

# FREEDOM

## ISSUE 2020/3

### WRITE FOR RIGHTS



**WRITE  
FOR  
RIGHTS**

AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL



AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL  
THAILAND





*"Your letters strengthen my wife's and my resolve, help us to know we did not fight alone, but many other people called for justice for us."*

*"Ten years ago I had no dream, and now I have lost countless goals. I want every single Kyrgyz to be able to live a colourful life and dream of their future."*

**GULZAR DUISHENOVA**

A Kyrgyz woman human rights defender who fought for the rights of disabled people.

In 2018, Amnesty supporters sent letters to the Kyrgyzstan government. In 2019, the parliament ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, to solve the issue of discrimination and to support access to health services, buildings, employment, and travel.



**YECENIA ARMENTA**

**JERRYME CORRE**

A truck driver from the Philippines.

Released in 2016 after being imprisoned for 4 years for a murder he did not commit but had been tortured into confessing to. After global pressure, the Philippines authorities reexamined the case. Eventually, the police officers who tortured him were imprisoned.

*"When I received all these letters saying that I was not alone, it made me feel great. It's exciting to know that there are people who concern about other people's rights, even when they didn't even know me personally."*

A Mexican mother of two.

Got her charge dropped and was released in 2016, after plainclothes police kidnapped, tortured, and raped her for 15 hours, to force her to confess her involvement in her husband's murder.



**MAHADINE**

An online activist from Chad.

Released in 2018 after spending more than 18 months in prison for allegedly being a threat to national security. He was at first given a life sentence at the end of 2016 for an online video that criticized the government for its failure to manage the national finances and the possibility of a financial crisis.

In December every year, more than a hundred thousand people around the world will write many letters to victims of human rights abuse, while many others also mail letters to the government of the countries where the abuse has occurred.

In 2019, Amnesty supporters around the world broke the **"Write for Rights"** campaign record with the highest number of participants ever, with emails, tweets, and many other communications adding up to **6,609,837 messages**. Each year, participants from around the world will send their letters to pressure governments of many countries to stop human rights abuses and bring justice to the people involved, along with many messages to support the victims and their families directly, so they know they are not alone. This campaign has been going on for 18 years.



**TEODORA VÁSQUEZ**

An El Salvador woman.

Released in 2018 after a court had sentenced her to 30 years in prison for an illegal abortion, while she was suffering from bleeding and in pain. Many people globally signed their names to call for her release.

*"The support of everyone around the world is the greatest power for a woman like me. Every signature called for my release to change my entire life. Now I'm free. It's not a dream, but a reality."*

*"I am very honored to be among the cases that you have selected for your Write for Rights campaign. I am honored to know people like you who denounce the injustices committed by the authorities and governments. You have brought joy into my heart. Thank you."*



**Zunar**

Malaysian cartoonist.

The Malaysian government has dropped all charges against "Zunar", the famous cartoonist, in 2018 after he had criticized the government on Twitter. The government had used the Sedition Act of 1948, which has been criticized for being used to limit the freedom of expression online.

*"I'm a cartoonist, so I draw cartoons. But if you can write, can speak in public, drawing, sing, then you can freely express your opinion too. We just have to keep doing what we can do."*

*"I want to thank everyone in the name of Istanbul 10 for your efforts to release us. I'm very grateful from the bottom of my heart. Without your efforts, we would never be here."*



**IDIL ESSER**

The director of Amnesty International Turkey.

Released in 2018 after 6 months in jail along with 9 other activists who became known as Istanbul 10. They were being held without charges or a clear justification, so many people called for their release.

## WRITE A LETTER, CHANGE A LIFE

Illustration by art\_nonz

*"I wish I had the time and ability to thank each one of you for giving me a little bit of joy with each letter and card."*

**CHELSEA MANNING**

The Hero who exposed the evidence of the US Army's human rights abuses.

She was freed in 2017 after serving 7 years of a 35-year sentence for releasing sensitive information, one of them a video of US forces shooting at unarmed citizens in Iraq.



**MAHMOUD ABOU ZEID aka SHAWKAN**

Photojournalist from Egypt.

Released in 2019 after spending 5 years and a half in prison on false charges. He was arrested while he documented the protest when the Egyptian army murdered around 800-1,000 protesters in cold blood. The incident was later known as the Rabaa massacre.

*"I would like to thank you for everything that had been done for me. I'm very fortunate to have people like you on earth, and I'm very grateful that I have all of you being like my friends."*

*"Your letters are not just letters, but also a gift and the greatest empowerment both for the students and the future of Myanmar. I start to realize that the world is watching and cheering for us. That we are not alone."*



**PHYOE PHYOE AUNG**

One of the leaders of the Myanmar student union.

Got her charge dropped and was released in 2016, after being arrested along with other 100 students who came out to protest an education law that threatens freedom of education.

*"Thank you all Amnesty supporters. Your campaign has succeeded in getting me released. We can come this far when we work together."*

**YORM BOPHA**

A Cambodian human rights defender.

Released in 2013, she had been arrested after participating in a protest against her community's forced eviction and faced bogus charges. While the charges have not dropped, she has been allowed to return home.



**HAKEEM AL-ARAIBI**

Australian refugee and footballer of Bahraini descent.

Released from 2 months in custody at the hands of the Thai government following an Interpol red notice issued by Bahrain for vandalism of a police station during the Arab Spring. After his release, he arrived back in Australia the next day and received citizenship a month later.

*"I'm so happy to receive my citizenship today. I feel 100% safe. Nobody in this world can track me down like in Bahrain ever again. Now, I'm an Australian, and I live in a safe country."*



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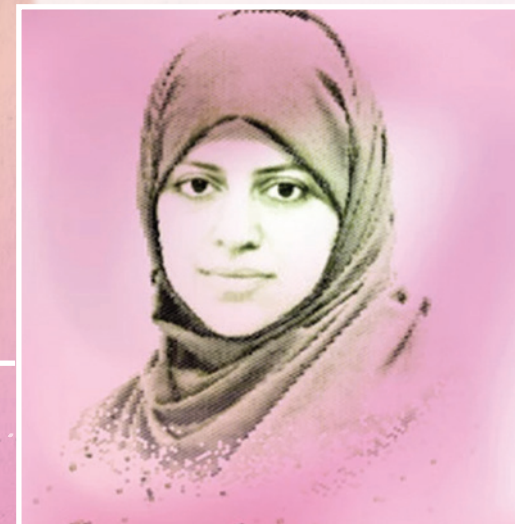
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## **METU PRIDE DEFENDERS** Turkey



Prosecuted for celebrating LGBTI Rights  
The LGBTI Group was established at METU University in 1996. They have organized a yearly march for LGBTI people on the campus since 2011. However, in 2019, The university's administration said it would not allow the university march on May 10.  
The group did not accept this order and sat in a peaceful protest instead of a march. The university called the police who dispersed the peaceful gathering by firing tear gas at the demonstrators. The police arrested at least 23 students, including Meliki, Erzkur, and one other scholar. Some detainees did not even participate in the rally. Merely for exercising the right to peaceful assembly, 18 students and academics now face a court case. If found guilty, they may receive a sentence of three years in prison.



## **NASSIMA AL-SADA** Saudi Arabia

Locked up for demanding women's rights.  
Nassi has spent most of her life campaigning for women's freedom in Saudi Arabia. The cost of her campaign is her freedom. She is one of the feminists campaigning for the right to drive cars and go out on daily errands without needing permission from a male "guardian". Since her arrest in July 2018, she has been locked up in solitary confinement, treated cruelly and humiliated for her efforts to protect women's rights.

# **TAKE ACTION AND PROTECT THEIR RIGHTS TODAY**

## **KHALED DRARENI** Algeria



Jailed for his journalism.  
When the Hirak movement first began, Khalid was one of the first independent journalists to report on the weekly protests and record all police violence. But he was considered an opponent of the authorities, and he was arrested several times.  
On March 27, 2020, Khaled was arrested while reporting on a demonstration. He has been charged with inciting the unarmed assembly. Although he only served as a reporter, he was sentenced to imprisonment simply for doing his job.



Scan to sign

Amnesty's "Write for Rights" has returned. We invite Thais who care about social problems to come and join the campaign as an encouragement to those trapped in the cycle of injustice all over the world.  
Your little voice has great power. Without your help, the justice they deserve could be further delayed. You can help them by signing up to appeal for justice for the **METU** students from Turkey, **Nassima al-Sada** from Saudi Arabia, and **Khaled Drarenii** from Algeria.





## FRIENDS OF WANCHALEARM AND AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL DEMAND TO KNOW THE PROGRESS IN THE INVESTIGATION OF WANCHALEARM'S DISAPPEARANCE. #6MonthsOnWeShallNotForget

Friends of Wanchalearm and activists from Amnesty International Thailand organized an event the Cambodian Embassy in Thailand on the occasion of the six-month anniversary of Wanchalearm's disappearance and submitted 14,157 signatures supporting an appeal to the Cambodian authorities for an efficient, urgent, comprehensive and transparent investigation of the matter to restore justice for Wanchalearm's family. The participants wore colourful Hawaiian shirts of the kind that Wanchalearm wore regularly along with Wanchalearm masks and invited everyone to post #6MonthsOnWeShallNotForget to show that everyone still remembers and is still monitoring the case.

*"We continue to reaffirm the original request for the Cambodian authorities to expedite the investigation of the disappearance of Wanchalearm to be effective, urgent, comprehensive, and transparent, and promptly return justice to the families of the missing. In the past 6 months, there has been no progress in the case. Wanchalearm will never disappear from our memory. For six months we have never forgotten Wanchalearm. And we will never stop asking for justice for Wanchalearm and his family."* Piyanut Kotsan, Director of Amnesty International Thailand.

Scan to read



'Child in Mob' is an informal gathering or task force of people and organizations based on the principle **"in the best interests of the child"**. The volunteers in the Child in Mob team mostly come from the staff from various groups and organizations, including Hinghoy Noy, Amnesty International Thailand, Childline Thailand Foundation and individual volunteers to create a safe area for children and youth to participate in public gatherings following the universal human rights principles.

*"Children are the first group to be removed from violent areas. It also prevents child abuse from face exposure, either by the media or by opportunistic criminals. This activity received a good response from parents and youth who attended the rally,"* said **Ruangtup Kaeokamechun**, co-founder of the 'Child in Mob' group

## 'CHILD IN MOB' COLOR TAG ON A WRIST BAND. PROTECT YOUTH IN THE MOB FROM VIOLENCE



## 'FREEDOM TO ASSEMBLY IS A WEAPON THAT POWERFUL PEOPLE FEAR'

Amnesty International Thailand hosted a live forum broadcast on Facebook under the topic **'Online Human Rights Classroom: International Standards and Freedom of Assembly'** with lecturer **Dr. Pat Niyomsilp** of the Faculty of Law, Chulalongkorn University, and **Petcharat Saksirivetkul**, Head of Campaign at Amnesty International Thailand, and moderated by **Yingcheep Atchanont**, Manager of iLaw.

*"Freedom to assembly is a test of how well society guarantees other freedoms because assembly requires many freedoms, such as freedom of expression, freedom of communication, freedom to travel. Freedom of assembly is the weapon of the poor and the weak. When gathered together, it'll make the people in power scared. Once feared, it opened up room for negotiations and some structural changes. When there's an assembly, we ask for calmness, peace, and the absence of weapons"* said **Dr. Pat Niyomsilp**, Faculty of Law, Chulalongkorn University.



Scan to watch



Scan to read

## HUMAN RIGHTS QUIZ

Amnesty International Thailand invites you to join in the fun, answer simple questions, and win prizes. Just fill out the answers and personal details and take a picture of your answer sheet, then email it to **media@amnesty.or.th** by **January 25, 2021** (email subject: **Human Rights Prize**)

Q

What is Amnesty's "Write for Rights" campaign?

A

Q

This year, Amnesty International Thailand is inviting its supporters to send appeal for justice in three cases where human rights have been violated. What are the names of the victims?

A

Q

In 2019, how many messages did Amnesty supporters around the world send in the "Write for Rights" activity?

A

If you get all three answers correct, you will enter a lucky draw. 10 people will receive an **Amnesty "Cover Your Mouth, Not Opinions" facemask** and will be notified by 5 February 2021.

\*Note: Only those who have not previously received an award from this event are eligible.

Please clearly fill in the information

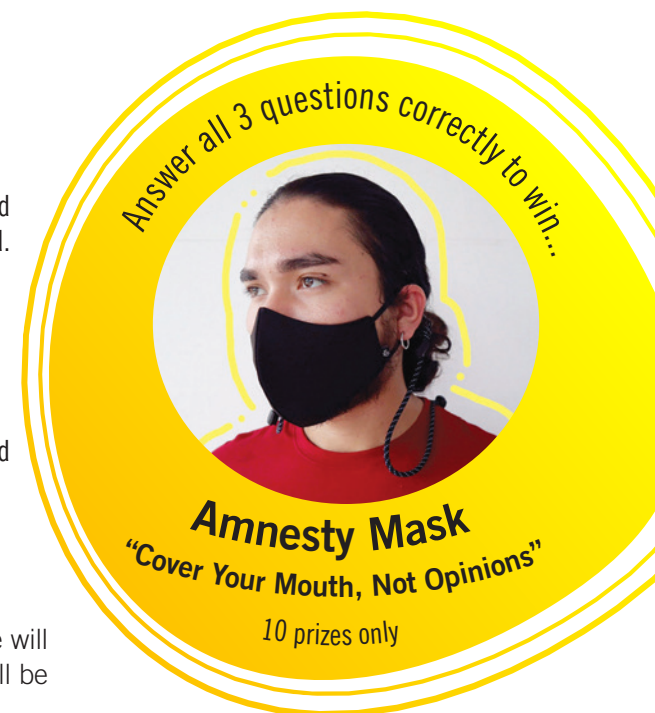
Name \_\_\_\_\_ Gender ☐ Female ☐ Male ☐ Other

Age group ☐ under 15 ☐ 15-20 ☐ 21-30 ☐ 31-40  
☐ 41-50 ☐ 50-60 ☐ over 60

Are you an Amnesty member? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_



## JOIN AMNESTY, PROTECT HUMAN RIGHTS

Amnesty International is a membership movement. The power and support of its members are essential to drive its campaigns. A growing membership base means we can become stronger and more powerful, which is the key to our work to protect and promote human rights.

**Annual membership for youth (Up to 25 years old):** 200 baht per year  
**Annual membership for the general public:** 500 baht per year



Scan the QR Code to apply for/renew your Amnesty membership

For more information on Amnesty membership, please contact: **Membership and Fundraising Department** by phone at **02-513-8745** or by email at **membership@amnesty.or.th**.



Wearing a shirt or using Amnesty products says you support human rights! The profit from every order will be used to support our campaign, scan the QR Code to shop!



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# WHAT IS AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL?

Amnesty International is an organization of ordinary people from diverse career fields who cannot maintain silence in the face of injustice and human rights violations no matter where in the world and who take action in the belief that every person can campaign for the respect, protection, and defence of human rights. Amnesty International was established in 1961, and the organisation was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1977. Today, there are more than 7 million supporters in over 150 countries.

After the 6<sup>th</sup> October 1976 massacre of Thai students, Amnesty became known in Thailand from its **prisoner of conscience** campaign. Over 100,000 letters from people all around the world were sent to the Thai government requesting the release of students and citizens. At present, Amnesty has over 1,000 members in Thailand carries out a wide range of activities for promoting knowledge, understanding, and campaigns for protection and defence of human rights.

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