

Sri Lanka: End Arbitrary Detention Now!

April 5, 2013

President Mahinda Rajapaksa
Presidential Secretariat
Colombo 1, Sri Lanka

Dear President Rajapaksa,

Several years after the end of the war in Sri Lanka -- during which both sides committed gross human rights abuses, including deliberate and indiscriminate attacks against civilians, torture and the use of child soldiers -- hundreds of people are languishing in prison without charge or trial under Sri Lanka's repressive anti-terrorism laws.

Under international human rights law, all people have the right to challenge the lawfulness of their detention, the right to a fair trial and the right to be free from torture. I call on you to end these human rights violations, hold accountable all those responsible and ensure that the rights of victims are upheld.

I respectfully urge you to immediately release those arrested under the Prevention of Terrorism Act, unless they are charged with recognizably criminal offenses. Any trials must be held promptly and in regularly constituted courts with all internationally recognized safeguards provided. Any arrest or detention must be done in strict compliance with the 2006 Presidential Decree regarding registration of detainees and disclosure of their whereabouts, and in compliance with Sri Lanka's obligations under international human rights law, in particular the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The Prevention of Terrorism Act should be promptly repealed and the system of administrative detention abolished without delay. If any detainees are found to have been tortured while in custody, they should be given appropriate care and compensation and their torturers held accountable.

Sincerely,

Name:

Address:

City, State, Zip Code:

Country:

Myanmar: Free All Prisoners of Conscience Now!

April 5, 2013

U Aung Min
Ministry of President Office
Nay Pyi Taw
Republic of the Union of Myanmar (Burma)



Dear Minister:

Myanmar continues on a path of reform that gives hope that all people in Myanmar may one day enjoy the freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly, and association. Amnesty International urges the Myanmar government to truly advance human rights by releasing all remaining prisoners of conscience.

Hundreds of political prisoners, many of them prisoners of conscience, continue to languish behind bars in Myanmar. Among them is **Dr. Tun Aung**, who was arrested in mid-2012 and was sentenced to 11 years' imprisonment in the second half of 2012 in connection with the riots that broke out in Maungdaw in June 2012. As you may know, Dr. Tun Aung is a family man, a medical doctor and was the Chairman of the Islamic Religious Affairs Council in Maungdaw at the time of his arrest.

Dr. Tun Aung, along with all prisoners of conscience in Myanmar, must be released immediately and unconditionally. Pending his release, I ask you to ensure that Dr. Tun Aung is allowed to appoint a lawyer of his own choice and to have private meetings with the lawyer and that he is given a trial that meets international fair trial standards.

Additionally, I ask you to make sure that Dr. Tun Aung is moved from Sittwe Prison to Insein Prison so that he is able to have regular visits with his family. I also ask you to ensure that the prison authorities provide him with the medical care and medication that he requires to manage his pituitary tumor.

Thank you for your immediate attention and response.

Sincerely,

Name:

Address:

City, State, Zip Code:

Country:

cc: U Soe Paing, Minister-Counselor, Chargé d'Affaires ad interim, Embassy of the Union of Myanmar, 2300 S St. NW, Washington D.C., 20008

Myanmar: Free All Prisoners of Conscience Now!

April 5, 2013

U Soe Paing
Minister-Counselor, Chargé d'Affaires ad interim
Embassy of the Union of Myanmar
2300 S St. NW
Washington DC 20008



Dear Minister-Counselor:

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Sincerely,

Name:

Address:

City, State, Zip Code:

cc: U Aung Min, Ministry of President Office, Nay Pyi Taw, Republic of the Union of Myanmar (Burma)

Sudan: Protect Internally Displaced Persons Now!

April 5, 2013

His Excellency Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir
Office of the President
People's Palace
PO Box 281
Khartoum, SUDAN

Your Excellency:

I am very concerned about recent serious human rights violations in Sudan, including sexual violence, indiscriminate aerial bombardment, burned villages and other armed attacks on civilians and internally displaced persons (IDPs). I am disturbed by the government's refusal to permit vulnerable populations access to humanitarian assistance in areas where there is military conflict.

I respectfully call on the government of Sudan to protect internally displaced persons in South Kordofan, Blue Nile, Abyei and Darfur, and to end human rights violations against civilians in these conflict zones. Specifically, I ask the Sudanese government to:

- Immediately order an end to all aerial and land attacks directed at civilians and IDPs, which violate the laws of war, by government and associated forces, including the Sudan Armed Forces, Popular Defense Forces and *Janjaweed*, and hold those responsible to account by effective investigations and prosecution;
- Urgently facilitate unimpeded access by humanitarian aid groups to deliver assistance to civilians in all parts of South Kordofan and Blue Nile, and in other conflict zones, such as Darfur and Abyei;
- Permit safe passage for all civilians attempting to leave areas where there is active fighting and bombing;
- Protect vulnerable populations such as women and children from human rights violations, including sexual violence, and ensure that the perpetrators of such violations are brought to justice in accordance with international legal standards;
- End harassment, threats and arbitrary arrest and detention of human rights activists, students and others who seek to exercise their right to freedom of expression; and
- Release all detained individuals who have not been charged with a recognizable criminal offense, and end all ill-treatment and torture of detained individuals.

I urgently await your action to stop the indiscriminate attacks on civilians and internally displaced persons, and to facilitate unimpeded humanitarian aid to all IDPs and civilians affected by the armed conflict in South Kordofan, Blue Nile, Abyei and Darfur.

Sincerely,

Name:

Address:

City, State, Zip Code:

Country:

South Africa: Stop the Violence! Justice for Noxolo Nogwaza Now!

April 5, 2013

General MV Phiyega
National Commissioner
South African Police Service
Private Bag X94
Pretoria 0001
South Africa

Dear General Phiyega,

I am writing with deep concern about prejudice-motivated violence against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people. I wish to draw your particular attention to the murder on April 24, 2011 of **Noxolo Nogwaza** in KwaThema - police case number 635/04/2011.

I am disturbed that, almost two years after her death, no progress has been made in investigating Noxolo Nogwaza's murder and arresting her killers. This failure increases the impact, for those who knew her, of the terrible acts of violence and hate that led to her death. This situation of impunity also places others at risk of harassment, discrimination and hate-motivated violence on the grounds of their real or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity. At least seven LGBTI individuals in four provinces were murdered in 2012 in what appear to be hate crimes related to their sexual orientation or gender identity, increasing the levels of fear amongst LGBTI people in South Africa.

I congratulate the positive steps taken by the South African Police Service to respond to gender-based violence affecting LGBTI people, including participating in the National Task Team to seek solutions to how this violence can be combated.

I respectfully urge the National Commissioner to continue with the good work already started and to:

1. Ensure that police authorities give their full attention to thoroughly investigating Noxolo Nogwaza's murder so that those found to be responsible may be brought to justice without further delay
2. Publicly condemn, in the strongest possible terms, targeted violence against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex individuals.
3. Allocate greater resources to training of all police personnel on their legal obligations to provide non-discriminatory and professional services to LGBTI individuals, including in the prevention and investigation of crimes of targeted violence and other forms of harassment and abuse against them.
4. Ensure that every police station implements clear instructions on these obligations and trains dedicated officers to properly investigate crimes of targeted violence – including on the grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression – in an efficient and unbiased manner.

I thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

China: Free Dhondup Wangchen! Respect Freedom of Speech!

April 5, 2013

DONG Kaijun Yuanzhang
Qinghaisheng Gaoji Renmin Fayuan
64 Xiguandajie
Chengxiqu
Xiningshi 810008
Qinghaisheng
People's Republic of China

Your Excellency,

I write out of concern for Dhondup Wangchen 当知项欠, a Tibetan filmmaker who was sentenced on December 28 in Qinghai Province to six years' imprisonment for "subversion of state power" after a secret trial by Xining City Intermediate Court. 当知项欠, along with a friend, had been producing a documentary on the opinions of Tibetans regarding the Beijing Olympics and the Dalai Lama.

The reasons for 当知项欠's arrest have been unclear. He was initially detained on suspicion of "illegal journalism," which is not an offense in Chinese law. The police then attempted to have him charged with "inciting subversion of state power," but the prosecutor returned the case to the police for lack of evidence. Amnesty International considers him a prisoner of conscience, detained solely for the peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression through his filmmaking work.

During his initial detention 当知项欠 was beaten, punched in the head, often deprived of food and sleep, and kept tied to a chair. Since then, he has experienced headaches and pain in his arms. 当知项欠 also suffers from Hepatitis B, for which he has not received any medical treatment. Although his family has attempted to visit him; they have not been allowed to see him. 当知项欠 was also forbidden from meeting with his lawyers on the grounds that his case involves "state secrets." This directly violates Article 33 of the Law on Lawyers of the People's Republic of China. On 13 July 2009, Beijing judicial authorities demanded that his lawyers drop the case altogether because of a new rule allowing only lawyers based in the province where a detainee has been charged to take up that case. It is unclear if 当知项欠 had any legal representation during his trial.

I urge you to consider 当知项欠 for an immediate sentence reduction and to ensure that he is not tortured or otherwise ill-treated while he remains in custody. I further call on you to allow 当知项欠 an independent medical assessment and any treatment that he requires. 当知项欠 should be permitted regular visits from his family and to write and receive letters from his wife and children.

I thank you for your attention to these concerns and look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

Name:

Address:

City, State, Zip Code, Country: