

“Thank you to everyone who believed in my innocence!”

© JAM STA ROSA/AFP/Getty Images

Philippines: Victory for Leila de Lima as bogus criminal charges are dismissed

Finally, human rights defender Leila de Lima can experience her freedom—after almost **seven years of arbitrary detention and political persecution**.

On June 24, a Philippine court cleared Leila, a former senator and human rights defender, of the last criminal charges against her. In the decision, the judge granted Leila’s legal motion that called for the dismissal of her case. Seven months previously, the same court had granted her bail and temporary liberty.

Leila’s ordeal began with her arrest in February 2017 on bogus, drug-related charges. She was **detained for 2,454 days** following her arrest. Amnesty International declared her a prisoner of conscience imprisoned solely for her human rights work, and

Amnesty activists pressed the Philippine authorities and demanded justice for her.

The authorities detained Leila after she began looking into human rights violations committed under the administration of Rodrigo Duterte, the president of the Philippines from 2016 to 2022. The Duterte administration oversaw the extrajudicial execution of thousands of people suspected of using or selling drugs. Amnesty believes the government’s actions may amount to **crimes against humanity**.

For exposing human rights violations in Duterte’s “war on drugs”, Leila was viciously targeted. After her arrest, Amnesty reported that the charges against her were false and that witness testimonies against her were all made up.

Leila’s political persecution reflects the increasing impunity for human rights violations in the Philippines over the past decade—human rights violations that include the killings, threats and harassment of political activists, human rights defenders, and members of the media.

As Leila fully regains her freedom, **Amnesty is urging the administration of the current president, Ferdinand Marcos Jr., to ensure a safe and positive environment for Leila and for other human rights defenders** who have been targeted because of their work.

**THANK YOU for joining
Leila de Lima in her
struggle for justice!**

GOOD NEWS

Colombia: Yuly Velásquez receives Amnesty International award

Yuly Velásquez is a human rights defender and environmentalist in Colombia. She is president of the Federation of Artisanal, Environmental and Tourist Fisherfolk of the Department of Santander (FEDEPESAN), an organization whose members are threatened and attacked for trying to protect the environment from pollution.

At a ceremony in Berlin on June 4, Yuly was presented with a prestigious human rights award from Amnesty Germany for selflessly defending human rights despite the danger she faces.

Yuly said the award will help raise the profile of her organization's work and pressure the Colombian authorities to address human

Italy: Romani people win important victory in their struggle to end discrimination

A unanimous decision on May 13 by the Council of Europe's European Committee of Social Rights is an important victory for Romani people in Italy in their human rights struggle.

The Committee ruled that Italy had breached the European Social Charter with respect to the housing situation of Romani communities. Italy must now ensure adequate, non-segregated and non-discriminatory housing for Romani people.

Romani communities in Italy have long faced segregation, forced evictions, and discrimination. Across Italy, the authorities have placed Romani families in camps, often in appalling living conditions.

The European Committee of Social Rights' decision was in response to a complaint filed by Amnesty International in March 2019. Amnesty's complaint drew on more than a decade of research by Amnesty and partners into the housing situation of Romani people in Italy.

Burkina Faso: Your support was a source of light for Daouda Diallo

"I would like to thank Amnesty International and all those who mobilized and called for my release!" said Burkinabe human rights defender Daouda Diallo after he regained his freedom in March. *"These appeals were a light in the solitude of my ordeal."*

Daouda's nightmare began four months earlier when he challenged the legality of the government conscripting him into the military. While visiting a government office, he was apprehended by security agents and driven to an unknown location. Alerted to his enforced disappearance, Amnesty quickly issued an Urgent Action appeal calling for his release.

Your support made a difference and now Daouda is reunited with his loved ones. *"Today I'm delighted to be back home with my family, my comrades and my colleagues!"* he said.



Yuly Velásquez (centre) with Julia Duchrow, Amnesty Germany's Secretary General, and Agnès Callamard, Amnesty's global Secretary General.

rights violations. *"We dedicate this award to the fishers who were murdered and dumped into the river, while those who murdered them have gone unpunished,"* Yuly said. *"We dedicate it to the widows and orphans, to the protectors of rivers, wetlands, and canals."*



A public event calling for an end to the forced evictions of Romani people in Italy.



Human rights defender Daouda Diallo was freed in March.

Iraq: Journalist Guhdar Zebari freed

Iraqi Kurdish journalist Guhdar Zebari was freed after more than three years of unjust imprisonment on February 17. His lawyer thanked Amnesty supporters for campaigning for Zebari's freedom and said that those efforts had a positive impact.

Authorities in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq arrested Zebari in October 2020 along with four other journalists and activists. Following a grossly unfair trial, a court sentenced him to six years in prison on false charges of spying. The trial was tainted by allegations of torture and the use of coerced confessions. Twice, while Zebari was in prison, his sentence was extended on other bogus charges.

While Zebari's release is welcome, he should never have spent a single day behind bars.



Guhdar Zebari spent three years unjustly imprisoned.

Zimbabwe: Opposition leader Job Sikhala released

There was good news in Zimbabwe on July 22 when former member of parliament Job Sikhala was finally acquitted by the High Court of charges of "incitement to commit violence".

Sikhala was arrested with fellow opposition leader Godfrey Sithole and 14 other men in June 2022. Amnesty International issued an Urgent Action appeal following their arrest. Sikhala spent 595 days in pre-trial detention until he was released in January 2024 after receiving a suspended two-year prison sentence. But it took another six months of campaigning before Sikhala's wrongful conviction was quashed.

Despite the positive outcome in Sikhala's case, the Zimbabwean authorities are still cracking down on dissent. Since mid-June, more than 160 people have been arrested, including politicians, union leaders, students and journalists. Amnesty is demanding an end to such violations and for all detainees to be released.



Zimbabwe politician Job Sikhala waves as he enters a Harare courthouse

Türkiye: Eren Keskin acquitted of all charges

Eren Keskin is a prominent human rights lawyer and vice-president of the Turkish Human Rights Association. For decades, she has had to work in a climate of fear and intimidation. As far back as 1995, she was imprisoned for her human rights activities and declared a prisoner of conscience by Amnesty International.

On May 2, 2024, Eren won a victory in her long fight for justice when a court in Istanbul acquitted her of charges of "insulting the Turkish nation". She had been prosecuted for comments she made about the Armenian genocide of 1915.

Through the decades, Amnesty supporters have stood with Eren, responding to Urgent Action appeals when her life and safety were threatened. In 2016, Eren was one of the cases featured in that year's Write for Rights letter-writing marathon.



Eren Keskin reading solidarity messages from Amnesty supporters.



© Ahmad Hasbani/Getty Images

The Israeli offensive in Gaza has caused massive destruction and loss of life.

GAZA Thank you for supporting Amnesty's critical work on the ongoing crisis

A year has passed since Hamas-led armed groups entered Israel on October 7, 2023, killing at least 1,200 people and taking over 200 hostages. A year since Israeli military forces launched an offensive into Gaza that has destroyed a huge number of Gaza's homes, schools, hospitals, shelters, and refugee camps. Some 40,000 Palestinians have been killed and almost the entire population displaced.

In recent months, Amnesty International has been one of the few organizations working on the ground in Gaza. Budour Hassan, an Amnesty Israel and Palestine researcher, describes how Amnesty's staff visit locations in Gaza where strikes have taken place and collect evidence for analysis.

"It's very important that Amnesty remains active on the ground in Gaza," Budour says. "Because without solid methodology and solid human rights research, we cannot hold perpetrators of human rights violations accountable."



© Israel Figenbaum/SOPA Images/LightRocket/Getty Images

In July, security forces in Venezuela used lethal force against protesters.

VENEZUELA You're calling for an end to violence and repression

Following presidential elections in Venezuela on July 28, protesters faced a massive use of force by security personnel. There were at least 17 deaths, and lethal weapons were used by armed civilians allegedly linked to the security forces. In 10 days, over 2,000 people were arrested. Most of the detainees were young people, including at least 105 aged between 13 and 17. Among those detained were at least 16 people with disabilities.

Amnesty is urging the Venezuelan authorities to immediately release all those detained for protesting and to protect the right to peaceful protest.

Venezuela has been experiencing a serious and complex human rights crisis for at least 10 years. Amnesty International has regularly reported serious human rights violations, including crimes against humanity, and a humanitarian emergency. More than 25% of the population has fled the country.



© Oleksandr Magalich/Global Images/Ukraine/Getty Images

People clear rubble at a Kyiv children's hospital hit by a Russian missile in July.

UKRAINE You're speaking out against war crimes by Russian forces

The war in Ukraine has gone on for over ten years. It began in February 2014 when Russia occupied Ukraine's Crimea and took control of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. In 2022, Russia began a full-scale invasion, an act of aggression and a crime under international law.

Today, just as we have over the past decade, Amnesty International is documenting war crimes and other human rights violations in Ukraine. Since the start of the invasion in 2022, Russian forces have conducted indiscriminate attacks causing thousands of civilian casualties. Amnesty researchers are collecting mounting evidence of torture, sexual violence and unlawful killings. Russian forces have also littered Ukrainian territories with anti-personnel landmines which are a daily, deadly threat to civilians.

Those responsible for these gross human rights violations and crimes must be brought to justice. Your support means that Amnesty's investigations are providing important evidence to ensure this happens.

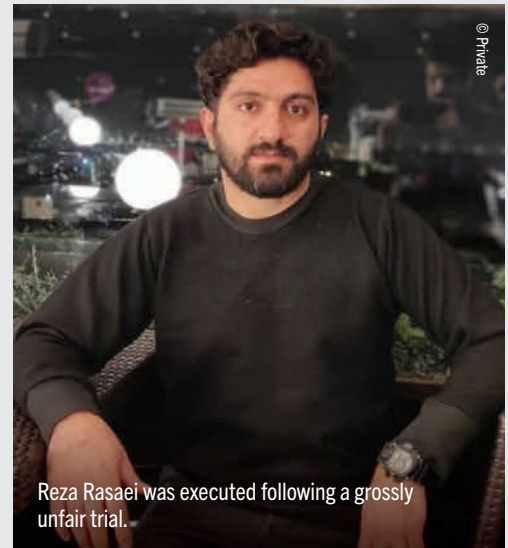


IRAN Amnesty condemns torture and execution of women's rights protester

On August 6, shocking news came out of Iran of the execution of a young man named Reza Rasaei.

Reza Rasaei's execution was connected to the "Woman Life Freedom" protests of 2022. Those protests were triggered by the death in custody of Mahsa Amini after her arrest for violating headscarf laws. At Rasaei's grossly unfair trial, he was found guilty of involvement in the death of a member of the security services. He had been tortured into signing a confession.

The scale of executions in Iran is horrific. A recent Amnesty International report exposed how the number of executions increased after the "Woman Life Freedom" protests. In 2023, 853 executions were recorded, and a further 274 executions were carried out in the first six months of 2024. Amnesty is calling on the international community to pressure the Iranian authorities into ending their use of the death penalty.



Reza Rasaei was executed following a grossly unfair trial.

SUDAN You exposed how the global trade in weapons is fuelling suffering

Despite an arms embargo, weapons flooding into Sudan are fuelling conflict and civilian suffering. A groundbreaking Amnesty investigation has exposed how weapons are entering the country from China, Russia, Serbia, Türkiye, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

More than 16,000 people have been killed since the conflict escalated between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces in April 2023. Amnesty researchers found that civilian casualties have been caused by indiscriminate strikes and direct attacks. War crimes have been committed. An estimated 11 million people have been internally displaced. Millions are at risk of famine.

By supplying arms to Sudan, countries such as China and Serbia, which have signed the Arms Trade Treaty, are violating their legal obligations. Amnesty is demanding they end the supply of arms and ammunition to Sudan.

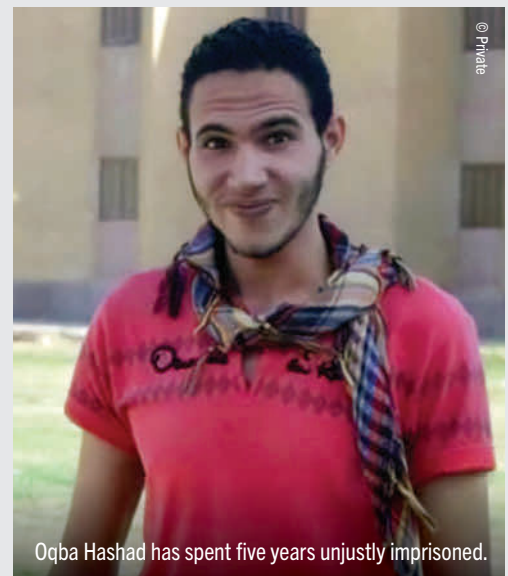


Members of a Sudanese armed group. Amnesty is demanding an end to the supply of arms to Sudan.

EGYPT You're demanding an end to enforced disappearances by security forces

Many donors will have recently received news from Amnesty International about Oqba Hashad, a young man in Egypt who was disappeared in May 2019 and then held in detention solely because of his brother's activism. Oqba's right leg is amputated above the knee and he uses a prosthetic leg to move unassisted. Adding to the scandal of Oqba's enforced disappearance and his unjust five-year detention is that prison authorities are cruelly denying him his prosthetic leg.

Oqba is one of many people in Egypt who have been subjected to enforced disappearance. At least 70 individuals arrested in 2023 were disappeared. One is lawyer Shaaban Mohamed who was arrested by security forces in January 2023 on a street in Giza. For six weeks, he was held in a security services facility where he was beaten, suspended and given electric shocks. The Egyptian authorities must end these shocking violations of human rights.



Oqba Hashad has spent five years unjustly imprisoned.

Wet'suwet'en Chief Dsta'hyl declared first Amnesty prisoner of conscience in Canada

Chief Dsta'hyl is being targeted for opposing the construction of a gas pipeline through the territory of the Wet'suwet'en First Nation.



© All McCracken/Amnesty International

In July, Amnesty International named Wet'suwet'en Chief Dsta'hyl a **prisoner of conscience**—someone detained solely for peacefully exercising their right to freedom of expression and association. **This is the first time that Amnesty has declared anyone a prisoner of conscience in Canada.** Amnesty's unprecedented announcement came after Chief Dsta'hyl was sentenced to 60 days of house arrest for defending the territory of Wet'suwet'en First Nation.

The federal and British Columbia governments targeted Chief Dsta'hyl for exercising his Indigenous and Charter rights when he opposed a massive gas pipeline that is being constructed right through the territory of the Wet'suwet'en. *"I've been convicted for protecting our own land while Wet'suwet'en laws have been sidelined,"* Chief Dsta'hyl said.

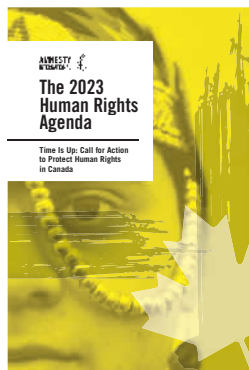
The Coastal GasLink pipeline, which is meant to transport natural gas to an export facility on the coast, has been opposed by all Wet'suwet'en clans. The Wet'suwet'en hold title and rights to their 22,000 square kilometers of territory, and their Hereditary Chiefs say **they have not consented to the pipeline.**

In 2023, an Amnesty report documented how land defenders peacefully opposed to the pipeline have been **arbitrarily detained.** When the trial of three other land defenders began in Smithers, BC, in June 2024, a team of Amnesty trial observers (see photo below) travelled from Europe and the Americas to

watch the court proceedings and show solidarity with Sleydo' Molly Wickham (Wet'suwet'en), Shaylynn Sampson (Gitksan) and Corey Jayohcee Jocko (Mohawk).

In Amnesty's Write for Rights 2024 event, letter-writers around the world will **call on Canada to stop criminalizing Wet'suwet'en and other Indigenous land defenders.**

Human Rights Agenda: Amnesty's annual score card and recommendations for Canada



Every year, Amnesty International publishes a Human Rights Agenda for Canada. In the Human Rights Agenda, Amnesty reviews Canada's domestic performance against its international human rights commitments over the past year, and we lay out concrete, actionable steps for Canada's federal and provincial governments to bring the country's human rights record in line with its obligations.

Our most recent Human Rights Agenda highlights multiple pressing challenges in the areas of Indigenous Peoples' rights, gender rights, racism and discrimination, refugee and migrant rights, human rights defenders, climate crisis and corporate accountability, Canada's foreign policy, and international human rights obligations.

The Human Rights Agenda is a vital resource for anyone with an interest in human rights in Canada. You can download the latest Human Rights Agenda at amnesty.ca/2023-human-rights-agenda



Through one action today, you can transform the future of human rights



"None of us lives forever, but our human rights activism will live on."—Atena Daemi



"We can still build a better world for humanity."—Bernardo Caal Xol



"We're all in this together and we have to take care of each other"—Ann Atkinson

A legacy is whatever we leave behind. What we are remembered for.

It is the impact we have on our loved ones and the rest of humanity through our words and actions.

Through Amnesty International, we are united by common values and a vision of a world where justice and human rights are enjoyed by everyone, not just a privileged few.

We each have a role to play.

Human rights defenders like Atena Daemi and Bernardo Caal Xol confront powerful governments and corporations to seek justice for their communities.

Meanwhile, Amnesty supporters like Ann, and you, donate, volunteer and write letters to these powerful entities in order

to support courageous human rights defenders.

You can also help build your own transformative human rights legacy through a gift in your Will to Amnesty International, once you have provided for your loved ones.

Together, we keep hope alive.

You can find out more on how your Will can help build a just world by requesting our **new, free guide to leaving a gift in your Will**. Please use the coupon enclosed, or contact our Legacy Giving Support Staff person, Hala Al-Madi, at halmadi@amnesty.ca or 613-744-7667 ext 223.

Scan here to hear more about Atena, Bernardo and Ann, and the future world we all aspire to.



SCAN HERE

Meet Sahra Omer, newest member of Amnesty's Supporter Services team



Sahra Omer joined Amnesty International's Supporter Services team in June. With over three years of experience in creative fundraising, Sahra has a keen ability to engage diverse audiences. Her expertise in research, media management, and digital marketing makes her a valuable addition to the team.

Before joining Amnesty, Sahra gained extensive experience working in government where she excelled in strategic communication and project management. Sahra's passion for communications and her commitment to making a positive impact have been the driving forces behind her career. She holds a BA in Global and International Studies and a Graduate Diploma in Interactive Media Management. Beyond her professional life, Sahra enjoys graphic design and calligraphy.

CONSIDER A GIFT OF STOCK

There is more than one way to help human rights work...

Your loyalty as a donor is truly appreciated and we wanted to let you know about another exciting way you could support human rights.

Did you know that you can make a gift of stocks or mutual fund units to Amnesty International?

There are significant tax advantages in donating your shares in stocks, including eliminating capital gains tax while also receiving a full market value tax receipt for your gift! This type of donation allows you to maximize your charitable giving.

For more information on giving a gift of stocks or mutual fund units, please visit amnesty.ca/stocks

Thank you for your generous support!

WRITE A LETTER. CHANGE A LIFE.

On December 10th, International Human Rights Day, Amnesty supporters in Canada and around the world will be Writing for Rights, sending letters, emails and petitions to take action on critical global cases. Join the world's largest human rights advocacy event. You are needed more than ever.

Join us. It's easy to take part!

Whether you want to take part on your own or join one of the many events being planned across Canada, we're here to help.

Register now for Write for Rights 2024

Go to amnesty.ca/write-for-rights to sign up, email us at writeathon@amnesty.ca, or phone us at 1-800-266-3789 to register or to find out more about how to get involved.



Free holiday cards for Amnesty donors

As a way of thanking you for so generously supporting the work of human rights defenders, we'd like to offer you some free Amnesty International greeting cards.

To order your cards, please fill out the enclosed coupon, phone us at 1-800-AMNESTY (1-800-266-3789) or email members@amnesty.ca

Thank you for your loyal support which makes all of Amnesty's work possible!

