



AMNESTY

ELY CITY GROUP

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

December 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.

Egypt: Held because of brother's activism

Oqba Hashad has been held in pre-trial detention for five years simply because of his brother Amr Hashad's human rights activism. During that time, he has endured torture and his prosthetic leg has been broken, leaving him physically reliant on others. The 27-year-old has been denied essential health care and his mental health has deteriorated. Despite a judge ordering his release, Egyptian prosecutors have kept him imprisoned. In a bid to justify Oqba's continued detention, another spurious legal case has been opened against him.

Please hold in mind or pray:

- For the Egyptian authorities to provide Oqba with the medical help he urgently needs
- That they will immediately and unconditionally free him
- That they will cease to target human rights activists and their families

Belarus: Democracy activist abducted and jailed

Maryia Kalesnikava is a professional musician who joined the presidential campaign of Svyatlana Tsikhanouskaya in 2020. The election was widely believed to have been rigged and Alyaksandr Lukashenka returned for his sixth term, forcing Ms Tsikhanouskaya to flee abroad. Maryia emerged as the highest profile opposition figure and on 7 September that year, she was abducted by the country's security forces. She refused to go into exile so she was arrested, detained, and later sentenced to 11 years in prison on charges including "undermining national security" and "extremism". She is being held in appalling conditions, without access to the healthcare she needs, her family have not heard from her in over a year and she has been isolated from other prisoners.

Please hold in mind or pray:

- For the Belarusian authorities to provide Maryia with the healthcare she needs
- For them to immediately and unconditionally free her from prison
- That they will cease to target democratic activists

Saudi Arabia: Outspoken women's advocate jailed

In recent years, Saudi Arabia's authorities have made big claims about advancing women's rights. At first, Manahel al-Otaibi believed them, tweeting about women's rights and showing pictures of herself enjoying shopping without wearing the traditional robe or abaya. As a result, she was arrested and charged with violating Saudi Arabia's Anti-Cyber Crime Law. Her case was referred to the counter-terrorism court, notorious for grossly unfair trials, and in January 2024, she was jailed for 11 years. Manahel has been left extremely distressed, told her family another prisoner has beaten her and is even suspected of having a broken leg for which she did not receive treatment. For months on end, she has not been allowed to communicate with her family.

Please hold in mind or pray:

- For the Saudi Arabian authorities to provide Manahel with the medical care she desperately needs
- For them to immediately and unconditionally free her from prison
- That they will cease to target women's rights activists

Good news: US prisoner freed after 32 years

Danny Davis, 52, has been released after 32 years in an American prison for a murder that DNA evidence proves he did not commit. He was 20 years old when police in Illinois coerced him into confessing to the brutal stabbing to death of a woman. The Illinois Innocence Project and the Innocence Project took up his case in 2015. DNA evidence from beneath the nails of the murdered woman has excluded Danny from involvement in the case and a court vacated his convictions and ordered his release.

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. The next meeting will be held from 7pm on 3 December in St Peter's House, Broad Street, Ely, CB7 4AH. *There will be no meeting in January.* We will be meeting on 4 February to plan our activities for 2025 and would warmly welcome anyone who wishes to join us.