



AMNESTY

ELY CITY GROUP

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

May 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.

Malta – three youths face life in prison

In March 2019, Amara, Kader and Abdalla (aged 15, 16, 19) boarded a crowded rubber boat, fleeing Libya. Along with 108 people, they were rescued by a cargo ship, *El Hiblu*. The rescued people were promised they would be taken to safety in Europe, but as time passed, they realised they were being taken back to Libya and began to panic. The three boys could speak English and French and so relayed messages to the crew and helped to calm the migrants. The ship turned around and set off for Malta. However, media and politicians spun the story, accusing the three boys of ‘hijacking’ the ship. The boys were disembarked in Malta in handcuffs, despite the police testifying that the crew were in control, no one was hurt, and nothing was damaged. The young men, now known as The El Hiblu 3, have been on trial for three years, facing serious charges that include terrorism and hijacking.

Please hold in mind or pray:

- For the three young men who had hoped for a better life but remain in limbo with the threat of a long prison sentence hanging over them
- For the Maltese Attorney General to drop all the charges against them.

Israel – human rights lawyer detained

Salah Hammouri is a French-Palestinian lawyer who holds a Jerusalem residency permit and works as a field researcher for Addameer, a legal aid and prisoners’ rights NGO that, together with five other civil society groups, was declared by the Israeli government a ‘terrorist organisation’ in October 2021. The Israeli authorities have persistently harassed Salah Hammouri. Since 2000, he has been detained multiple times, including twice when he was placed under administrative detention – for five months in 2004 and for 13 months in 2017. He has now been detained without trial since 7 March 2022. He is also at risk of forcible deportation as the Israeli authorities have taken action to revoke his residency status.

Please hold in mind or pray:

- For the Israeli authorities to immediately release Salah Hammouri and ensure that he is allowed to keep his residency status
- For the Israeli authorities to allow Salah to continue with his human rights work without fear of reprisals
- For the Israeli authorities to release all those who have been placed under administrative detention unless they are properly charged with an internationally recognisable crime and given a fair trial.

Belarus – human rights defender facing prison sentence

Marfa Rabkova is a Belarusian human rights defender and the coordinator of Viasna, a leading human rights group that monitors and documents human rights violations. Marfa was arbitrarily detained on 17 September 2020 for exposing the police's brutality against peaceful demonstrators. She has been in pre-trial detention ever since, charged with multiple fabricated criminal offences. She could face up to 12 years in jail if convicted. Marfa's health has been deteriorating rapidly but she has been refused treatment for abdominal pain and toothache.

Please hold in mind or pray:

- For Marfa Rabkova who has committed no crime and has been targeted solely for her peaceful human rights work.
- For the authorities to immediately terminate criminal proceedings against Marfa
- For the authorities to urgently provide her with adequate medical care
- For the authorities to stop persecuting members of Viasna and other civil society activists, and respect the rights to freedom of association, peaceful assembly and expression.

Good news!

Indonesia's armed forces have finally ended all so-called 'virginity tests' as part of the recruitment process for women. The military's first actions against this abusive practice began in June 2021 when then-Army Chief General Andika Perkasa issued an order that female recruits should only be assessed on their ability to take part in physical training. He also ordered that the fiancées of male officers who applied for permission to get married no longer needed to get a medical check, including a 'virginity test.' However, it was only in April 2022 that the Navy and Air Force followed suit.

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 3 May and 7 June 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 17 May in the Aedwen Room in the Ely Museum at 7.00pm. Gary Eittle, the Amnesty International country coordinator for Israel and Palestine, will give a talk on Amnesty's recently released report on Israel's Apartheid against Palestinians.