



AMNESTY

ELY CITY GROUP

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

January 2024

“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

A special time is 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.

Morocco: Journalist denied justice

In July 2020, award-winning investigative reporter and human rights activist, Omar Radi was arrested and charged with 'harming national security' and 'rape'. In June 2020, an Amnesty International report had revealed that Omar Radi was being targeted by the Moroccan authorities, using spyware produced by NSO Group, an Israeli company. Omar Radi had been investigating corruption by the authorities. On 19 July 2021, the Casablanca Court of First Instance convicted Omar Radi of espionage and rape and sentenced him to six years in prison. On 18 July 2023 Morocco's highest court rejected his appeal. Omar now has no internal legal recourse to justice, despite the many unfair violations noted in his trial.

Please hold in mind or pray:

- For Omar Radi who has been in prison since July 2020
- For the Moroccan authorities to stop arresting independent journalists, activists and politicians on questionable charges because of their critical writings and work

Guatemala: Journalist faces retrial

On 13 October, the Second Chamber of the Court of Appeals of Guatemala annulled the sentence imposed in June on José Rubén Zamora, award-winning journalist and founder of the newspaper *elPeriódico*. Detained since 29 July 2022, Zamora was sentenced on 14 June 2023 to six years in prison on trumped-up money-laundering charges based on nothing more than an absence of documentary justification for the origin of a transfer intended to keep *elPeriódico* afloat. The court ordered that the case be sent back to court and a date be set for a retrial. Zamora, who also faces charges of using false documents, must remain in detention in the meantime.

Please hold in mind or pray:

- For the authorities to immediately release José Rubén Zamora to await trial in freedom
- For the retrial to be fair and impartial

Saudi Arabia: Juveniles facing imminent execution

Abdullah al-Darazi was 17 at the time of his arrest. Jalal Labbad was between 15 and 17 years old at the time of his arrest. Both have been convicted for involvement in protests and rebelling against public order. The death penalty is not mandated for these crimes under Islamic law. Both were held in pretrial detention, subjected to torture, and had no access to legal representation. It is believed that the Supreme Court has secretly upheld their death sentences. The two young men could be put to death as soon as the King ratifies their death sentences. Saudi Arabia is one of the world's top executioners. Between January and October 2023, the Saudi authorities have already executed 112 people. In 2022, the kingdom executed 196 people, the highest number of annual executions that Amnesty International has recorded in the country in the last 30 years.

Please hold in mind or pray:

- For the Saudi authorities not to ratify the death sentences of Abdullah and Jalai, to quash their convictions and order a fair retrial.
- For the defendants' claims of torture and ill-treatment to be impartially investigated
- For the Saudi authorities to immediately establish an official moratorium on executions, particularly of minors under 18.

Good news

On 15 November Iranian authorities released the prize-winning human rights lawyer Nasrin Sotoudeh. She had been arrested in October at the funeral of Armita Garawand, a teenager who was beaten to death by Tehran's morality police. Sotoudeh has served time for her activism in the past, including a sentence in 2018 for 38 years and 148 lashes. She was released two years into her term. However, she still faces charges on national security and for disregarding the mandatory veiling laws.

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.amnestycity.org.uk

ELY AMNESTY NEWS

Our monthly planning meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month. There will be *no* meeting on 2 January. Our next meeting will be held from 7pm on 6 February in St Peter's House, Broad Street, Ely, CB7 4AH. Anyone interested is welcome to attend.