

THULANI MASEKO

# KILLED FOR SPEAKING TRUTH

# TO POWER

📍 Eswatini

WRITE  
FOR  
RIGHTS

AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL



Centre for  
Human Rights  
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

VERA CHIRWA AVENUE



# THULANI MASEKO

 Eswatini

Thulani Maseko was a loving father and husband. He was a committed member of the Methodist church, a devoted human rights defender, and an ally to LGBTI people. People who knew Thulani described him as humble and friendly, with an incredible sense of humour.

After qualifying as a lawyer, Thulani fought tirelessly for the people of Eswatini, a country ruled by a wealthy absolute monarchy, and where approximately 60% of the population live under the poverty line. Thulani was openly critical of the country's repressive laws and excessive state violence used to silence peaceful protest.

Thulani knew the risk of speaking out was high. In 2014 he was arrested and charged with criminal contempt of court after writing two news articles denouncing the lack of judicial independence and integrity in Eswatini. He spent over a year in prison. Undeterred, Thulani continued his human rights work, stating in 2016: "We shall never surrender, for we know there is a price to pay for the truth."

On 21 January 2023, Thulani paid the ultimate price. He was shot dead at close range, through the window of their home, in front of his wife, Tanele. Just hours earlier the king gave a speech stating that those calling for democratic reform would be "dealt with" and "people should not shed tears and complain about mercenaries killing them." To date no one has been held accountable for Thulani's killing.

**Demand justice for Thulani Maseko.**



## WRITE TO THE KING OF ESWATINI

Demand the unlawful killing of Thulani Maseko is effectively investigated, the people suspected of responsibility are brought to justice in a fair trial and that Thulani's family is provided access to effective remedies.

**ADDRESS:**

His Majesty King Mswati III  
Office of the King  
Lozitha Palace  
PO box 1  
Kwaluseni  
Eswatini

**SALUTATION:** Your Majesty

**EMAIL:** [clerktoparl@swazi.net](mailto:clerktoparl@swazi.net)

**FACEBOOK:** [www.facebook.com/EswatiniGov/](https://www.facebook.com/EswatiniGov/)

**TWITTER / X:** @EswatiniGovern1

**HASHTAGS:** #JusticeForThulaniMaseko, #W4R23

## SHOW THULANI'S FAMILY THAT THEY ARE NOT ALONE

Send Thulani's wife, Tanele, messages of hope and support.

**ADDRESS:**

Tanele Maseko  
c/o Amnesty International, Southern Africa  
97 Oxford Road  
Saxonwold  
Johannesburg  
2196  
South Africa

**INSTAGRAM:** @Tanele70

**HASHTAGS:** #JusticeForThulaniMaseko, #W4R23

December 2023

Index: AFR 55/7022/2023 English

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THAPELO MOHAPI AND

THE ABAHLALI BASEMJONDOLO MOVEMENT

# THREATENED FOR DEFENDING HIS COMMUNITY

South Africa

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INTERNATIONAL





# THAPELO MOHAPI

# AND THE ABAHLALI BASEMJONDOLO

# MOVEMENT

South Africa

Thapelo Mohapi loves listening to jazz and supporting his favourite football teams, the Mamelodi Sundowns and Manchester City. But right now he can't enjoy these things like he used to. Since 2021, he has been forced to live in hiding because of threats to his life.

As general secretary of Abahlali baseMjondolo (AbM), a vibrant and courageous grassroots movement, Thapelo has dedicated his life to fighting for the rights of people across South Africa, particularly in areas suffering economic hardship.

One such place is eKhenana, in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. Most residents are economic migrants from rural South Africa who have moved to seek a better life. They cannot afford the high costs of living in the area and often end up making homes from tin, with little to no access to water or sanitation. They also face police brutality, forced evictions and poor public services, amongst many other challenges.

Determined to improve lives in the community, AbM members in eKhenana have spoken out against cases of local government corruption and worked hard to improve life in their community by starting a school, farm, communal kitchen and shop. In return, they have been met with not just resistance but threats, harassment and intimidation from state officials who have incited violence against them. They have been victims of attempted and actual murders, violence, harassment, and damage to their homes. In 2022 alone, three AbM members were killed in eKhenana.

**Tell the police to thoroughly and effectively investigate the harassment and killings of AbM members.**



## WRITE TO THE SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE

Demand a thorough, impartial, independent, transparent and effective investigation into the harassment and killings of AbM members, bringing suspected perpetrators to justice in fair trials and an end to the attacks against AbM members.

**ADDRESS:**  
Minister of Police  
Private bag X463  
Pretoria  
0001  
South Africa

**SALUTATION:** Dear Minister

**TWITTER / X:** @SAPoliceService

**FACEBOOK:** [www.facebook.com/SAPoliceService](https://www.facebook.com/SAPoliceService)

**INSTAGRAM:** @sapoliceservice\_za

**HASHTAGS:** #ProtectThapelo; #ProtectAbM; #W4R23

## SHOW THAPELO AND ABM YOU'RE WITH THEM

Send your messages of friendship and hope, so they can keep up their fight for their communities.

**ADDRESS:**  
Thapelo Mohapi and the AbM movement  
c/o Amnesty International South Africa  
97 Oxford Road  
Rosebank  
Johannesburg  
2196  
South Africa

**TWITTER / X:** @abahlalibm

**FACEBOOK:** [www.facebook.com/abahlalibasemjondolo](https://www.facebook.com/abahlalibasemjondolo)

**INSTAGRAM:** @abahlalibasemjondolo

**HASHTAGS:** #ProtectThapelo; #ProtectAbM; #W4R23

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ROCKY MYERS

# THREE DECADES ON DEATH ROW DESPITE FLAWED PROCEEDINGS

USA

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# ROCKY MYERS

USA

Rocky Myers is described by those who know him as gentle and kind. He loves his siblings, children, and grandchildren, and they adore him. He played drums in his church choir. At age 11, Rocky was diagnosed with an intellectual disability. He finds reading hard and can't keep dates or times straight in his head. One night in 1991, in the town of Decatur, Alabama, his life changed forever.

An elderly white woman was murdered in a predominantly Black neighbourhood. Rocky, who is Black, lived across the street. Despite no evidence linking him to the scene of the murder, except for a video cassette recorder belonging to the victim which Rocky maintains he found abandoned in the street, Rocky was convicted of the crime.

Testimonies were tainted by inconsistencies and allegations of police pressure – one key witness later stated that he had lied. An overwhelmingly white jury found him guilty but recommended a sentence of life imprisonment. The judge instead sentenced Rocky to death. Overruling a jury in this way is now illegal in Alabama.

The US Supreme Court ruled that defendants with intellectual disabilities “face a special risk of wrongful execution”. This is certainly true for Rocky. Burdened with ineffective legal representation and abandoned by his post-conviction lawyer, Rocky missed deadlines for appeal. His execution could be scheduled at any time, and his only hope is for the governor of Alabama to grant him clemency.

**Tell the governor of Alabama to grant clemency to Rocky Myers.**



## WRITE TO THE GOVERNOR OF ALABAMA

Demand they use their authority to grant clemency to Rocky Myers and commute his death sentence.

**ADDRESS:**

Governor of Alabama  
Office of the Governor of Alabama  
600 Dexter Avenue  
Montgomery, AL 36130  
USA

**EMAIL:** [info@governor.alabama.gov](mailto:info@governor.alabama.gov)

**SALUTATION:** Dear Governor

## LOCKED IN A CELL WITH NO WINDOWS, TAKE ROCKY ON A WORLD TOUR THROUGH POSTCARDS

Send Rocky postcards or pictures of where you live, where you go on holiday, or places you love. Remember, Rocky has a hard time reading, so keep your messages simple.

**ADDRESS:**

Rocky Myers, AIS 0000Z563  
Holman Correctional Facility, M-44  
Holman 3700  
866 Ross Road  
Atmore, AL 36503  
USA

Please add your full address to ensure the prison authorities allow Rocky to receive his mail.

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ANA MARIA SANTOS CRUZ

# A MOTHER'S FIGHT

# FOR JUSTICE

📍 Brazil

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# ANA MARIA SANTOS CRUZ

 Brazil

Ana Maria Santos Cruz is a loving mother. She enjoys attending concerts and cultural events with her daughter in Salvador, Brazil. However, since the death of her son, Pedro Henrique, Ana Maria feels like a part of her has been taken away.

In his short life, Pedro Henrique achieved a lot. An activist and advocate of racial justice and human rights, Pedro Henrique organized “Walks of Peace” in Tucano, Bahia, Brazil. These annual marches brought people together to speak out about police abuses primarily against Black communities.

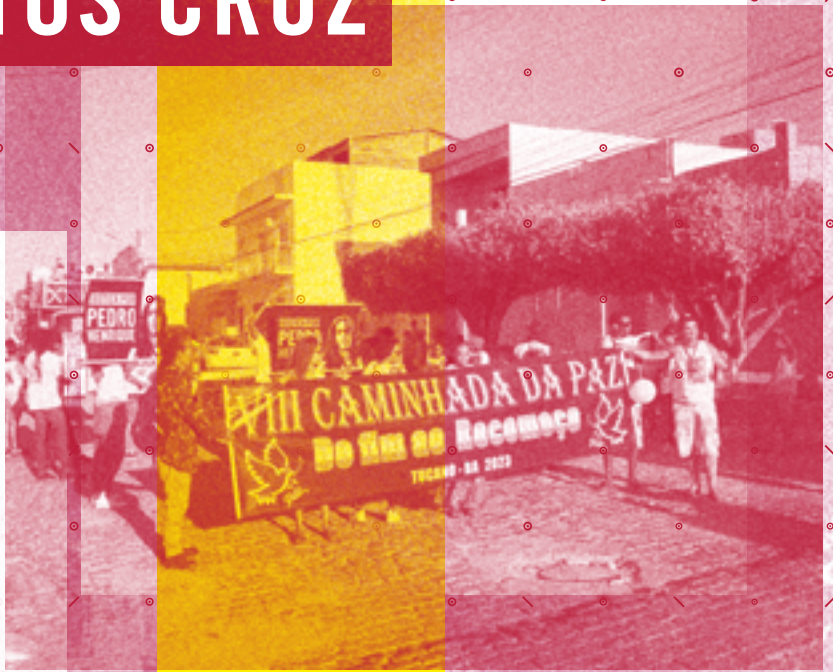
These moments of solidarity were met with hostility and intimidation from the police.

Officers began to monitor Pedro Henrique. They threatened and violently attacked him for his activism. On 27 December 2018, Pedro Henrique was killed, aged 31. His house was raided by three hooded men as he slept next to his girlfriend. He was shot eight times in the head and neck. His girlfriend recognized the three men as police officers.

The officers suspected of killing Pedro Henrique were indicted in 2019. But almost five years on, they are still active in the police force. The investigation into the killing has not been concluded and the trial has yet to begin.

Despite ongoing threats and the grief of losing her child, Ana Maria has bravely sought the truth about his death, calling on the authorities for a thorough investigation and trial.

**Support Ana Maria in her fight for justice.**



## WRITE TO THE GENERAL PROSECUTOR

Demand they take all necessary measures to ensure an independent, impartial and thorough investigation into Pedro Henrique's murder and bring those responsible to justice in fair trials.

### ADDRESS:

General Prosecutor of Bahia  
Ministério Público do Estado da Bahia  
Quinta Avenida, nº 750, 1º andar  
sala 129, do CAB (Centro Administrativo da Bahia)  
CEP 41.745-004  
Salvador, BA  
Brazil

**SALUTATION:** Dear General Prosecutor

**TWITTER / X:** @MPdaBahia

**HASHTAGS:** #JusticeForPedroHenrique, #W4R23

## SHOW ANA MARIA SHE'S NOT ALONE

Send your messages of solidarity to help keep Ana Maria's spirits strong.

### ADDRESS:

Ana Maria Santos Cruz  
c/o Amnesty International Brazil  
Rua da Glória, 344  
Rooms 302 and 304  
Gloria  
CEP: 20241-180  
Rio de Janeiro  
Brazil

**INSTAGRAM:** @justicaparapedrohenrique

**HASHTAGS:** #JusticeForPedroHenrique; #W4R23

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UNCLE PABAI AND UNCLE PAUL

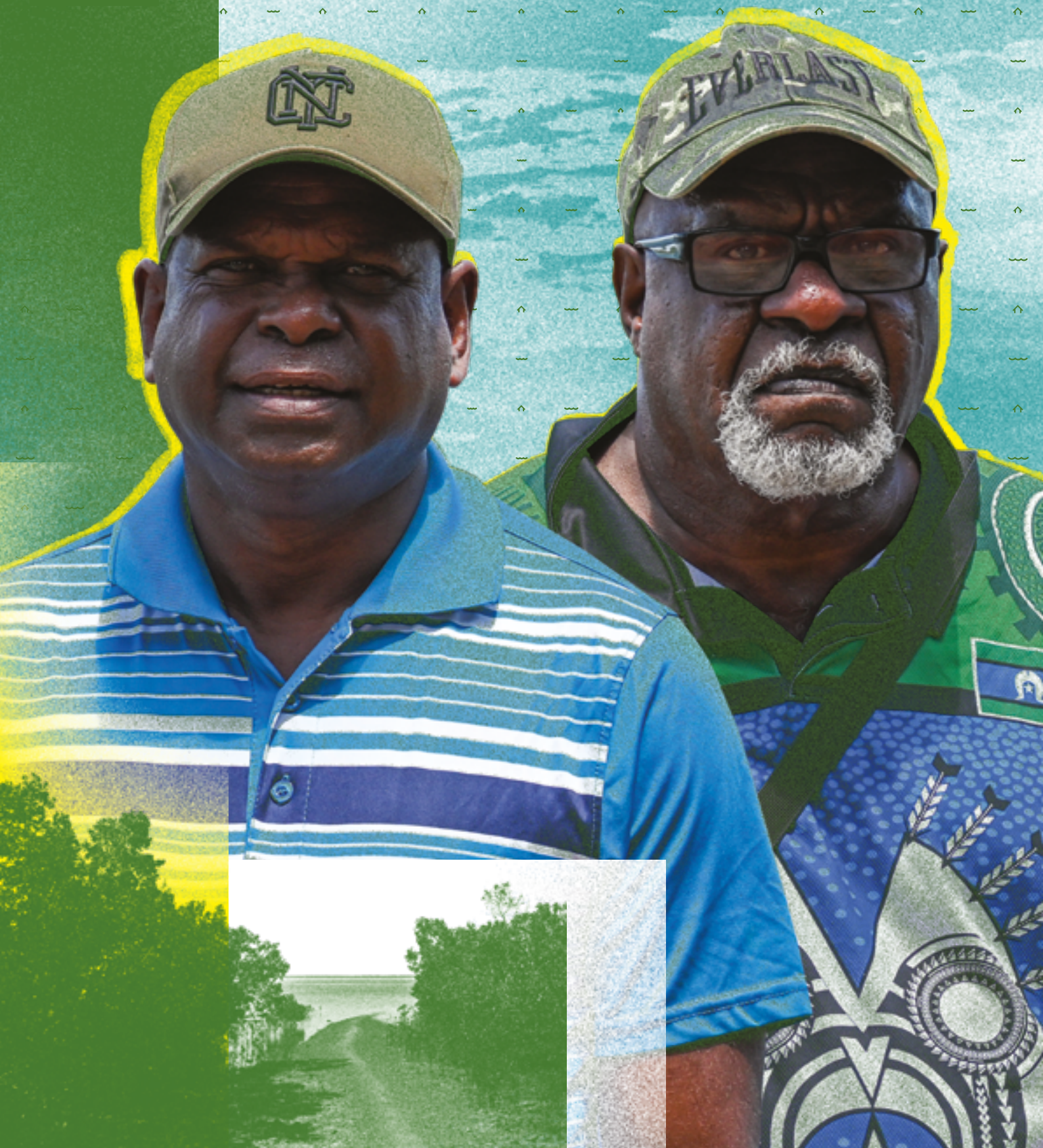
FIGHTING TO SAVE

THEIR ANCESTRAL LANDS

📍 Australia

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# UNCLE PABAI AND UNCLE PAUL

 Australia

Uncle Pabai and Uncle Paul are community leaders from the Guda Maluyligal Nation at the northernmost part of Australia in the Torres Strait. Their Indigenous ancestors have lived on the islands for thousands of years.

Now, because of climate change, their way of life, traditional knowledge systems, cultural practices and spiritual connections that have been passed down from generation to generation could be broken forever. Rising sea levels are causing more destruction each year by eroding beaches, destroying sacred cultural sites and cemeteries where ancestors are buried, wrecking food gardens, and putting the islands' infrastructure at risk.

Uncle Pabai and Uncle Paul, who are referred to as "uncle" by their communities as a sign of respect, have turned to the courts. They argue that the Australian government is taking insufficient action to prevent harm from climate change, resulting in the destruction of their lands and culture.

Unless urgent action is taken, many Torres Strait Islanders will be forced to leave their homelands as large parts become uninhabitable. This would be devastating to the communities. As Uncle Pabai says: "We are born to these islands, they are our mothers, our identities, who we are. For thousands of years, our warrior families fought off anyone who tried to take our homelands from us. But now, we could lose the fight to climate change."

**Call on Australia to take urgent climate action.**

## WRITE TO THE PRIME MINISTER

Demand the rights of First Nations communities in the Torres Strait are protected, by rapidly reducing carbon emissions in line with the world commitment of limiting global warming to 1.5°C in line with the best available scientific research.

**ADDRESS:**

Prime Minister of Australia  
PO box 6022  
House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600  
Australia

**SALUTATION:** Dear Prime Minister

**EMAIL:** [www.pm.gov.au/contact-your-pm](http://www.pm.gov.au/contact-your-pm)

**FACEBOOK:** [www.facebook.com/AlboMP](https://www.facebook.com/AlboMP)

**TWITTER / X:** @AlboMP

**INSTAGRAM:** @albomp

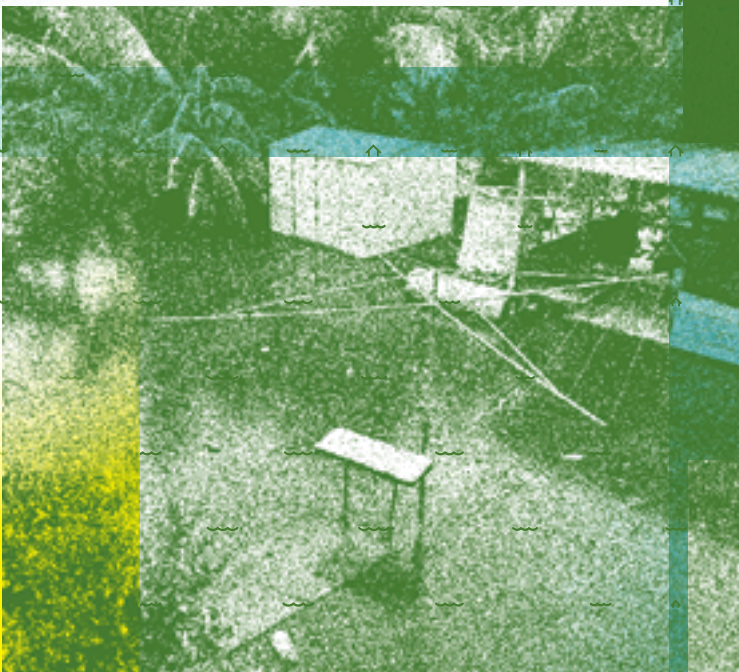
**HASHTAGS:** #PabaiVCmth, #W4R23

## SHOW UNCLE PABAI, UNCLE PAUL AND THEIR COMMUNITIES THAT YOU SUPPORT THEM

Send your messages of support to show the Peoples of the Torres Strait that you support them in their fight to protect their island homes.

**ADDRESS:**

Uncle Pabai and Uncle Paul  
c/o Amnesty International Australia  
Locked bag 23  
Broadway, NSW, 2007  
Australia



December 2023

Index: ASA 12/6977/2023 English

Front page image: © Talei Elu

Back page image: © Talei Elu, © Pabai Pabai



RITA KARASARTOVA

# FACING 15 YEARS IN PRISON FOR PEACEFULLY PROTESTING

Kyrgyzstan

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# RITA KARASARTOVA

Kyrgyzstan

Rita Karasartova loves spending time with her children, practising yoga, and sewing *chapans*, the traditional quilted jackets worn by people in Kyrgyzstan. But since October 2022 Rita's life has been turned upside down. She was arrested and spent months detained in a cramped cell, denied access to healthcare and unable to see or speak to her family. Now she is under house arrest and a strict curfew.

Rita is a human rights defender and an expert in civic governance. For over a decade she dedicated her life to providing independent legal advice, helping people whose rights had been violated by a corrupt and unreliable legal system. She leads the non-governmental Institute for Public Analysis and is a member of the United Democratic Movement of Kyrgyzstan, fighting against poverty and injustice.

Alongside 26 others, Rita was arrested for opposing a new border agreement that gave control of a freshwater reservoir to Uzbekistan. The group called for people to peacefully demonstrate against the agreement, demanding transparency from the government. Like others, Rita feared Uzbekistan would restrict or prohibit access to water, a scarce resource in the region where loss of access could have devastating consequences.

Rita and the others were initially detained for organizing "mass disorder", and she was charged with attempting to "violently overthrow the government", which carries a maximum sentence of 15 years' imprisonment.

**Demand Rita Karasartova's freedom.**



## WRITE TO THE GENERAL PROSECUTOR

Demand Rita is immediately released from house arrest, all charges against her dropped and that she can carry out human rights activities without fear of retaliation.

**ADDRESS:**

General Prosecutor  
A. Toktonaliev Street, 139  
Bishkek  
720040  
Kyrgyz Republic

**EMAIL:** [statement@prokuror.kg](mailto:statement@prokuror.kg)

**FACEBOOK:** [www.facebook.com/prokuratorkg](https://www.facebook.com/prokuratorkg)

**SALUTATION:** Dear General Prosecutor

**HASHTAG:** #W4R23

## KEEP RITA'S HOPE ALIVE

Let Rita know she is not alone by sending your messages and drawings of friendship and hope.

**ADDRESS:**

Rita Karasartova  
c/o Civic Initiatives  
Abdrakhmanova 204  
Office 14  
Bishkek  
710040  
Kyrgyz Republic

**EMAIL:** [freedomrita@protonmail.com](mailto:freedomrita@protonmail.com)

**FACEBOOK:** [www.facebook.com/rita.karasartova](https://www.facebook.com/rita.karasartova)

**HASHTAG:** #W4R23

December 2023

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JUSTYNA WYDRZYŃSKA

# PROSECUTED FOR DEFENDING SAFE ABORTION

Poland

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# JUSTYNA WYDRZYŃSKA

Poland

Justyna Wydrzyńska's own abortion experience, with no support or access to reliable information, gave her the strength and motivation to help others make informed decisions about their reproductive lives. Justyna co-founded Abortion Dream Team, an activist collective campaigning against abortion stigma and offering advice on accessing safe abortion in Poland, where abortion laws are among the most restrictive in Europe.

In February 2020, Justyna was put in contact with Ania (not her real name). Ania was in an abusive relationship, pregnant and desperate, saying she would rather die than continue with her pregnancy. Justyna, a survivor of a violent relationship herself, knew she had to help. She sent Ania her own abortion pills through the post, but Ania's partner intercepted the package and contacted the police, who confiscated the pills.

In November 2021, the public prosecutor brought charges against Justyna for "helping with an abortion". In March 2023, she was found guilty and sentenced to eight months' community service. Her lawyers have appealed.

Justyna's conviction sets a dangerous precedent. Without the support and trustworthy information that she and other activists provide, people like Ania would be alone and without access to safe abortion.

Demonstrating her courage in spite of the hostility she faces, Justyna says: "I was driven by the will to help when no one else wanted to or could help. For me, helping Ania was an obvious, decent, and honest thing to do."

**Demand the prosecutor general take all necessary measures to ensure that Justyna's unjust conviction is overturned.**



## WRITE TO THE PROSECUTOR GENERAL

Tell them to take all necessary measures to ensure that Justyna's unjust conviction is overturned and to refrain from bringing any other charges against her for carrying out her legitimate defence of human rights.

### ADDRESS:

Prosecutor General  
National Prosecutor's Office  
ul. Postępu 3  
02-676 Warsaw  
Poland

EMAIL: [biuro.podawcze.pk@prokuratura.gov.pl](mailto:biuro.podawcze.pk@prokuratura.gov.pl)

TWITTER / X: @PK\_GOV\_PL

SALUTATION: Dear Prosecutor General

HASHTAGS: #IAmJustyna, #W4R23

## HELP KEEP JUSTYNA'S SPIRIT STRONG

Send her your message of solidarity and hope.

### ADDRESS:

Justyna Wydrzyńska  
c/o Amnesty International Polska  
Sapieżyńska 10A  
00-215 Warsaw  
Poland

EMAIL: [dla.justyny@amnesty.org.pl](mailto:dla.justyny@amnesty.org.pl)

HASHTAGS: #IAmJustyna, #W4R23

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CHAIMA ISSA

FACING YEARS IN PRISON

FOR SPEAKING OUT

Tunisia

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# CHAIMA ISSA

Tunisia

Speaking out for what she believes is right runs in activist Chaima Issa's blood. The daughter of a former political prisoner, Chaima speaks truth to power. Even if the cost is her freedom.

When Tunisian president Kais Saied suspended parliament, dismissed the prime minister and took executive control of the country in July 2021 citing emergency powers, Chaima was one of the first to publicly oppose him. Since his power grab, human rights in Tunisia are more fragile than ever. Freedom of expression is under attack. Military courts target critics of the government, and the legal system lacks independence.

After meeting foreign diplomats along with other Tunisian opposition figures to discuss the political situation in Tunisia, Chaima was arrested on 22 February 2023 as part of an investigation for alleged "conspiracy". She was released on 13 July after more than four months of arbitrary detention, but the legal case is ongoing and the authorities have banned her from travelling abroad and "appearing in public spaces". A military court, which lacks independence, is also investigating Chaima for criticizing the authorities on a radio show. She faces decades in prison.

But Chaima will not give up. In the judge's office Chaima exclaimed: "Is this Tunisia? Is this the Tunisia where we studied, you and me? Is this the Tunisia we dreamed of?" As she was taken to prison, surrounded by police officers, Chaima smiled, raised her fist and sang the national anthem.

**Demand Chaima Issa's full freedom.**



## CONTACT THE PRESIDENT OF TUNISIA

Call on the Tunisian authorities to immediately drop the baseless investigation and other restrictions against Chaima Issa as they are related solely to the exercise of her human rights.

**ADDRESS:**

President of Tunisia

**EMAIL:** [contact@carthage.tn](mailto:contact@carthage.tn)

**FACEBOOK:** [www.facebook.com/Presidence.tn](https://www.facebook.com/Presidence.tn)

**TWITTER / X:** @TnPresidency

**HASHTAG:** #W4R23

**SALUTATION:** Your Excellency

## SHOW CHAIMA THAT SHE IS NOT ALONE

Send Chaima messages of hope and solidarity. Let her know you support her in her fight for human rights in Tunisia.

**ADDRESS:**

Chaima Issa

c/o Amnesty International

Tunis Regional Office

24 Avenue de la livre

Les Berges du Lac 2

Tunis

Tunisia

**TWITTER / X:** @IssaaChaima

**HASHTAGS:** #FreeChaima, #W4R23

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AHMED MANSOOR

# LOCKED UP FOR SPEAKING

## TRUTH TO POWER

United Arab Emirates

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# AHMED MANSOOR

United Arab Emirates

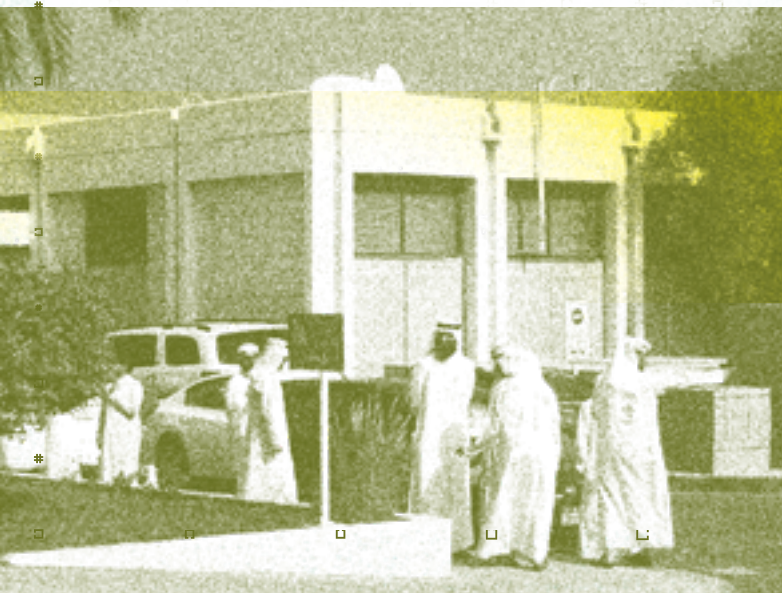
Ahmed Mansoor is a loving father and husband. He's a poet, blogger, and human rights defender. Right now, he is locked away in a cell in al-Sadr prison, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. He spends his days in an isolation cell, with no access to books, pens or paper. He does not even have a bed.

His crime? Speaking the truth. Before his arrest, Ahmed was one of the few voices within the UAE providing the rest of the world with credible independent information about human rights violations in the country. He regularly raised concerns about the detention, torture and unfair trials of dissenting voices. He spoke about problems with the justice system and of domestic laws that breach international ones.

For this Ahmed is paying a high price. In March 2017, UAE security forces raided his home and arrested him. For over a year, no one, not even his family, knew where he was detained. In May 2018, Ahmed was sentenced to a decade in prison on charges including "insulting the UAE and its symbols".

Protesting about his prison conditions, Ahmed has twice resorted to hunger strikes, losing dangerous amounts of weight and putting his life at risk. Despite this he is only allowed outside three times a week, when guards remove all other prisoners from the yard and Ahmed spends the little time he has in the sunlight, alone.

**Demand the UAE immediately and unconditionally release Ahmed Mansoor.**



## CONTACT SHEIKH MOHAMED BIN ZAYED AL NAHYAN

Tell him that Ahmed Mansoor must be immediately and unconditionally released, as he has been imprisoned solely for his peaceful human rights activism.

### ADDRESS:

President of the United Arab Emirates  
Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan  
c/o UAE embassy in your country,  
or a country near you.

**TWITTER / X:** @MohamedBinZayed

**INSTAGRAM:** @mohamedbinzayed

**SALUTATION:** Your Highness

For the best chance of the president seeing your letters, please take photos of them and post on Twitter and Instagram, tagging the president's handles.

**HASHTAGS:** #FreeAhmed, #W4R23

## HELP KEEP AHMED'S SPIRIT ALIVE

Send him your message of solidarity and hope.

### ADDRESS:

Ahmed Mansoor  
c/o Ms S.F  
Gulf Centre for Human Rights  
PO box 245  
Saida  
Lebanon

**TWITTER / X:** @Ahmed\_Mansoor

**HASHTAGS:** #FreeAhmed, #W4R23

Please post photos of your cards and letters for Ahmed on social media, so his family can see them.

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