Saifullah Paracha turned 74 on 17 August. He has been cleared for release by six US government agencies, including the CIA. He has been in Guantánamo for almost 17 years. Never charged with a crime, he was accused of financially facilitating at least two of the Al-Qaeda members involved in the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Saifullah Paracha, who suffers from a number of ailments, including diabetes and a heart condition, denied his involvement in terrorism, saying he did not know the men he was dealing with were Al-Qaeda members. Nine people are currently cleared for release at Guantánamo (some have been cleared for more than a decade), yet they are still stuck there.

Please hold in mind or pray:

- For Saifullah Paracha's speedy release from Guantánamo and reunion with his family in Pakistan
- For the US administration to live up to repeated promises to close the military prison at Guantánamo Bay, where 39 men remain imprisoned, and arrange the transfers of all detainees who are not charged with crimes.

## **IRAN: Youth facing execution**

20-year-old Hossein Shahbazi faces execution for allegedly stabbing a classmate during a mass brawl when he was 17 years old. Following his arrest, he was denied access to a lawyer and his family for 11 days while he was interrogated. His conviction was based, in part, on 'confessions' that he said were obtained through torture. Using the death penalty against someone who was a child at the time of the crime is prohibited under international human rights law and violates Iran's international obligations. Amnesty has identified more than 80 people held on death row in Iran for crimes committed when they were children.

Please hold in mind or pray:

- For the Iranian authorities to halt the execution of Hossein Shahbazi
- For the Iranian authorities to grant him a fair retrial in full compliance with the principles of juvenile justice, excluding coerced 'confessions'
- For the Iranian authorities to cease using the death penalty against people who were under 18 at the time of the crime.

### **Good News!**

Burundian human rights defender Germain Rukuki was released from prison in July, his sentence reduced from 32 years to one. He was convicted and jailed in 2018 on trumped-up charges of 'participation in an insurrectional movement' for his work documenting acts of torture and other crimes committed throughout Burundi. Germain has been reunited with his family, including his son, who was born just after he was arrested.

**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

Our monthly planning meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month. We are now meeting cautiously in person. The next two meetings will be held from 7pm on 7th September and 5th October in St Peter’s House, Broad Street, Ely, CB7 4AH. Anyone interested is welcome to attend.

Our next event will be the annual Ben Jupp Lecture on 24 October. Geraldine Van Bueren QC, an international human rights lawyer and professor emerita at Queen Mary, University of London, will talk on ‘*Children’s Rights – New Global Threats*’. Because of the ongoing pandemic, it is not yet clear whether this will take place face to face in the Cathedral or on Zoom.