



Mahmoud Khalil and his wife, Noor, in New York following his release from U.S. immigration detention. Mahmoud was unlawfully detained for exercising his rights to freedom of expression. © KENA BETANCUR/AFP via Getty Images

## “Your messages kept me going!”

### Mahmoud Khalil: Released after three months of unjust detention

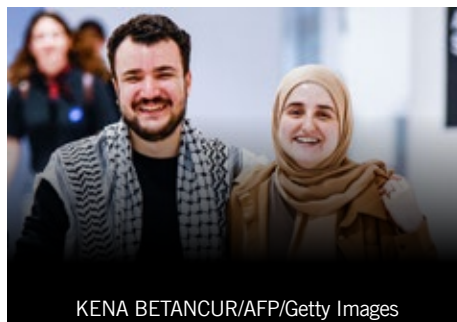
There was good news on June 20 when Palestinian activist Mahmoud Khalil was finally freed from US immigration detention on the orders of a federal judge.

A lawful US permanent resident and recent graduate of Columbia University in New York, Mahmoud was arrested on March 8 at the student housing building where he lived. The immigration officials who took him into custody threatened to detain his wife, Noor Abdalla, a US citizen. At the time of Mahmoud’s detention, Noor was expecting their first child, who was born just a few weeks later.

Shortly after his arrest, Mahmoud

was transferred 2,000 km away to Louisiana and held there for the next three months. Mahmoud was detained solely for his involvement in peaceful protests at Columbia University. He was one of the organizers of the Gaza Solidarity Encampment on campus and regularly spoke to the media and negotiated with university officials.

Mahmoud’s case is part of a chilling trend. Around the time of his arrest, nine other international students were also detained and their visas or residency status revoked. Like Mahmoud, these nine students



KENA BETANCUR/AFP/Getty Images

had spoken out against the war in Gaza and the US government’s support for it.

Noor Abdalla tirelessly led the fight to win her husband’s release, and Amnesty International supporters around the world enthusiastically added their voices to her campaign. When Amnesty issued an Urgent Action appeal, thousands of activists wrote to the US government demanding Mahmoud’s release.

***“Your messages kept me going. Still the fight is far from over, the genocide is still happening in Gaza, Israel is still waging a full war against Palestine. The U.S. government is funding this genocide, and Columbia University is investing in this genocide. This is why I was protesting, this is why I will continue protesting with every one of you!”***

# GOOD NEWS



Mariame Dabo works to raise community awareness on women's and girls' rights. © Amnesty International

## WEST AFRICA

### How human rights education is helping to combat gender-based violence

*"Being a victim of female genital mutilation myself led me to work alongside girls to support them, and to raise parents' awareness so that they would stop this practice,"* says Mariame Dabo, who lives in Senegal. Mariame works with Amnesty International to raise community awareness on women's and girls' rights and support survivors of gender-based violence. *"I'm very optimistic, but I know it won't be easy! It's a long-term battle"* she says.

In 60 communities in Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Burkina Faso, Amnesty is using a human rights education approach to combat all forms of gender-based violence. This work, which is made possible through your generous support, has reached many thousands of people.

*"Through our activities with Amnesty International and other partners, we have managed to bring men, women, and youth together,"* Mariame says. *"We organize talks, training sessions, and intergenerational dialogues to discuss early marriage, gender-based violence, and human rights."*



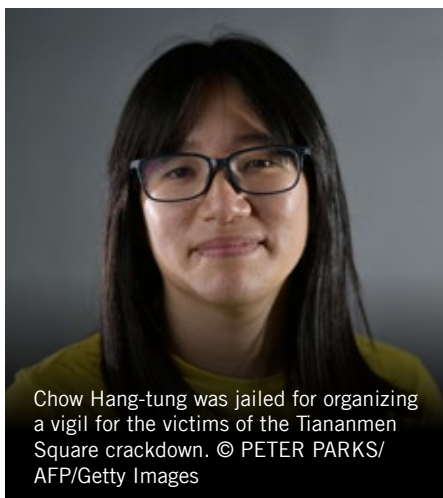
Amnesty members long campaigned for the release of Native American activist Leonard Peltier. © Gavrilah Wells/Amnesty International

## USA

### Leonard Peltier leaves prison after almost 50 years

Before leaving office in January, President Joe Biden commuted the life sentence of Indigenous elder and activist Leonard Peltier, allowing him to finish the remainder of his sentence under home confinement with his loved ones and community.

Peltier, a Native American activist, was imprisoned for nearly 50 years for the murders of two FBI agents in 1975—a crime he maintains he did not commit. Amnesty International had long campaigned for the U.S. government to grant Leonard Peltier clemency. There were serious human rights concerns about the fairness of his trial, to which Amnesty sent observers in 1977. Evidence was withheld by the prosecution, and a key witness, who initially claimed to have seen Peltier kill the agents, later retracted her testimony and said it had been coerced through threats and harassment from FBI agents.



Chow Hang-tung was jailed for organizing a vigil for the victims of the Tiananmen Square crackdown. © PETER PARKS/AFP/Getty Images

## HONG KONG

### Chow Hang-tung wins case at top court

Chow Hang-tung is a brilliant young human rights lawyer imprisoned in Hong Kong for organizing vigils to commemorate the victims of the Tiananmen

Square crackdown in 1989.

In March, Hong Kong's Court of Final Appeal ruled in favour of Chow Hang-tung and two other Tiananmen vigil activists. The police had accused them of being "foreign agents" and charged them with inciting subversion. The five judges of the Court of Final Appeal ruled that a lower court had made serious errors in their case.

Despite this court victory, Chow Hang-tung remains in prison because of other allegations made against her. Amnesty International supporters have long spoken in defence of Chow Hang-tung, with many supporters adding their names to a petition demanding that the Hong Kong authorities free her.

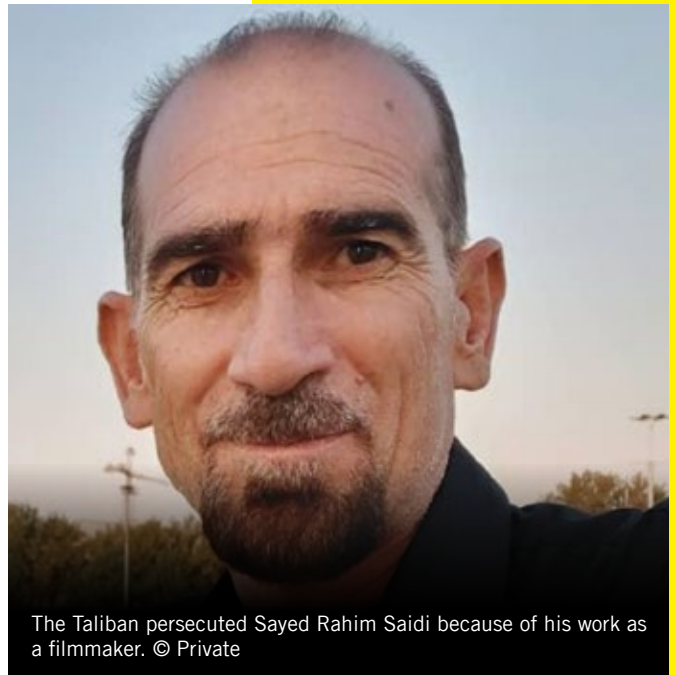


## AFGHANISTAN

### Filmmaker Sayed Rahim Saidi freed

In July, filmmaker Sayed Rahim Saidi was released in Afghanistan after 11 months in jail. Sayed, who worked for over two decades with Afghanistan National TV, had been detained along with his son in 2024 by the Taliban. His son was soon released, but Sayed was accused of spreading propaganda against the Taliban, a charge based on his past films, as well as a film he was planning to make about the Taliban's ban on girls' education.

Amnesty International issued an Urgent Action appeal following Sayed's detention and raised the profile of his case around the world. Sayed was kept in solitary confinement for months. He was denied access to a lawyer and endured serious illness without adequate healthcare. In December 2024, Sayed was subjected to an unfair trial. Brought before a judge with his hands and legs chained and forced to confess, he was unjustly sentenced to three years' imprisonment.



The Taliban persecuted Sayed Rahim Saidi because of his work as a filmmaker. © Private

## SAUDI ARABIA

### Prisoner of conscience Abdulaziz al-Shubaily released

On July 13, Saudi human rights defender and prisoner of conscience Abdulaziz al-Shubaily was conditionally released from prison after serving an eight-year prison sentence. Despite his release, he remains banned from travelling and using social media.

Abdulaziz al-Shubaily was a founding member of the Saudi Civil and Political Rights Association (ACPRA), an organization that helped families of long-term untried detainees. Before it was disbanded, ACPRA was one of Saudi Arabia's few independent human rights organizations.

From 2012, the Saudi Arabian authorities began intensifying their crackdown on human rights defenders. ACPRA was among the organizations targeted, and Abdulaziz al-Shubaily was repeatedly interrogated because of his work. He was put through an unfair trial and found guilty on bogus charges. One of the charges against him concerned sharing information with Amnesty International that was then used in two of Amnesty's reports.



Abdulaziz al-Shubaily helped found one of Saudi Arabia's few independent human rights organizations. © Private

## TÜRKIYE

### Taner Kılıç: "I thank each and every one who stood up for me!"

Taner Kılıç, a refugee rights lawyer and former Chair of Amnesty International's Türkiye section, has finally been acquitted after nearly eight years of judicial proceedings.

Arrested in June 2017, he was unjustly convicted in 2020 despite no credible evidence. Taner



Taner Kılıç endured an eight-year ordeal through Türkiye's courts. © Amnesty International

faced more than six years in prison for "membership of a terrorist organization". Amnesty provided relief support to him and his family

as they endured the ordeal of his imprisonment.

In a thank-you message to Amnesty supporters, Taner said: *"This nightmare that has gone on for almost eight years is finally over. The only thing I was sure of throughout this process was that I was right and innocent, and the support from all over the world gave me strength. I thank each and every one who stood up for me!"*

# NEWS UPDATES

## SYRIA

### You're calling on the new government to address a legacy of abuses

For five decades, Amnesty International investigated and documented human rights violations in Syria committed by the governments of Hafez al-Assad and his son Bashar al-Assad. Under the Assads' rule, more than 100,000 people are estimated to have been forcibly disappeared. Arbitrary arrest and torture were commonly used by the security forces to crush dissent.

Following Bashar al-Assad's ouster in December 2024, Syria's new transitional government, led by President Ahmad al-Sharaa, has a crucial opportunity to break with the past. This opportunity must not be squandered. Amnesty International is calling on Syria's new government to take concrete steps towards justice and truth and undertake urgent reforms to prevent further violations. This is the only way to address the country's legacy of human rights abuses.

Amnesty supporters have campaigned for decades for an end to human rights abuses in Syria. © Scott Olson/Getty Images



President Trump's administration is fully embracing authoritarian tactics. © Andrew Harnik/Getty Images

## USA

### You're demanding an end to cruelty, chaos, and attacks on human rights

President Donald Trump's second presidency has ushered in an escalating human rights crisis. "President Trump has led with cruelty and chaos," says Paul O'Brien, Amnesty USA's Executive Director. "The Trump administration has fully embraced authoritarian tactics."

In the face of hostility towards those defending human rights, Amnesty International is pushing back against the president's discriminatory policies and dangerous rhetoric. Since Trump's return to office, Amnesty has taken action to oppose many of the president's worst actions including:

his targeting of immigrants through mass deportations; his attacks on freedom of expression and the right to protest; his undermining of the rule of law by disregarding court orders, threatening judges and attacking law firms; his undermining of press freedom by targeting journalists and suing media outlets; his attacks on the rights of women and LGBTQIA+ communities; and his marginalizing of Black and other racialized communities.



Amnesty supporters in Berlin, Germany, protest the ongoing genocide in Gaza. © Hannes P Albert/Picture-Alliance/Getty Images

## GAZA

### Evidence points to Israel's use of starvation to inflict genocide

The Israeli authorities are using starvation as a weapon of war and a way to inflict genocide on Palestinians in Gaza. Amnesty International researchers have gathered testimonies from medical staff, parents of children hospitalized for malnutrition, and displaced people struggling to survive. These testimonies paint a horrifying picture of starvation and desperation. Israel's actions have had a particularly devastating impact on young children and pregnant and breastfeeding women.

Following Israel's imposition of a new "aid" scheme this year, hundreds of Palestinians were killed and thousands injured near or while on their way to distribution sites. Meanwhile, hundreds of aid trucks carrying desperately needed supplies have been stuck outside Gaza, waiting for Israeli permission to enter.

Amnesty International is demanding that Israel allow access to aid throughout Gaza. As the occupying power, Israel has a legal obligation to ensure Palestinians have access to food and medicine.



## SUDAN

### You're calling for aid for millions of displaced people

Sudan has the largest number of displaced people in the world. Since armed conflict broke out in April 2023, over 11 million people have fled their homes. Many live in dire conditions, including in Darfur, one of the regions most severely affected by fighting. Cases of cholera have been reported.

The rainy season in Darfur lasts between June and September, and this year the rainy season has worsened an already catastrophic situation. Displaced people told Amnesty International researchers that they are desperate for food, shelter, water, and medical services. Amnesty is calling on Sudan's international partners to increase emergency funding for the humanitarian response in Sudan.

"More must be done to save lives," says Tigere Chagutah, Amnesty International's Director for East and Southern Africa. "The international community cannot afford to look away."



Sudan's rainy season has worsened the dire conditions in camps for displaced people. © AFP/Getty Images



The site of a Russian missile strike on the city of Sumy, Ukraine. © Eugene Abrasimov/Global Images Ukraine/Getty Images

## RUSSIA/UKRAINE

### You spoke out against indiscriminate attacks on civilians

Amnesty International investigators have been in Ukraine collecting evidence at the sites of indiscriminate Russian missile strikes.

Civilian casualties from Russian attacks have increased significantly in Ukraine this year. Sumy is a city of 200,000, approximately 40 kilometres from the border with Russia. Russian forces have been firing unguided Grad rockets into Sumy, killing civilians. The Ukrainian authorities report 80 to 120 shellings each day in the Sumy area. Grad rockets cannot be precisely aimed, and in civilian areas their use fails to differentiate between military targets and civilians. Indiscriminate attacks that kill or injure civilians may constitute a war crime.

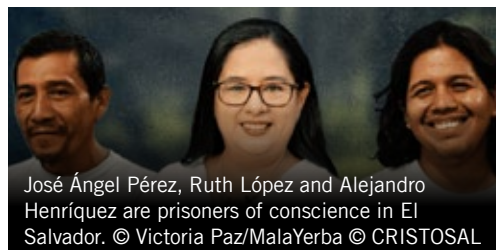
"Our research has shown how Grad rockets have caused death and destruction across a wide area of Sumy. These indiscriminate attacks must be investigated as war crimes," said Brian Castner, Amnesty International's Head of Crisis Research.

## EL SALVADOR

### You're supporting courageous prisoners of conscience

In El Salvador, human rights defenders are being increasingly harassed and persecuted under the rule of President Nayib Bukele. Among them are prisoners of conscience Ruth López, Alejandro Henríquez, and José Ángel Pérez.

Ruth is a lawyer well-known for fighting corruption. In May, she was arrested



José Ángel Pérez, Ruth López and Alejandro Henríquez are prisoners of conscience in El Salvador. © Victoria Paz/MalaYerba © CRISTOSAL

and later charged with illicit enrichment, but Amnesty International is aware of no evidence that she was involved in such a crime. José Ángel is a pastor and community leader, and Alejandro is a lawyer and environmental defender. Both

were arrested for peacefully protesting the forced eviction of a community of 300 families.

Amnesty has joined local human rights organizations in raising the alarm about the risks that human rights defenders face under the authoritarian practices of President Bukele. The Salvadoran authorities must release all prisoners of conscience and must stop persecuting those who peacefully exercise their right to free speech.

# CANADA

## Amnesty delivers thousands of letters of support to Wet'suwet'en land defenders

Earlier this year, Amnesty International had the honour of travelling to Wet'suwet'en territory and delivering more than 26,000 letters of solidarity to land defenders who have been criminalized, intimidated, and harassed for resisting the construction of the Coastal GasLink pipeline.

The letters were written by people around the world who had taken



part in Amnesty's Write for Rights letter-writing campaign. A solidarity canoe was made by transforming thousands of letters into a paper canoe. The canoe, which carried the spirit of international unity, was an offering to Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs and community members.

During their visit to Wet'suwet'en

territory, the Amnesty team did follow-up research on proposed industrial sites linked to the Coastal GasLink pipeline. The latest developments are deeply concerning, not only because of their environmental and climate impacts, but also from the perspective of free, prior, and informed consent and the increasing criminalization of Wet'suwet'en land defenders.

## Canada's new border bill is an attack on refugees' right to seek asylum

Amnesty International Canada has been raising the alarm and speaking out against Bill C-2, the federal government's new border bill, which would make it virtually impossible for most people entering Canada via the U.S. to have their refugee claim reviewed by the Immigration and Refugee Board. The bill would also



effectively block people who have been in Canada for more than a year from seeking refugee status. As a result,

people who face persecution, torture, or worse in their countries of origin could be unfairly denied refugee protection by Canada.

"Seeking asylum is a human right," said Ketty Niyabandi, Secretary General of Amnesty International Canada. "With Bill C-2, the Canadian government threatens to chip away at that right, making it harder for people seeking safety and freedom to file an asylum claim and have it assessed fairly."



Amnesty spoke out against offensive remarks made by Premier Doug Ford in defence of Bill 5. © Katherine KY Cheng/Getty Images

## New Ontario law threatens Indigenous rights and environmental justice

Following Bill 5 becoming law in Ontario in July, Amnesty International is calling on the provincial government to repeal it. The law would see the creation of "special economic zones" where critical provincial laws, including those protecting endangered species, clean water, and consultation with Indigenous Nations, may be suspended to fast-track development.

In defence of Bill 5, Ontario Premier Doug Ford told reporters that First Nations "can't just keep coming hat in hand all the time to the government". Although Premier Ford has since apologized for his offensive and racist words, they reveal a worldview in which Indigenous Peoples are seen as obstacles to economic development, rather than as sovereign Nations with constitutionally and internationally protected rights.





# FUNDRAISE TO HELP DEFEND FREEDOM, DIGNITY & JUSTICE AROUND THE WORLD.

At Amnesty International Canada, we believe that change begins with ordinary people taking extraordinary action. This is why we're calling on our supporters to go beyond solidarity and take action by launching a personal fundraiser in support of human rights.

If you're passionate about protecting peaceful protest, advocating for refugee rights, or challenging systemic injustice, help us raise vital funds for Amnesty's global research, advocacy, and rapid response work. Every dollar you fundraise supports human rights defenders, legal justice efforts, and the fight to hold governments accountable.



## Honour a Life. Celebrate a Milestone.

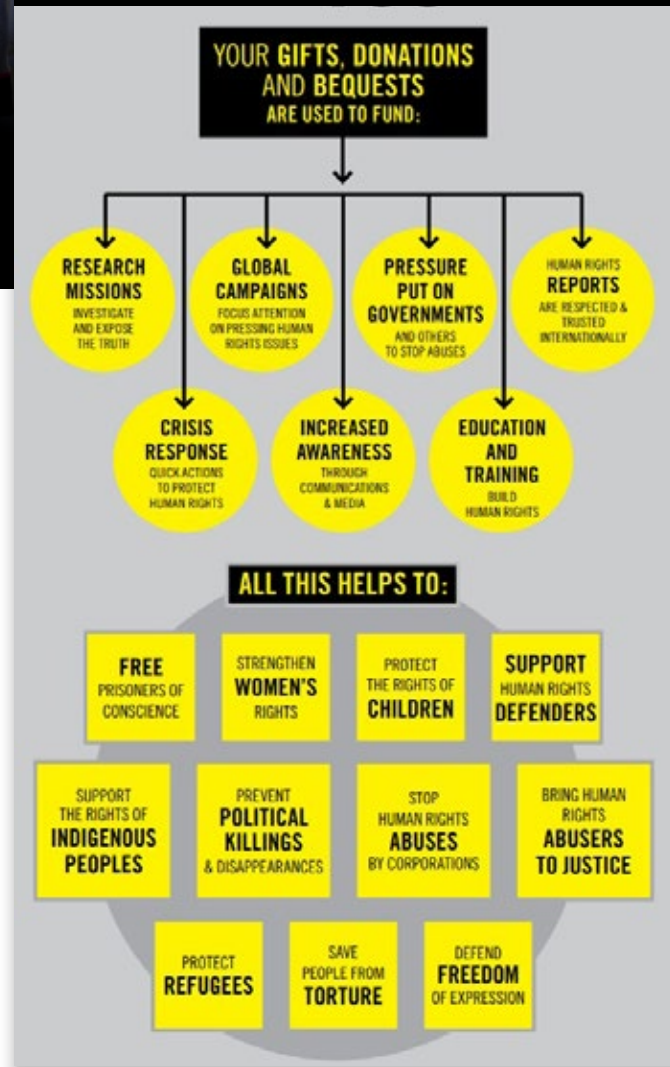
Peer-to-peer fundraising isn't just about donations, it's about people. When you bring Amnesty into your circle, with your friends, family, or community, you create a ripple effect of awareness, action, and impact that we simply can't do alone. Mark your birthday, graduation, wedding, retirement, or honour the memory of a loved one by inviting friends and family to donate in their name. It's a powerful way to celebrate while making a lasting impact in the fight for justice, truth, dignity, and freedom for all.

Change starts with people like you, and you have the power to turn your moment into a movement! Fundraise for Change with Amnesty International Canada by contacting [members@amnesty.ca](mailto:members@amnesty.ca).

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Visit [epiloguewills.com/give/amnesty-international](https://epiloguewills.com/give/amnesty-international) or scan this QR code to save 20% off the cost of your estate planning.



## DONOR SPOTLIGHT

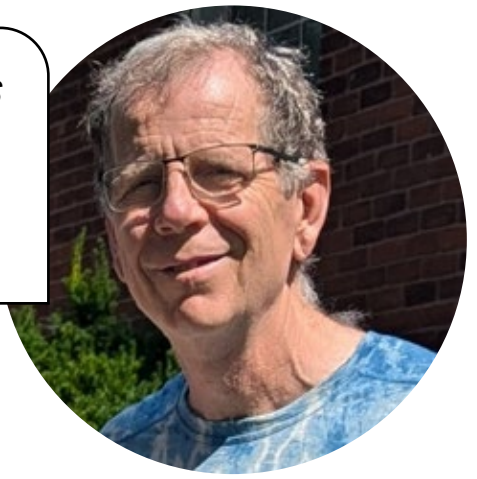
### MICHAEL GREEN ON WHY HE SUPPORTS AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

I am 66 years old. I retired two years ago after a satisfying career as a lawyer representing injured workers with their claims. For the last 45 years or so, I've volunteered to support nuclear disarmament, international human rights and climate action. Amnesty International has been the vehicle for my human rights work—whether as a participant in Write for Rights, my local Amnesty group, or as a donor.

When Amnesty started in the UK in 1961, I was two years old. I had little knowledge of Amnesty until I went to law school and worked for a student legal clinic. Once a week, I went from the school to the Latin American Centre nearby to do intake of new clients. At the centre, I got to know a lawyer who did refugee work and who was a member of Amnesty, and I ended up taking on some refugee cases myself. I found the clients' accounts of their experiences deeply moving.

*"To my mind, Amnesty's research is the best of its kind."*

MICHAEL GREEN  
AMNESTY DONOR



Lately, most of my volunteering is devoted to climate action. Canada is further behind on the climate crisis than it is on protecting human rights. But I know that both issues are urgent and becoming more urgent with each passing year. I've learned that progress is not inevitable, and in both cases, diligence, persistence, integrity and imagination will be required for us to move forward. The principles are straightforward, but getting there isn't easy.

What I most appreciate about Amnesty is its in-depth research of the human rights situation in countries around the world. To my mind, it's the best of its kind. Amnesty's global reach allows it to support human rights defenders, including environmental defenders, everywhere. In this way, my local volunteer work in support of climate action is integrated with my donations. I'm very happy to support Amnesty International. Indeed, it's the only cause that I give to!

## 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](mailto:members@amnesty.ca).

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

