



## Afghanistan: Thank you for supporting Amnesty's crisis response work



Background: © WAKIL KOHSAR/AF/Geity. Inset: © Private

After a long, difficult process, one of the families helped by Amnesty supporters was finally able to leave Afghanistan and start a new life in Europe.

## Thousands of Afghans are at serious risk of Taliban reprisals— your support ensures Amnesty is working to protect those in danger.

“The Taliban are searching for me,” Mahmud, a human rights defender, told Amnesty International researchers following the Taliban takeover of Kabul on August 15. “They found another colleague who was beaten by them. All my staff members are underground.”

Aadila is a journalist who was based in Kabul. She told Amnesty that at first she decided to stay in Afghanistan and continue her work—until the Taliban came to her home one night asking for her. She left the country shortly afterwards.

In the weeks since taking control of Afghanistan, the Taliban have already committed human rights violations—reprisal attacks, restrictions on women, and crackdowns on protests and the media.

Human rights defenders are under attack. Their offices and homes have been raided. Colleagues have been beaten. They are forced into permanent hiding. They live under the constant threat of arrest, torture, or worse.

With your support, Amnesty International was able to evacuate several families who had members working with Amnesty.

The evacuation efforts were complex and involved the work of dozens of people across an international network. Hopes were repeatedly raised and dashed. Seats were secured on planes out of Kabul, but it was then impossible for the families to get into the airport because of the huge crowds and the risk of bomb attacks.

The families next took the long, dangerous journey over land to Pakistan. Finally, they were able to fly out to Europe, arriving tired, relieved, and very grateful for the support and warm welcome.

“In just a matter of a day, my school building turned into a Taliban military base, my hopes shattered, my future uncertain, and the lives of my family members in great danger,” said 14-year-old Khalid (name changed). “I’m grateful for the support of Amnesty. I’m now back to school in Europe. I’d like to become a pilot and fly more people to safety.”

**Thank you for your  
solidarity with the people  
of Afghanistan**

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Germain Rukuki was sentenced to 32 years in prison because of his human rights work.

## Burundi: Germain Rukuki freed, reunited with family

Burundian human rights defender Germain Rukuki has been freed from prison where he was serving an outrageous 32-year sentence for campaigning against torture.

Germain was arrested in 2017 when dozens of security forces came to his home and arrested him. He was later found guilty of sham charges including “rebellion” and “threatening state security” for his association with ACAT-Burundi, an anti-torture NGO. Just weeks after his arrest, his wife, Emelyne, gave birth to their third son, who Germain never met until his release.

After Germain’s release, Emelyne shared her thanks with everyone who campaigned for his release: “From the bottom of my heart, I want to thank you all to have mobilized and made it possible for Germain to reunite with us soon!”

During Amnesty’s Write for Rights campaign in December 2020, supporters from around the world took more than 436,000 actions calling for Germain’s freedom, including nearly 10,000 actions from Canada.

ISAAC LAWRENCE, VURI KAOONOVAVARIPICAVY Images



Nobel Peace Prize winning-journalists Maria Ressa and Dmitry Muratov have courageously held power to account for decades.

## Nobel Peace Prize: Maria Ressa and Dmitry Muratov’s win is a victory for press freedom

On October 8, journalists Maria Ressa and Dmitry Muratov won the 2021 Nobel Peace Prize for their fight for freedom of expression.

Maria Ressa is a global icon for press freedom in the Philippines, and the co-founder of Rappler, an

uncompromising news website. For more than three decades, she has worked tirelessly to expose corruption and abuse of power. She has reported on human rights violations in President Rodrigo Duterte’s so-called war on drugs. She was found guilty of “cyber libel” in June 2020 and could face up to 60 years in prison.

Dmitry Muratov has been a rock for free media in Russia. He co-founded Novaya Gazeta in 1993 and has been its editor ever since. His newspaper produces fearless journalism in the face of Russia’s perilous press environment. He is one of the few who continue to hold power to account despite ongoing attacks and threats.

© Private



Nassima al-Sada and Samar Badawi have been released, but they still face travel bans and other restrictions on their freedom.

## Saudi Arabia: Women human rights defenders Nassima and Samar released

On June 27, 2021, Saudi Arabian women human rights defenders Nassima al-Sada and Samar Badawi were released from prison.

Three years ago, they were arrested and jailed along with other high-profile activists for their peaceful women’s rights activism. Nassima spent over a year in solitary confinement.

Their freedom is proof of the power of collective action. More than 40,000 Amnesty supporters in Canada sent messages to Saudi authorities demanding freedom for the jailed women human rights defenders. Globally, more than 777,000 messages were sent in solidarity. Nassima and Samar still face a five-year travel ban and restrictions on their right to freedom of expression. Amnesty will continue to campaign until they are truly free.

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Amnesty International, 312 Laurier Avenue East, Ottawa ON, K1N 1H9.  
1-800-AMNESTY (1-800-266-3789) FAX: 613-746-2411  
EMAIL: members@amnesty.ca www.amnesty.ca.

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An Amnesty activist protesting against spyware developed by the NSO Group. A ground-breaking investigation into the spyware recently won a prestigious journalism award.

## Pegasus Project wins journalism prize for exposing digital spyware

On October 14, the Pegasus Project was awarded the European Parliament's Daphne Caruana Galizia Prize for Journalism. The Prize is awarded for outstanding journalism that promotes human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, rule of law, and human rights. The prize is a tribute to Daphne Caruana Galizia, a Maltese anti-corruption journalist, who was assassinated in 2017.

The Pegasus Project investigation has exposed how spyware developed by the NSO Group (an Israeli technology company) is being used by repressive governments to silence journalists, attack activists, and crush dissent.

Amnesty International is a partner organization of the Project, which is a collaboration of more than 80 journalists from 17 media organizations in 10 countries. Amnesty provided the technical support, conducting cutting-edge forensic tests on cell phones to identify traces of spyware. For years, Amnesty has warned of the grave dangers to human rights posed by the surveillance industry.

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Maura is a trans woman originally from Nicaragua. Global campaigning helped win her release from US immigration detention.

## USA: Maura is finally free after two years in detention

After a long campaign, Maura, a 41-year-old transgender woman from Nicaragua, was freed in July after spending 800 days in immigration detention in California.

"I am so, so happy!" Maura said after her release. "I still can't believe it. I thought I was alone in this world. I thought it wasn't worth it to keep fighting. And then I realized that there were people around the world, who I didn't even know, very good

people who have been very supportive. They supported me by sending me letters, they gave me moral support. I am very happy for all that, very grateful."

Maura fled to the United States to escape persistent abuse in Nicaragua and live openly as a transgender woman. She lived in the United States as a lawful permanent resident for over 25 years but experienced severe mental health struggles, and after an altercation in the street she was facing deportation to Nicaragua.

© Family of Shafqat and Shagufta



Following their acquittal, Shafqat Emmanuel and Shagufta Kausar were given asylum in Europe.

## Pakistan: Couple acquitted and taken off death row

After a seven-year ordeal on death row, Shafqat Emmanuel and Shagufta Kausar were finally acquitted by a court in Lahore, Pakistan, on June 3.

The couple faced execution for allegedly sending "blasphemous" texts. They always denied these allegations. The texts were from a phone containing a sim

card registered in Shagufta's name, and the couple believe Shagufta's national identity card was misused by someone to obtain the sim card.

The couple's lawyer said that without Amnesty International's campaigning, the charges against Shafqat and Shagufta would likely not have been dropped. The global mobilization of Amnesty supporters was critical in drawing attention to the case.

Their acquittal provoked a strong backlash with threats against the couple and also their lawyer. The couple have since been given asylum in Europe.

# YOU SHINE THE LIGHT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AROUND THE WORLD

Your generous support helps to save lives. Without you, Amnesty's researchers, campaigners, and lawyers would not be able to carry out their critical work. By funding Amnesty's work worldwide, you are ensuring that Amnesty teams are exposing human rights violations wherever they happen and holding those responsible for abuses to account. On these pages we feature just a few of the countries that Amnesty's experts have been focused on in recent months.



## Cuba

**You spoke out for peaceful protestors in Cuba.** Thousands of people took to the streets in July to peacefully protest about the economy, shortages of medicines, the government's response to COVID-19, and restrictions on the rights to freedom of expression. The authorities responded by cracking down, and imprisoning and ill-treating citizens who were simply expressing their views.

## Nicaragua

## Nicaragua

**You called for an end to enforced disappearances.** An Amnesty report revealed that in the space of just a few weeks this past summer, the government of Daniel Ortega unjustly deprived more than 30 people of their freedom. Among those detained are political activists, student leaders, and journalists. They must be immediately released.

## Niger

**You spoke out for the rights of children.** Conflict is raging along Niger's borders with Mali and Burkina Faso. In September, an Amnesty report told of the devastating impact on children. Armed groups are attacking schools and targeting children for recruitment. Amnesty is calling on the Nigerian government and its international partners to act now to prevent further abuses.

## NICARAGUA

Maria Josefina Gurdian holds a picture of her daughter, Margarita Vijil, a lawyer and political leader. Margarita was arrested for protesting against the government.



OSWALDO RIVAS/AP/GETTY IMAGES

## CUBA

Thousands of Cubans in Havana took part in protests against the authorities on July 11. The authorities responded by detaining hundreds of them.



ADAM BERTO/ROQUE AFAGRETTI IMAGES

## Belarus

You stood with human rights defenders in Belarus. Amnesty is demanding that the Belarus authorities end their attack on civil society and release all human rights defenders detained solely for their activism. In July, the Belarus authorities closed dozens of human rights and other civil society organizations. The government of Belarus must respect and protect human rights.

## China

You called on the United Nations to act on Xinjiang atrocities. An Amnesty petition expressed mass global outrage and called on the Chinese authorities to release the hundreds of thousands of Muslim minority people detained and subjected to mass internment, torture and persecution in Xinjiang. United Nations member states have so far failed to hold the Chinese government to account for its actions.

## China

You spoke out for human rights in Hong Kong. The Chinese government's attack on human rights in Hong Kong is relentless. In June, the Apple Daily newspaper was forced to close. In August, the biggest teachers' union was forced to disband. Days later, the Civil Human Rights Front, a well-known coalition of rights groups, folded. And on October 25, Amnesty announced the closure of our offices in Hong Kong with operations moving to other offices in the region.

## Ethiopia

## Ethiopia

You helped expose horrific human rights violations. In August, Amnesty researchers reported how women and girls in Tigray were targeted for rape and other sexual violence by forces aligned to the Ethiopian government. Since fighting began in the region in November 2020, thousands of civilians in Tigray have been killed, and hundreds of thousands of people have been displaced.

## Bangladesh

You joined activists campaigning to protect freedom of expression. Bangladesh's government is abusing the Digital Security Act to harass, intimidate, and persecute people. More than 1,000 people have been arrested under the law and been subjected to disappearance, detention, and torture simply for exercising their right to freedom of expression.

## BELARUS

In September, opposition leader Maryia Kalesnikava and lawyer Maksim Znak were sentenced to 11 and 10 years for speaking out against President Lukashenka.



FAMIL MASIBULIN/BELTA/AP/Getty Images

## CHINA

Amnesty activists handing over a petition at the Chinese embassy in London, UK, to demand the release of all people detained in internment camps in Xinjiang.



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Amnesty International campaigns for an end to the death penalty in all countries and in all cases.

## Sierra Leone abolishes the death penalty

Sierra Leone has abolished the death penalty, becoming the 23rd country in Africa to end the use of the death penalty for all crimes. This is a major victory for everyone who campaigned to end this cruel punishment.

The Parliament of Sierra Leone voted in favour of a Bill abolishing the death penalty on July 23. Following the vote, at a ceremony in Freetown on October 8, President Julius Maada Bio formally signed the bill into law. “We today affirm our belief in the sanctity of life,” the President said.

Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases without exception, no matter who is accused, the nature of the crime, guilt or innocence, or method of execution. The death penalty is the ultimate cruel and inhuman punishment and has no place in our world.

## Turkey: Victory for Pride participants after a long struggle for justice

In 2019, a peaceful Pride event in Ankara, Turkey, was met with police using pepper spray, plastic bullets, and tear gas. The participants were rounded up and dragged through the courts. They faced three years in jail for celebrating Pride.

Finally, on October 8, an Ankara court acquitted 18 students and an academic. The verdict is a victory for justice, but the long legal battle should never have happened.

Activists around the world joined the campaign calling for the 19 to be acquitted. International solidarity is especially critical because of the enormous challenges in defending the rights of LGBTI+ people in Turkey against a backdrop of increasing homophobia and restrictions on freedom of expression.



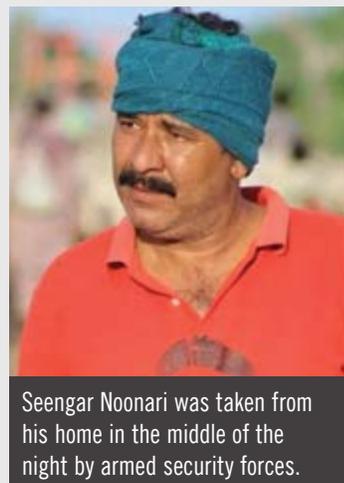
Melike Balkan and Özgür Gür were two of the 19 defendants acquitted on October 8 for celebrating Pride in Ankara in 2019.

## Pakistan: Disappeared human rights defender Seengar Noonari freed

After being abducted without trace in June, lifelong human rights activist Seengar Noonari was returned to his family on August 1.

Armed Pakistani security forces had taken Seengar from his home in the middle of the night. Fouzia, Seengar’s wife, told Amnesty International that their children, aged between 15 months and 10 years, were with them as the men broke into their home and ransacked their belongings before blindfolding Seengar and taking him away. Fouzia said Seengar’s return was like “Eid has arrived”.

Seengar Noonari is the Labour Secretary of the Awami Workers Party (AWP) and is well known for fighting for the rights of his people and for helping the poor. He had been organizing his community to campaign against illegal land grabs by a private property developer, which is why it is believed he was disappeared. Immediately after his disappearance, the AWP and Seengar’s family led a campaign to free Seengar, and Amnesty International mobilized the Urgent Action Network to take global action.



Seengar Noonari was taken from his home in the middle of the night by armed security forces.

## First Nations children deserve justice and accountability

The remains of 215 Indigenous children were found buried on the grounds of the former Kamloops Indian Residential School in British Columbia in May 2021.

Amnesty International mourns these children and all those who never came home. We are in solidarity with residential school survivors, their families, and all First Nations, Inuit and Métis people who are grieving and mourning.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission, national investigations, the United Nations, and several other international human rights bodies have repeatedly called on Canada to address these human rights violations and ensure justice for survivors and their families. The bulk of these calls remain unimplemented. Amnesty International joins First Nations people in demanding that Canada take concrete action without any further delay.



LARS HAGBERG/Amnesty Images

Residential school survivors receive Eagle Feathers at a ceremony in Ottawa on the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, September 30, 2021.

## Canada must stop selling arms to Saudi Arabia

In August, Amnesty International and Project Ploughshares launched a joint report on arms sales to Saudi Arabia.

The Amnesty-Project Ploughshares report challenges a 2020 Global Affairs Canada review of arms exports to Saudi Arabia, which concluded that there is “no substantial risk” the arms would be used to commit human rights violations. But the Global Affairs Canada assessment is flawed—it cherry-picks evidence to paint a picture of a weapons deal that complies with international law.

Amnesty and Project Ploughshares are calling on the Canadian government to revoke current arms export permits to Saudi Arabia. There needs to be much greater scrutiny of Canadian export controls to ensure compliance with the global Arms Trade Treaty.



© Amnesty International

Activists demanding an end to the sale of weapons to Saudi Arabia.

## Canada must fight for other Canadians jailed in China



Huseyin Celil

Amnesty International is again pressing the Canadian government to fight for the release of Huseyin Celil, a Muslim Uyghur activist imprisoned in China for over 15 years, and Sun Qian, a Falun Gong practitioner, and for China to revoke the death penalty sentences for Fan Wei and Robert Schellenberg.

## Time to end the detention of migrants in provincial jails

In a new campaign, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch are turning the spotlight on the role of provinces in detaining migrants in jails.

Between April 2017 and March 2020, more than a fifth of immigration detainees—about 5,400—were held in provincial jails, many of which are maximum security facilities. Restricted to small spaces and under constant surveillance, many detainees are confined in dangerous environments where they risk being subjected to violence.

Amnesty and Human Rights Watch are calling on federal and provincial leaders to cancel immigration detention contracts with the federal government and stop using provincial jails to lock up people seeking safety or a better life. Canada’s immigration and refugee protection system should be prioritizing human rights.



© Sarah Koch-Schulte

Sarah Koch-Schulte is a legacy donor.

# Look to your values and change the world with a gift in your Will

“I invite you all to look to your values... make sure they are expressed through future generations. The opportunity to add my voice to millions of others working for justice and dignity for all humanity is what makes me feel good about supporting Amnesty’s work for generations to come.”—Sarah Koch-Schulte, Amnesty International Board Member, activist and legacy donor.

You have the power to contribute towards a future world that reflects your personal values through your will. If you would like more information about how to remember Amnesty International in your will, please contact Hala Al-Madi at 613-744-7667 ext 223, or at [halmadi@amnesty.ca](mailto:halmadi@amnesty.ca). You can also respond by using the attached coupon or visit [amnesty.ca/legacy](https://www.amnesty.ca/legacy).

## SEE WHAT'S NEW IN STORE

The Amnesty 2022 gift collection is now available. Calendars, greeting cards, T-shirts, hoodies, bags, totes, and much more. For the full catalogue, visit [aito.ca/merchandise](https://aito.ca/merchandise)

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AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL TORONTO ORGANIZATION

I AM A HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER

## You're invited to a global celebration of human rights

**WRITE FOR RIGHTS**

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

On December 10, 2021—International Human Rights Day—Amnesty International supporters in Canada and around the world will be taking part in Write for Rights, the world’s largest letter-writing event.

COVID-19 continues to impact our lives, but it won’t stop us from taking action. Your voice and your letters are needed now more than ever to take action on 10 critical global cases.

**Join us. It's easy to take part!**

Whether you want to organize an event with your social bubble, join a virtual letter-writing party, or write on your own, we’re here to help.

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