



Our Next Meeting:
Thursday, June 10th
7:00pm via Zoom.



On April 17, 23-year-old **Paing Phyo Min** was released from prison in Myanmar! Two years ago, he was arrested and sentenced to six years in prison for peacefully making fun of the Myanmar military with his satirical poetry troupe, the Peacock Generation.

Last December, members of Group 48 and activists around the world sent more than 300,000 actions calling for his freedom during our annual Write for Rights campaign. Paing Phyo Min's father has shared his thanks:

"I just wanted to say as a parent thanks so much for helping my son."

Urgent Action: China

Lawyer Faces Charges for Reporting Torture



Human rights lawyer Chang Weiping was officially charged with “subversion of state power” on April 16, 2021, six months after police officers took him away for publicly detailing incidents of torture that he experienced during an earlier detention in January 2020. He is currently being held incommunicado at Feng County Detention Centre. Given his isolation and the reports of the torture Chang previously endured, there are grave concerns for his physical and mental wellbeing.

Chang Weiping is a human rights lawyer in Baoji City, Shaanxi, who is known for his work defending the rights of people facing discrimination based on their health status, sex/gender identity and sexual orientation. Due to his outspokenness and the sensitivity of his work, the Baoji City Judicial Administration Bureau suspended his law licence in October 2018. As a result of continued pressure and interference from the authorities, Chang Weiping was unable to obtain employment at other law firms in 2019. Finally, in January 2020, the authorities officially revoked his law licence.

Chang Weiping was taken away by the authorities on October 22, 2020. As he was living alone at the time, no one knew about the arrest until the authorities informed Chang's wife through a phone call later that evening. The authorities have yet to provide any documentation about the details of Chang's arrest.

On October 26, Chang's father and lawyers Chang's family had appointed to represent him went together to Gaoxin District Branch of the Baoji City Public Security Bureau to seek information regarding Chang's arrest. All their requests – including for legal documentation, access to Chang and an application for bail – were rejected. Since then, Chang's lawyers submitted multiple applications to visit Chang, all of which were rejected.

The authorities allowed Chang's father only once to see him for 10 minutes on November 25, 2020. During the short visit, Chang seemed to be unusually discreet about his condition. He told his family not to speak up about his case and expressed his wish that they would take care of each other. According to his father, it sounded like he was saying farewell to them. His family are very



worried that Chang might have once again been subjected to torture and other ill-treatment.

Prior to being formally arrested, Chang Weiping was held under “residential surveillance in a designated location”. He had been previously detained for 10 days in January 2020 after attending an informal and private meeting in the city of Xiamen in December 2019 at which human rights activists discussed the situation of civil society and current affairs in China. Ding Jiayi, another human rights lawyer who also attended the Xiamen meeting, has been detained since December 26, 2019.

Chang Weiping was taken into custody six days after releasing a video clip on YouTube in which he shared details of how he had been subjected to torture during his detention in January 2020. Chang Weiping said that police tied him to a restraining device known as a “tiger chair” for 24 hours a day and that he was interrogated 16 times. He also reported being subjected to heavy surveillance after his release.

Chang’s parents and other family members have faced ongoing surveillance and intimidation. They are followed whenever they leave their house. Their phones have been taken away and any visitors they receive are questioned by the police. Chang’s wife was threatened that she might lose her job if she continues to speak out on Chang’s case.

Please write immediately urging the authorities to:

- Release Chang Weiping immediately and unconditionally, unless there is sufficient credible and admissible evidence that he has committed an internationally recognized offence and is granted a fair trial in line with international standards;
- Pending his release, ensure that Chang Weiping has regular, unrestricted access to family and lawyers of his choice and is not subjected to torture and other ill-treatment;
- Immediately stop surveillance, harassment and intimidation against the family members of Chang Weiping.

Send appeals by June 28, 2021 to:

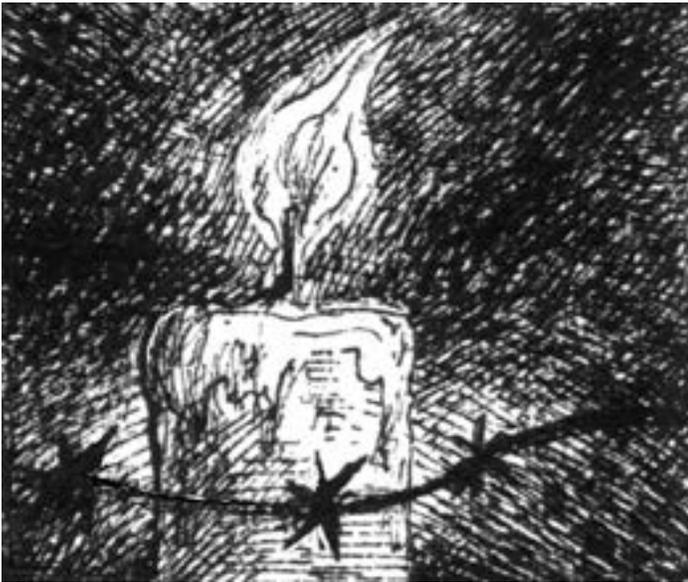
Director He Dong

Baoji City Public Security Bureau
57, Zhongshanxilu,
Weibin Qu, Baoji Shi,
Shaanxi Province, 721001
People’s Republic of China
Salutation: Director He

Ambassador Cui Tiankai

Embassy of the People’s Republic of China
3505 International Place NW
Washington, DC 20008
Fax: 202 495 2138
chineseembassyspokesperson@gmail.com
Twitter: @ChineseEmbinUS
Salutation: Dear Ambassador





Urgent Action : Cuba

ARTIST NAMED PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE

NAME AND PRONOUN: Luis Manuel Otero Alcántara (he/his)

On May 2, 2021 Cuban state security officials took artist Luis Manuel Otero Alcántara from his home and to a hospital, while he was hunger-striking in protest over the confiscation of artwork from his home around the April 22, 2021. Luis Manuel is a key figure in the San Isidro Movement, a diverse group of independent artists, journalists and activists that defend freedom of expression in Cuba. He is a prisoner of conscience, detained solely because of peacefully expressing his ideas, and should be released immediately and unconditionally.

Sample Letter

I write to you to condemn the detention of Cuban artist Luis Manuel Otero Alcántara, a key leader of the San Isidro Movement. Luis Manuel Otero Alcántara has been held seemingly under state custody in a hospital in Havana since May 2, 2021 with little contact with the outside world and reportedly highly restricted visits, solely for peacefully exercising his freedom of expression.

Prior to this, Luis Manuel Otero has faced harassment and intimidation from state security officials due to his work as a human rights defender. Just in December 2020, he was submitted to frightening levels of surveillance and,

TAKE ACTION:

1. Write a letter in your own words or using the sample below as a guide to one or both government officials listed. You can also email, fax, call or Tweet them.

2. Click [here](#) to let us know the actions you took on Urgent Action 55.21. It's important to report because we share the total number with the officials we are trying to persuade and the people we are trying to help.

Miguel Díaz Canel

President of the Republic of Cuba
Hidalgo, Esquina 6. Plaza de la Revolución La Habana, CP 10400, Cuba

Email: despacho@presidencia.gob.cu

Twitter: @DiazCanelB

Facebook: @PresidenciadeCuba

Salutation: Dear Mr President,

Ambassador Lianys Torres Rivera

Embassy of Cuba

2630 16th Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20009

Tel: 202 797 8515

Email: recepcion@usadc.embacuba.cu

Twitter: @EmbaCubaUS @Lianystr

Facebook: @EmbaCubaUS

Salutation: Dear Ambassador

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: July 16, 2021

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

following another hunger strike, was ultimately detained under similar circumstances.

Luis Manuel Otero Alcántara is a prisoner of conscience, detained solely for peacefully expressing his ideas. I therefore urge you to secure his immediate and unconditional release.

Sincerely,



New Heroes Campaign Celebrating Community Violence Intervention Program Leaders

June 1, 2021 -- Just days before Wear Orange Weekend 2021, Amnesty International USA (AIUSA) today announced the launch of the Heroes Campaign, a national advocacy effort to secure critical federal funding for community violence intervention programs. The campaign is AIUSA's latest effort to bring attention to and to end gun violence that disproportionately affects Black and brown communities throughout the country.

The campaign kicks off with a virtual live panel discussion at 7:00 PM EST and features six leaders from grassroots violence prevention groups, "heroes" who work tirelessly on the front lines to save lives in their communities. These heroes will discuss how local organizations' leaders continue to fight the erasure of Black and brown youth from the national conversation, and how proper funding from lawmakers can help curb violence in the most affected communities.

"We are thrilled to launch this new Heroes campaign just in time for National Gun Violence Awareness Day and Wear Orange Weekend," said Ernest Coverson, Amnesty International USA's End Gun Violence Campaign Manager. "For so long, leaders and volunteers of local violence prevention organizations have continually put their lives on the line to protect entire neighborhoods from the devastation and trauma of gun violence. They should be celebrated. Their names should be known. With few resources, perseverance and imagination, these leaders have shown us what's possible when it comes to keeping children and people of color safe. This Wear Orange weekend we call on our lawmakers to provide these heroes with the resources they need to end gun violence in the United States once and for all."

Research, including by Amnesty International USA, shows that evidence-based violence intervention programs, tailored to specific local contexts, working in partnership with affected communities can greatly reduce gun violence. These programs provide holistic approaches to tackle underlying causes of violence, including hunger, homelessness, and unemployment. However, despite providing frontline assistance and community care, most of these programs remain grossly under-funded.

"There is no rhyme or reason to gun violence," said Mar'yum Patterson,

AIUSA Group 48

<https://aipdx.org>

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Concert Tabling

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Central Africa/ OR State Death Penalty Abolition

Terrie Rodello
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www.amnestyusa.org

Postage Rates

Within the United States
\$0.55 - Domestic Letter up to 1oz
\$0.35 - Domestic Postcard

International Postage
\$1.20 - Up to 1 oz



Hospital Trauma Liaison, Cleveland Peacemakers Alliance. “It is not always targeted. It can happen to anyone, anywhere, at any time. Everyone wants data and numbers, yet they cut funding. No one wants to deal with it.”

“We fund police, but we don’t fund gun violence prevention programs and the heroes that run them,” said Coverson. “We should be investing in communities and the programs that help them live better, safer lives. We spend over a hundred billion dollars a year on policing in the United States, yet gun violence is worse than ever. Meanwhile violence interrupters are often working for less than a living wage, and doing side gigs to get by.”

Working in collaboration with the “Invest In Us”

coalition, AIUSA has called on Congress and the Biden Administration to authorize \$5 billion in federal funds over the next eight years in investments for effective, community violence intervention programs working to protect youth and communities of color. AIUSA is targeting online actions and phone calls to Members of Congress urging the reintroduction and passage of the Break the Cycle of Violence Act, which would provide the stated request of \$5 Billion dollars for community violence prevention organizations.

National Gun Violence Awareness Day, June 4, is part of Wear Orange Weekend, a time dedicated to honoring the lives of those most affected by gun violence and the advocates who continue to fight for an end to this uniquely American crisis.

For more information on Amnesty International’s campaign against gun violence, click [here](#).

The COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act Signals Accountability for Violence Against Asian and Other Communities of Color

May 20, 2021 --Responding to President Biden signing into law the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act, which includes the Jabara-Heyer NO HATE Act, Joanne Lin, National Director of Advocacy and Government Affairs at Amnesty International USA, said:

“The enactment of the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act is a major step forward to address racial violence by improving hate crimes reporting in order to hold government and law enforcement accountable to the needs of communities of color. The U.S. must

confront and uproot the systems of white supremacy that have contributed to the targeting, profiling, and scapegoating of communities of color.

The new law provides for improved data collection and law enforcement policies on identifying, investigating, and reporting hate crimes; provides grants for state-run hotlines for reporting and connection to support services; and creates opportunities to restore communities and address the root causes of hate crimes through alternative sentencing for offenders.

United States Must Halt Arms Sale To Israel And Commit To Ending Violations In Gaza

May 21, 2021-Amnesty International USA (AIUSA) supports joint resolutions in the House and Senate, introduced by Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Senator Bernie Sanders, to block the United States' pending \$735 million weapons sale to Israel. Israeli forces have carried out airstrikes in Gaza targeting residential buildings and family homes, in some cases killing entire families. These attacks may amount to war crimes or crimes against humanity and must be investigated. By planning to supply hundreds of millions of dollars worth of weapons to Israel, the United States government stands to help carry out war crimes and kill or injure more people with U.S.-made precision guided missiles. The U.S. must halt this arms sale, as well as commit to reviewing Israeli forces' use of U.S.-manufactured weapons and other aid to commit human rights violations, pursuant to the Leahy Laws.

In the midst of these escalating violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, AIUSA is also joining with Amnesty Israel in calling on the Biden

administration to work to end violations perpetrated by both Israel and Palestinian armed groups and demand that the Israeli government immediately cease the forced evictions and forced displacement of Palestinian families in Sheikh Jarrah that led to this latest escalation in hostilities. They are also calling for an end to the rockets fired indiscriminately into civilian areas of Israel by Palestinian armed groups that have injured and killed civilians.

The letter also calls on Secretary of State Antony Blinken to publicly insist that the Israeli government address the root causes of the violations and injustice experienced by Palestinians to end ongoing, and prevent future violations. To this end, the U.S. must exhaust all available resources, from an independent investigation to multilateral efforts, and re-examine its longstanding role in funding and enabling the ongoing violations perpetrated by Israel against people in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Israel/OPT: Cycle of Impunity Leaves Civilians Once Again Paying the Price Amid Escalation of Hostilities

May 12, 2021 -- Israeli forces and Palestinian armed groups in Gaza must not repeat violations of international humanitarian law that led to killing and maiming of civilians and destruction of homes and infrastructure in previous rounds of fighting, said Amnesty International today.

Since May 10 Palestinian armed groups have fired more than 1,500 rockets striking civilian areas in central Israel and towns near the Gaza border killing and injuring civilians. Israeli forces have carried out air strikes killing and injuring civilians in Gaza. They have also damaged or destroyed at least two residential buildings housing tens of Palestinian families and one office building in Gaza, in targeted attacks amounting to collective punishment of the Palestinian population. In total at least 53 people, including 14 children, in Gaza and seven people in Israel have been killed in the violence.

“The intensification of armed hostilities between Israel and Palestinian armed groups in Gaza raises fears of a further spike in civilian bloodshed and destruction of homes and infrastructure over the coming days.

All sides in the conflict have an absolute obligation to protect civilians. They must remember that there is an active investigation before the International Criminal Court and must not assume they will enjoy past impunity for violations,” said Saleh Higazi, Deputy Director for the Middle East and North Africa at Amnesty International.

“This escalation is reminiscent of horrific hostilities from 2008, 2012, and 2014 where civilians bore the brunt of the suffering, with massive death and destruction in Gaza, which has been under an illegal blockade amounting to collective punishment since 2007.

“Both Israeli forces and Palestinian armed groups have carried out war crimes and other violations with impunity. Israel has a deplorable record of carrying out unlawful attacks in Gaza killing and injuring civilians including war crimes and crimes against humanity. Palestinian armed groups have also committed violations of international humanitarian law with impunity.”

Amnesty International has consistently condemned indiscriminate rocket fire by Palestinian armed groups.

“Firing rockets which cannot be accurately aimed into populated areas can amount to a war crime and endangers civilian lives on both sides of the Israel/Gaza border,” said Saleh Higazi.

In Israel a 50-year-old Palestinian citizen of Israel and his 15-year-old daughter were killed in a suspected rocket attack in the unrecognized village Dohmosh outside the city of Lydda in central Israel. The community does not have access to shelters, and the alarm system of sirens warning of oncoming projectiles from Gaza does not function in these communities.

In Gaza, Israeli forces carried out attacks on a number of residential buildings from the early hours of May 11. One 13-story high rise residential building – Hanadi Residential Tower – was completely destroyed and reduced to rubble. Civilians had been warned to evacuate the area before it was hit. Al-Jawhara office building was also severely damaged and Al-Shurouq building was also destroyed and reduced to rubble on May 12. Other buildings were partially damaged as specific apartments were targeted.

“Deliberate targeting of civilian objects and extensive, unjustified destruction of property are war crimes. Destroying entire multi-story homes making tens of families homeless amounts to collective punishment of the Palestinian population and is a breach of international law,” said Saleh Higazi.

“Even if part of a building is being used for military purposes Israeli authorities have an obligation to choose means and methods of attack that would minimize risks posed to civilians and their property.”

An attack targeting an apartment on the top floor of the seven-story “Tiba Apartments” building killed one woman and her son, a 19-year old with special needs, who lived on the floor below.

An attack on the 14-story residential tower called “al-Jundi al-Majhoul” killed three Palestinian members of Islamic Jihad. One civilian resident in the building who was woken up by the attack said:

“The building was shaking crazily... When we got to the windows... we saw everyone looking at us and then people screaming ‘vacate the building immediately’ because it was hit... minutes afterwards I was outside, with people pulling me away from danger ... which now feels funny to say, as we have no idea where a safe place would be to seek refuge in.

“So far [the building] hasn’t [been destroyed], but the terror of the thought alone is enough. We haven’t slept a wink, the strikes have been non-stop. I have a two and a half year old daughter and this is her first

war, I was terrified myself and did not know what to do to calm her,” she said, adding “what drives me crazy, is that they can easily just target precisely whoever they want as they’ve done with our building, and yet they choose to level entire buildings to the ground. What does that tell you? I’m sure not an entire building is a security threat.”

Amnesty International is calling on the international community, UN Security Council members – including the United States – to publicly denounce violations of humanitarian law and pressure all sides to the conflict to protect civilians. The United States needs to stop stalling and allow the UN Security Council to release a

Recent Antisemitic Incidents Must be Condemned

May 21, 2021--Responding to antisemitic incidents reported in the U.S. in recent weeks, including reports of one today in New York City that is now being investigated as a hate crime, Amnesty International USA executive director Paul O’Brien said:

“As a human rights organization committed to fighting discrimination wherever it is committed, we condemn antisemitism in the strongest possible terms. Intimidating worshippers at synagogues, defacing the Star of David, and using images and words that invoke antisemitic tropes is appalling and abusive, and when done in the name of protesting the actions of the Israeli government, belie the perpetrator’s motives and do nothing to advance human rights.

“Antisemitism is hatred. It attacks the very notion of universal human rights, and we must hold accountable — in our personal interactions, in our workplaces, in our communities, and in our activism — those who commit, encourage or acquiesce in such abuse, whenever and wherever it is inflicted.

“We are aware that some are conflating legitimate criticism of Israeli government policies with antisemitism. We want to be crystal clear that Amnesty’s research, campaigns, advocacy and statements pertaining to Israel are focused on the actions of the Israeli government — they are not, and never will be, a condemnation of Judaism or the Jewish people.

“The right to be free from discrimination is a fundamental principle of human rights law, and all governments are obliged to combat discrimination in all its forms. Amnesty International USA supports all those who are targeted for their identity, and we reiterate our commitment to building a world in which every person can enjoy the full range of their human rights, free from hatred and discrimination.”