



WRITE FOR RIGHTS

GLOBAL WRITE-A-THON 2009

CHINA:

10 YEARS IN PRISON FOR SENDING AN EMAIL

In April 2004, Chinese journalist **Shi Tao** used his Yahoo! email account to send a message to a U.S.-based pro-democracy website. In his email, he summarized a government order directing media in China to downplay the upcoming 15th anniversary of the 1989 crackdown on pro-democracy activists in Tiananmen Square. Police arrested him in November 2004, charging him with “illegally providing state secrets to foreign entities.” Authorities used email account information supplied by Yahoo! to convict Shi Tao in April 2005 and sentence him to 10 years in prison.

China’s vaguely-worded legal definition of what constitutes a “state secret” gives authorities broad discretion to detain people who peacefully exercise their right to free expression. China has constructed an extensive system of Internet censorship to silence activists and journalists like Shi Tao. All Internet communications pass through government-controlled routers, and authorities are able to block access to many sites, to filter content, and to delete links or web pages considered “dangerous” or “subversive.”

Shi Tao, a published poet and essayist, is currently held at Deshan Prison in Changde city, Hunan Province. He was first held in Chishan Prison, where he was reportedly forced to labor under harsh conditions. His family has been harassed by the authorities. His wife underwent daily questioning by security officials, and she eventually divorced Shi Tao after experiencing persistent pressure from her work unit. His mother and other family members have been monitored and harassed.

Amnesty International considers Shi Tao to be a prisoner of conscience, imprisoned for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression, a right protected in international law and the Chinese constitution.

YOU CAN HELP:

WRITE A LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT:

- Calling on him to bring about the immediate and unconditional release of Shi Tao and all those imprisoned solely for the legitimate exercise of their right to freedom of expression;
- Urging him to amend or repeal vaguely-worded laws or regulations that can be used to persecute individuals who exercise their human rights.

MAIL TO:

President Hu Jintao
President of the People's Republic of China
The State Council General Office
2 Fuyoujie
Xichengqu
Beijingshi 100017
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Salutation: Your Excellency

International airmail postage is \$0.98.

WRITE A LETTER OF SUPPORT TO SHI TAO:

Please send a message of hope and support to Shi Tao. A sample message:

“We are thinking of you. You are not forgotten.”

Please do not use Amnesty International or religious cards or envelopes. Do not comment on his case or the political situation in China. Amnesty International recommends sending letters of support to Shi Tao in a batch. Therefore, please send your cards to Amnesty's office, and we will forward them accordingly.

MAIL TO:

Amnesty International USA
Campaign for Individuals at Risk
600 Pennsylvania Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20003

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www.amnestyusa.org/writeathon





WRITE FOR RIGHTS

GLOBAL WRITE-A-THON 2009

VIETNAM: HUMAN RIGHTS LAWYERS JAILED

Human rights lawyers **Le Thi Cong Nhan**, age 30, and **Nguyen Van Dai**, age 40, were jailed in May 2007 for “conducting propaganda against the State.” Amnesty International considers them prisoners of conscience and is calling for their immediate and unconditional release.

Le Thi Cong Nhan and Nguyen Van Dai are well known in dissident circles in Vietnam as outspoken human rights lawyers. Nguyen Van Dai provided legal advice to dissidents and represented some in court, including imprisoned Protestant Christians claiming persecution by the state. In interviews with Voice of America, Radio Free Asia and other media, the two lawyers called for respect for human rights in Vietnam.

Le Thi Cong Nhan and Nguyen Van Dai were arrested in March 2007 by Hanoi Investigation and Security Police and tried by Hanoi People's Court in May 2007. Nguyen Van Dai was sentenced to five years' and Le Thi Cong Nhan to four years' imprisonment, under Article 88 of the Penal Code, for “conducting propaganda against the State.” Their sentences were reduced by one year each on appeal in November 2007, but both must serve additional sentences of house arrest upon release from prison. Nguyen Van Dai will be under house arrest for four years, while Le Thi Cong Nhan must serve three.

In 2006 Nguyen Van Dai founded the dissident Committee for Human Rights in Vietnam, which documents human rights violations. He was also one of the original signatories to the Bloc 8406 online petition, Manifesto 2006 on Freedom and Democracy for Vietnam, launched on 8 April 2006.

Le Thi Cong Nhan, who was a member of the Committee for Human Rights in Vietnam and a supporter of Bloc 8406, was also the spokeswoman for the Vietnam Progression Party, one of several pro-democracy political parties and groups formed in 2006 without official approval. It called for democracy and freedom of expression and association, and for human rights to be respected.

YOU CAN HELP:

WRITE A LETTER TO THE PRIME MINISTER:

- Calling for the immediate and unconditional release of Le Thi Cong Nhan & Nguyen Van Dai;
- Calling on him to ensure that while detained, they are allowed regular family visits, and receive appropriate medical care.

MAIL TO:

Prime Minister
Nguyen Tan Dung
Office of the Prime Minister
Hoang Hoa Tham
Hanoi
SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

Fax: 011-844-3823-1872

Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

International airmail postage is \$0.98.

WRITE LETTERS OF SUPPORT TO LE THI CONG NHAN AND NGUYEN VAN DAI:

Please send messages of hope and support to Le Thi Cong Nhan and to Nguyen Van Dai. A sample message:

“Greetings from [name of your town]. You are in our thoughts and hopes for the future.”

MAIL TO:

Nguyen Van Dai
Prison camp K1
Xa Ba Sao
huyen Kim Bang
thi xa Phu Ly
tinh Ha Nam
SOCIALIST
REPUBLIC
OF VIETNAM

Le Thi Cong Nhan
Prison camp 5
phan trai 4
Yen Dinh
Thanh Hoa
SOCIALIST
REPUBLIC OF
VIETNAM

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UZBEKISTAN: HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS JAILED

Alisher Karamatov, aged 41, and **Azam Farmonov**, aged 30, are prisoners of conscience, detained on 29 April 2006 as they defended the rights of local farmers who had accused district farming officials of extortion and corruption. The two human rights defenders were allegedly tortured, charged with extortion and subjected to an unfair trial where they were denied adequate legal representation.

The two men are regional heads of the independent Human Rights Society of Uzbekistan. They said that after they started investigating the farmers' allegations and confronted local officials with their findings, some of the farmers were coerced, including through physical intimidation, into claiming that Farmonov and Karamatov had pressured farmers to accuse the local officials of wrongdoing.

Authorities gave no prior notice of the start of the men's trial in June 2006, and their legal representative had just four days to prepare the defense. The men were sentenced to nine years' imprisonment for extortion under Article 165 of the Uzbekistan Criminal Code. Amnesty International considers the two men to be prisoners of conscience who were, in truth, jailed on account of their human rights activism.

When Azam Farmonov and Alisher Karamatov were arrested in 2006 they were taken to the pre-trial detention center in the town of Khavast. They were kept incommunicado for at least a week, and they alleged that they were beaten and tortured during that time, including by having a gas mask put over their head and the air supply turned off. They reported being beaten on their legs and heels to force them to sign confessions.

There have been recent serious concerns for the health of Alisher Karamatov, who has been treated for tuberculosis in Sangorodok, a prison hospital facility near Tashkent, since October 2008. He had been subjected to torture, beatings and humiliation by prison guards since 2007 while held at Karshi prison camp and had lost nearly half his body weight. Azam Farmonov continues to be held at Yaslik prison camp.

YOU CAN HELP:

WRITE A LETTER TO THE HEAD OF THE DIRECTORATE OF EXECUTION OF SENTENCES:

- Calling for the immediate and unconditional release of Azam Farmonov and Alisher Karamatov as prisoners of conscience;
- Urging authorities to ensure that Alisher Karamatov receives appropriate medical treatment while he is imprisoned.

MAIL TO:

Head of the Directorate
of Execution of Sentences
Ministry of Internal Affairs
Abdukarim SHODIEV
GUIN MVD Respubliki Uzbekistan
Ferganskoye shosse, 25
Tashkent 700005
UZBEKISTAN

Fax: 011-998-71-191-6835

Salutation: Dear Mr. Shodiev

International airmail postage is \$0.98.

WRITE A LETTER OF SUPPORT TO ALISHER KARAMATOV:

No solidarity messages are possible at this time for Azam Farmonov, but you can send a message for Alisher Karamatov through his wife, Namuna Karamatova. Sample messages:

Our thoughts are with you.

In Uzbek: Siz doim bizning uilarimizda – Сиз
доим бизнинг ўйларимизда

We are thinking of you.

In Uzbek: Biz doim siz hakingizda uilaimiz – Биз
доим сиз хакингизда ўйлаймиз

MAIL TO:

Namuna Karamatova
Sirdarinskaia oblast
g. Yangier, ul. Farkhod
dom 8, kvartira 7
Namune Karamotve
UZBEKISTAN

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MEXICO: WOMEN ASSAULTED BY POLICE

When the women left their homes that May morning in 2006, they never imagined the horrific experience that lay ahead of them. During a police operation in response to protests by a local peasant organization in San Salvador Atenco, more than 45 women were arrested without explanation. Dozens of them were subjected to physical, psychological and sexual violence by the police officers who arrested them.

In the case of one of the women, **Bárbara Italia Méndez**, police officers pulled her hair, beat her, and forced her into a state police vehicle with her shirt pulled over her head. She was made to lie on top of other detainees, and during the journey to the prison, police officers sexually assaulted her repeatedly. Once at the “Santiaguito” prison near Toluca in Mexico State, the prison doctors who examined many of the women failed to document all their physical injuries or to gather evidence of the sexual abuse they had suffered.

More than three years later, these brave survivors are still waiting for justice. None of the officials responsible for their abuse have been held accountable.

Federal authorities had conducted an investigation that resulted in a list of 34 names of police officers who were suspected of being responsible for the abuses, but the federal authorities recently concluded that these individuals should be prosecuted at the state level. Now is the time to push for real justice and ask the Governor of Mexico State not to let this impunity continue.

YOU CAN HELP:

WRITE A LETTER TO THE GOVERNOR:

- Urging him to use the documentation on sexual torture collected by the federal authorities to bring all the perpetrators of these crimes to justice, including senior officials who failed to prevent these human rights violations or to carry out timely investigations;
- Calling on him to ensure that full reparation be made to all the victims.

MAIL TO:

Lic. Enrique Peña Nieto
Gobernador Constitucional del
Estado de México
Lerdo Poniente No. 300, 1er piso,
puerta 216
Palacio del Poder Ejecutivo
Col. Centro, C.P. 50000
Toluca, Estado de México MÉXICO

Fax: 011-52-722-276-0046

E-mail: gob@gem.gob.mx

Salutation: Dear Governor

Airmail postage to Mexico is \$0.79.

WRITE LETTERS OF SUPPORT TO THE WOMEN OF ATENCO:

Please send messages of hope and support to the following **11** women who have made their names and stories public in an effort to hold the authorities accountable for the assaults in Atenco:

Suhelen Gabriela Cuevas Jaramillo	Georgina Edith Rosales Gutiérrez
Claudia Hernández Martínez	Cristina Sánchez Hernández
Norma Aidé Jiménez Osorio	Mariana Selvas Gómez
Bárbara Italia Méndez Moreno	Patricia Torres Linares
Yolanda Muñoz Diosdada	Ana María Velasco Rodríguez
María Patricia Romero Hernández	

A sample message: We hope that impunity ends, and that justice is done. Solidarity and support to you!

Esperamos que se termine la impunidad y que pronto se haga justicia. ¡Abrazos de solidaridad y apoyo!

MAIL TO:

[name of woman]
Centro de Derechos Humanos Miguel
Agustín Pro Juárez A.C.
Serapio Rendón No. 57-b
Col. San Rafael
C.P. 06470
México, DF
MEXICO

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IRAN: TRADE UNION LEADER IMPRISONED

Mansour Ossanlu, a trade union activist and human rights defender, is no stranger to prisons. He has long been persecuted by authorities because of his legitimate trade union activities, and he has spent several periods in prison as a result. Amnesty International considers him to be a prisoner of conscience and is calling for his immediate and unconditional release.

As head of the Union of Workers of the Tehran and Suburbs Bus Company, Mansour Ossanlu has struggled to build a strong and independent trade union movement in Iran capable of defending the human rights of workers against discriminatory laws and practices. His most recent arrest came in July 2007, and he is now serving a five-year prison sentence for “acts against national security” and “propaganda against the system.” The charges were apparently based on his contacts with international organizations such as the International Transport Workers Federation.

Mansour Ossanlu’s health has deteriorated in prison, and he is in very poor condition. He is held in Raja’i Shahr prison in Karaj, which houses violent criminals who have intimidated and abused him. Authorities have denied him permission to leave the prison for treatment for pre-existing medical problems and new ones that have arisen due to the lack of proper medical care. He was denied treatment by the case judge, despite a referral by the prison doctor following his fourth medical examination.

An outpouring of international support for his case is especially needed at this time.

YOU CAN HELP:

WRITE A LETTER TO THE HEAD OF THE JUDICIARY:

- Calling on him to immediately and unconditionally release Mansour Ossanlu, as he is a prisoner of conscience detained solely for the peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression and association;
- Calling on him to ensure that Mansour Ossanlu has full and immediate access to the medical treatments that he requires, including at specialist medical facilities outside the prison, if necessary;
- Urging him to fully investigate reports that Mansour Ossanlu was beaten and maltreated during his arrest, and bring to justice those found responsible for the abuses.

MAIL TO:

His Excellency
Ayatollah Sadeqh Larijani
Howzeh Riyasat-e Qoveh Qazaiyeh
(Office of the Head of the Judiciary)
Pasteur St.
Vali Asr Ave.
south of Serah-e Jomhouri,
Tehran 1316814737
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

Email: info@dadiran.ir
(Subject line: FAO Ayatollah Larijani)

Salutation: Your Excellency

International airmail postage is \$0.98.

WRITE A LETTER OF SUPPORT TO MANSOUR OSSANLU:

Please send a message of hope and support to Mansour Ossanlu. A sample message:

“Thinking of you and your family at this time.”

In Persian:

می‌تسه امش دای هب!

(We are thinking of you)

MAIL TO:

Mansour Ossanlu
First floor, Number 343
Shahid Ali Akbar Amiri Alley
Western Water Barrier Crossroads
(Maseyl-e Bakhtar Crossroads)
(Janbazan West)
Golbarg West
Tehran
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

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USA: GUANTÁNAMO DETAINEE CLEARED FOR RELEASE, REMAINS DETAINED

Mohammed Mohammed Hassan Odaini remains detained in Guantánamo despite being cleared for release more than four years ago. Mr. Odaini was detained in March 2002, along with several other Yemeni nationals, and sent to the detention camp at the U.S. Naval Base in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. In June 2005, U.S. authorities declared him suitable for release from Guantánamo. Yemeni authorities have stated that they are prepared to take him back, yet he continues to be detained. He has not been interrogated for nearly two years and the reason for his continued detention is unclear. His lawyer has stated “For all [Odaini] knows, he could be there for the rest of his life.”

Mohammed Odaini was born in 1983 in Ta’iz, Yemen. He traveled to Pakistan in 2000 to study Islamic law at Salafi University in Faisalabad. In March 2002, Pakistani police raided a house in which he was having dinner with 14 other Yemeni nationals. All were handed over to U.S. authorities and later transferred to Guantánamo.

Amnesty International is deeply concerned that Mohammed Odaini and many other Yemeni nationals remain detained in Guantánamo without charge or trial, despite having been cleared for release. The United States detention facilities at Guantánamo Bay have become emblematic of the gross human rights abuses perpetrated by the U.S. Government in the name of fighting terrorism. In creating the detention facilities at Guantánamo, the U.S. government sought to hold detainees in a place where neither U.S. nor international law applied. But no one can be held outside of the law. All detainees held at Guantánamo must either be charged with crimes and given fair trials, or be released.

YOU CAN HELP:

WRITE A LETTER TO THE ADMIRAL:

- Requesting that he clarify why Mohammed Mohammed Hassan Odaini and the other Yemenis cleared for release have not yet been returned to Yemen; (Be sure to include Mohammed Hassan Odaini's detainee number in your letter: ISN-681.)
- Calling for the release of Odaini and all those held in Guantánamo unless they are charged and tried in accordance with international standards of fairness;
- Urging him to push for the closure of the detention facility at Guantánamo Bay.

MAIL TO:

Rear Admiral Tom Copeman
Commander
Joint Task Force Guantánamo
Department of Defense
Joint Task Force Guantánamo
Guantánamo Bay
Cuba
APO AE 09360

Fax: 1-305-437-1241

Salutation: Dear Admiral

Postage: \$0.44

WRITE A LETTER OF SUPPORT TO MOHAMMED ODAINI:

Please send a message of hope and support to Mohammed Odaini. A sample message:

“We are thinking of you. You are not forgotten.”

MAIL TO:

Mohammed Mohammed Hassan Odaini
Detainee ISN-681
Camp Delta
US Naval Base at Guantánamo Bay
Washington, DC 20355

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MYANMAR (BURMA):

NOBEL PRIZE WINNER ONE OF THOUSANDS JAILED

The military rulers of Myanmar have jailed thousands of people in their continuing efforts to crush all dissenting views. Most prominent of those detained is **Aung San Suu Kyi**, the Nobel Peace Prize laureate who has been the beacon of hope and change for two decades in Myanmar, the Southeast Asian nation formerly known as Burma.

Aung San Suu Kyi co-founded the National League for Democracy (NLD), a pro-democracy political party that sought to counter the military junta that had reigned over Myanmar since 1962. In 1990, the NLD won almost 80% of the parliamentary seats in a general election. Surprised at the landslide victory, the military junta refused to transfer power to Aung San Suu Kyi and the NLD, and jailed scores of political activists. Aung San Suu Kyi has spent 14 of the last 20 years under some form of detention. She was recently sentenced to 18 more months of house arrest.

Authorities in Myanmar have justified the imprisonment of thousands of students, politicians, doctors, lawyers, housewives, farmers and others on the basis that they were seeking to cause “unrest.” Such arrests have been made possible by laws that allow an excessively wide interpretation of what constitutes a threat to security.

Amnesty International seeks the immediate and unconditional release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and all prisoners of conscience in Myanmar.

YOU CAN HELP:

WRITE A LETTER TO THE GENERAL:

- Calling on him to bring about the immediate and unconditional release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and all prisoners of conscience in Myanmar;
- Urging him to stop the violent repression of people for simply attempting to peacefully exercise their right to freedom of expression.

MAIL TO:

Senior General Than Shwe
Chairman
State Peace and Development Council
c/o Ministry of Defense
Naypyitaw
UNION OF MYANMAR

Salutation: Dear General

International airmail postage is \$0.98.

WRITE A LETTER OF SUPPORT TO AUNG SAN SUU KYI:

Please send a message of hope and support to Aung San Suu Kyi. A sample message:

“Greetings from [name of town]. You are in our thoughts and hopes for the future.”

Because mail cannot be sent directly to her, please send your cards via the Myanmar Embassy with a note asking them to pass your message to Suu Kyi.

Even if the authorities fail to honor that request, the letters will be a clear demonstration of the international support for Aung San Suu Kyi.

MAIL TO:

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi
c/o Embassy of the Union of Myanmar
2300 S Street NW
Washington, DC 20008

Fax: 1 202 332 4351

Email: info@mewashingtondc.com

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WRITE FOR RIGHTS

GLOBAL WRITE-A-THON 2009

NEPAL: WOMEN'S RIGHTS ACTIVIST THREATENED

Human rights defender **Rita Mahato** has been threatened with death, rape and kidnapping as a result of her work helping women in Nepal who have suffered acts of violence. She is a health adviser at the Women's Rehabilitation Center (WOREC), which has been attacked by men from the village who object to WOREC's work. The police have failed to provide Rita Mahato with protection or to investigate the threats, and she fears for her life.

Rita Mahato documents cases of violence against women during her work at WOREC in Bastipur Village Development Committee, a village in Siraha district. She plays a vital role in ensuring that cases are officially registered, as the police are often reluctant to do so.

In June 2007, between 60 and 70 men arrived at the WOREC offices, threatening Rita Mahato and other staff with rape and death and insisting that they leave the village within five days. The same month, around 20 people threw bricks at the WOREC office. When staff went outside to confront the group, bricks were thrown at them for about two hours, and then the attackers ran away. Despite reporting these incidents to the police and requesting protection, no action was taken.

Rita Mahato continues to receive threats and to face discrimination in her community as a result of her work for WOREC. She has been told that a woman who is not educated should not be doing a man's job, and that men can force women to go back to where they belong. She feels threatened, and she fears she may be killed. Yet, she continues her crucial work defending the human rights of women.

YOU CAN HELP:

WRITE A LETTER TO THE INSPECTOR GENERAL OF POLICE:

- Calling on him to take all possible measures to ensure the protection and safety of Rita Mahato;
- Urging the authorities to develop a national plan of action to implement the UN Human Rights Defender Declaration enabling human rights activists to carry out their legitimate work without fear of reprisals.

MAIL TO:

Inspector General of Police
Ramesh Chand Thakuri
Police Headquarters
GPO Box 407
Naxal, Kathmandu
NEPAL

Fax: 011-977-1-4-415-593

Email: info@nepalpolice.gov.np

Salutation: Dear Inspector General

International airmail postage is \$0.98.

WRITE A LETTER OF SUPPORT TO RITA MAHATO:

Please send a message of hope and support to Rita Mahato. A sample message:

I am writing to express my solidarity with you and your colleagues at WOREC. I wish you strength and hope in your courageous attempts to defend women in Nepal who have suffered acts of violence. We are writing to the Police Headquarters urging them to ensure your safety and to develop a national plan of action to enable human rights defenders to carry out their legitimate work without fear of reprisals.

MAIL TO:

WOREC
PO Box 13233
Balkumari, Lalitpur
NEPAL

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ETHIOPIA: POLITICAL LEADER JAILED FOR LIFE

Birtukan Mideksa, an opposition party leader, is serving a life sentence in Kaliti Prison in Addis Ababa. Amnesty International considers her a prisoner of conscience, imprisoned for peacefully exercising her right to freedom of expression and association.

Birtukan Mideksa was previously arrested in November 2005 after the Coalition for Unity and Democracy party, of which she was a leader, disputed the results of local and parliamentary elections. Post-election demonstrations turned violent -- security forces shot dead 187 people and wounded 765 others, while at least six police officers were also killed. Birtukan Mideksa was charged with treason among other charges, convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment. Local elders working with detainees negotiated a process which led to a pardon by Ethiopian authorities. Birtukan Mideksa and others were released in June 2007 after serving more than 18 months in prison. The exact terms of the pardon remain unclear.

In November 2008 Birtukan Mideksa spoke at a public meeting in Sweden about her pardon and the process that led to her release. When she returned to Ethiopia, authorities asked her to retract her statement. She refused and was re-arrested in December 2008, when the Ministry of Justice revoked her pardon and re-imposed her life sentence. As a result of a complaint she filed against the prison, Birtukan Mideksa has been allowed more regular visits with her immediate family, including her mother and her four-year-old daughter. However, she has reportedly had only intermittent access to legal representation to date.

YOU CAN HELP:

WRITE A LETTER TO THE U.S. SECRETARY OF STATE:

- Urging her to express to Ethiopian authorities her concern about the life sentence re-imposed on Birtukan Mideksa following her re-arrest in Dec. 2008;
- Urging her to use all diplomatic means to strongly encourage the government of Ethiopia to immediately and unconditionally release Birtukan Mideksa.

MAIL TO:

The Honorable Hillary Clinton
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Salutation: Dear Madam Secretary

Postage: \$0.44

WRITE A LETTER OF SUPPORT TO BIRTUKAN MIDEKSA:

Please send a message of hope and support to Birtukan Mideksa. A sample message:

Greetings from [name of your town]. We are thinking of you and send you and your family our best regards.

MAIL TO:

Birtukan Mideksa
c/o Ethiopian Women for Peace and
Development
P.O. Box 1318
Wheaton, MD 20915

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EGYPT: NOVELIST ILLEGALLY DETAINED

Musaad Suliman Hassan Hussein, known by his pen name **Musaad Abu Fagr**, is a novelist and human rights defender in Egypt. He has been in administrative detention, by order of the Minister of Interior, since 15 February 2008, despite obtaining several court orders for his release, most recently in September 2009.

Musaad Abu Fagr was arrested on 26 December 2007 following demonstrations in Sinai against government plans to demolish thousands of homes near the border with the Gaza Strip. The demonstrations were led by a movement founded by Musaad Abu Fagr and other political activists in Sinai, Wedna Na'ish (We Want to Live). He was accused of "inciting others to protest," "resisting the authorities," and "assaulting public officers during the exercise of their duties." During the July and December 2007 demonstrations, several thousand protesters clashed with the security forces.

On 15 February 2008, the Ismailia Appeals Court ordered his release. However, using its powers under the state of emergency that has been in force in Egypt virtually uninterrupted since 1967, the Ministry of Interior issued an administrative order to detain him in spite of the court decision. His lawyers lodged a complaint with the Supreme (Emergency) State Security Court, which ordered that he be released. The Ministry of Interior appealed. On 12 May 2008, another court confirmed the release order. However, Interior authorities issued Musaad Abu Fagr with yet another administrative detention order.

As a result of unsanitary conditions, Musaad Abu Fagr developed an abscess on his foot in Borg al-Arab prison, where he was held for a year. The prison authorities provided no medical treatment but a fellow inmate, a doctor, performed the surgery without anesthetic. He recovered from this ordeal thanks to his family and lawyer, who brought him medication to prevent infection.

Musaad Abu Fagr continues to be held, more than 18 months after the courts first ordered he be released. Amnesty International considers him to be a prisoner of conscience, detained for the peaceful expression of his views.

YOU CAN HELP:

WRITE A LETTER TO THE MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR:

- Urging the immediate and unconditional release of Musaad Abu Fagr, a prisoner of conscience, detained for the peaceful expression of his views.

MAIL TO:

His Excellency
Habib Ibrahim El Adly
Minister of the Interior
Ministry of the Interior
25 Al-Sheikh Rihan Street
Bab al-Louk
Cairo
EGYPT

Fax: 011-20-22-796-0682

Email: moi@idsc.gov.eg

Salutation: Dear Minister

International airmail postage is \$0.98.

WRITE A LETTER OF SUPPORT TO MUSAAD ABU FAGR:

Please send a message of hope and support to Musaad Abu Fagr. A sample message:

I am writing to express my solidarity with you and your family. I wish you strength and patience in your attempts to recover your freedom, and hope you will be free soon. We are calling on the Minister of the Interior to release you.

MAIL TO:

Musaad Abu Fagr
c/o Hisham Mubarak Law Center
1 Souk El-Tewafikiah Street (floor 5)
11111, Cairo
EGYPT

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