



SAUDI ARABIA:

ACTIVISTS DEFIANT IN THE FACE OF SUPPRESSION

Amnesty International activists demonstrate in front of the Saudi Arabian embassy in Oslo, Norway. The activists were taking part in a global protest against the killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi inside the Saudi consulate in Istanbul.



Frida Marie Grande/Amnesty Norway

Saudi Arabia's deplorable human rights record is nothing new. Oppression of Shia communities, cracking down on freedom of speech, upholding the death penalty—the list goes on. But in recent years, and with the appointment of Mohammed bin Salman as the Kingdom's Crown Prince, a new wave of human rights violations has taken shape, including imprisoning women who fought for the right to drive, creating a humanitarian crisis in Yemen, and killing journalist Jamal Khashoggi. Amnesty campaigners Farrah Khan, Jackie Hansen, and Justin Mohammed report on the Kingdom's continuing human rights abuses.

The murder of Jamal Khashoggi in October 2018 made the headlines for months and left those closest to him at

a loss for answers about his death. The murder further exposed the Saudi regime's long list of human rights violations. It also tested the boundaries of political alignment. US President Donald Trump responded with laudatory comments about Mohammed bin Salman, Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince. Germany, Denmark, and Finland suspended arms sales to the Kingdom, and Canada imposed lukewarm sanctions on the individuals suspected of being involved in Khashoggi's murder.

The facts of Saudi Arabia's actions are bleak, and accountability absent. But rights defenders are far from defeated, and we're witnessing acts of solidarity that fuel our hope that change will come.

Following Khashoggi's murder, prominent journalists demanded #JusticeForJamal. Amnesty International launched a global petition urging UN Secretary-General António Guterres to conduct an independent investigation into Khashoggi's death. Over 170,000 individuals—including more than 18,000 in Canada—added their names to the petition.

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THORNBURY GROUP MEMBERS CELEBRATE 35TH ANNIVERSARY

Thornbury Group 82 (pictured) recently marked its 35th year. The group was accredited in 1983, and since that time, their work has involved a spectrum of activities including working with local schools, public demonstrations, Write for Rights, films festivals and so much more. The group has also seen and experienced first hand the movement expand beyond political rights and into new areas of work. We wish the group many more amazing years!



AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL'S VISION AND MISSION

Amnesty International's vision is of a world in which every person enjoys all of the human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments. In pursuit of this vision, Amnesty International's mission is to undertake research and action focused on preventing and ending grave abuses of these rights.

RECEIVING ACTIVIST MAGAZINE

To receive Activist magazine, phone **1-800-AMNESTY (1-800-266-3789)** and confirm you are a supporter. Published in print three times a year, Activist is free to all Amnesty supporters who request it. Change of address or problems receiving Activist? Contact Sue McNamara at our National Office by email at smcnamara@amnesty.ca

BRANCH FINANCIAL UPDATE

Fundraised revenue for 2018 amounted to \$14.382 million, slightly less than the amount of \$14.486 million which had been targeted in the budget for the year, resulting in a shortfall from budget for fundraised revenue of \$104 thousand. Income from other sources amounted to \$71 thousand, resulting in total revenue for the year of \$14.453 million.

Expenditures for the same period amounted to \$14.263 million, an amount which is significantly less than the budgeted amount of \$14.682 million. Due to efficiencies and realized savings, there were savings in 2018 with respect to a number of expenditure categories, and the Branch finished the year in a strong position financially.

Table of Revenue & Expenditure (in 000s of dollars)

	Actual to December 31	Budget to December 31
Revenues		
Fundraised	14,382	14,486
Other	71	65
Subtotal	14,453	14,551
Expenditures	14,263	14,682
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	190	(131)

There was a net surplus from operations for the year of \$190 thousand as compared to the budgeted net deficit of \$131 thousand. Trends in the 2018 budget have been taken into account in the course of establishing budgetary levels for 2019. It is important to note that the figures above are preliminary, and that there may be changes as a result of the external audit of the accounts which is scheduled to take place in March of 2019.

APRIL 2019
Published by Amnesty International
Canadian Section (ES)

EDITOR: David Griffiths
(dgriffiths@amnesty.ca)

Activist is the result of the collaborative efforts of numerous people. Many thanks to everyone who helped with this issue.

NEXT PRINT ISSUE

The next issue will be mailed by August 15, 2019. The deadline to submit content for that issue is June 27, 2019.

Canada Post—Canadian Publications Mail Product Sales Agreement 40065443

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SAUDI ARABIA: ACTIVISTS DEFIANT IN THE FACE OF SUPPRESSION

(cover story continued)

Activists also got creative by renaming the streets outside Saudi embassies in London, Oslo, and Istanbul to reflect the journalist's name, and in Ottawa activists surrounded the embassy with signs reading "Journalists: Proceed with Caution". Following this, in January 2019, the UN announced it would begin an independent investigation into the journalist's murder, heeding the demands of so many who spoke out seeking justice.

OUTCRY OVER JAILED WOMEN'S RIGHTS ACTIVISTS

When Loujain al-Hathloul and other women's rights activists were detained by Saudi authorities in May 2018 for campaigning for the right for women to drive, there was great hope they would be released after the Kingdom lifted the ban on women driving the following month. But they were not released, and even more activists were soon arrested. Despite a global outcry, today the activists remain in jail without charge.

In response, Loujain's friends and colleagues formed a grassroots group, *Friends of Loujain*, and organized demonstrations and a public campaign to pressure Saudi authorities to release the activists. Recently, they have been joined by Loujain's siblings, who broke their silence despite risks to their own safety, and published op-eds for the New York Times and CNN appealing to Saudi authorities to release their sister. In solidarity, tens of thousands of Amnesty supporters have taken action, calling for the release of Loujain and the other activists, and Amnesty is calling for an independent investigation into torture allegations of the detainees that have come to our attention. We won't back down.

PROTESTS AGAINST CANADA'S SAUDI ARMS DEAL

Amid human rights concerns in Saudi Arabia and the ongoing conflict in Yemen, Canada maintains its



© Doaa Jamal

Left: Activists in Ottawa demonstrated outside the embassy of Saudi Arabia in November, demanding answers about the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi. **Above:** Friends of jailed Saudi Arabian human rights defender Loujain al-Hathloul call on Saudi authorities to release Loujain and other women human rights defenders.

\$15 billion arms deal with the Kingdom. Addressing this agreement, Prime Minister Trudeau said in December that his government was trying to "see if there is a way" to end Canada's export of Light Armoured Vehicles (LAVs) to the Kingdom. People in Canada, however, were not content to wait and instead they made their voices heard.

On December 22, protestors picketed at a port in Saint John, New Brunswick, from where LAVs were to be loaded onto a Saudi-flagged ship. In the fog and rain, the protestors lobbied longshore workers not to load the cargo due to concerns about how the LAVs will be used by Saudi Arabia. Many workers refused to cross the picket line. The protestors' efforts made national news, increasing public awareness about the LAV deal and sparking a conversation within the International Longshoremen's Association about their participation in these shipments.

In the realm of human rights activism, results are often not immediate, but we will continue to do our part to build community, speak up for change, and remain unapologetically stubborn in our pursuit of justice.

TAKE ACTION

- › Urge Canada's Foreign Affairs Minister Chrystia Freeland to stop selling arms to Saudi Arabia at [amnesty.ca/end-saudi-arms-deal](https://www.amnesty.ca/end-saudi-arms-deal)
- › Call on Saudi Arabia's ambassador to Canada to release women's human rights defenders at [amnesty.ca/free-saudi-feminists](https://www.amnesty.ca/free-saudi-feminists)



© Amnesty International Toronto

At a Young Professionals networking event hosted by the Ontario Council for International Cooperation, participants called for justice for beloved Indigenous leader Berta Cáceres, who was murdered in Honduras in 2016.

Activists demonstrated outside Google's offices in Toronto on November 27. They were calling on Google to cease developing Dragonfly, a censored search engine for China.



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On January 19, in Regina, Saskatchewan, activists took part in the city's Women's March. The event was one of thousands around the world. Protestors expressed outrage at gender-based rights violations and demonstrated solidarity with women human rights defenders.

DON'T SEE YOURSELF ON THESE PAGES?

If you attend or organize an Amnesty International event in your community, please share your photographs with other Amnesty members across Canada. Email high-resolution images with captions to members@amnesty.ca.



APPLY NOW FOR 2019 HUMAN RIGHTS COLLEGE, TORONTO, MAY 27-JUNE 2

Are you a young person with a passion for human rights and a desire to develop your leadership skills? Are you committed to kindness and respect? Do you want to learn more about Amnesty International's work? Then the Amnesty International Human Rights College (HRC) is the opportunity for you!

Whether you are new to Amnesty International, or have been involved for as long as you can remember, we encourage you to apply. Participating in the Human Rights College will change your life!

In all, it's a five-day immersion in Amnesty International. First, you will spend three days with like-minded youth aged 15 to 25 from across Canada. That's three days of skills workshops, discussions, activities and hands-on experiences that will enable you to test out your new skills on the spot. You will also be equipped to play an active role in Amnesty's Annual General Meeting (AGM), which immediately follows the Human Rights College, and to take on leadership roles when you return to your school and community.

This all takes place May 27 to June 2, at the University of Toronto, just a few steps from the iconic Toronto City Hall.

All youth are encouraged to apply to participate in the HRC. Applicants will be assessed using criteria that allows for a diversity of regions, ages, genders, cultural backgrounds, and experiences to be represented at the college and AGM.

APPLY NOW! The deadline for submission is March 29, 2019.

If you have any questions regarding the Human Rights College, or would like to receive an application, contact Molly at youth@amnesty.ca

AMNESTY UBC HOSTS REGIONAL YOUTH MEETING FOR THE LOWER MAINLAND

The theme was **Youth, Power, Action!** and it brought together young activists from both secondary and post-secondary schools in British Columbia for a day of action and learning this past January. "Our goal for this regional meeting was to empower the future generation of activists and change-makers. It was inspiring to see such a passionate group of individuals so committed to bringing about positive change in the world."—Adria Lwin, Amnesty International UBC President



In January, Amnesty UBC hosted an event for youth activists in British Columbia.

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Amnesty's next Annual General Meeting is in Toronto in May.



© Eugen Florin Zamfirescu/Amnesty International

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2019: GET READY TO GATHER IN TORONTO THIS SPRING

TORONTO IS hosting the 2019 Amnesty International Canada Annual General Meeting (AGM) from Friday May 31 to Sunday June 2.

The AGM is an opportunity for members and activists to come together and inspire one another, to learn about each other's efforts and campaigns, to share stories and experiences, and to listen and participate in educational workshops, sessions and panels.

The AGM is also Amnesty Canada's highest decision-making body and a place where important governance work happens, including electing Amnesty's Board of Directors and voting on resolutions that guide the nature and substance of Amnesty's work.

Throughout the weekend, you will meet and interact with individuals and groups from across Canada who share your commitment to human rights. You'll leave the AGM with new skills, inspiring stories, and a refreshed sense of hope and determination.

You must be a registered Amnesty International Canada member 30 days before the AGM (May 1) to vote, nominate candidates, stand for election, and move or second resolutions.



© Paul Thompson/Amnesty International

AGMs are opportunities to come together and inspire each other.

FIND OUT MORE

Key AGM dates

- › Applications for subsidized AGM registrations must be received by March 29
- › To vote at the AGM you must be a registered member by May 1
- › Standard AGM registrations must be received by May 20
- › The AGM is from May 31 to June 2

Learn more at amnesty.ca/members

AMNESTY'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS: CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

THERE ARE many exciting ways to support Amnesty Canada. Sitting on the Board of Directors isn't typically the first volunteer opportunity that comes to mind, but we're asking you to consider it. Participating in Amnesty's annual Write-a-thon, signing an online petition, attending a local event, or being a donor are all ways to help defend and promote Human Rights in our country and the rest of the world, but you can also make a valuable contribution by participating in the governance of our organization.

We all want to see Amnesty Canada use its financial and human resources in the best and most efficient ways to effect human rights change in the world. Good governance of the organization is one of the key ways to ensure that this happens.

The Board of Directors oversees the operations and strategic direction of Amnesty Canada. Meetings are held four times per year, including the AGM. Board Members also work with staff and volunteers on a range of committees outside of regular meetings (e.g. AGM Planning Committee, Nominations Committee, Audit and Finance Committee, etc.).

Joining the Board is a big commitment, but it allows you to contribute to the organization in a meaningful way. Before you assume that you don't have the required skills or qualifications, you should know that we build a good board by recruiting members of diverse ages, genders, and professional and educational backgrounds.

There is no "ideal" board member. Some bring a wealth of non-profit volunteer or board experience and others have a primarily corporate background. Sometimes they have been members of Amnesty for

AMNESTY'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS NEEDS YOU

- › You could make a valuable contribution to human rights by joining Amnesty's Board of Directors
- › The Board oversees Amnesty's operations and strategic direction
- › The Board needs a wide range of skills and perspectives to represent Amnesty's membership
- › Board meetings are held four times per year
- › Board Members also work with staff and volunteers on a range of committees
- › At the 2019 AGM, four Directors, Treasurer (one-year term), and a Board Chair will be elected
- › More details at amnesty.ca/nominations

decades and others are just starting their activist journey with us. The Board needs a wide range of skills and perspectives to represent Amnesty Canada's membership and provide balanced oversight to the organization.

Each year, five of the ten board members are elected for a two-year term. At the 2019 AGM in Toronto, we will elect four Directors and a Board Chair. We will also elect a Treasurer for a one-year term.

FIND OUT MORE

- › More details about the positions and the nominations process will be available in March at amnesty.ca/nominations
- › If you would like more information on the process or are considering running for one of the positions, please contact the Nominations Committee at nominations@amnesty.ca. We would love to talk to you!

LET PROTECTING HUMAN RIGHTS BE YOUR LEGACY TO THE WORLD



Join us as a Human Rights Guardian by leaving a gift in your Will to human rights through Amnesty International.

For more information, contact Hala Al-Madi at **613-744-7667 ext 223** or email halmadi@amnesty.ca or visit amnesty.ca/legacy.

MEXICO'S PRESIDENT ORDERS INVESTIGATION INTO MISSING 43 STUDENTS



© RONALDO SCHEMIDT/AFIP/Getty Images

Mexico's President López Obrador (centre) with relatives of 43 missing students. The president has ordered a commission to investigate the 2014 disappearance of the students.

AMID AN ongoing human rights crisis in Mexico, there are signs of hope.

Last July, Mexicans voted overwhelmingly for change, electing Andrés Manuel López Obrador of MORENA, the National Regeneration Movement, to succeed discredited President Enrique Peña Nieto whose Institutional Revolutionary Party has dominated Mexico for much of the past nine decades.

Immediately after taking office in December, the new president announced the creation of an investigative commission to re-examine the case of 43 students from a rural teacher-training college in Ayotzinapa who were taken away by police in September 2014 and never seen again.

The 43 students have come to emblemize an epidemic of tens of thousands of disappearances fuelled by collusion on the part of authorities and failure to search for the missing.

For four years, Amnesty Canada supporters have campaigned in support of the families of the 43 and other beleaguered groups of families of the disappeared. In November 2018, an Amnesty delegation met with Mexico's Ambassador in Ottawa and delivered thousands of your messages of concern demanding action.

President López Obrador has directed his government to respond. The new Ayotzinapa investigative commission began operations in January. "I assure you there won't be impunity in this sad and painful case," said the president. A month later, his government announced the launch of a program to search for 40,000 people reported disappeared.

There have been other signs of hope.

Shortly after taking office, Mexico's Attorney General ordered the release of Enrique Guerrero, a university

student who had been arbitrarily detained with other activists and tortured by federal police in 2013, then jailed without trial for the next five years. Enrique's case was featured in Amnesty's report **False Suspicions**, which exposed the extent of arbitrary detention in Mexico—an everyday occurrence that is often the starting point for serious human rights violations such as torture, enforced disappearances and extrajudicial executions. At a press conference after his release, Enrique pledged to continue raising his voice for rights and justice.



"I assure you there won't be impunity in this sad and painful case."

— President López Obrador

Good news like this is cause for celebration. Yet other actions by the new government are cause for concern.

President López Obrador announced a Public Security Plan that includes creation of a National Guard made up of Military Police, drawn from the Army and the Navy, together with Federal Police. Arbitrary detentions, torture, disappearances and even extrajudicial executions by security forces skyrocketed after 2006 when then-President Felipe Calderón deployed the Army and Navy on Mexico's streets to combat organized crime. Such horrors must end for hopes of real change to become reality in Mexico.

AMNESTY TO CHALLENGE SAFE THIRD COUNTRY AGREEMENT IN FEDERAL COURT



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Refugee claimants in Champlain, New York, walk towards the U.S.-Canada border. The Safe Third Country Agreement requires refugee claimants to request refugee protection in the first safe country they arrive in. Amnesty International is going to court to argue that the United States is not safe for many refugees.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL Canada, along with the Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR) and the Canadian Council of Churches, is back in Federal Court to challenge the Canada-US Safe Third Country Agreement (STCA). If you think you have heard about this court case before, it's probably because you have: in 2007, Amnesty International and the CCR challenged the agreement and won in Federal Court, but were unsuccessful at the Federal Court of Appeal (largely on procedural and jurisdictional grounds).

WHAT IS THE SAFE THIRD COUNTRY AGREEMENT?

The STCA is a legal agreement between Canada and the United States, under which refugee claimants are required to request refugee protection in the first country they arrive in, subject to some exceptions. It is premised on the idea that the United States is safe for refugee claimants, and that they will have access to a fair process for determining their claims there. A refugee claimant travelling from the United States who crosses at a recognized land border crossing would be turned back to make the claim in the United States, but the agreement does not apply between border posts. As such, people coming from the United States who wish to claim refugee protection in Canada sometimes cross at unofficial border crossings, often at risk to their own personal safety.

WHY IS AMNESTY BACK IN COURT?

The United States is not safe for many refugees, and Canada cannot rely on its refugee status determination system to protect the rights of refugees. First, refugee

claimants are at risk of being deported if they don't make their claims within one year. Second, refugee claimants can be prosecuted, convicted and imprisoned for entering the United States without authorization, preventing access to the refugee determination system. Third, the United States takes a very narrow interpretation of gender-based persecution, unduly preventing many refugee claimants from accessing protection. These are a handful of issues that Amnesty will highlight at the Federal Court, arguing that they are inconsistent with the Refugee Convention and the Canadian *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

However, this time around, there is an important difference: we are joined by a courageous family of refugee claimants from El Salvador. These refugee claimants face the human rights violations that can result from the operation of the STCA, should they be returned to the United States to make their claims.

TAKE ACTION

- Go to amnesty.ca/rescind_sfca and call on Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Ahmed Hussen to rescind the Safe Third Country Agreement immediately.
- If you're in the Toronto area, attend the court hearing at the Federal Court of Canada at 180 Queen St. W, Toronto ON M5V 3L6. Follow us on Twitter [@AmnestyNow](https://twitter.com/AmnestyNow) to be notified of the date.



NEVSUN CASE: SUPREME COURT HEARS EVIDENCE ON ERITREA HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES

ON JANUARY 23, the Supreme Court of Canada heard arguments in a potentially game-changing lawsuit for Canada’s mining sector and its overseas victims.

In 2014, three Eritrean refugees filed a civil lawsuit against Vancouver-based mining company Nevsun Resources for human rights abuses including the use of torture, forced labour, slavery and crimes against humanity at its Eritrean copper-zinc mine.

Nevsun failed to convince two lower courts in BC to throw out the case against it, eventually appealing to Canada’s Supreme Court to dismiss the case. This marks the first time that a corporate accountability case of this kind has made it to the Supreme Court of Canada.

The Supreme Court must decide if the plaintiffs should be allowed to sue in Canada for the breach of customary international law (these are laws that prohibit, for example, the use of torture, forced labour or slavery) and whether the ‘act of state’ doctrine should apply (the ‘act of state’ doctrine prevents courts from reviewing the official acts of a foreign government on its own territory).

Nevsun argues that corporations should not be held accountable for human rights abuses under customary international law and that other accountability mechanisms exist. Lawyers for the company argued that the State of Eritrea should be sued by the plaintiffs instead.

It’s important to remember that the BC Supreme Court ruled in 2016 that there was a real risk of an unfair trial if the plaintiffs were to file their claims in Eritrea and they would likely face the risk of punishment or jail if they returned to Eritrea.

Despite being called to do so by various UN bodies, Canada has failed to implement mechanisms to hold companies responsible for respecting human rights at overseas operations and reporting on their progress. The

Amnesty supporters in Vancouver call on Nevsun Resources to stop profiting from forced labour. Three Eritrean refugees have filed a lawsuit against Nevsun for human rights abuses including the use of torture and forced labour at its Eritrean copper-zinc mine.

much-touted Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise, announced by the Trudeau government in January 2018, was meant to give the independent office the tools required to thoroughly investigate allegations against Canadian companies and recommend penalties. More than one year on, Canada’s foot-dragging has turned the much celebrated announcement of the Ombudsperson into an international embarrassment.

“This marks the first time that a corporate accountability case of this kind has made it to the Supreme Court of Canada.”

The right to remedy is a cornerstone of international human rights law. Those seeking justice for corporate abuses overseas have few available resources: taking their claims to court in Canada, while fraught with significant challenges, is currently their only viable option.

The question now is whether Canada’s Supreme Court will grant Eritrean refugees, who worked as forced labourers at Nevsun’s Bisha mine, the right to seek remedy in Canada. The Supreme Court will render its decision in the next six months.

FIND OUT MORE

For more information on the Nevsun Resources case, please go to [amnesty.ca/nevsun-case](https://www.amnesty.ca/nevsun-case)

TRIPADVISOR MUST PULL OUT OF ILLEGAL SETTLEMENTS

FOR MONTHS, Israeli army bulldozers have rolled in and out of Khan al-Ahmar, a small Bedouin village in the occupied West Bank. So far, the bulldozers have just been levelling the ground. But at some point they will demolish dozens of homes, as well as the school, clinic and mosque which serve this community.

Just two kilometres away is the Israeli settlement of Kfar Adumim, a thriving hub for tourism thanks to its commanding views over the Judean desert and the Jordan Valley. Tour companies and individuals offering accommodation in Kfar Adumim are prospering partly thanks to promotion by online booking companies such as Airbnb, Booking.com, Expedia and TripAdvisor.

Settlements in occupied territories are illegal under international law—their creation amounts to a war crime. They should not be tourist destinations.

Digital tourism companies know that Israeli settlements have a negative impact on a vast number of human rights of the Palestinian population. This has been extensively documented by Amnesty International, the United Nations, and many other organizations. Any basic risk assessment by the companies would reveal that any business activity in or with settlements would unavoidably contribute to sustaining human rights violations, as well as a regime that is inherently discriminatory and abusive of the human rights of Palestinians.

In doing business with settlements, all four companies are contributing to, and profiting from, the development, maintenance and expansion of illegal settlements, which amount to war crimes under international criminal law. The companies' promotion of Israeli settlements in occupied Palestinian territories as

A Palestinian boy looks on as Israeli authorities demolish a school site in a village south of the West Bank city of Hebron. A new Amnesty report documents how tourism companies are contributing to human rights violations in occupied Palestinian territories.

a tourist destination also has the effect of “normalizing” and legitimizing to the public what is recognized under international law as an illegal situation.

To comply with their responsibilities to uphold international humanitarian law and respect human rights, Airbnb, Booking.com, Expedia and TripAdvisor must stop listing tourist accommodation, activities and attractions in settlements or run by settlers in the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem.

A new Amnesty report, *Destination: Occupation*, documents the ways in which digital tourism companies contribute to violations of human rights, and provides recommendations to governments and companies.

TAKE ACTION

Join Amnesty's campaign to get TripAdvisor to stop listing in Israeli settlements. TripAdvisor promotes more listings in more settlements than any other digital tourism company (with the exception of Airbnb, which pledged in November 2018 to remove most of its listings in settlements):

- › Visit [amnesty.ca/TripAdvisor](https://www.amnesty.ca/TripAdvisor) to sign the TripAdvisor petition, watch the video, download our report, and more.
- › To stay up to date on this campaign, subscribe now to our corporate action network e-newsletter here at [amnesty.ca/BHR-subscribe](https://www.amnesty.ca/BHR-subscribe)

Activists across Canada marked International Women's Day on March 8 by taking to social media to demonstrate solidarity with Indigenous women who have survived forced and coerced sterilizations.

CANADA: STOP STERILIZING INDIGENOUS WOMEN WITHOUT CONSENT

ACTIVISTS ACROSS Canada marked International Women's Day on March 8 by taking to social media to shine a light on a form of torture impacting Indigenous women in Canada, and to demonstrate solidarity with torture survivors.

Indigenous women have reported having a tubal ligation—a permanent form of birth control—without providing their free, full, and informed consent for the surgery. As recently as last year, Indigenous women from across Canada have reported being sterilized without their consent.

In December, the UN Committee Against Torture affirmed that sterilizing women without their consent amounts to torture. Amnesty International Canada's gender rights campaigner Jackie Hansen said, "Coerced or forced sterilization meets the legal definition of torture because it is committed by state officials, because it is intentional, because it causes serious harm, and because it is rooted in discrimination."

When asked why Indigenous women in Canada are still being subjected to this form of torture, Alisa Lombard of Maurice Law, who is leading a proposed class action lawsuit representing Indigenous women in Saskatchewan who were sterilized without their consent, said, "Systemic and institutional racism and discrimination negatively affect the quality of health care available to Indigenous Peoples. No concrete and effective measures have been taken by the institutions delivering reproductive health care to Indigenous women to prevent, protect against and remedy this terrible practice."

Little is known about how rampant this form of torture is across Canada. But with each successive

wave of media coverage since the issue made headlines last fall, more and more Indigenous women have contacted Maurice Law to disclose that they had been sterilized without consent.

Alongside the Native Women's Association of Canada, Action Canada for Sexual Health and Rights, and Inter Pares, Amnesty International is echoing the calls from the UN Committee on Torture for Canada to fully investigate sterilization of Indigenous women without their consent; to ensure this form of torture is ended; and to provide justice to survivors and their families.

The federal government should coordinate a comprehensive national response involving provinces, territories, medical bodies, and civil society. The federal government has affirmed that this heinous practice must stop, but continues to do little to prioritize urgent actions to investigate and end the practice.

The survivors Maurice Law represents have experienced profound trauma; many have felt alone for a very long time in their struggle for justice. Alisa Lombard appealed to Amnesty supporters to show "support, kindness, empathy, and understanding" to women who have been sterilized without their consent. And so, to mark International Women's Day, activists blanketed survivors in solidarity, reaching out on social media to let them know that they are not alone in their journey.

TAKE ACTION

Learn more and send a solidarity message to survivors at amnesty.ca/defend-consent



Amnesty International

AMNESTY VOLUNTEERS AND A DECADE-LONG STRUGGLE FOR POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY

Left to right: Amnesty volunteer researchers Stan Jolly and Larry Hay, and Tyendinaga research participants Dan Doreen, Alberta Doreen and Amzy Doreen, who provided crucial affidavits and ongoing support for Amnesty's research. In the background is the Thurlo Aggregates Quarry, one of the flashpoints for the Indigenous land rights struggle at Tyendinaga.

In 2007 and 2008, police responded excessively to protests at the Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory in Eastern Ontario. Stan Jolly and Larry Hay, who led Amnesty Canada's research into the police's overreaction, look back at events.

In May 2008, Amnesty Canada launched a research project into how the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) responded to Indigenous land rights occupations and protests at the Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory.

As volunteer researchers, we gathered more than 30 sworn affidavits from Tyendinaga community members describing an excessive and dangerous over-response by the police. We then faced a major challenge: How could Amnesty fairly and credibly assess these allegations when repeated requests for interviews with OPP leadership and personnel were denied?

Amnesty turned to Ontario's freedom of information (FOI) system. During an eight-year period from 2008 to 2016, we worked with articling students at Amnesty's Ottawa office to submit 86 FOI access requests for OPP records such as police notes and video recordings from the various incidents in question. After most of these requests were rejected, Amnesty followed up with 54 different appeals, participated in 20 different mediation efforts through the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner (IPC), and made 16 representations to IPC adjudicators.

Despite our efforts, many requested files were never released or else were heavily redacted. We were told that other files were missing.

Nevertheless, Amnesty achieved some successes. We were able to obtain video recordings from police cells

that confirmed the accounts of five Mohawk activists who had their wrists tied with plastic restraints while locked in cells for up to 13 hours. "Zip ties" are designed to painfully tighten if the prisoner pulls on them and are only intended for temporary use by the police.

Why does the OPP's misconduct at Tyendinaga and its subsequent efforts to thwart the disclosure of relevant records matter ten years later? The answer boils down to the vital importance of police accountability and justice for Indigenous peoples.

At Tyendinaga, the OPP betrayed its own public assurances that it had adopted a "peacekeeping" approach to the policing of Indigenous land rights disputes. Then the OPP and the provincial government ignored and subverted the letter, spirit and intent of Ontario's FOI legislation by responding to Amnesty's FOI access requests with delay, misrepresentation, bad faith and obstruction.

Amnesty's goal is to ensure that these institutions and their employees are held accountable for such actions and discouraged from repeating such unacceptable and, in some instances, unlawful behaviour.

Amnesty's concerns about the OPP response to land occupations and blockades at Tyendinaga, and the years of efforts to obtain OPP records of these events, are explored in a new documentary on APTN at bit.ly/2A1Dsb6

TAKE ACTION

Learn more and take action online at
amnesty.ca/tyendinaga



SOUTH SUDAN: CALL FOR DONG AND AGGREY TO BE FREED

Dong Samuel Luak and Aggrey Ezbon Idri went missing on January 23 and 24, 2017, respectively. Dong Samuel was last seen in Nairobi, Kenya, when he was on his way to board a bus home. Aggrey Ezbon Idri was last seen in the Kilimani neighbourhood of Nairobi. Both Dong Samuel Luak and Aggrey Ezbon Idri were vocal critics of the South Sudanese government.

Both South Sudanese and Kenyan officials denied having them under their custody and did not provide any information of their whereabouts. Amnesty International has confirmed that the two men were taken to a prison facility at the National Security Service headquarters in Juba, South Sudan, on January 25, 2017. They were then removed from this facility on January 27, 2017. Their current fate and whereabouts are unknown.

The enforced disappearance of the two is believed to result from collaboration between Kenyan and South Sudanese security forces.

TAKE ACTION

Please write to the Governments of Kenya and South Sudan:

- › Call on the Governments of Kenya and South Sudan to reveal the whereabouts of Dong Samuel Luak and Aggrey Ezbon Idri and ensure they have access to their families and lawyers of their choosing;
- › Urge the Governments of Kenya and South Sudan to make public the reasons for the continued detention (if they are in custody) of Dong Samuel Luak and Aggrey Idri and to release them without delay;
- › Call on the Kenyan government to conduct an effective, impartial and prompt investigation into the circumstances of the disappearance of the two men and hold those found responsible to account.

WRITE TO:

President of the Republic of South Sudan
Salva Kiir Mayardit
Permanent Mission of the Republic of South Sudan
to the United Nations
336 East 45th Street
5th Floor
New York, NY 10017, USA

President of the Republic of Kenya
H.E. Uhuru Kenyatta
Office of the President
Harambee Avenue
Nairobi, Kenya

SALUTATIONS: Your Excellency

SEND COPIES TO:

His Excellency John Lepi Lanyasunya
High Commissioner
High Commission for the Republic of Kenya
415 Laurier Ave E
Ottawa, ON K1N 6R4

JOIN THE URGENT ACTION NETWORK

When an individual is in immediate danger of a human rights violation, Amnesty International mobilizes a dedicated group of letter-writers—the Urgent Action Network—to take action quickly to protect them. To join the network and receive regular Urgent Actions, send an e-mail to urgentaction@amnesty.ca with “I want to join” in the subject line.

USA: HELP RELEASE VALQUIRIA FROM DETENTION



In March 2018, Valquiria (surname withheld), a 39-year-old woman (US immigration case file no. ###-###-418) and her seven-year-old son, Abel (pseudonym, real name withheld per Valquiria's request), fled Brazil and requested protection at the

US–Mexico border in El Paso, Texas. Valquiria said that she received repeated death threats from drug traffickers who threatened to kill her and her son no matter where they fled to in Brazil. After one night together in detention, on March 17, 2018, US border authorities forcibly separated Valquiria from Abel. On March 27, a US asylum officer found that Valquiria's story was credible, but on September 10, Valquiria's asylum claim was rejected. She began the appeal process, still in immigration detention and separated from her child. Valquiria is currently being held in the El Paso Processing Center in El Paso, Texas, USA. She hasn't seen her son since March 2018.

TAKE ACTION

Please write to the Field Office Director, USA Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE):

- › Call on him to grant Valquiria humanitarian parole immediately as she awaits the decision on her asylum claim appeal;
- › Call on him to ensure psychosocial support is provided for Valquiria and her son to recover from the trauma experienced from their unlawful family separation.

WRITE TO:

Field Office Director Mr. Marc Moore
ICE Enforcement & Removal Operations,
EL Paso Field Office
11541 Montana Ave Suite E
El Paso, TX, 79936, USA

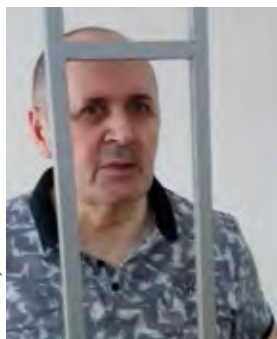
SALUTATION: Dear Mr Moore

EMAIL: Marc.J.Moore@ice.dhs.gov

SEND A COPY TO:

Her Excellency Kelly Craft
Embassy of the United States of America
490 Sussex Dr
Ottawa, ON K1N 1G8

RUSSIA: DEMAND FREEDOM FOR OYUB TITIEV



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Prominent Chechen human rights defender Oyub Titiev, the head of Russian NGO Memorial's office in Grozny, Chechnya, was arrested by police on fabricated drug possession charges on January 9, 2018, and has remained in detention ever since. Since then, over

30 hearings were held in Shali City Court on the merits of his case. Oyub has been repeatedly refused bail, and his detention has been renewed several times. He is a prisoner of conscience who must be immediately and unconditionally released.

In recognition of his human rights work, Oyub Titiev was awarded the Václav Havel Human Rights Prize by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) on October 8, 2018. At the award ceremony, the PACE President said, "This award is a message that we send to all those who work in this region [Chechnya and the Northern Caucasus] to reassert the rule of law and human rights: Carry on—you can rest assured of our support."

TAKE ACTION

Please write to Russia's prosecutor general:

- › Call on him to immediately and unconditionally release Oyub Titiev, and to drop all charges against him, as he is a prisoner of conscience, detained solely in connection with his legitimate human rights work.

WRITE TO:

Prosecutor General of the Russian Federation
Yuriy Chaika
Prosecutor General's Office
ul. B. Dmitrovka, d.15a 125993 Moscow
GSP- 3 Russian Federation

SALUTATION: Dear Prosecutor General

SEND A COPY TO:

His Excellency Alexander Darchiev
Embassy of the Russian Federation
285 Charlotte St
Ottawa, ON K1N 8L5



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WRITE FOR RIGHTS

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Pictured above are Amnesty International supporters in Nigeria taking part in Write for Rights 2018 on December 10, International Human Rights Day.

Every December for the past 16 years, Amnesty supporters around the globe have written millions of letters for those whose basic human rights are being attacked, continuing a long tradition of writing letters to right some of the world's biggest wrongs. And it's not just letters—it's petitions, emails, Tweets, Facebook posts, photos, postcards.

Write for Rights 2018 prompted tens of thousands of people to pick up their pens. The global count of actions taken in December 2018 stands at 5.5 million. In Canada alone, there were more than 271 events and 31,000 letters written.

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