



AMNESTY

ELY CITY GROUP

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

February 2022

“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.

Russia: Detained activist denied lawyer

Activist Lilia Chanysheva was the former regional coordinator of Aleksei Navalny's Ufa HQ, conducting peaceful social and political activities. In November, following the June ban of organisations linked to the jailed opposition leader, Lilia was arrested on charges of "establishing or leading an extremist association". On 21 November, she was removed to pre-trial detention in Moscow, more than 900 miles away from Ufa. Since then, Russian officials have prevented four lawyers from representing her or visiting her in prison. She now faces prosecution without legal representation, violating her right to a fair trial. She could be jailed for up to 10 years.

Please hold in mind or pray:

- For Lilia in her continued detention
- That the Russian authorities will respect her right to a fair trial and allow her access to legal representation
- That the Russian authorities will cease to undermine and criminalise the work of democratic activists

Guatemala: Campaigner convicted without evidence

Teacher and trade unionist Bernardo Caal Xol made it his mission to empower his people, the indigenous Maya Q'eqchi'. He has also done everything he can to peacefully protect their land and natural resources from plunder and biodiversity loss. He and his community protested when the government licensed a company to build two hydroelectric power plants on their Cahabón river, stripping their forests and threatening their access to the water they need to survive. Bernardo was smeared by baseless accusations and, in 2018, a judge convicted him without evidence and jailed him for seven years.

Please hold in mind or pray:

- For Bernardo in his continued imprisonment
- That he will be immediately released from jail
- For the authorities to either quash the conviction or provide evidence worthy of a future fair trial

Philippines: Campaigning senator imprisoned since 2017

Senator Leila de Lima was a vocal critic of the human rights violations committed in the Philippines since President Duterte started his “war on drugs”. Shortly after he took office in 2016, she voiced her concern about the growing number of extrajudicial killings of suspected drug offenders. The president and other state officials began a campaign of harassment and intimidation against her. The senator has been imprisoned since February 2017. Amnesty International believes the charges against her are politically motivated and calls on the authorities to immediately and unconditionally release her, dropping all charges.

Please hold in mind or pray:

- For Leila in her continued imprisonment
- That she will be immediately freed
- That the Philippine government will cease its use of extrajudicial killings in the “war on drugs”

Good news:

Former Syrian intelligence officer Anwar Raslan has been convicted of crimes against humanity and jailed for life in Germany. His crimes include the torture, murder and rape of detainees at an infamous military intelligence facility in Damascus city. This would not have come about if victims had not bravely shared their stories, and human rights and litigation organisations hadn't doggedly pursued justice.

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 1st February and 1st March in St Peter's House, Broad Street, Ely, CB7 4AH. Anyone interested is welcome to attend.

Our next event will be a screening of the BAFTA-nominated film *The Mauritanian*, directed by Kevin Macdonald and based on the *NY Times* best-selling memoir 'Guantánamo Diary' by Mohamedou Ould Slahi, at the Maltings cinema, Ely, on Wednesday 30 March at 7.30pm. Tickets are £10, booking through Babylon Arts nearer the date.