



**WRITE
FOR
RIGHTS**

campaign Report
2015

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL



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Write for Rights is a unique campaign in so many ways. Perhaps the most obvious feature is the sheer size. With the campaign occurring annually, we are able to see a continuous growth from almost every Section and structure. In 2014 we broke the 3 million mark for the first time, and in 2015 for the 13th consecutive year the global number of actions grew again, resulting in at least...

3,776,809

ACTIONS
WORLDWIDE

We have also seen some great human rights impact on the cases featured in the campaign in 2015, with real change in their lives: A press release from the Ministry of Justice, Human Rights and Civic Promotion in Burkina Faso has affirmed the government's commitment to eradicating early and forced marriage in the country. The ministry is reviewing the Code of Persons and Family and plans to raise the legal age of marriage for girls to 18 years. The ministry also plans to ensure that forced marriage is clearly defined in Burkina Faso's criminal code. We know that this is most definitely a Write for Rights and Amnesty International 'win' as the press release states that the ministry had been receiving letters, emails and correspondence from people all over the world calling for an end to child marriage.

On 19 February 2015 Albert Woodfox, the last imprisoned member of the Angola 3 in the U.S.A, was released after more than four decades in solitary confinement. His release was long overdue and Amnesty International joined his supporters around the world in celebrating Albert and his legal team's tireless pursuit of justice.

We also know that your handwritten postcards, letters and messages of support and solidarity have also been a huge comfort to people going through incredibly tough situations. For example, we visited Yecenia Armenta in jail in Mexico and passed on more than 8,000 of your letters and messages: **"When I receive all these letters saying that I'm not alone, it makes me feel great. And I think: 'Yes, it's true, I'm not alone. They really are supporting me'. It's exciting to think that there are people who still care about the rights of other people – and they don't even know me."**

We also spoke to Phyoe Phyoe Aung in Myanmar: **“Receiving letters gives me real inspiration for what we are doing. I have begun to notice that the world is watching and cheering us – we are not alone. I thank everyone very much for their support. Although we cannot see the results from the government yet, it can influence their mind set.”**

And the final word goes to Costas in Greece, who shows exactly why solidarity actions are so important:

“Write for Rights is one of the most important campaigns in the world, and because we don’t live in a perfect world, it should and must go on. It’s wonderful! I am so moved, and I thank you from the depth of my heart – every single person, woman, man or else, that wrote even half a line and contributed to this campaign. Thank you, Amnesty, for bringing light into the darkness.”





¹

Case	Estimated total # actions ²
Burkina Faso Protecting Girls from Forced Marriages	503,192
Democratic Republic of Congo Fred Bauma and Yves Makwambala	170,719
El Salvador Teodora Del Carmen Vásquez	233,748
Greece 'Costas'	151,426
Iran Saman Naseem	213,266
Malaysia Zunar	241,639
Mexico Yecenia Armenta	318,705
Myanmar Phyoe Phyoe Aung	394,670
Saudi Arabia Waleed Abu Al-Khair	296,219
Syria Rania Alabbasi and Her Six Children	216,811
USA Albert Woodfox	241,082
Uzbekistan Muhammad Bekzhanov	218,117
Unknown actions taken	577,215

¹ Please be aware that this table only includes numbers of actions on the official Global 12 cases collated via the survey sent out after the campaign. The total number of actions for the whole campaign however (as indicated at the start of this report), includes cases outside of the global 12, actions where S/s were unable to give us a breakdown by case and actions from S/s that filled in the global counter and/or the evaluation survey, but did NOT answer the detailed numbers survey following the end of the campaign.

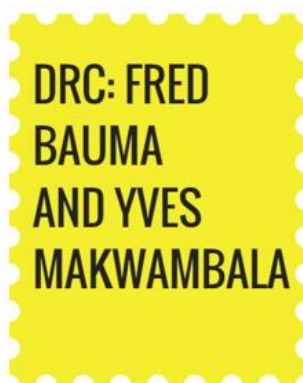
² The estimated total actions include all actions taken in countries with an Amnesty section and online actions taken independently by activists around the world.

Actions were taken by Amnesty International sections, activists and by online supporters from all around the world. The following are the countries and territories where action was taken:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, American Samoa, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bermuda, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Cayman Islands, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Cook Islands, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Faroe Islands, Fiji, Finland, France, French Polynesia, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Gibraltar, Greece, Greenland, Guadeloupe, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Holy Vatican City State, Honduras, Hong Kong, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Macedonia, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Martinique, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Moldova, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, Netherlands, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, State of Palestine, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Puerto Rico, Qatar, Réunion, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Taiwan, United Republic of Tanzania, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States of America, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Virgin Islands (U.S), Virgin Islands (British), Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.



In the following section we report on how being a part of the Write for Rights campaign in 2015 has impacted the lives of those individuals featured as ‘cases’. The huge number of actions that took place in 2015 broke all records, yet again more activists than ever wrote letters, signed petitions, sent SMS’, Facebook and Twitter actions. As a global movement this is an amazing achievement, but our number one goal is ensure that this growth is translated into meaningful human rights impact. So what have we managed so far?



Fred Bauma and Yves Makwambala are youth activists from the ‘Struggle for Change’ (known as the LUCHA movement in French). They were arrested on 15 March 2015 in Kinshasa by the Congolese intelligence services during a press conference to launch “Filimbi,” a platform to encourage Congolese youth to peacefully and responsibly perform their civic duties. Filimbi aimed to ensure civic education of youth in the Democratic

Republic of Congo (DRC) in the context of the upcoming 2016 general elections in DRC. There has been increasing pressure on President Joseph Kabila not to seek a third term after 14 years in power. This has resulted in heightened repression of the freedoms of expression, association and assembly by the DRC authorities against youth movements, civil society members and politicians who speak out against President Kabila’s attempt to run for another term in office.

Fred and Yves were kept in incommunicado detention after their arrest by the national intelligence service, without access to family or lawyers. Yves Makwambala was transferred to Makala prison in Kinshasa after 40 days, while Fred Bauma was transferred to the same prison after 50 days. They are now at risk of the death penalty following charges against them which include ‘conspiracy against the head of state’.



Letters and postcards for Fred and Yves

Despite several rumours circulating about a possible release of Fred and Yves, they remain in prison. Nevertheless, thanks to Amnesty's campaigning LUCHA, the youth movement Fred and Yves belong to, has received a lot of visibility. A lot of the security concerns that were there previously for activists in the LUCHA movement have not materialised.

Further, there has been overwhelming support on the case from the larger Amnesty movement. Over 170,000 actions were taken all over the world.

LUCHA activists have also taken an active role, supporting Amnesty's campaigning on the case especially during Write for Rights. LUCHA activist Serge Kambale participated in panel discussions and advocacy tours in Belgium, France and Spain organised with the assistance of the sections in these countries. Another LUCHA activist, Micheline Mwendike was part of a speaker tour organised by Amnesty International Germany.

Bienvenu Matumo, LUCHA activist and close friend of Fred and Yves attended a film screening in Nairobi of 'The Man Who Mends Women', a film that tells the story of Denis Mukwege, a Congolese gynaecologist who has dedicated his life to treating rape victims and survivors in eastern DRC. Bienvenu made a short presentation at the Write for Rights event held on 24 November 2015 in Nairobi by the DRC team and Amnesty International Kenya. He later interacted with guests who included members of the international NGO community and diplomats in Nairobi.

The East Africa Regional Office and Amnesty International Kenya also organised a 'spoken word' (readings of prose and verse) event on 28 November 2015 in Nairobi. The event themed 'Expression not Repression' brought together some 20 young artists whose performances were centred around the theme as well as on Fred and Yves.

Several of Fred and Yves' friends and fellow activists have expressed their gratitude to Amnesty International for all the support in campaigning for the release of the two activists. The support for Fred and Yves has encouraged other LUCHA activists to continue with their activism despite the challenges and risks they are increasingly facing in DRC.

"Sometimes we start asking ourselves whether it is us who are crazy. But being surrounded by all these amazing amnesty activists, I realise we are fighting the good fight. Amnesty feels like a whole new family to us, who supports us and reminds us that we are not just crazy," LUCHA activist.

Fred and Yves are also grateful for all the support they have been getting.

"I would like to thank the thousands of citizens across the world who through Amnesty International wrote to me, or just thought of me and Yves, my companion in misfortune.

I will never be grateful enough for the work you do selflessly every day for us and for all those who, throughout the world, are in similar situations. Your work has certainly saved us from undergoing some treatments that could be fatal. Thanks for your intense campaigns," Fred Bauma.

The full letter from Fred Bauma to Amnesty International activists and supporters:

Dear friends of Amnesty International,

I take my pen today to thank you for your continued support during these twelve long months I have spent behind bars.

From the beginning, you have spared no effort to document and communicate on our case. Your work has certainly saved us from undergoing some treatments that could be fatal.

I also want to thank you and encourage you for the support that you have given to LUCHA and its activists whenever need arises (arrests, abductions, threats or intimidation).

Through your organization, I would like to thank the thousands of citizens across the world who wrote to me, or just thought of me and Yves, my companion in misfortune, thanks to your intense campaigns.

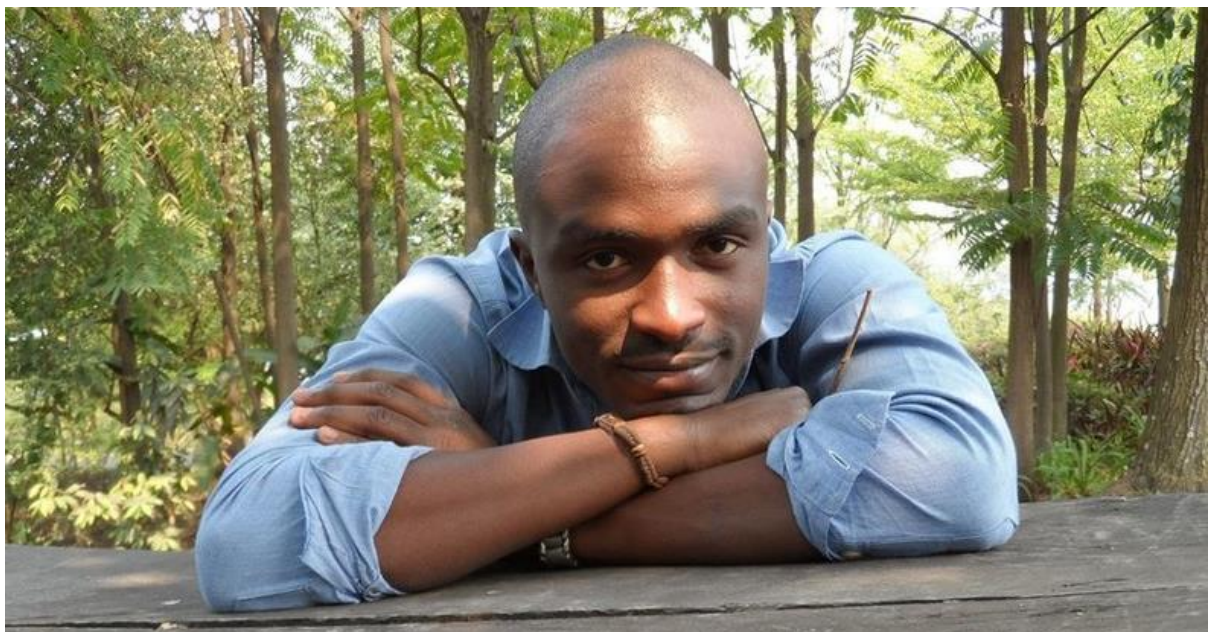
DR Congo, my country, is at a turning point in its history. After long years of colonialism followed by decades of harsh dictatorship, we are here to defend our democracy. The human rights violations currently already growing legion may be in the coming months.

My people, if they cannot directly rely on all States, may nevertheless rely on the people of the world with whom they share common ideals of liberty, fraternity and dignity knowing that "we are all responsible for all in respect of all. The Congolese people can count on Amnesty International.

I will never be grateful enough for the work you sacrifice selflessly every day for us and for all those who, throughout the world, are in similar situations.

Fred Bauma - March 2016

We urge the movement to continue campaigning on this case until the charges against Fred and Yves are dropped and they are released.



Fred Bauma © Amnesty International

BURKINA FASO: GIRLS FORCED INTO MARRIAGE



Thousands of girls across Burkina Faso are subjected to early and forced marriage. The majority of the girls are married off as early as 11 to 12-years-old, in some cases so that their parents can benefit from the dowry.

The prevalence rate of child marriage in Burkina Faso is 52%. Forced and early marriage is

particularly prevalent in the Sahel region in Burkina Faso which has very high rates of poverty, weak institutions, a lack of basic services and patriarchal social structures are entrenched.

Girls who are forced to marry by their family are rarely sent to school and have little or no education. Once married, the girls are expected to do the large majority of household chores such as cleaning, hauling water and cooking as well as working on the farm. It is also expected that they should bear many children. The task of raising children, whilst they are still children themselves, falls on them. The decision about if and when to have children and how many to have, as well as the use or not of contraception is almost always made by the husband. Furthermore they are, in some instances, subjected to sexual violence and frequently endure egregious violations of their sexual and reproductive rights.

Despite incredible family and societal pressure, many girls have refused such marriages and have overcome huge obstacles in order to escape to shelters. One girl, *Maria aged 13 years old, walked nearly 170km over three days to seek refuge at a shelter for young girls.

Forced and early marriage constitutes a serious violation of girls' human rights.

In December 2015, the Ministry of Women, National Solidarity and Family adopted a national strategy (2016-2025) and a three year action plan (2016-2018) to prevent and eliminate child marriage in Burkina Faso. This occurred at the beginning of the Write for Rights campaign, but Amnesty International played a key role through early campaigning and advocacy meetings with the ministry as well as other relevant government officials as part of the My Body My Rights campaign.

An amazing 502,601 actions were taken on this case in 40 countries around the world as part of Write for Rights 2015 – making it the most successful case out of the global 12 in terms of actions taken.

These actions did not go unnoticed by the authorities in Burkina Faso and they have made concrete moves to bringing about real change: The Ministry of Justice, Human Rights and Civic Promotion publicly recognised, in a press release on 23 February 2016, that the ministry had been getting many, many letters, emails and correspondence from all over the world, all calling for an end to early and forced marriage in Burkina Faso. The Ministry affirmed that eradicating the harmful practice of early and forced marriage is a priority for the new government in Burkina Faso. The Minister said that it was unacceptable for the marriage of children under the age of 18 to continue. The Ministry of Justice, Human Rights and Civic Promotion has also begun reviewing the Code of Persons and Family with the view of raising the legal age of marriage for girls to 18 years. The ministry will also act to ensure that current law against forced marriage, which is already in place, is better defined in the penal code.

Amnesty International Burkina Faso visited girls and shelter workers in Fondation Cardinale Emile Biayenda (FOCEB) and Tema Bokin shelters between 18 and 20 February, delivering hundreds and thousands of solidarity letters and postcards. Solidarity messages continue to arrive at the Burkina Faso section office and they plan to deliver these to other shelters across Burkina Faso. The solidarity messages offered great encouragement to the girls, some of whom have been disowned by their families after escaping early and forced marriages. The letters also brought joy to the shelter workers, who help the girls as they seek refuge. Both the girls and the shelter workers expressed their gratitude to Amnesty International:

Martine Kabore a shelter worker at Pan Bila, Ouagadougou said:

"The mobilization of Amnesty International is very important for victims and shelter workers. Early and forced marriage is a very sensitive issue. Our desire is that all the major international organizations concerned with this problem fight with us. The mobilization of all your members is very important to eradicate early and forced marriage, to pressure the Burkinabe authorities to protect our girls ... but also to find the funds to support shelters."

"I am very happy because so many people around the world thought of people like us," Roseline, a girl living in Tema Bokin Shelter

"I'm glad that Amnesty is interested in our case and mobilizes people to support us. Thank you very much," Pauline, a girl at one of the shelters.

"I ask Amnesty to keep doing advocacy with authorities to prohibit forced and early marriage," Mrs Ouedraogo, shelter worker at FOCEB

Amnesty International plans to launch a report focusing on early and forced marriage, alongside other issues on sexual and reproductive rights in Burkina Faso, as part of the My Body My Rights global campaign at the end of April 2016.

A big thank you to everyone who worked on this case as positive impact is already being realised. We encourage you to continue taking action on the case until the government of Burkina Faso ensures that all laws that can prevent early and forced child marriage are developed, amended and implemented fully.

Shelter for survivors of forced marriage in Kaya city, northeast Burkina Faso. © Sophie Garcia for Amnesty International





In July 2012, Yecenia Armenta was taken into police custody in Sinaloa, Mexico, and brutally tortured into confessing to the murder of her then husband. Her attackers beat her for hours, raped her and threatened to kill her children. Despite independent medical evidence showing that torture took place, the 'confession' was used to charge Yecenia, without any other direct proof against her.

Nearly four years later, Yecenia remains in prison while her torturers have not been brought to justice.

As part of Write for Rights 2015, over 300,000 actions were taken on Yecenia Armenta's case, many of which urged the Sinaloa State Attorney General to ensure that the charges against her are dropped and she is released immediately, and that he carry out a prompt, thorough and impartial investigation into her torture and bring those responsible to justice. Alongside letters to the authorities, activists also sent solidarity messages to Yecenia in Centro de Ejecución de las Consecuencias Jurídicas del Delito de Culiacán (CECJUDE), the prison where she is held. Activists also posted messages of support on the Facebook group 'Solidaridad con Yecenia'. Activists from at least 31 Sections and structures took action on Yecenia's case during the campaign period.

In Germany, over 750 billboards were posted around the country calling on people to take action on her case; in the USA, AI staff lobbied for Yecenia's freedom by raising her case with the US Department of State and with the Mexican embassy on numerous occasions; in Chile, Yecenia's image was projected onto the Mexican Embassy building in Santiago to demand she be released immediately and receive justice for the torture she has suffered; in France, the section used the Write for Rights 2015 Human Rights Education Toolkit, particularly the activity highlighting Yecenia's case, to talk about torture with student groups and encourage them to take action on her case. Amnesty International's local partner in Culiacán, Frente Cívico Sinaloense, also organized an event for Yecenia on 12 December 2015, as part of their ongoing work to support her case and campaign for her freedom.



A selection of solidarity postcards for Yecenia Armenta created by artistic activists in © Amnesty International Taiwan

Although Yecenia Armenta unfortunately remains in prison and her torturers have not been brought to justice, our analysis is that the high level of activism during Write for Rights has had a great impact in terms of international solidarity, which is our secondary objective in campaigning on her case. We also believe that it has also helped shift public opinion and media coverage in Sinaloa state, where most people previously believed that Yecenia was indeed responsible for the killing and that her torture allegations were unfounded. This can be an important step towards putting pressure on the state authorities to clean up their act on this case.

On 29 January 2016 an Amnesty International delegation including AI Spain Director Esteban Beltrán visited Yecenia Armenta in prison to convey, once again, our solidarity with her. The delegates

interviewed Yecenia to gather feedback on Write for Rights, particularly focusing on solidarity actions and how Yecenia has felt to receive letters since the campaign began. Yecenia was presented with more than 8,000 solidarity letters from activists in Mexico, Norway, Denmark, USA, Venezuela and Taiwan, as well as a large banner from AI UK.

Yecenia told Amnesty International that she reads every letter she receives and is allowed to keep them with her in the prison. She particularly enjoys receiving postcards with pictures of different places on them, she says that this way she can learn about new cities around the world and better understand the lives of the people who are writing to her. She is very happy to have received a number of bracelets and other pieces of jewellery made by AI activists, and during AI's visit she was wearing two bracelets that had been sent to her from activists in Chile and South Africa.

Yecenia told the AI delegates that she is incredibly grateful for all of the support she has received from the organization and its activists, stating:

“When I receive all these letters saying that I’m not alone, it makes me feel great. And I think, yes, it’s true, I’m not alone. They really are supporting me.”

“I am immensely grateful and I think that [the activists writing letters] are doing the nicest thing you can do, which is helping people who are facing such unjust situations. It fills me with pride and I truly feel that it’s a wonderful thing.”



Yecenia Armenta reading some of the 8,000 solidarity letters brought to her during a visit by Amnesty International to the prison where she is held in Culiacán, México, on 29 January 2016 © Amnesty International

While in Culiacán, the AI delegation also issued a press release and spoke to local media. They met with Marco Antonio Higuera Gómez, the Sinaloa State Attorney General, and presented him with more than 6,500 petitions calling for the charges against Yecenia to be dropped and for her to be released immediately. The Attorney General told Amnesty International that he has received many letters, however, it was disheartening to hear that he did not mention a single step forward in the investigation into Yecenia's torture complaint. The State Attorney General's office has also not found any new and legal evidence against Yecenia, so the delegation urged him to drop the charges and release her. As the State Attorney General is still not prepared to drop the charges against Yecenia Armenta, Amnesty International will continue developing the campaign strategy for her case in order to persuade him. Unfortunately the state of Sinaloa is one of the weakest in Mexico in terms of respect for human rights, and the Governor is at the end of his six-year term and his officials show no sign of softening their hard-line stance on this case. Elections for a new state government are in June 2016.

Regarding Amnesty International's wider work on torture in Mexico, in the last few months the federal government has taken some measures which could potentially improve the investigation of torture complaints across the country. It has issued a national protocol for prosecutors to follow in such investigations; it has created a specialized unit within the Federal Attorney General's Office to focus on torture investigations; it has issued instructions to official medical forensic staff to improve their examinations of victims; and it has sent a bill to Congress to improve current legislation on torture. It will be crucial that effective monitoring and accountability is put in place in order to ensure that these measures translate into tangible benefits for torture victims.

Amnesty International's campaign for Yecenia Armenta will continue, and we will keep pushing for the charges against her to be dropped in order to secure her release, as Yecenia deserves to be free and to see her torturers brought to justice. In coming months the organization is also preparing new research and campaigning activities on torture against women in Mexico, of which Yecenia's case is also emblematic.



Yecenia Armenta and Karen Javorski, Individuals at Risk Campaigner, in CECJUDE, the prison where she is held in Culiacán, Sinaloa, México, during a visit on 29 January 2016. They are holding the Spanish version of the campaign t-shirt © Amnesty International

EL SALVADOR: TEODORA DEL CARMEN VÁSQUEZ



Teodora del Carmen Vásquez suffered a stillbirth in 2007, after the rapid onset of serious pain while she was at work. Police arrested her as she bled profusely. She was later sentenced to 30 years for 'aggravated homicide', presumed guilty of 'abortion', which is a crime under any circumstance in El Salvador, rather than the victim of pregnancy-related complications. Teodora's trial was also

deeply flawed. As in all similar cases in El Salvador, she was presumed guilty and, being from a poor family, could not afford an effective legal team to represent her. Teodora's only option now is to ask for her sentence to be changed so that she is released immediately.

As part of Write for Rights 2015, over 200,000 actions were taken on Teodora del Carmen Vásquez's case, many of which urged the Salvadoran Minister of Justice to do everything in his power to release Teodora, and to immediately and impartially review the sentences of all women still in jail on pregnancy-related charges. Hundreds of solidarity photos and messages were posted for Teodora on the Tumblr page [#TeodoraLibre](#).

Although Teodora remains unjustly imprisoned, our analysis is that the Write for Rights campaign has had a positive impact through providing solidarity to Teodora and her family, as well as on international media attention and openness of the Salvadoran prison authorities towards other local NGOs working on the issue of women imprisoned on pregnancy-related charges.



Cecilia Vásquez Sánchez and María Elena Sánchez, Teodora del Carmen Vásquez's sister and mother, wear Write for Rights t-shirts while posing at Amnesty International's Regional Office for the Americas in Mexico City, 30 November 2015 © Amnesty International

From 22-25 February 2016 Amnesty International's Central America Campaigner travelled to El Salvador. She visited Teodora in prison, and met her family members and our local partner, Agrupación Ciudadana. Due to strict regulations in the prison where Teodora is held, our campaigner was not permitted to bring in a booklet of images and solidarity messages from the [#TeodoraLibre](#) Tumblr page that we created to be able to share the messages with Teodora. However, we shared this booklet, along with another booklet of information and images on Section/structures' activities for Teodora, with her family members as well as with Agrupación Ciudadana.

Although not able to see the hundreds of solidarity messages and images first-hand, Teodora told Amnesty International that she was aware of the messages reaching her family and was excited to know people all around the world had been sending them. She said: **"My sister told me about the cards that people have been sending me. One day I'd love to see them all."** Speaking about how she felt Write for Rights has impacted her life and the lives of "Las 17", the other women imprisoned on pregnancy-related charges, Teodora told Amnesty International: **"I think that we feel supported and like we are people who are worth something."**

During this visit, Teodora told AI's Campaigner that what she wanted most was to see her son, who has not been able to visit her as he does not have up to date identification documents that the prison requires in order to visit. Amnesty International is therefore working to support Teodora's family to get these documents so that her son can visit her in prison in the upcoming month.

Teodora's sister, Cecilia Vásquez Sánchez, told Amnesty International that since the start of the Write for Rights campaign, it has been easier for her to support her sister's case and visit her in prison because of Amnesty International's support. Cecilia was presented with the booklet of Tumblr solidarity messages and additional solidarity cards from AI Venezuela, USA and the Netherlands. She expressed her gratitude for those who took solidarity action, saying that the support provided **"is not only for my sister, but also for us as a family. We are happy and very thankful for you"**. Cecilia particularly enjoyed seeing the murals and graffiti art produced by AI USA and AI Australia. She also shared the following message of thanks for Amnesty International activists:

"Thank you so much, we are receiving your letters. We are so thankful to you for the support that you are providing us. We know that one day, God willing, with your support my sister will be free."

Members of Agrupación Ciudadana told Amnesty International that since Write for Rights began, Teodora has become more confident and taken on a leadership role within the prison. When there is a common concern amongst the detained women, they noted that Teodora speaks up on behalf of the group and has become the leader of their activism. Cecilia Vásquez Sánchez agreed with this positive change in her sister's attitude, saying that **"Teodora is more motivated. She helps other women when they have problems."** Agrupación also told Amnesty International that the organization's involvement in Teodora's case and support for "Las 17" has created a more open dialogue and atmosphere between the prison authorities and other local NGOs supporting "Las 17". They report it is much easier for them to enter the prison to speak to these women since the start of AI's campaign.

Agrupación Ciudadana also noted that the Write for Rights campaign brought more interest from international media outlets in Teodora's case and the cases of the other women imprisoned following pregnancy-related complications that their organization supports. With the outbreak of the Zika virus in El Salvador and many other countries in the region in early 2016, members of Agrupación stated that international media attention has increased even more; this has provided an excellent platform for them to be able to speak globally about the issue of criminalization of abortion in El Salvador. While they also stated that there has been more interest from national media since the campaign began, it has been on a smaller scale as engaging national media on the issue of abortion continues to be a challenge in El Salvador.

From 29 March – 1 April 2016, AI delegates will again visit El Salvador to carry out advocacy work on Teodora's case and host a large concert with 2016 Grammy award-winning Mexican musician Natalia Lafourcade called "With the strength of our voice". The concert is linked to Amnesty International's wider campaign seeking decriminalization of abortion in El Salvador and My Body My Rights campaign and will include a number of youth activities, including several actions to support Teodora and "Las 17".

AI staff have requested meetings with Salvadoran authorities during this visit, including members of the Legislative Assembly and the new Minister of Justice and Public Security who took office in January 2016. It is unclear at this time how receptive the new Minister of Justice will be to our campaigning on Teodora's case, however the remaining Write for Rights petitions will be handed over to the authorities during these meetings. Amnesty International will discuss further with Agrupación Ciudadana how additional letters will be handed over to the Legislative Assembly, our secondary target in Teodora's case and the governmental body who has the authority to decriminalize abortion in El Salvador. Feedback will be shared with Sections/structures in the coming weeks in order to inform Amnesty International's continued campaigning for Teodora's freedom and the decriminalization of abortion in El Salvador.



Teodora's sister, Cecilia Vásquez Sánchez, reading solidarity letters from activists in the USA during a visit by Amnesty International to El Salvador, 24 February 2016 © Amnesty International

USA: ALBERT WOODFOX



Albert Woodfox was a prisoner in Louisiana who was placed in solitary confinement nearly 44 years ago following the murder of a prison guard. Albert has always maintained his innocence, claiming he was targeted by the state because of his political organizing in prison as a founder of the first prison chapter of the Black Panther Party. The four decade legal process surrounding Albert Woodfox's case was riddled with

flaws. There was no physical evidence to link him to the crime, and the conviction relied primarily on the testimony of an eye witness who received favours – including his release by pardon – for his cooperation. For over 40 years, Albert spent 23 hours a day alone in a small cell with little natural light, few personal possessions and reading materials and no meaningful communication with others. He was the USA's longest serving prisoner held in isolation, and the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture described Albert's decades in solitary confinement as torture.

As part of Write for Rights 2015, over 250,000 actions were taken on Albert Woodfox's case. Letters to the authorities urged Louisiana Attorney General to release Albert from prison immediately following decades of cruel and inhumane conditions in solitary confinement, and no remedy for serious legal flaws in his case. Activists also sent many thousands of solidarity messages to Albert in prison at West Feliciana Parish Detention Center in Louisiana. Activists from at least 26 sections campaigned on Albert's behalf throughout the campaign period.



Robert King, one of the 'Angola 3' stands in front of a mural depicting his friend, Albert Woodfox. The mural in New Orleans, Louisiana, was painted by artist Brandon "B-Mike" Odums in conjunction with AI USA in September 2015 © Amnesty International

Amazing news came on 19 February 2016, when Albert Woodfox walked free from prison on his 69th birthday. He continues to maintain his innocence for the murder that sent him to isolation for more than four decades, but pled no contest to two lesser crimes before being set free. Prior to this settlement, Albert Woodfox's conviction had been overturned three times. On 8 June 2015, Federal Judge James Brady granted Woodfox unconditional release and barred the state from retrying him. However, Judge Brady's ruling was overturned on appeal.

With the knowledge of his release in February 2016, Albert took the time to thank the many people, including Amnesty International, who helped him secure his freedom:

"I want to thank my brother Michael for sticking with me all these years, and Robert King, who wrongly spent nearly 30 years in solitary. I could not have survived without their courageous support, along with the support of my dear friend Herman Wallace, who passed away in 2013.

I also wish to thank the many members of the International Coalition to Free the Angola 3, Amnesty International, and the Roddick Foundation, all of whom supported me through this long struggle. Lastly, I thank William Sothern, Rob McDuff and my lawyers at Squire Patton Boggs and Sanford Heisler Kimpel for never giving up.

Although I was looking forward to proving my innocence at a new trial, concerns about my health and my age have caused me to resolve this case now and obtain my release with this no-contest plea to lesser charges. I hope the events of today will bring closure to many."



Albert Woodfox following his release from a Louisiana prison after spending more than four decades in solitary confinement, February 2016 © AI USA / Jasmine Heiss

Amnesty International activists and supporters who worked on Albert Woodfox's case over the course of the last five years, including as part of Write for Rights 2015, have generated more than 700,000 actions on behalf of Albert and the Angola 3. The years of partnership and leadership of U.S. Members of Congress Cedric Richmond and John Conyers was also critical in securing Albert's freedom, as was the international pressure on the U.S. authorities generated by both the UN, and Sections/structures lobbying their home governments on Albert's behalf. His freedom could not have been possible without this hard work and support. Amnesty International, in turn, owes a debt of gratitude to the grassroots activists and organizers who struggled to keep Albert's case in the spotlight for years before the organization's involvement, and particularly to Robert King for bringing the case to AI's attention and for tirelessly speaking truth to power.

While being held in isolation in West Feliciana Parish Detention Center, Albert told Amnesty International that the solidarity letters he received from thousands of people around the world brought him hope and encouraged him to continue fighting for his freedom. He told Amnesty International in early December 2015:

"I am thrilled to have received 2,000 letters already. Please pass on my thanks and gratitude to Amnesty International and to all those who have written to me. Their letters make all the difference".

And later in January 2016:

“I'd like to thank our friends at Amnesty International and Amnesty USA for their remarkable support these last years, culminating just recently in the Write for Rights Campaign that occurred last month in December. As a result of this campaign, I have received thousands of letters from around the world pledging solidarity and support. These messages from beyond the prison walls have become an enormous source of strength for me as I continue my fight for freedom.”

Albert left the Parish Prison with an entire box of still-unopened mail, which he continues to read through just as he did while incarcerated – selecting cards from children and schools to respond to, as the sheer volume of all the mail makes it impossible to conceive of answering everyone.

As in many other cases around the world, we also know that the prison authorities were influenced by the massive show of solidarity. Prior to Albert's release, the Warden of the Detention Center asked Albert personally if it was really necessary for him to receive so much mail and asked whether he could put a stop to it, clearly indicating that the staff in the mail room and the prison in general were being taxed by the sheer volume of solidarity messages Albert received.

Albert has been dazzled by the materials and effort manifested through Amnesty International's work on his case throughout the past five years - from marches for justice, to the mural in downtown New Orleans, to the Art for Rights event, including a multimedia installation and replication of a solitary cell, and R&B artist Usher. He says the calls directly with the artists and then with Usher also had a noticeable impact on the prison staff, as his name and reputation were instantly recognizable. He also wanted Amnesty International to know that he particularly appreciated the design of the materials, and joked that he has never been as handsome as he is since Amnesty became involved in his case.

After four decades of isolation, Albert Woodfox's release is long overdue and undeniably just. Nothing will truly repair the cruel, inhuman and degrading solitary confinement that the state of Louisiana inflicted upon him, but this belated measure of justice is something he has been seeking for more than half his life.

Albert's release comes shortly after the Obama administration announced sweeping changes to the practice of solitary confinement in the U.S. federal prison system in January 2016, for which AI was able to provide input and guidance directly to the U.S. Department of Justice. These reforms include guiding principles and policy recommendations from the Department of Justice that would limit the use of solitary confinement and restrictive housing in prisons, with emphasis on housing prisoners in the least restrictive environment necessary, diverting the mentally ill out of isolation, and drastically limiting the use of solitary for juveniles. They should also mark a pivotal new chapter in reforming the use of prolonged solitary confinement in state prisons and jails.

Albert's case must serve as a tragic reminder of the cruelty inflicted by the prison system at its most extreme. While Albert is most immediately concerned with spending time with his friends and family and adjusting to life as a free man, he is committed to continuing his activism as an advocate for reforms in U.S. prisons and jails, particularly with regard to solitary confinement. Amnesty International will continue to work in partnership with Albert and Robert King, urging the U.S. authorities to commit to urgent reforms to solitary confinement, and work towards ending the country's overall crisis of mass incarceration.

“They might bend me a little bit. They may cause me a lot of pain. They may even take my life. But they will never be able to break me.” Albert Woodfox during his years of solitary confinement.

MYANMAR: PHYOE PHYOE AUNG



Almost 400,000 actions were taken in at least 34 countries and territories around the world for Phyoe Phyoe Aung and the other detained peaceful students during Write for Rights. Despite the huge amount of action, she is still behind bars, detained in Tharrawaddy prison, in Bago Region while the trial against her is ongoing.

On 22 January Myanmar announced a prisoner amnesty which saw 102 prisoners released, including at least 16 prisoner of conscience that Amnesty had campaigned for. Unlike Phyoe Phyoe Aung, all 16 had already been convicted, and most had only a few months of their sentence left to serve. According to a Presidential spokesperson, the releases came as a result of “pressure from many organizations”, and we believe that Amnesty International’s campaigning contributed to this decision.

Unfortunately, since the start of the year, the authorities have continued to target Phyoe Phyoe Aung and other student leaders with politically motivated charged, and in January 2016 she received six additional charges under Section 18 of the Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Act, which each carry up to six months’ imprisonment. Her husband Lin Htet Naing and her friend and student activist Nandar Sitt Aung also received additional charges for protesting without authorization. All charges are related to their participation in protests against the National Education Law that took place before her arrest on 10 March 2015. Further charges are also possible.

It is difficult to assess why these extra charges have been levied against Phyoe Phyoe Aung and the other student leaders at this time. One of the possible explanation could be that the authorities are attempting to show their strength while negotiating the transition of power with Aung San Suu Kyi (the leader of the main opposition party) following her party’s landslide victory in the November elections.

Other factors at play could be the fact that opposition to the military regime in Myanmar has typically been led by student unions, resulting in a particularly harsh approach towards them by the authorities. We do not believe the additional charges against her are related to the Write for Rights activities. Even before the campaign had launched there were reports that she may receive additional prison sentences, and indeed, the targeting of leaders – in particular student leaders – with more charges is a common pattern in politically motivated cases in Myanmar.



Phyoe Phyoe Aung receiving solidarity messages and Write for Rights materials © Mizzima News

Although our primary objective for the campaign has not yet been achieved, there has still been a clear impact. Representatives of other NGOs, diplomats, and media have been attending their trials more regularly, and support for the students from international actors has grown markedly. We believe this is largely due to Amnesty International's campaign, and the visuals we have produced have been widely used by others on social media.

Some of the detained students with health concerns have been released on bail, which is also a positive sign, and could be as a result of the increased attention and visibility of their situation.



Some of the solidarity messages for Phyoe Phyoe Aung © Amnesty International

In addition to appeals targeting the President, hundreds of solidarity messages have also been sent to Phyoe Phyoe Aung and the other detained students. These have been greatly appreciated, and Phyoe Phyoe Aung was able to pass on the following message at one of her court hearings:

"Receiving letters gives me real inspiration for what we are doing. I have begun to notice that the world is watching and cheering us – we are not alone.

I thank everyone very much for their support for me and our movement. Although we cannot see the results from the government yet, it can influence their mind-set.

People have sent inspiring letters, supportive letters, letters about lovely animals, letters about their beautiful countries, letters about their beautiful and cute pets, and some lovely poems.

Your letters are not just letters, they are also big presents and great strength not only for the students but also for Burma's future."

Amnesty International student activists also set up a [Facebook page](#) to show the actions students from around the world have taken as part of the campaign, and this has been shared with students and other activists in Myanmar. This international solidarity was always a key component of the campaign, especially considering the duration of their trial, and we know it has been gratefully received by the detained students and their supporters.

Overall the Write for Rights action for Phyoe Phyoe Aung also significantly contributed to the wider campaign to free all prisoners of conscience in Myanmar. We believe this has been very important in highlighting that although the space to exercise freedom of expression and peaceful assembly has increased in the country compared to the past, restrictions still remain and these will not be ignored by the international community.

A verdict in Phyoe Phyoe Aung's case is not expected any time soon, and the next big moment for the campaign will be when the new President comes to power at the beginning of April. It is hoped that this will result in further releases of prisoners of conscience, but if she remains in prison, we will review and refine our strategy to determine the next steps. Until then, the current President Thein Sein remains the priority target and activists are encouraged to continue calling for her release, and the release of all other peaceful detained students' immediately and without conditions.

MALAYSIA: 'ZUNAR'



Political cartoonist Zulkiflee Anwar Ulhaque, also known as “Zunar”, continues to face a lengthy prison sentence as a result of tweets he sent in February 2015, which criticized the judiciary in Malaysia. His court hearings have been postponed numerous times, most recently with the explanation that they cannot take place until the outcome is reached in another case which is claiming that the Sedition Act is unconstitutional.

Although the charges against Zunar have not been dropped, which is our main objective for the campaign, our analysis is that the huge amount of action that took place as part of Write for Rights has had a definite impact. In addition to hundreds of thousands of actions for Zunar, there was a range of other activities including generating media coverage and lobbying. This has contributed to a tremendous increase in the regional and global interest in his case. Zunar was already a well-known figure in Malaysia, but much less-so outside of the country. Being featured in Write for Rights has significantly raised his international profile, including from people who do not normally follow issues in Malaysia. His case has received a wide variety of media coverage in numerous countries, and the diplomatic community has been pushed to take action. For example, the EU delegation in Malaysia recently said that they were aware of AI’s campaign and were closely following the issue Freedom of Expression in the country.

This increased global attention on Zunar’s case has undoubtedly been useful, as it comes at a time when Malaysia is very concerned about its international image. The authorities are very keen to be perceived positively on the global stage, and are therefore much less likely to hand Zunar a heavy sentence now that they know this would lead to significant criticism from around the world. Although it is possible he will still be convicted, we believe his increased profile and the international pressure created will at the very least have reduced the severity of any sentence he receives.



Zunar with AI activists during his visit to AI Sweden © Amnesty International Sweden

In addition, although the authorities have said that Zunar's case is being postponed while the outcome of the constitutional challenge to the Sedition Act is reached, this could also be a delaying tactic as they try to decide how to take forward his case. The huge international support for him may have made them wary of a backlash if he is given a harsh sentence. So while his charges have not been dropped, we believe the Write for Rights action could still have had a positive influence.

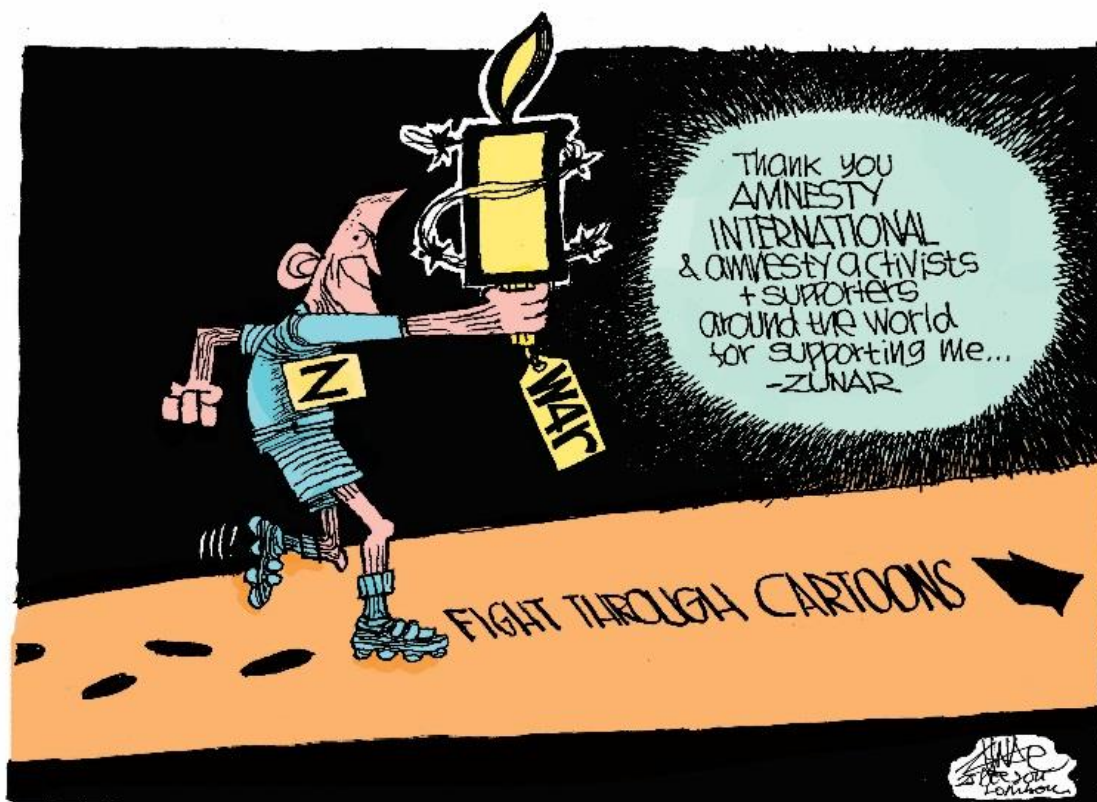
As well as sending appeals directly to the authorities, activists from around the world also drew drawings and cartoons to show their support for Zunar, or to represent what freedom of expression meant to them. Hundreds of their creations have been uploaded to Instagram, including from some well-known cartoonists, leading to a wonderful, creative show of solidarity for Zunar.

One of the objectives for the campaign for Zunar was to use his case to highlight the increasing restrictions on freedom of expression in Malaysia, and to impact the broader issue. We feel this has been a success, as the details of his case have been widely discussed, and the reasons behind the charges well-documented. Since the campaign began, there have been fewer convictions under the Sedition Act, and while people are still facing charges related to freedom of expression, it seems that other charges are being used instead. In addition, on 12 February the Attorney General announced that the charges under the Sedition Act against academic Dr Azmi Sharom were being dropped. This was an unexpected development, and suggests that the international attention on Zunar and this wider issue in Malaysia may be having an impact on other cases.

Zunar was very grateful that AI had chosen to highlight his case as part of Write for Rights, and that as a result the broader issue of freedom of expression in Malaysia received more attention. Zunar was able to take part in some Amnesty events, including in the UK, Sweden, Malaysia, and also a virtual session as part of the Online Human Rights Course. He gave positive feedback about the materials that were produced, and was able to use some of the images and audiovisual content during his own activities.

The campaign for Zunar continues, and we will keep pushing for the charges against him to be dropped. The work on freedom of expression in Malaysia will flow into the project on Human Rights Defenders, focusing on the laws that are used to silence and repress HRDs. We will be exploring specific opportunities for pressure in the coming months, and hope that sections and activists will remain engaged so that we can build on the momentum created.

Thank you cartoon drawn by Zunar for Amnesty International © Zunar



GREECE: COSTAS

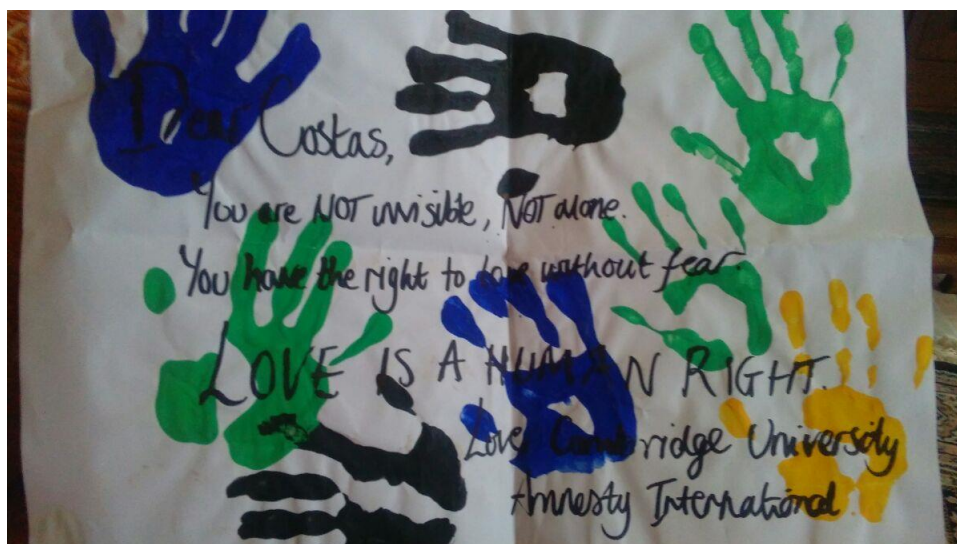


Costas and his partner were badly beaten in a homophobic and racist attack in August 2014. As Costas explained **“they could tell we are a couple, and they targeted us because of that, and because of my partner’s skin colour.”** The scars were not only physical – his leg was broken in three places and had to undergo surgery – but also psychological. LGBTI people in Greece live in a climate of hostility,

where hate speech is common and physical attacks are on the rise. The authorities fail to protect LGBTI people adequately and impunity for hate crimes is rife. To date no suspects of the attack against Costas have been identified, let alone punished.

Amnesty’s relation with Costas started well before Write for Rights and at the time, speaking about the sequels of the attack, Costas explained: **“It’s like the government condones the attacks by not recognizing our relationships, by not acknowledging we are real. That we have the right to exist, safely. It’s as if we don’t exist.”**

Write for Rights was the perfect platform to amplify this message – the link between recognition, protection and justice – and to support the tireless fight of LGBTI activists in Greece.



One of the photos taken by Costas of the thousands of solidarity messages received © Costas, March 2016.

During Write for Rights over 150,000 actions were taken in at least in 25 countries around the world for Costas. He has received boxes of solidarity messages and postcards in which thousands of people remind him that he is not alone. Similarly, thousands of letters and messages have reached the Minister of Justice urging him to take action.

On 22 December 2015 a law extending civil unions to same-sex couples was passed by the Greek Parliament. Although the law does not guarantee full equality with married couples or legal gender recognition for transgender people, it is a historic and important step in the right direction. It means that the government finally acknowledges that same sex relationship exist and matter.

Explaining how he felt about Write for Rights, Costas told Amnesty: **“I am so moved, and I thank you from the depth of my heart – every single person, woman, man or else, that wrote even half a line and contributed to this campaign. Thank you, Amnesty, for bringing light into the darkness.”**

UZBEKISTAN: MUHAMMAD BEKZHANOV

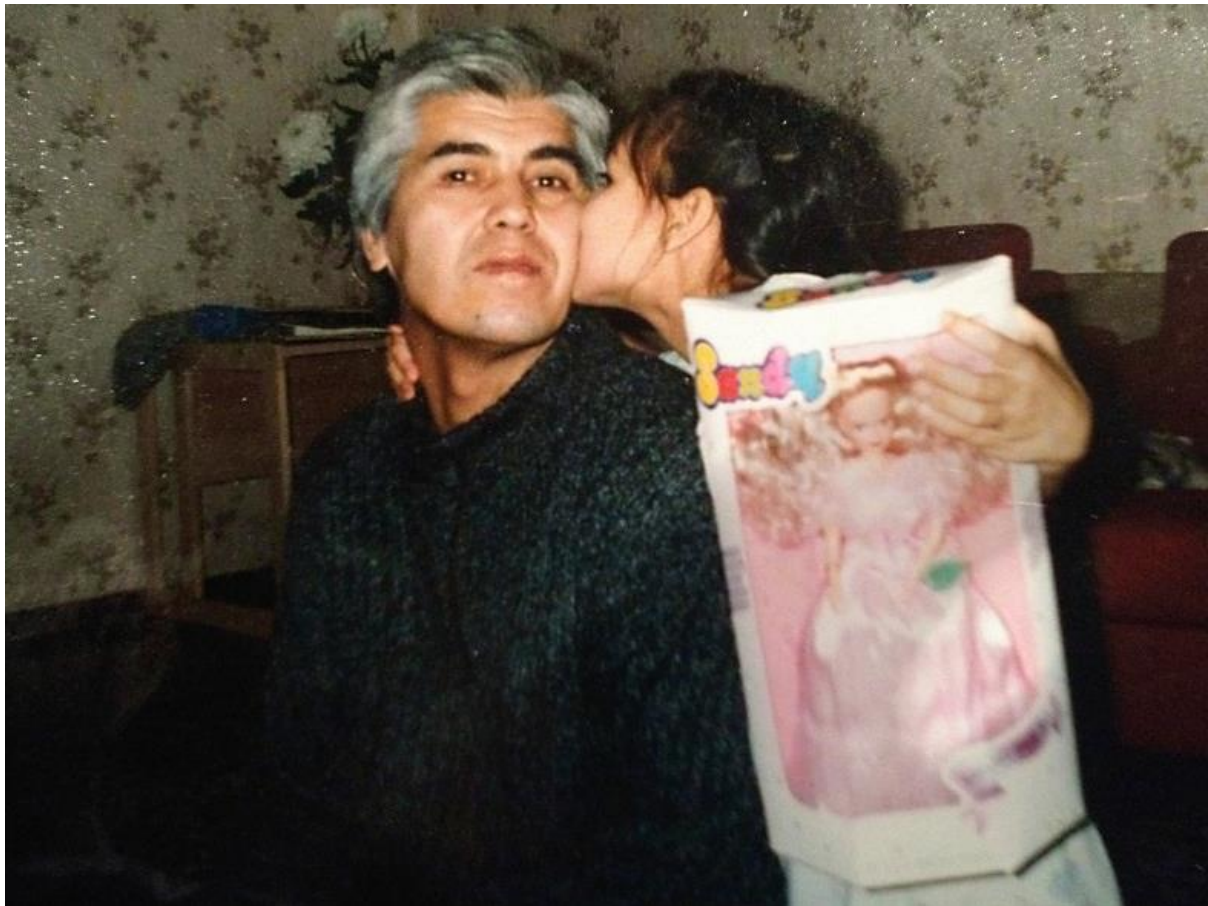


Over 200,000 actions were taken for Muhammad Bekzhanov in at least 22 countries around the world during Write for Rights.

Amnesty describes the human rights situation in Uzbekistan in its 2015 annual report as one where “the authorities used torture and other ill-treatment to suppress dissent, combat

actual or perceived security threats, repress political opponents, extract confessions and incriminating information, and intimidate or punish detainees and prisoners and their families. Courts relied heavily on confessions extracted under torture, duress or deception. Prison sentences of individuals convicted of anti-state and terrorism offences were arbitrarily extended.”

Sadly, Muhammad Bekzhanov's case exemplifies all of that: In 1999, Uzbekistani security forces tortured him, beat him with rubber truncheons, suffocated him and gave him electric shocks until he confessed to “anti-state” offences. He was the editor of a banned opposition newspaper. In court, his “confession” was used to sentence him to 15 years in prison. He was due to have been released in 2012, but shortly before, he was sentenced to an additional four years and eight months for allegedly violating prison rules.



Muhammad with one of his daughters, before his arrest © Private

And yet, the situation in Uzbekistan is all too often forgotten. For that reason and because Muhammad Bekzhanov's case is such an important and emblematic case, its inclusion in Write for Rights was welcome by those working on human rights in Uzbekistan. Such a wide and visible international campaign sends a clear message to the authorities that the world is watching.

Muhammad Bekzhanov is one of the world's longest imprisoned journalists. His three daughters and his wife Nina, who had to leave Uzbekistan, have not given up on his freedom. Write for Rights had united thousands of voices to theirs in telling Muhammad that he is not forgotten. As his daughter Aigul told us: **"We are profoundly thankful that our dad received so much attention. Thanks to all of you!"**



Muhammad Bekzhanov's three daughters at his youngest daughter's graduation © Private

SAUDI ARABIA: WALEED ABU AL-KHAIR



Human rights defender and lawyer Waleed Abu al-Khair was sentenced to 15 years in jail – with five of these years suspended – in July 2014, following years of harassment, arrests, threats and court cases. Through his work, he had challenged the assault on human rights in Saudi Arabia. Waleed has represented many peaceful activists imprisoned by the authorities, including his brother-in-law Raif Badawi, the blogger jailed and sentenced to 1,000 lashes.

Waleed was found guilty by the Specialized Criminal Court of, among other farcical charges, insulting the judiciary, disobeying the ruler, and harming the reputation of the Kingdom. In 2015, an appeal judge ruled that he will serve the full 15 years, since he has refused to apologise for his 'offences'.

As part of Write for Rights 2015, almost 300,000 actions were taken on Waleed Abu al-Khair's case, calling on the Saudi Arabian authorities to quash his conviction and release him immediately and unconditionally as he is a prisoner of conscience imprisoned solely for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression. Thousands of activists also sent solidarity messages to Waleed and his family, letting him know he is in the thoughts of people across the world, sharing their admiration for his courage and unwavering defence of human rights and their hopes that he will soon be released. Activists from at least 29 sections sent appeals or solidarity messages for Waleed and his family, and on 10 December, many sought to make Waleed's words famous, painting them on pavements, projecting them, and performing readings of them in front of embassies.



An action for Waleed and Raif, run by AI Germany © Amnesty International Germany

Amnesty International has been campaigning on Waleed Abu al-Khair's case for many years. Our activism has been increasing particularly since April 2014 after he was detained following a court hearing in his ongoing trial. Since then he has been a focus of Amnesty International's work on Saudi Arabia, with activists carrying out joined-up actions around the anniversary of his arrest and his birthday in 2015, and culminating in the 2015 Write for Rights campaign.

Despite not yet seeing concrete improvements in Waleed Abu al-Khair's situation, Amnesty International believes that awareness of his case has increased significantly as a result of his inclusion in Write for Rights and the association of his case with that of Raif Badawi, and that this will be of benefit to his situation as we continue to campaign for his release.

In part, Waleed Abu al-Khair's case was selected for Write for Rights as we wanted to build upon the campaigning efforts on Raif Badawi's case which was included in the campaign in 2014. We sought to highlight the grim situation in Saudi Arabia for numerous courageous activists facing a similar predicament.

According to our information, the Saudi Arabian authorities are aware of the campaign and have acknowledged it privately, despite not reacting publicly.

Amnesty International will continue to campaign for Waleed Abu al-Khair's release throughout 2016 and beyond, and expects him to be a feature of concerted campaigning around key dates throughout the year.



An action for Waleed and other Saudi political prisoners, run by AI Germany © Amnesty International Germany

IRAN: SAMAN NASEEM



Saman Naseem was 17 years old when he was arrested for taking part in armed activities against the state. He has described how he was tortured and forced to make a “confession”, which was then used to sentence him to death for charges of “enmity against God” and “corruption on earth.” After worldwide campaigning to stop his scheduled execution on 19 February 2015, Saman Naseem was transferred to an undisclosed location. After nearly five

months of concealing his fate and whereabouts, the authorities finally confirmed that he was alive. His lawyer was informed that the Head of the Judiciary had stayed the execution, and the Supreme Court had quashed his death sentence and sent his case back to a court of first instance for retrial. Saman Naseem is now awaiting his retrial before Branch 1 of the Criminal Court 1 of West Azerbaijan Province, north-west Iran.

As part of Write for Rights 2015, over 200,000 actions were taken on Saman Naseem’s case, urging the Iranian authorities to ensure that Saman Naseem’s retrial adheres strictly to international human rights law and standards on juvenile justice without recourse to the death penalty, and that “confessions” obtained under torture and other ill-treatment are not used in court as evidence of guilt.

Thousands of activists also sent solidarity messages to Saman Naseem and his family, expressing hope that he would receive a fair retrial, and giving assurances that he is not alone and forgotten, and that people are thinking of him. Activists from at least 26 Amnesty International sections and structures campaigned on Saman Naseem’s behalf throughout the campaigning period. People who took part in the campaign came from all over the world, including European countries, as well as Togo, Burkina Faso, Nauru, the Seychelles, Mongolia, Paraguay, Hong Kong, New Zealand, Tunisia, Venezuela, Moldova and Nepal.



Solidarity cards sent to Saman Naseem and his family from all over the world. © Amnesty International

Activism by Amnesty International supporters for Saman Naseem's case has been developing since his death sentence was sent to the Office of the Implementation of Sentences in September 2014. When Amnesty International learned that Saman Naseem's execution was scheduled to be carried out on 19 February 2015, it intensified its campaigning. Due to the continuous developments in Saman Naseem's case, sections and structures remained engaged in campaigning for him, taking various actions throughout 2015, which reached their peak during the 2015 Write for Rights campaign.

Amnesty International believes that its campaigning has made a real difference in Saman Naseem's situation and helped save him from the gallows throughout 2015. It has also helped raise sympathetic awareness about the plight of other juvenile offenders languishing on death row in Iran, often after unfair trials, including those based on "confessions" extracted through torture and other ill-treatment.

Despite some recent juvenile justice reforms, Iran continues to lag behind the rest of the world, maintaining laws that permit girls as young as nine and boys as young as 15 to be sentenced to death. In a number of cases, the authorities have scheduled the executions of juvenile offenders and then postponed them at the last minute, such as in Saman Naseem's case, in response to widespread appeals and international pressure.

Amnesty International calls on activists and supporters to keep up the momentum generated by the Write for Rights campaign and the launch of its January 2016 report on juvenile executions (AI Index Number MDE 13/3112/2016) in order to urge the Iranian authorities to commute the death sentences of all juvenile offenders, and adopt laws abolishing the use of death penalty against juvenile offenders once and for all.

SYRIA: RANIA ALABBASI AND HER CHILDREN



Rania Alabbasi, her husband Abdulrahman Yasin and their six children aged between three and 15 years were arrested by the Syrian authorities in March 2013. They have been missing ever since, victims of enforced disappearance. Syrian Military Intelligence officers came to Rania Alabbasi's home in the Damascus suburb of Mashroua Dummar on 9 March 2013, and arrested Abdulrahman Yasin without giving any reason. They

returned the following day to confiscate valuables, papers and the family's cars. Two days later, they came for Rania and her six children. No one has heard from the family ever since. Despite requests from their relatives, the Syrian authorities have given no information about what has happened to them, where they are or why they were arrested.

The activism of Amnesty International supporters for Rania Alabbasi and her children has been steadily growing since Amnesty International learnt about their situation in October 2014 and peaked during the 2015 Write for Rights Campaign. As part of Write for Rights 2015, over 200,000 actions were taken on the case of Rania and her children, and Amnesty International continues to receive more solidarity cards. Petition signatures have urged the Syrian authorities to release the children unconditionally and release Rania unless she is charged promptly with an internationally recognizable offence and tried in accordance with international fair trial standards. Supporters have further demanded that the Syrian authorities reveal their fate and whereabouts and give them access to their family and a lawyer, in addition to requesting that Rania and her children be protected from torture and other ill-treatment and provided with medical attention. Finally, the petition requested access for independent monitors to all persons deprived of their liberty across Syria to address the issue of enforced disappearances systematically. Activists also sent solidarity cards and messages, expressing their wishes and support for Rania and her family. Actions were taken in at least 25 Amnesty International sections/structures, who campaigned on behalf of Rania and the children throughout the campaign period.



Examples of solidarity cards received for Rania and her children. © Amnesty International

Amnesty International Sections were also working with the International Secretariat to organize events and tours with Syrian activists speaking about the Syrian's government use of enforced disappearances. At least nine Amnesty International sections invited Syrian speakers from Turkey and Europe to join membership events, engage with the media and / or carry out lobbying and advocacy activities. Rania Alabassi's sister travelled from Saudi Arabia to Spain and Italy as part of these activities. According to these sections, she achieved media coverage in the main national newspapers and met with government officials in Italy. These activities were seen as a success by the involved sections as far as the International Secretariat is aware. Other sections, such as France or Iceland, who had invited other Syrian activists, also reported that their events, media work and high level meetings had proven very successful and contributed to raising the issue of enforced disappearances in Syria in their national contexts.



Mail bags filled with solidarity cards arrived at the International Secretariat.

© Amnesty International

In the meantime, the Syria Team at the International Secretariat also carried out media, lobbying and advocacy activities at the international level. In October, prior to the release of a research report on enforced disappearances, members of the team organized a panel discussion at the UN Security Council in New York and held several private advocacy meetings with representatives of member states. The launch of the report was extensively covered in international and regional media. Rania Alabassi's sister and other Syrian activists gave interviews to a number of international media outlets contributing to a high quality coverage of the report and the issue of enforced disappearances in general.

In February, members of the Syria team continued advocacy activities in Geneva in the context of the upcoming discussion on Syria at the Human Rights Council and the negotiations between warring parties that were pending in Geneva at the time. The International Secretariat engaged with diplomats leading on the upcoming Human Rights Council resolution on the issue of enforced disappearances, which resulted in the inclusion of stronger language in the draft. The Amnesty International delegates also engaged with the office of Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura to raise the issue of enforced disappearances as an important confidence-building measure for peace negotiations. This trip also resulted in media coverage as interviews were conducted jointly with a Syrian activist and former victim of enforced disappearance.

As such, the campaign has helped to raise awareness about the case of not only Rania Alabassi, but also that of other victims of enforced disappearances in Syria and the plight of their families.

There has been no official word from the Syrian government in reaction to the campaign. However, even though the government very rarely reacts in public to such campaigns, we believe that they take notice of them. The campaign for Rania Alabbasi and her children has probably had an effect but the government refuses to acknowledge this in public. Recent interviews given by President Assad show that the government is placing a strong emphasis on presenting itself to the world as the only option for peace in Syria, while continuing its rhetoric around counterterrorism. This is especially important to the Syrian government in the context of the pending peace negotiations in Geneva as they would like to be perceived as the legitimate rulers of Syria. This campaign, which publicly confronts the authorities with the real tactics they are using against civilians in Syria – the merciless repression of anyone suspected of a dissenting opinion, including children - is therefore bound to be noticed by the government and Amnesty International will continue to press this issue.

Rania's sister, Naila, told Amnesty International: **"We don't have any news about Rania and her family yet. I really appreciate your efforts. It is great work. But above all I still have the hope that you will continue doing all your best to release Rania. Her children need your help. I hope you can put pressure on the Russian authorities as they are controlling Syria. Again thank you for all you did."**

Amnesty International will continue to campaign on behalf of Rania Alabbasi and her children as part of our work on detentions, enforced disappearances and abductions. Following the end of the Write for Rights campaign, which coincided with campaigning activities on enforced disappearances, the signatures gathered on both of these petitions will be presented to the Syrian authorities in New York in June or July as part of a stunt. On a separate occasion, the solidarity cards will also be taken to New York and will be handed to the Syrian authorities as part of a stunt. More information on these stunts will be shared closer to the date.

Moving forward, the next output of the Syria team, which is planned for April/May, will focus on abductions by non-state armed groups. The next phase of our campaigning work on detention issues by the Syrian government will then commence around early July, with a report on torture and ill-treatment in state-run detention facilities. This will be accompanied by a virtual 3D model of one of the most notorious prisons in Syria: Saydnaya Military Prison.



3

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL **ALGERIA**

52,836 Total actions

12,000 Estimated Participants

AI Algeria organized approximately 60 events across 20 cities in Algeria, involving 28 youth groups and individual members who collected approximately 53,000 actions. These events included solidarity actions, exhibitions, debates, stalls, and online actions. They also held a press conference (with over ten journalists) to launch the campaign, which was followed by a "One Day Action for Write for Rights" in their office. During this event, people signed petitions, wrote solidarity letters and took part in several workshops on human rights. For the third consecutive year, AI Algeria had a media partnership with the first Algerian online French speaking media channel, "TSA-Algerie". "Le Hic" and "Ghilas Ainouche", two famous Algerian cartoonist who drew cartoons in solidarity with Zunar. AI Algeria's Activism Coordinator also promoted the Write for Rights campaign during a talk show.



Activists from Algeria take part in Write for Rights activities

³ We have not included in this section information about the countries where actions were simply taken independently online by activists. While these activists may have been reached by Amnesty International's online presence, they were not involved with Amnesty in any other way. Please also be aware that this list only includes numbers of actions collated via the survey sent out after the campaign. The total number of actions for the whole campaign however (as indicated by the global counter), includes actions from S/s that filled in the global counter, but did NOT answer the survey following the end of the campaign.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

ARGENTINA

697 Total actions

1,200 Estimated Participants

For the Write for Rights 2015 campaign, AI Argentina organised three street actions. The first was in the law school at the Buenos Aires University (explaining the cases and collecting signatures at the main entrance of the university). The second event was in Plaza Houssay Park with another NGO. #MovidaSolidaria is an activity with a main concept: one day, one park, many NGOs working together for various causes. The third activity was in the biggest park of Buenos Aires, Bosques de Palermo. AI Argentina set up a tent and with the assistance of activist and youth groups. They collected signatures and explained the cases involved. One extra activity was developed in this park, as AI Argentina hired nail artists and they were drawing iconic graphics from the cases in the nails of the girls who came to the tent.



Activists in Argentina

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

AUSTRALIA

90,000 Total actions

The Section used the online Activist Portal as their main tool - with each case having its own page and related campaign materials to download and create their own events – as well as online actions promoted on social media. The Parramatta and Mt Druitt groups in NSW teamed up to run a Write for Rights seven-day challenge encouraging supporters to write a letter for an individual at risk every day for a week. In Melbourne one of their new groups, the Pop Culture Network, held an event at the Gaming Convention PAX. Teodora's case featured in public transport ads in Sydney and Melbourne, utilising the Pocket Protest SMS network to generate actions as well as bring in new people. They worked with three internationally renowned street artists - E.L.K., Kaff-eine and Adnate - who painted giant murals of Teodora and Yorm Bopha (W4R 2013) in Sydney and Melbourne respectively, which was shot with time-lapsed photography and shared on social media. The Sections also visited the offices of 130 MPs and Senators in the Australian Parliament, encouraging them to write letters – many of whom confirmed they had written and sent their letters.

Mural of Yorm Bopha in Australia



AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL AUSTRIA

Cards drawn by Austrian children

44,404 Total actions

21,000 Estimated Participants

Local Amnesty International groups in Austria organised over 39 Write for Rights events in cafes, pubs, libraries, shops, public streets and squares around the country. Approximately 180 classes and over 3,500

students from various schools took part in this year's campaign. Overall, more than 44,400 actions were taken as part of the campaign in Austria. In preparation for Write for Rights 2015, the annual human rights conference in Austria was dedicated to the campaign as well as a speaker's tour with Justine Ijeoma was organized. On 10 December 2015, AI Austria also held a press conference in cooperation with an Austrian university as well as an event which combined letter writing activities with human rights education.



AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL BELGIUM (FLEMISH)

AI Belgium (Flemish) used numerous events and methods of involving participants. They held a 12 hour marathon in the city of Antwerp. During this event, they collected 3,411 letters. AI Belgium (Flemish) also created an action kit for its campaigners, which included solidarity cards and letter writing. More than 300 action kits were ordered – in comparison to the 120 action kits that were ordered in 2014. The Section also involved groups from schools, people in a rest home, libraries, city halls, writing marathons in different cities, all joined in and wrote thousands of letters.

32,472 Total actions

AI Belgium (Flemish) also created an platform/website for online activism. Political activist Ales Bialiatski helped the section and made promotional movies for Write for Rights together in collaboration with the Sections' communication agency. The Section also worked alongside many media partners including national and regional radio stations, tv channels, magazines and newspapers. Other organisations (such as women organisations) also participated and promoted the campaign and asked their members to join the marathon.



AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL **BRAZIL**

The Write for Rights campaign was launched during the "Everybody Has Rights" festival sponsored by AI Brazil and other national human rights organisations. This event was attended by over 50,000 people, with the participation of 25 activists. During the campaign, 20 other activities and events were held by ten local activism groups in seven states. Thereby, increasing the total number of actions by approximately 50% (with actions taken in five additional cities) from the previous year!

19,372 Total actions

5,000 Estimated Participants

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

BURKINA FASO

Over 15,000 Total actions

10,349 Estimated Participants

AI Burkina Faso worked on the Write for Rights 2015 campaign by implementing various methods and activities such as public events, youth activities (at schools and universities in Ouagadougou, Ouahigouya and Bobo Dioulasso) and face-to-face meetings. Other methods of participation included human rights education activities, such as training of specific groups and running World Cafes. AI Burkina Faso also used the media as a tool to increase participation in the campaign. They also ran poetry competitions on sexual and reproductive rights in Yako.



Girls who are victims of early and forced marriage as well as early pregnancy at the FOCEB shelter admiring solidarity letters and postcards sent as part of Write for Rights 2015. Amnesty International Burkina Faso volunteers prepared the wall display for the girls, most of whom have been disowned by their families.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

CANADA (ENGLISH)

78,500 Total actions

28,000 Estimated
Participants

In 2015, Amnesty International Canada (Anglaphone) more than doubled the number of Write for Rights events held across the country. During the campaign, tens of thousands of actions were taken at over 1,700 private and public events. New areas of innovation included the experimentation with social media strategies such as Facebook picture profile overlay, Twibbon and culminated in a Twitter Party that used a display tool. The events were strongly supported by AI Canada's activism team and had approximately 100% participation by Amnesty International groups. These events also attracted twice the number of school participation as previous years. The Section held a marquee event, where they shared previous successes of activism and reached out to high profile Canadians to solicit their support. This year they had notable endorsements from author Margaret Atwood, TV personality George Stroumboulopoulos and actress Erica Caroll.



Activists in Canada

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CHILE

2,691 Total actions

In 2015, AI Chile focused on the four cases from El Salvador, Mexico, Greece and Saudi Arabia. With the aim of improving their participatory methods, AI Chile established a working committee composed by activists, the Activism Coordinator and/or the Campaigner whose role was to decide which activities AI Chile would carry out and the methods used to do so. The committee worked very well and many activists participated in the four outdoors activities that were developed. AI Chile collected 1,710 offline signatures and 881 online signatures. Their main activity was a music festival organized by another organization that AI Chile attended. During this event, AI Chile illuminated the wall of an emblematic building with the faces of the four cases. A video was also projected on the same wall made by activists. The Section also wrote 200 Christmas postcards and took action through the use of Twitter and Tumblr.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL COTE D'IVOIRE

27,065 Total actions

35,000 Estimated
Participants

Two major activities (public mobilisation with information stands and Human Right Education) were highlighted during the Write for Rights 2015 campaign in Côte d'Ivoire.

Through various activities and events, AI Core D'Ivoire collected over 27,000 actions for six cases. The photo of Phyoe Phyoe receiving her first solidarity letters really energized AI Cote D'Ivoire's activists, enabling them to collect even more signatures and organize further events activities.

Another activity AI Cote D'Ivoire is proud of is the debate between students at a school in Abidjan. Through discussion groups, students were taught about the issues of early child marriage in Burkina Faso. This was useful as the situation in Côte d'Ivoire is very similar. Due to this debate most of the participants became members of Amnesty and went on to help collect more signatures.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

CZECH REPUBLIC

17,302 Total actions

8,000 Estimated
Participants

Amnesty International Czech Republic was pleased to organize 200 events across the country for Write for Rights 2015. The campaign took place in many schools, coffee shops, libraries, churches, but also private living rooms. The famous Czech band "Zrni" hosted a letter writing marathon event during their Christmas concert in Prague.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL DENMARK

AI Denmark always strive to do something new for the Write for Rights campaign, and this year they held a public Scrabble (game) event where people received bonus points every time they used a word relevant for the campaign. In addition, a Danish author read aloud the solidarity letters that she had written. AI Denmark is proud of the number of people (mainly pupils and Amnesty International activists) who composed hand written letters. Despite these activities requiring high levels of engagement, AI Denmark is grateful for the time the participants dedicated to the campaign by writing letters alongside their families and friends.

171,705 Total actions

73,940 Estimated
Participants

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS OFFICE

356 Total actions

While the EIO has engaged in Write for Rights in the past, 2015 was the first year they actively organised campaign activities. They focused on seven cases, building on previous EU-level advocacy, and chose to target the European Parliament (EP) in particular. Working in close cooperation with the Chair of the EP Sub-committee on Human Rights, Elena Valenciano, the EIO prepared an evening reception and letter-writing activities to be held in the parliament around Human Rights Day. However, due to heightened security restrictions following the November 2015 Paris attacks, their original plans had to be cancelled at late notice. Shifting focus, the EIO then designed tailored materials which Ms. Valenciano distributed to all Members of European Parliament (MEP) to encourage their participation. They also targeted key EU figures using social media. Brussels-based NGOs also joined the campaign such as ILGA Europe and the European Youth Forum, who took action for Costas and for Fred and Yves, respectively. A foundation for future Write for Rights activities at EU level was established.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL FINLAND

Amnesty International Finland witnessed its most successful results during the Write for Rights 2015 campaign. During this period, they received an increase of 156% in their total number of actions in comparison to previous years. AI Finland encouraged higher levels of activity from its individual members and supporters in contributing to offline campaigning.

35,000 Total actions

69,195 Estimated
Participants

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL **FRANCE**

Despite the events that occurred in France (the Paris attacks and the state of emergency), Write for Rights was an amazing moment for activism and solidarity. Approximately 100,000 people generated more than 600,000 actions in 250 towns and villages. These actions included petitions, letters and tweets to authorities. Solidarity actions were also collected online or through more than 500 public events organized in the streets, in schools and universities, as well as in cultural locations. Two human rights activists were invited including Serge, an activist from the Democratic Republic of Congo who advocated for imprisoned friends and colleagues Fred and Yves. Hussein Ghreer, a journalist and blogger from Syria and a survivor of enforced disappearance also attended and analysed the human rights situation in Syria in terms of advocacy, media and human rights education activities.

600,000 Total actions

100,000 Estimated
Participants



AI France launched the Write for Rights campaign at the Louvre museum with a weekend of human rights debates, conferences, concerts, and screenings, attended by many artists and over 1,300 people. The campaign received high levels of media attention in France and the Section was able to advertise through various means, such as video displays and audio ports at dozens of radio stations as well advertising at 400 theatres.

Activists from AI France

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL **GHANA**

In order to increase the number of participants and actions taken, some youth groups from Senior High Schools in and around Accra were involved in the Write for Rights 2015 Campaign. Activism Coordinators also mobilized Amnesty International Members in Accra and Kumasi who also participated in the Write for Rights Campaign 2015. Overall, the campaign received 7,642 letters and 8,709 signatures. AI Ghana was able to take this number of actions offline with the support of their membership in their schools and the Section's Activism Centres in Accra and Kumasi specifically.

18,730 Total actions

8,709 Estimated
Participants

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL GERMANY

255,804 Total actions

AI Germany had their biggest ever Write for Rights in 2015, setting an all-time record. Overall, the campaign received 255,804 total actions in comparison to 170,000 in 2014. AI Germany also received high volumes of offline actions (letters written). In 2015, they received a total number of 115,111 offline letters in comparison to 46,000 in 2014. The main reason for this increase is that in 2015, 284 schools participated in the Write for Rights campaign, more than twice as many as last year. The human rights education material on the campaign were very well received by teachers and many of them have already signed up for 2016.

All over Germany, activists and Amnesty International groups carried out a total of 260 events and activities such as letter writing events, vigils etc. Together, with 2,500 large-sized advertisement posters and a newspaper inlays with almost 100,000 copies, AI Germany had a huge visibility during the campaign period. With the support of the Section, local groups in Berlin organized a pop-up store for ten days. During this event, the public and schools visited an exhibition with cartoons drawn by refugees. Every evenings, there were also events such as film screenings, panel discussions etc. related to the Write for Rights cases.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL GREECE

2,898 Total actions

2,858 Estimated
Participants

Amnesty International Greece placed its focus on online activism. They held two events on 10 December in the cities of Athens and Thessaloniki. AI Greece collaborated with a youth Greek NGO called Colour Youth and other LGBTI groups in Greece to promote Costas' case. These collaborations had an impact on the LGBTI community.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL ICELAND

80,436 Total actions

8,000 Estimated
Participants

In total, 80,436 actions were taken online and offline in Iceland during the Write for Rights campaign 2015. During the campaign AI Iceland launched a new website, which was successful in collecting over 37,075 actions for the 12 cases presented on the website. Letter writing events took place in 19 cities and towns all over Iceland as well as concerts and events held in Christmas markets. In 2015, 20 schools signed up to participate in the campaign and competed with each other for "The best Write for Rights 2015". This was the highest number of schools that has participated in the campaign in Iceland since 2013. They also launched an advertising campaign in many cinemas and produced videos with young Icelandic celebrities who encouraged young people to take part in the campaign. AI Iceland also invited guest speaker, Dr. Bashar Farahat, a doctor from Syria. This was very successful as Dr. Bashar Farahat provided a speech to over 100 people as well as receiving media attention including TV news broadcasts. AI Iceland also organised a cinema screening of the documentary 'In the Land of the Free', which tells the story of Albert Woodfox, Herman Wallace and Robert King. After the film screening activists also collected signatures to support Albert Woodfox's case.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL IRELAND

AI Ireland's 2015 Write for Rights campaign featured 13 individual cases, including Ibrahim Halawa, who is an Irish citizen. AI Ireland launched the Write for Rights campaign in November 2015. During this period, an e-bulletin went out to 23,000 members and financial supporters. AI Ireland also redesigned its webpage from 2014 and included background information and sample letters for each case. During a U2 concert, 1,937 letters were collected for the Burkina Faso and Mexico cases. AI Ireland also raised their number of actions with two Christmas market activists (total of 4,649 letters). AI Ireland also promoted the campaign digitally – via email, website and social media. As the campaign continues to grow in numbers of actions, it also strengthened in terms of mobilisation. This year local groups, activists, supporters and youth and students organized letter writing marathons in their homes, town centres, churches, workplaces, cafes and universities.

34,774 Total actions

600 Estimated
Participants

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL ITALY

Amnesty International Italy worked on five cases during the 2015 Write for Rights campaign. They launched a solidarity action for Zunar with the assistance of their youth network, made up of 26 AI groups, AI Italy's kid's network and 200 schools involved. They engaged with 15 Italian cartoonists who drew a cartoon, asking justice for Zunar. AI Italy also organized a speaking tour with Naila Al Abbasi, Rania's sister. The Section also created a new website dedicated to the campaign and collected 140 online signatures. AI Italy's local groups – approximately 110 groups – organized events, reading, filming around the country to talk about the Write for Rights 2015.

159,301 Total actions

160,000 Estimated
Participants

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL JAPAN

620 Estimated Participants

In 2015, Amnesty International Japan organised 32 Write for Rights events in 21 places across the country. During this campaign, approximately 620 people joined events and collected 8,463 letters.

Activists in Japan



AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL **KENYA**

3,600 Estimated Participants

Kenyan youth activists



AI Kenya worked on Fred and Yves' case during the Write for Rights 2015 campaign. This was due to the fact that they had conducted a series of solidarity actions for Fred and Yves in the last half of 2015 which led to increased interest in the case among Kenyans. AI Kenya was able to collect signatures from all over the country. In 2015, they focused on Nairobi only, which limited the number of signatures collected. AI Kenya used their human rights education networks to collect signatures from the rural

areas and the informal settlements. During the 2015 Write for Rights campaign, they used only AI-Kenya staff and volunteers to collect signatures at strategic locations and used the human rights education performance arts festivals to put across Fred and Yves' case. A majority of the letters were signed at these festivals. The festivals made it easier for AI Kenya to educate the target audiences on the DRC case whilst entertaining the participants.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL **MALAYSIA**

1,327 Total actions

800 Estimated Participants

Amnesty International Malaysia began working on Zunar's case from October 2015 and started with a press conference. At least five local media channels covered the story. Over the month of November and December 2015, AI Malaysia collected at least 700 offline actions and at least 400 online actions. They also received over 10,000 actions for Zunar from Amnesty International Sections around the world.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL **MEXICO**

17,733 Total actions

1,477 Estimated Participants

AI Mexico collected 17,733 actions, meaning that their total number of actions quadrupled in comparison to Write for Rights 2014 (3,775 actions received). They also organized some events where with high levels of attendance. These events included, a Human Rights Day event in the University of the Cloister of Sor Juana in Mexico City as well as an informal meeting of Write for Rights in San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas. The Section also held two conferences of Write for Rights in the Memory and Tolerance Museum in Mexico City as well as the Human Rights Camp in Guadalajara, Jalisco.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL **MOLDOVA**

The Write for Rights campaign in Moldova was launched on the 1 December 2015 and lasted until the 17 December. The official launch at the AI Moldova office was held on the 10 December. Overall, the campaign activities were led by AI Moldova's group coordinators and leaders. They held more than 75 events in at least 53 places involving thousands of activists, supporters and new members. AI Moldova also used the online tool for the campaign developed by AI Czech Republic for campaigning on Write for Rights. This year's campaign set a new record for AI Moldova, as they tripled their number in comparison to 2014.

20,636 Total actions

4,000 Estimated Participants

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL **MONGOLIA**

AI Mongolia organized their Write for Rights events in 15 locations, including universities, secondary schools and public locations such as the Sukhbaatar's square of Ulaanbaatar. The campaign received media attention including AI Mongolia's global press release on the Write for Rights campaign being published in daily newspapers such as 'Mongolyn Medee' and 'Undesnii Medee'. The new page for Write for Rights 2015 attracted more participants in comparison to 2014.

28,742 Total actions

3,900 Estimated Participants

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL **MOROCCO**

AI Morocco took part in Write for Rights 2015 by organising more than 50 events across 12 Moroccan cities. AI Morocco also successfully mobilized 14 of its local groups, as well as encouraged individual members, partner schools and civil society members to coordinate a wide range of activities that resulted in approximately 10,000 actions. These activities included awareness-raising workshops and stalls in schools and universities, organizing a 'sit-in' and a national march with other human rights organizations on Human Rights Day (10 December 2015), setting up spaces at partners' events, hosting letters writing evenings, launching online actions (social media and mass email actions) and reinforcing all of this mobilization through their online networks.

In line with the movement's guidance regarding Write for Rights 2015, AI Morocco's activities focused on human rights education and youth mobilization. This enabled their Section to open up to new schools as potential partners and allowed with new membership recruitment from youth constituencies.

21,160 Total actions

14,500 Estimated Participants

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL **NORWAY**

Amnesty International Norway produced Human Rights Education materials and organised schools visits for its staff members and activists. During the Write for Rights 2015 campaign, AI Norway also organized a group visit to see Senior Senators in order to speak about the cases and collect signatures/solidarity letters. In 2015, AI Norway also collected signature through SMS-networks, emails and social media platforms (digital solidarities). During the 2015 Write for Rights campaign, celebrities engaged as ambassadors. They held lectures, wrote op-eds, participated in newsletters, encouraged participants to sign actions on social media and/or held speeches at local events. During this campaign, AI Norway collected signatures and encouraged others to organize letter writing workshops and activities on the campaign's webpage.

226,827 Total actions

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NETHERLANDS

155,107 Total actions

35,000 Estimated
Participants

Amnesty International Netherlands participated in the 2015 Write for Rights campaign for its third year. In 2015, the campaign was larger in almost every aspect in comparison to its previous years. There were approximately 350 public events where people could come and join in with the campaign. Many schools, libraries, bookshops, student organisations and churches joined. More than a hundred Mayors (almost 30% of the Dutch Mayors) wrote letters and/or visited a local event in their town or village. The Dutch Parliament, as well as at the Ministry of the Interior, also provided letter writing locations. In the Amsterdam office they held their annual 24-hour event. During this event, 900 people attended to write and some stayed for the full 24 hours. A special letter writing boat sailed the Amsterdam canals. In total more than 100,000 letters were written. At some moment #schrijfmarathon (letter writing marathon) was second trending topic on Twitter.



The AI Offices in the Netherlands

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL **NEPAL**

35,000 Total actions

35,000 Estimated
Participants

AI Nepal mobilized its members across the country. Members collected approximately 35,000 actions, including artworks. The actions recorded were collected via offline events such as art competitions, reaching out to different colleges as well as events in public places. Some events were integrated with the International Human Rights Day events. AI Nepal also took part in the Asia Pacific Challenge on Write for Rights. During the Write for Rights 2015 campaign, one youth activists group took up the challenge and collected round 10,000 petitions and artworks.

Despite the fact that Nepal has not yet overcome and recovered from the effects of devastating earthquake in 2015 and political instability, members showed their enthusiasm during the campaign.



Activists in Nepal

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL **NEW ZEALAND**

AI New Zealand coordinated across media sources (both online and offline) in order to ensure a longer build-up and on-going engagement for the Write for Rights 2015 campaign. This was also to ensure greater levels of engagement among its youth networks, which contributed to the campaign from late October and early November 2015. Despite having a domestic priority campaign, AI New Zealand was able to successfully encourage participation for the Write for Rights campaign and witnessed high levels of public outreach. High volumes of creative talent was discovered in the drawings /cartoons generated for Phyoe Aung and Zunar's case.

2,986 Total actions

250 Estimated
Participants

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL **PARAGUAY**

Activities for Write for Rights took place at number of different locations in the city of Asuncion. These included well known locations such as the Waterfront, the National Pantheon, the Historic Centre and also at a Morrissey concert that was taking place nearby. They also had the Peter Benenson award for the Defence of Human Rights and it was awarded to the "Fiesta Amarilla 2015" activists, members and supporters.

1,887 Total actions

500 Estimated
Participants



Activists from AI Paraguay

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL **PHILIPPINES**

5,634 Total actions

5,000 Estimated
Participants

Most of the Amnesty International Philippines' Write for Rights events were carried out with forums and symposiums on the Global Campaigns that members carried out as part of their human rights week activities. Write for Rights booths were also installed in school and university fairs in time for the Christmas Season.

The highlight for the Section was the December 10 Candle Lighting Ceremony and Write for Rights event held in Quezon City where its members, supporters and partners gathered for a night of celebration through poetry, music and writing letters in between.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL **POLAND**

270,575 Total actions

89,740 Estimated
Participants

The Write for Rights 2015 campaign was another great success for Amnesty International Poland as 270,575 actions taken. The Section gathered online signatures and as always invited their supporters to organize event in their communities. In the end, letters were written in 675 places in Poland, mostly schools. AI Poland had a lot of youth taking actions, inviting local authorities, journalists, celebrities and for example fire fighters. There were concerts, workshops, movie screenings and many other creative actions. Ales Bialiatski also visited AI Poland and wrote letters with one of their local groups.



Activists from AI Paraguay

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL **PORTUGAL**

**131,106 Total
actions**

41,023 Estimated
Participants

AI Portugal worked on four of the global cases and the case of Rafael Marques, an Angolan journalist persecuted for writing a book regarding human rights violations in his country. During the Write for Rights campaign, 31 groups participated and AI Portugal managed to take the campaign to 171 schools and to their annual Youth Camp.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

PUERTO RICO

1,183 Total actions

500 Estimated
Participants

AI Puerto Rico invited school and university groups to write letters in the weeks leading up to International Human Rights Day (10 December 2015). The Section also hosted a music festival with local artists in order to conclude the Write for Rights 2015 campaign in Puerto Rico.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

RUSSIA

2,000 Estimated
Participants

This year, AI Russia organised events for the Write for Rights campaign in ten regions including Moscow, Saint-Petersburg, Ryazan, Kostroma, Voronezh, Rostov-on-Don, Perm, Dagestan, Kaliningrad and Omsk. Outside of Moscow the campaign was carried out by regional coordinators who were selected among AI Russia supporters and were trained in November 2015. At the same time, they created a separate website for Write for Rights and collected online signatures for the first time.

Many participants took action and composed letters for all featured cases. However, in Dagestan and Rostov-on-Don many refused to support Sentsov, Kolchenko and Afanasiev due to their fear of possible reprisals. According to regional coordinators' feedback, Rostov-on-Don and Dagestan had the most complicated political environments as people were afraid to sign letters, to take action and speak up, and many popular places refused to cooperate. Despite this, those in north-west of Russia (Saint-Petersburg, Kaliningrad and Perm), people were more open and willing to take action.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

SENEGAL

88,246 Total actions

18,800 Estimated
Participants

In addition to collecting signatures, AI Senegal also set up discussions on human rights with young people at schools and universities. These debates and discussions focused on various themes including freedom of expression, pregnancy, early marriages and torture. Various activities, such as theatre performances, were used as a way to encourage young people to do their own research and together propose solutions for the better protection of human rights. The Section also organized a press conference to launch the campaign, with supporters of Abdoulaye Wade Yinguou from Senegal and supporters of

Yves and Fred from the DRC in attendance. AI Senegal used this opportunity to inform and educate people on the need for justice. To encourage groups to become more involved in this campaign in the future, the Section will be presenting an award to the group that gathered the most signatures.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL SLOVAKIA

4,605 Total actions

3,000 Estimated Participants

In 2015, AI Slovakia engaged schools all over the country to participate in the Write for Rights campaign. They successfully developed new relationships with teachers who were participating in a variety of other human rights education activities. Many teachers were also engaged through AI Slovakia's year-long Human Rights Education projects, such as workshops and film clubs. The Section created an interactive atmosphere on Human Rights Day for the public through the creation of an 'open house day'. Participants could attend and write letters at this event. Their activist groups organized and participated in public events – they engaged in discussions, presented the cases in info stalls and collected letters.

AI Slovakia was pleased that many people decided to participate by writing letters, which were often accompanied with a drawing or otherwise personalized methods of participation. In 2015, they have also collected the largest number of solidarity letters in comparison to previous years, most of which were addressed to girls in Burkina Faso and Phyo Phyo Aung in Myanmar. AI Slovakia received many positive reactions where people were truly happy that they could contribute to end the injustice and positively change lives.



Pictures and letters drawn and written by Slovakian school children.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL SLOVENIA

10,678 Total actions

6,500 Estimated
Participants

Almost 11,000 actions were collected during the Write for Rights campaign, with the majority coming from over 50 primary and secondary schools who participated in the campaign. AI Slovenia's volunteers organised two public actions (in Ljubljana and Bled), as well as several micro-events and set up Write for Rights self-sufficient info and action points (posters and petitions in libraries, youth centres and cafes). AI Slovenia is proud that the participating schools become more independent and innovative every year. This year the primary school from a municipality Benedikt of less than 2,500 inhabitants collected over 1,000 actions and participated in appeal writing. They also made a picture-book with supportive thoughts for Phyo Phye Aung and students collected signatures with their parents, friends, relatives, and other inhabitants of the town. Signatures were also collected on the web site and via text message.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

SOUTH KOREA

4,904 Total actions

4,746 Estimated
Participants

Amnesty International South Korea collaborated with a paper-toy company during the Write for Rights 2015 campaign. The results can be found on the following website:
<http://amnesty.or.kr/letter2015/page/2/>.



Paper toy created for the campaign in South Korea

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL **SPAIN**

47,781 Total actions

AI Spain worked on two cases during the 2015 Write for Rights campaign including, Rania Alabassi from Syria as well as Fred and Yves from the DRC. During the campaign, AI Spain invited Naila, Rania's sister and Serge Kambale (LUCHA's activist). Naila did many interviews in the media and participated in two public activities. Serge visited seven local groups and did many interviews as well. Unfortunately, AI Spain was not able to do any lobbying work due to the general elections taking place. They also received two cyber actions and some Twitter and Facebook actions

The local groups organized many activities in streets, collecting signatures, drawing icons of the cases, chess games and activities with dentists (Syria case), activities with whistles (DRC case), etc.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL **SWEDEN**

AI Sweden launched the campaign with a video by music group First Aid Kit that encouraged people to take part in the campaign. This action received high levels of media coverage. Actions were taken via text messaging, phone calls, e-mails and via AI Sweden's campaigning website.

Amnesty groups all across Sweden also took part in the campaign and brought it out onto the streets. Some activities in Malmö were also attended by Zunar from Malaysia. The campaign was also part of their work with Human Rights Education. Teachers and students planned and carried out different activities, such as concerts, poetry slams, workshops and exhibitions. Solidarity actions were taken through a digital application where you could create and send your own solidarity post-cards. During the campaign AI Sweden also engaged in lobby and fundraising activities.

117,162 Total actions

25,000 Estimated
Participants



Activists from AI Sweden

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL SWITZERLAND

Write for Rights 2015 was integrated into the My Body My Rights campaign. AI Switzerland therefore only promoted the three My Body My Rights related cases (Burkina Faso, Greece and El Salvador) and introduced a new online tool ("e-collector"). By entering their name and city, participants receive a personalized letter (pdf format) ready for printing and sending.

20,948 Total actions

10,000 Estimated
Participants

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL TAIWAN

AI Taiwan successfully reached its goal of growth in 2015. The total number of actions taken grew significantly by 900% in comparison to 2014. Through Write for Rights Human Rights Education toolkits, more than 170 teachers and educators together with almost 15,000 students took parts in actions. Of these students, 95% of them were young people. Young volunteers became multipliers in both on-line and off-line activities. In the newly-formed official Instagram account, number of followers had increase in threefold compared with early December. Two networks, including human rights concerned teachers and volunteer designers, were established after Write for Rights 2015.

45,054 Total actions

18,186 Estimated
Participants



AI Taiwan reached more than 14,000 students through its 2015 Write for Rights campus projects.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL THAILAND

5,178 Total actions

4,000 Estimated
Participants

Despite a very challenging political situation under the military government, Amnesty International Thailand and its activist managed to take part in Write for Rights 2015. The Section focused on how to use Write for Rights as the main tool to establish some new activist groups in Thailand in order to increase their capacity in the long run. Over 5,100 actions have been taken both offline and online (excluding Facebook and Twitter) which varied from petition signings to drawings. More than 30 Write for Rights events or activities were held in eight cities around Thailand by both staff members and activists. The campaign received media attention as nine new agencies attended one of AI Thailand's Write for Rights events in Bangkok. Eventually, at the end of 2015, two new activist groups were successfully established, while the existing groups were even more active like never before.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL TOGO

70,442 Total actions

10,928 Estimated
Participants

During the Write for Rights 2015 campaign, AI Togo organized musical concerts, signatures collections in schools with Human Rights Education youth clubs, beach soccer games, films projections, photo actions, football matches, paper flower making session.

AI Togo is proud to have collected over 50,000 signatures and received media attention. Another achievement is the mobilization of more than 40% of entities to support Write for Rights. Write for Rights also enabled some groups in Togo, who had previously been inactive, begin their public activities.

Teenage girls at a Write for Rights event in Togo



AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL **TURKEY**

AI Turkey primarily promoted Write for Rights 2015 on online platforms. A separate microsite was created for the campaign and social media was effectively used to collect signatures. In addition, five activist groups worked on the campaign throughout December, with a peak on Human Rights Day, and collected signatures and solidarity letters by organizing letter writing events, opening stands and organizing movie screenings and panels. One letter writing event was organized by Amnesty International Turkey staff at the Section's office. Finally, AI Turkey's "Face To Face" Team collected signatures on the streets during the week around Human Rights Day. Signatures doubled this year when compared to last year. In total, three letter writing events, one movie screening and three panels were organized and their activists opened six Write for Rights stands.

4,567 Total actions

4,500 Estimated Participants

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL **USA**

Write for Rights 2015 was the largest in AI USA's history. They generated more actions (both letters and online actions), participants, events, Human Rights Education classroom events, media coverage and donations, than the Section ever has before. AI USA used the International Secretariat's cases, branding and materials. They emphasized the importance of writing letters and reporting back thereby making it easy to report. They also prioritized outreach to 14,619 teachers and professors, as well as 50 teachers' organizations, and 15 community and youth organizations (in addition to active AIUSA members and student and local groups). AI USA promoted Write for Rights through their fundraising channels, generating funds as well as actions. They included lobbying and media work on cases where strategic, and as capacity allowed. AI USA made their website and resources available as early as possible, and promoted Write for Rights heavily at their five Regional Conferences. They held a special event in New Orleans with attendees such as artists and singers such as Usher, focusing on Albert Woodfox but also including all cases.

312,205 Total actions

107,272 Estimated Participants

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL **UKRAINE**

AI Ukraine organized a two-day film marathon to promote the Write for Rights campaign. Documentaries about Zunar, protests in Myanmar and the ban on abortions in El Salvador were shown. They also showed such prominent films like Wim Wenders' "Salt of the Earth" and Sundance Festival winner "E-Team". AI Ukraine's highlight was an exclusive screening of a documentary about Oleg Sentsov (AI Ukraine's chosen domestic case), with further discussion of the case with the documentary's Co-Director Andrey Litvinenko and Sentsov's cousin Natalia (via Skype).

30,000 Total actions

5000 Estimated Participants

AI Ukraine also organized a reception for their partners and decision-makers in order to present them with cases and ask them to sign petitions and promote the Write for Rights campaign.

They also organized a concert where local groups played to celebrate Human Rights Day. AI Ukraine trained 80 regional coordinators, who launched more than 90 local letter-writing events in their cities (including film screenings, exhibitions and lectures). The Section also created and launched their own video with prominent Ukrainian decision-makers briefly presenting the cases and asking Ukrainians to join the Write for Rights campaign.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL **UK**

78,101 Total actions

AI UK created both online and offline materials for the 12 Write for Rights cases, 11 of which were from the global selection as well as Israa Al-Taweel from Egypt. They focused their staff led work on Waleed Abu Al-Khair and Phyoe Phyoe, launching online actions for both cases throughout the campaign. They held a small demonstration outside the Burmese embassy on Election Day calling for Phyoe Phyoe's release. They also held a day of action for Waleed Abu Al-Khair on Human Rights Day at the Saudi Arabia Embassy to call for his release, using a giant screen to play Write for Rights videos outside embassy and using microphone for supporters to read quotes from Waleed Abu Al-Khair with the aim of making his words known. Students took action on Albert Woodfox, taking life size cardboard cut-outs of him on a tour of London finishing with 200 student strong demo at the USA embassy. Finally, AI UK held an event in parliament where MPs and peers took action on five Write for Rights cases, including Jeremy Corbyn taking action for Waleed Abu Al-Khair.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

VENEZUELA

Amnesty International Venezuela received actions and solidarity letters from many areas across the country. They collected these actions through many activities such as: an NGO fair, a concert of peace (self-organized), workshops and other university activities.

14,119 Total actions

12,000 Estimated
Participants