



AMNESTY

ELY CITY GROUP

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

April 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.

Ukraine and Russia: Invasion and oppression

Ukraine has been plunged into war after Russia's President Putin ordered an invasion. Civilians are under attack and dying, while refugees are fleeing over the borders to neighbouring countries. Many Ukrainians have joined the fight against the invading army, in a bid to preserve their democratic right to decide their own country's future. At the same time, Putin has ratcheted up the oppression of his own people, introducing a law that effectively criminalises journalists who report the truth of what is happening in Ukraine. Thousands of peaceful anti-war protestors have been arrested in 53 Russian cities. This is predicted to be a drawn out conflict, but circumstances are constantly changing.

Please hold in mind or pray:

- For the people of Ukraine and their president Volodymyr Zelensky
- That the UK government will speed up its welcome to Ukrainian refugees
- That countries around the world will increase their sanctions on Putin and the men who've made billions from the systems he has enabled

Ethiopia: The horrors of civil war

There has been a civil war in the Tigray region of Ethiopia since November 2020. Since then, the Tigrayan forces have disregarded the fundamental rules of humanitarian law which all warring parties must follow – including repeated rapes, executing unarmed civilians and looting from hospitals. Meanwhile, the Ethiopian government forces, and Eritrean forces acting alongside them, have engaged in massacres, permitted extrajudicial executions and used rape and other gender-based violence against supporters of the Tigray. They have also arbitrarily rounded up citizens of Tigrayan origin in the capital Addis Ababa, including civil servants, UN staff, children, the elderly and Orthodox priests.

Please hold in mind or pray:

- For the victims of all sides in this civil war
- For peace in Ethiopia

Good news from Saudi Arabia, China and Iran

Raif Badawi is a prominent human rights activist and lawyer who has spent more than a decade behind bars for exercising his freedom of expression. He was also sentenced to a 10-year post-sentence travel ban, a one million Saudi Arabian riyal fine (more than £200,000) and 1,000 lashes – the first 50 in public in January 2015. Having served his 10-year term, he was released from prison on 11 March. However, he has been banned from travel and told he must wait another decade to see his family.

We've written about Chinese citizen journalist Zhang Zhan a number of times, so it is good to report a more positive update, although she does remain imprisoned. She was detained by the Chinese authorities for reporting the failures of the Wuhan government at the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic. Her lawyer has told her mother that her treatment in prison has improved and she has ended her hunger strike. On 28 January, her mother was allowed to have a video call with her and could report she was in visibly better health.

And yet more good news – from Iran. Dual-nationals Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe and Anoosheh Ashoori have been released. Nazanin was arrested in 2016 while visiting her family for Iranian New Year and accused of plotting to overthrow the government. Anoosheh was arrested in 2017 when he visited his mother. In 2019 he was sentenced to 12 years in prison for spying for Israel's Mossad and acquiring 'illegitimate wealth'.

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 5 April and 3 May in St Peter's House, Broad Street, Ely, CB7 4AH. Anyone interested is welcome to attend.

The first in a new series of Amnesty Talks will be held on 12 April in the Aedwen Room in the Ely Museum at 7.00pm. Nigina Istanakzai-Zarifi, the Amnesty International country coordinator for Afghanistan, will give a talk on Women in Afghanistan