



February 2023

**Our Next Meeting:
February 9th on Zoom**

**Amnesty International USA
Annual General Meeting
March 3-5, 2023**

**San Diego Omni Hotel
and virtually via Whova**

Amnesty International USA is excited to be hosting our hybrid Annual General Meeting 2023 (AGM'23) in San Diego, California and virtually via WHOVA.

The AGM'23 is an opportunity for members and activists to come together and inspire one another, to learn about each other's efforts and campaigns, to share stories and experiences, and to listen and participate in our sessions and panels. For members looking to vote at this AGM please keep in mind there is a 50-day cut-off for AGM'23. Members must have renewed their membership to vote at AGM'23 by January 12, 2023. If you have any questions regarding your membership status, please email Member Services at aimember@aiusa.org

<https://www.amnestyusa.org/virtual-annual-general-meeting-2023/>



*Thousands turn out in Melbourne to stand in solidarity with protests that have broken out in Iran following the death of 22-year old Mahsa Amini at the hands of the country's 'morality' police.
Photo by Matt Hrkac CC 2.0*

Urgent Action: Iran Youth with Mental Disability Risks Execution

Mohammad Ghobadlou is at grave risk of execution in connection with Iran's nationwide protests. He has received two death sentences after grossly unfair sham trials, marred by torture-tainted "confessions" and failure to order rigorous mental health assessments despite his mental disability. International law and standards prohibit using the death penalty against people with mental disabilities.

Mohammad Ghobadlou was under the supervision of a psychiatric hospital for bipolar disorder since the age of 15. According to information obtained by Amnesty International, during the two months leading to his arrest on September 22nd, 2022, he had suffered from heightened distress and extreme mood episodes. Following his arrest, he was held for several days at a detention centre of the Public Security Police of the Law Enforcement Command (police-e amniat), where, according to information gathered by Amnesty International, he was severely beaten. The organization learned that after repeated beatings and after his interrogators promised to release him and facilitate his departure from Iran, he was forced to "confess" and read a pre-typed statement in front of a video camera. He spent the rest of his time during the investigation stage, which lasted until late October 2022, at the Greater Tehran Central Penitentiary. During this period, he was taken several times before the lead investigator of Branch 1 of the Office of the Prosecutor in Robat Karim, Tehran province, for questioning. During each transfer, he said officials tied his hands and feet together, pushed him under the rear seat of a car and beat him.

Mohammad Ghobadlou was not provided with his bipolar medication throughout the investigation phase and until after his first trial session on October 29th, 2022. This abusive practice, which violates the absolute prohibition of torture and other ill-treatment, led to a deterioration in his mental health and made him further vulnerable during his interrogations and trial. On November 1st, 2022, his

mother released a video message, saying authorities had barred her son from receiving visits, were holding him in solitary confinement and denying him his medication. The authorities subsequently transferred him from the Greater Tehran Central Penitentiary to Rajai' Shahr prison in Karaj, where he remains to date. There, they provided him with his medication, but continued to keep him in solitary confinement until two days before his second trial session on November 15th, 2022.

Amnesty International reviewed two official letters sent by senior prison officials at the Greater Tehran Central Penitentiary to the prosecution authorities, warning about his mental health and calling for his release on medical grounds. The documents bear the official stamps of the prosecutor of Robat Karim, Tehran province, and of the lead investigator of Brach 1 of the Office of the Prosecutor in Robat Karim, which indicate they received the warnings.

Despite this, the prosecution authorities failed to ensure that Mohammad Ghobadlou receives his medication or order a detailed mental health assessment, which his family and lawyer say would have provided evidence that his mental disability had substantially impaired his responsibility for his actions. He was brought before a psychiatrist working for the Legal Medicine Organization of Iran, the state forensic institute operating under the judiciary, only once about two weeks after his arrest. The psychiatrist was not provided with any background information on Mohammad Ghobadlou's mental health or his medical records.

Without conducting a detailed assessment and after several general questions about the events of September 22nd, 2022, the psychiatrist stated that Mohammad Ghobadlou had acted in a purposeful manner and fully appreciated the nature of his conduct. The psychiatrist testified to this effect before Criminal Court One in Tehran province on December 10th, 2022. However, on December 29th, 2022, the psychiatrist effectively retracted his earlier position and joined dozens of psychiatrists who published an open letter to the head of judiciary urging that a committee consisting of distinguished psychiatrists closely examines Mohammad Ghobadlou's mental health and

assesses its impact on his capacity to exercise judgment.

International standards require that defendants in capital cases have access to independent and rigorous mental health assessments at intervals throughout the entire criminal justice process. They further require that as soon as mental disabilities are diagnosed, prisoners are provided with prompt and appropriate treatment and support and protected against the imposition of the death penalty. According to the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, denial of access to individual support and reasonable accommodation constitutes discrimination.

The trial of Mohammad Ghobadlou before Criminal Court One in Tehran province consisted of two brief sessions on December 4th and 10th, 2022. His lawyer has stated on his twitter account that he was denied access to material evidence, including the CCTV

footage and photographs of the incident on September 22nd, the injuries sustained by the deceased at time of the incident or his body after death. The lawyer has also publicly stated that this lack of transparency, together with glaring discrepancies between police reports prepared shortly after the incident and subsequent allegations by the prosecution authorities about the nature of injuries sustained by the deceased, raises serious doubts as to whether his client's conduct was a substantial cause of death.

In opposing the death penalty, Amnesty International does not minimize or condone violent crimes. Families who have lost their loved ones to violent crimes have a right to see the person responsible held to account in a fair trial without resort to the death penalty. The death penalty is pre-meditated, vengeful state-sanctioned killing of human beings, not justice. It brutalizes the society and devalues over time the worth that society places upon human life.

Sample Letter

Mohammad Ghobadlou, a 22-year-old with a long-term mental disability, is at risk of execution. He has received two death sentences in relation to the death of an official which the authorities allege resulted from

Mohammad Ghobadlou running over him with a car during a protest in Robat Karim, Tehran province, on September 22nd, 2022. The first sentence was issued by a Revolutionary Court for “corruption on earth” on November 16th, 2022 and upheld by the Supreme Court on December 24th, 2022. A request for judicial review remains pending. The second one was issued by Criminal Court One in Tehran province for “murder” on December 24th, 2022 and an appeal is pending before the Supreme Court. Both sentences would amount to an arbitrary deprivation of his right to life as they followed flagrant violations of fair trial guarantees.

He was denied access to a lawyer throughout the investigation phase which lasted about a month. According to information obtained by Amnesty International, during this period, the authorities repeatedly beat him and withheld his bipolar medication, to force him to “confess” that he deliberately ran over several officials with a car to cause death. A forensic report dated October 20th, 2022 confirms that while in custody, he sustained bruising and injuries. His independently chosen lawyer was not allowed to represent him at his trial before the Revolutionary Court, which consisted of two brief sessions on October 29th and November 15th. The authorities placed him in solitary confinement between the two sessions, denied him access to his family and lawyers and continued to withhold his medication, which exacerbated his vulnerability. The trial before Criminal Court One in Tehran province also consisted of two brief sessions on December 4th and 10th, 2022. Mohammad Ghobadlou was denied the right to an adequate defence as his independently chosen lawyer was denied access to material evidence.

Another serious violation is the authorities’ failure to order independent rigorous mental health assessments even though his mental capacity to control his conduct is at issue. International law and standards prohibit the use of the death penalty against people with disabilities. Amnesty International opposes the death penalty without exception, regardless of the nature of the crime or the characteristics of the offender.

I urge you to immediately quash the convictions and death sentences of Mohammad Ghobadlou and grant him a fair retrial without recourse to the death penalty, consistent with international law and standards prohibiting the imposition of the death penalty on people with mental disabilities, excluding coerced

“confessions”, and providing for the special needs relating to his disability. I further urge you to ensure that he has prompt and appropriate mental health treatment and regular access to his family and lawyers. An independent and impartial investigation into his allegations of torture and other ill-treatment must be conducted and all those suspected of criminal responsibility must be held accountable. In addition, immediately establish an official moratorium on executions with a view to abolishing the death penalty.

Yours sincerely,

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 6.23. 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.

Head of judiciary,

Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejei

c/o Embassy of Iran to the European Union,
Avenue Franklin Roosevelt No. 15,
1050 Bruxelles, Belgium
Salutation: Dear Mr. Gholamhossein
Mohseni Ejei,

H.E. Majid Takht Ravanchi

Permanent Mission of the
Islamic Republic of Iran
622 Third Avenue, 34th Floor,
New York, NY 10017
Phone: 212 687-2020 • Fax: 212 867 7086
Email: iran@un.int ,
Majidravanchi@mfa.gov.ir
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Please take action as soon as possible until 17 March 2023. Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

Israel / OPT: Palestinian Lives in Peril as Israel Reinforces Apartheid

February 2, 2023 Israeli authorities must dismantle the system of apartheid which is causing so much suffering and bloodshed, Amnesty International said today. Since the organization launched a major campaign against apartheid one year ago, Israeli forces have killed almost 220 Palestinians, including 35 in January 2023 alone. Unlawful killings help maintain Israel's apartheid system and constitute crimes against humanity, as do other serious and ongoing violations by Israeli authorities such as administrative detention and forcible transfer.

Over the past few days, a series of deadly attacks has underscored the urgent need for accountability. On January 26th, Israeli forces carried out a raid on Jenin refugee camp and killed 10 Palestinians, including a 61-year-old woman. On January 27th, seven Israeli civilians were killed when a Palestinian gunman opened fire in Neve Ya'akov, an Israeli settlement in occupied East Jerusalem. In response to this attack, Israeli authorities have stepped up collective punishment against Palestinians, carrying out sweeping mass arrests and threatening punitive home demolitions.

"The devastating events of the past week have exposed yet again the deadly cost of the system of apartheid. The international community's failure to hold Israeli authorities to account for apartheid and other crimes has given them free rein to segregate, control and oppress Palestinians on a daily basis, and helps perpetuate deadly violence. Apartheid is a crime against humanity, and it is frankly chilling to see the perpetrators evade justice year after year," said Agnès Calamard, Amnesty International's Secretary General.

"Israel has long attempted to silence findings of apartheid with targeted smear campaigns, and the international community allows itself to be cowed by these tactics. Until apartheid is dismantled there is no hope of protecting civilian lives, and no hope of justice for grieving families in Palestine and Israel."

Under apartheid, Israeli authorities control virtually every aspect of Palestinians' lives and subject

them to daily oppression and discrimination through territorial fragmentation and legal segregation. Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) are segregated into separate enclaves, with those living in the Gaza Strip isolated from the rest of the world through Israel's illegal blockade, which has caused a humanitarian crisis and is a form of collective punishment.

On February 1st, 2022, Amnesty International released a report setting out how Israel enforces an institutionalized system of oppression and domination

against Palestinians wherever it has control over their rights: in Israel, the OPT and against displaced refugees by denying their right to return. It showed how Israeli laws, policies and practices are enacted with the overarching aim of maintaining a Jewish demographic majority, and maximizing control of land and resources to benefit Jewish Israelis to the detriment of Palestinians.

2022 went on to become one of the deadliest years for Palestinians in the occupied West Bank since at least 2005, with some 153 Palestinians, including dozens of children, killed by Israeli forces, mostly in the context of increased military raids and arrest operations. Research

by Amnesty International found that 33 Palestinians, including 17 civilians, were killed by Israeli forces during their August 2022 offensive on Gaza, and that at least seven civilians were killed by rockets launched by Palestinian armed groups.

Meanwhile, incidents of Israeli settler violence against Palestinians increased for the sixth consecutive year in 2022, with attacks including physical assaults, damage to property, and destruction of olive groves. There is extensive documentation of the Israeli authorities condoning and facilitating this violence, including by arresting the Palestinians who are under attack, providing armed escort to settlers, or simply looking on from the sidelines while Palestinians are beaten and their property destroyed. his culture of

The crime against humanity of apartheid is perpetrated when particular serious human rights violations are committed with the purpose of establishing and maintaining a system of domination by one racial group over another and systematically oppressing them."

UN Apartheid Convention, 1973

AIUSA Group 48

<https://aipdx.org>
www.facebook.com/amnestygroup48/

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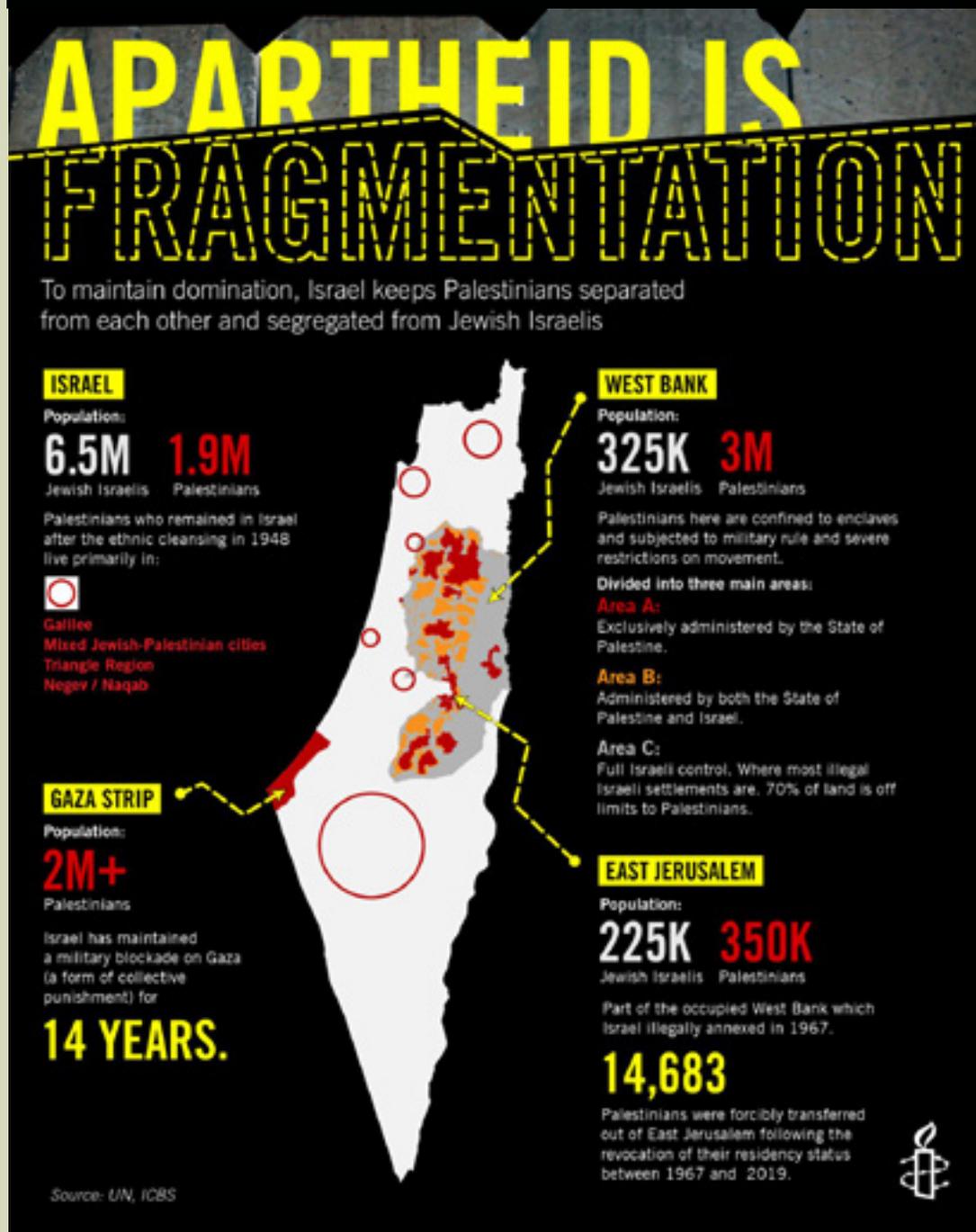
Central Africa/ OR State Death Penalty Abolition

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impunity has encouraged further violence, as demonstrated by the spate of attacks by settlers which have taken place in recent days.

Following the Neve Ya'akov shooting attack, Israeli authorities have appeared to incite further violence against Palestinians by announcing plans to expedite gun licenses "in order to enable thousands of additional citizens to carry weapons". Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who has already pledged to massively expand illegal settlements across the OPT, also said the government was planning to "strengthen settlements".

All Israeli settlements in the OPT are illegal under international law, and Israel's long-running policy of settling civilians in occupied territory amounts to a war crime.

Increased settlement expansion will put countless more Palestinians at risk of forcible transfer – a crime against humanity which Israeli authorities have committed on a systematic basis. A recent example is the

May 2022 Supreme Court ruling which greenlighted the forcible transfer of more than 1,150 Palestinians from Masafer Yatta in the West Bank. In the past year Israeli authorities also scaled up plans to demolish the unrecognized village of Ras Jrabah in Israel's Negev/Naqab region and displace its 500 Palestinian-Bedouin residents, while in January 2023 the Bedouin village of Al-Araqib was demolished for the 212th time. Amnesty International's apartheid report showed how forced evictions in the Negev/Naqab, and across the OPT, are carried out in pursuit of Israel's demographic objectives.

Amid these violations, there is growing international recognition that Israeli authorities are committing apartheid. Palestinians have long been calling for an understanding of Israel's rule as apartheid, and Palestinian organizations such as Al-Haq, the Palestinian Center for Human Rights, and Al Mezan have been at the forefront of UN advocacy to this end.

The push for such recognition gained momentum in 2022 with two UN Special Rapporteurs concluding that Israeli authorities are committing apartheid. The number of states at the Human Rights Council referring to apartheid by Israel doubled from nine in 2021 to 18 in 2022. Notably, South Africa and Namibia are among the states who have expressed concern that Israel's treatment of Palestinians constitutes apartheid. Several international and Israeli human rights organizations have also called for an end to apartheid, including Human Rights Watch, B'Tselem and Yesh Din.

Israeli authorities have gone to great lengths to suppress and discredit findings of apartheid. The consequences are particularly serious for Palestinian

human rights defenders – in August last year, Israeli authorities raided the offices of seven leading Palestinian NGOs after branding them “terrorist entities” and outlawing them. In December, Salah Hammouri, a field researcher at prisoners' rights organization Addameer, was stripped of his Jerusalem residency and deported to France after spending nine months in Israeli administrative detention.

In May 2023, Israel's human rights record will come under scrutiny through the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) at the UN Human Rights Council. Amnesty International has written to the Israeli authorities urging them to engage, but they have yet to submit to the review process. Israeli authorities have ignored most of the recommendations put forward by reviewing states and endorsed by the Human Rights Council during the previous UPR cycle in 2018. For example, despite being urged repeatedly over the years, and then again in 2018, to end administrative detention, Israel is currently holding over 860 Palestinians without charge or trial – the highest number in 15 years.

“The Israeli authorities' longstanding disregard for their obligations under international law and the recommendations of the international community continues to have dire consequences for Palestinians and undermines rights protection for Israelis as well,” said Agnès Callamard.

“No state should be able to systematically flout international law, including binding UN Security Council resolutions, with impunity. We call on states to end all forms of support for Israel's violations, and to break with years of complicit inaction by holding the Israeli authorities to account.”

Peru: AI deploys crisis response team to investigate serious human rights violations

January 30, 2023 After closely monitoring the situation in Peru, Amnesty International has deployed a specialized crisis response team to investigate serious human rights violations and possible crimes under international law committed in the context of the wave of protests that began last December.

“The world is watching Peru. Given the seriousness of the allegations of human rights violations we are receiving, we have sent our specialized continental crisis response team, which is only deployed in situations of extreme gravity, when there are indications of possible crimes under international law. Our team will

investigate human rights violations, with the intention of contributing to the efforts of Peruvian organizations in identifying the alleged criminal responsibility of the authorities, including at the highest level,” said Erika Guevara-Rosas, Americas director at Amnesty International.

To date, at least 46 demonstrators and one police officer have died during the repression of protests and nine more people have lost their lives in events linked to the social crisis in the country, according to Peru's Ombudsman's Office.

Amnesty International's crisis response team will

collect testimonies and access documents to corroborate allegations of human rights violations and possible crimes under international law, in order to accompany the victims and demand that the Peruvian authorities guarantee their rights to justice, truth, reparation and non-repetition. In addition, Amnesty International's Digital Verification Corps is continuing to analyze photographic and video evidence of possible human rights violations.

“We urge President Dina Boluarte to put a stop to

the violent repression of demonstrations by the security forces. To resolve the crisis facing the country, her government must focus all its efforts on listening to and genuinely addressing the demands of the population, especially those historically discriminated against because of their ethnic and racial origin. Substantial and structural changes are urgently needed so that all people in Peru can enjoy their human rights and live in dignity,” said Marina Navarro, executive director of

Group 48 Votes to Follow Case of Ilham Tohti

Group 48 has voted to follow prisoner of conscience, Ilham Tohti. He is a renowned intellectual in China, a Muslim Uyghur, who had been an economics professor at the Central University of Nationalities in Beijing. He founded and directed the bilingual website, “Uyghur Online”, which reported on the human rights violations suffered by the Uyghurs and some ethnic Han Chinese. The website was shut down by the authorities before the 2008 Beijing Olympics and several times afterwards. Ilham Tohti worked for two decades building understanding between the Uyghurs and Han Chinese.

On January 15, 2014, Ilham Tohti, at the time, 45 years of age, was taken from his home by police, denied food for 10 days and shackled for 20 days in detention. On January 25, 2014 an Amnesty International Urgent Action was issued, given his whereabouts were unknown, and feared to be tortured and held prisoner for exercising his right to freedom of expression.

Ilham Tohti's family and friends were not told where he was, despite the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention finding his detention to be arbitrary in March 2014. On September 23, 2014 he was given a brief, unfair trial, and sentenced to life imprisonment on a common charge of “separatism”. As an academic and Uyghur, Ilham Tohti was targeted for persecution and muzzled as an academic, despite his consistently rejecting separatism and violence and trying to reconcile differences between Uyghurs and Han Chinese. “Separatism” is the charge often used by the Chinese authorities. Ilham Tohti had criticized the oppressive policies of Chinese authorities with regard to ethnic and religious freedoms, particularly in the

Xinjiang region. In 2017, the world became aware of the million or more detainees in internment camps called “re-education camps” by the Chinese authorities. Most of this huge number were Muslim minority Uyghurs and Kazaks and other ethnic minorities. This is now labeled as crimes against humanity and by some, genocide.

Ilham Tohti's daughter, Jewher Ilham, has courageously written a book about her father entitled “Because I Have To: The Path to Survival, The Uyghur Struggle”. This is at great risk to her own safety. She has received numerous awards worldwide on behalf of her father.

Dale Norma Oller, MD

Urgent Action Update: Peru 18 Killed During Protests

January 11, 2023 On 9 January, 18 people were killed during protests in the city of Juliaca, in the Puno region, in Peru. The country continues to experience protests and violence in different regions, following the announcement of then-president Castillo to dissolve Congress and his consequent arrest on 7 December. Both the National Police and the Armed Forces have used excessive force against protesters. At least 40 individuals have died since 7 December. Amnesty International urges President Boluarte to put an immediate end to all forms of unlawful force by the security forces. <https://www.amnestyusa.org/urgent-actions/urgent-action-update-18-killed-during-protests-peru-ua-105-22/>