



AMNESTY

ELY CITY GROUP

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

December 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.

The cases below are from Amnesty International’s annual Write for Rights campaign. If you would like to know more, would like to write a letter or to sign a petition, there is more information at:

<https://www.amnesty.org.uk/write-for-rights>

BELARUS: Teen sent to child penal colony

Mikita Zalatarou was waiting for the bus in the main square of the city of Homel when the police moved in on a nearby largely peaceful protest about the recent presidential election. As the crowd began to run, someone told Mikita to do the same. The next day, the police came to his home and arrested him, accusing him of throwing a Molotov cocktail at officers the day before. They beat him with an electric-shock truncheon and interrogated him without a lawyer or responsible adult being present. After being locked up for six months, he was found guilty at a trial in which no video evidence was offered showing him engaged in any violence. Media reports of the demonstration did not mention any mass unrest. He was sentenced to five years in a child educational prison colony.

Please hold in mind or pray:

- For Mikita in his incarceration and for his family
- For the teenager to be released pending a fair trial
- For the trial to comply with international juvenile justice standards

MEXICO: Shot by police at a peaceful demonstration

Childcare worker Wendy Andrea Galarza Herrera attended a march organised by feminist collectives in Cancun on 9 November 2020. It was demanding justice for the murder of a woman called Alexis – in Mexico, women are often abused and killed simply for being women. A group of demonstrators began pulling down and burning wooden barricades. The police fired shots into the air – and some say also into the crowd. Wendy discovered she had bullet wounds in her leg and vulva. Two days later, she lodged a complaint against the police. She produced clothing showing bullet holes. The case continues, but so far no one responsible for her shooting has been brought to trial.

Please hold in mind or pray:

- For the authorities to conduct a prompt, impartial and exhaustive investigation into the human rights violations suffered by Wendy
- For all those suspected of criminal responsibility to be brought to justice in fair trials before ordinary civilian courts

THAILAND: Democracy campaigner accused of lèse-majesté

Panusaya Sithijirawattanakul – known as ‘Rung’ – is a leading voice in Thailand’s democracy movement. The student, a vocal proponent for equality and freedom of expression, opposes the use of the draconian lèse-majesté law – which penalises criticism of the monarchy – and is used to silence government critics. In 2020, she took part in demonstrations calling for social and political change and by August had become one of their leaders. Watched by thousands, she called for equality, freedom of expression and reform of the monarchy. In March, she was jailed for 60 days under this law. After going on hunger strike for 38 days, Rung was released, but now faces the prospect of life imprisonment.

Please hold in mind or pray:

- For Rung as she faces the possibility of decades in prison
- For the authorities to drop all criminal charges against her and others charged solely for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and expression

Good news: Writing for Rights works

Burundi human rights defender Germain Rukuki was sentenced to 32 years in prison for his peaceful activism. Amnesty supporters took more than 346,000 actions for him during the campaign. On 4 June, a court of appeal overturned his conviction on several charges, although a charge of rebellion remained. His sentence was reduced to a year in prison and a small fine. His wife Emelyn said messages of support and solidarity were a comfort, as she thanked Amnesty campaigners.

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

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 December 2021 and 4th January 2022 in St Peter's House, Broad Street, Ely, CB7 4AH. Anyone interested is welcome to attend.