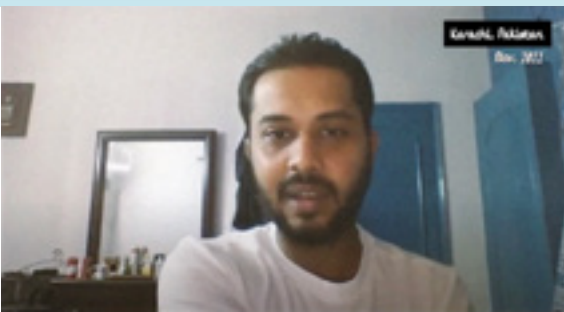




**April 2023**

**Our Next Meeting:  
April 13th on Zoom**



### **Saifullah Paracha and the Human Cost of Guantanamo**

This film was made by a UCLA film student in partnership with Amnesty USA. It tells the story of a Pakistani man seized by US authorities and sent to Guantanamo, where he was imprisoned without charge for more than 18 years. Through interviews with his sons and his lawyer, the film illustrates the lasting impact of US imprisonment without charge or trial, not only on the men detained but also on the families and communities they left behind.

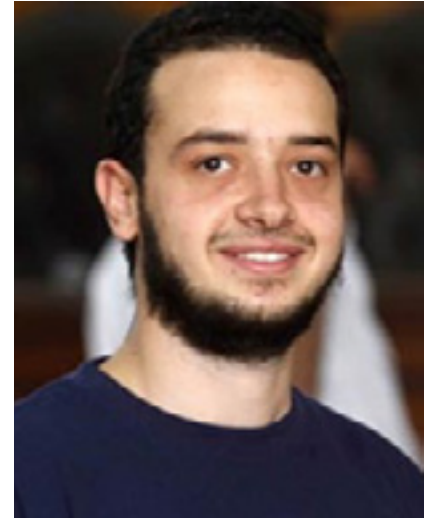
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F-pLm1M5cl6E>

Tell President Biden to close Guantanamo today, and share this action widely: <https://act.amnestyusa.org/page/96987/action/1?ea.tracking.id=cp>

### **Urgent Action: Egypt**

#### **Tortured Son of Opposition Figure Held Incommunicado**

Anas al-Beltagy, who has been arbitrarily detained for over nine years solely due to his family links, is being held in incommunicado in the Badr Prison Complex, some 70 km east of Cairo, and is at risk of torture and other ill-treatment. He has been denied any visits and other contact with his family for over six years. Since his arrest in December 2013, Egyptian authorities have subjected Anas al-Beltagy to a litany of violations including enforced disappearance and torture. Concerns for his wellbeing and physical and mental health have mounted in recent weeks amid alarming reports emerging from the Badr Prison Complex about prisoner suicides and hunger strikes in protest at their conditions. Muslim Brotherhood.



#### **Sample Letter**

*Your Excellency,*

*Anas al-Beltagy, the 30-year-old son of detained prominent Muslim Brotherhood leader Mohamed al-Beltagy, has been arbitrarily detained for over nine years solely because of his family affiliation. Despite courts acquitting him of all charges in four separate cases and a judge's decision to provisionally release him in a fifth case, the Supreme State Security Prosecution (SSSP) ordered his detention pending investigations into a separate sixth case on similar spurious terrorism-related accusations. This well-documented pattern is referred to as "rotation" by Egyptian activists and lawyers and is intended to keep critics and opponents locked up indefinitely. Since his transfer to the Badr Prison Complex in November 2022, his detention renewal hearings have been held online, further violating his fair trial rights to meaningfully challenge the legality of his detention and adequate defence. During online hearings, defence lawyers are present in the courtroom with the judges, while the defendant is connected from a room in the prison in the presence of security officials. Lawyers frequently complain of technical problems during online hearings, including poor connectivity and their inability to adequately hear defendants.*

*Since his arrest, Anas al-Beltagy has been subjected to torture and other ill-treatment, including through prolonged solitary confinement and deliberate denial of healthcare. He has been banned from any visits, phone calls or written correspondence with his family and lawyers since 2017. Anas al-Beltagy, who was a university student when he was arrested in December 2013, has been unable to continue*



*his studies in prison despite attempts to enrol in more than seven universities. He has been held in Badr Prison 1, about 70 km east of Cairo, since November 2022 in cruel and inhuman conditions of detention. For months, he was held in solitary confinement in a freezing cell with fluorescent lights switched on 24 hours a day, not permitted any exercise outdoors and denied any contact with other prisoners. Prison officials continue to ban his family from bringing him any food, climate-appropriate clothes, and medicine. During his detention renewal hearings, in which he sometimes appears with his hands and legs cuffed, he complained about the deterioration of his physical and mental health and psychological condition due to his detention conditions.*

*In light of the above, I urge you to ensure that Anas al-Beltagy is immediately and unconditionally released and all charges against him are dropped as they are brought solely because of his family links and his exercise of his human rights. Pending his release, I call on you to ensure that he is held in conditions meeting international standards for the treatment of prisoners and granted regular access to his family, lawyers and adequate healthcare.*

*Yours sincerely,*



#### **TAKE ACTION:**

1 Write a letter in your own words or using the sample provided 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 29.23. 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.

#### **President Abdelfattah al-Sisi**

Office of the President  
Al Ittihadia Palace, Cairo, Egypt  
Email: p.spokesman@op.gov.eg  
Twitter: @AlsisiOfficial  
Your Excellency,

#### **Ambassador Motaz Zahran**

Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt  
3521 International Ct NW,  
Washington, DC 20008  
Fax: 202 244 5131  
Email: ambassador@egyptembassy.net ,  
embassy@egyptembassy.net  
Twitter: @EgyptEmbassyUSA , @MotazZahran

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 24 May 2023

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





## State Department Reports Perpetuate Double Standards

March 20, 2023--In reaction to the release of the State Department's annual human rights reports today, Amnesty International USA Executive Director Paul O'Brien said, "when Secretary of State Blinken announced the US foreign policy strategy, he said it would be one centered in human rights, yet the annual human rights report demonstrates that the Biden Administration continues a policy of double standards when it comes to failing to call out the human rights abuses of key security partners."

For example, the State Department's reporting on Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories fails to fully encompass the deteriorating human rights situation and gives de facto recognition of Israeli control over occupied East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights. It's time the Biden administration stops giving its allies a pass on human rights.

From key U.S. allies in Europe, we saw heartbreaking pushback, detention, and cruel treatment of migrants and asylum seekers from countries including Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria and much of sub-Saharan Africa, yet the human rights report on Poland and Lithuania failed to emphasize these human rights abuses, treating them as "allegations" rather than what they are: extensively documented patterns of abuses directed at migrants and asylum seekers from Asian and African countries.

In Asia, the Indonesian government recently announced amendments to its criminal code that,

among other issues, criminalizes sex outside of marriage. While the country report acknowledges the problematic legislation, it fails to highlight the threats this amendment poses to the LGBTI community. It further claims that "no national law criminalizes consensual same-sex sexual conduct between adults," despite the fact that, in a country that does not recognize same-sex marriage, outlawing sex outside of marriage would serve exactly that purpose.

In the Western Hemisphere, the Mexican government has failed to provide protections for migrants and asylum seekers. There is particular harm against Haitian asylum seekers, including unlawful forced returns and pushbacks to Haiti and Guatemala without assessments of protection and restricting all Haitian asylum applicants to Tapachula. The State Department report's minimization of these human rights failures is particularly troubling as the U.S. relies on Mexico to externalize its obligations to provide protections to asylum seekers.

Said O'Brien: "The US must end its double standard of failing to criticize the human rights records of security partners if it is to fully center its foreign policy in human rights. And of course, as the US reports every year on other countries, these criticisms ring hollow unless it also upholds human rights at home."



## 200K People Demand an End to Apartheid Against Palestinians

March 21, 2023 Amnesty International offices around the world will today deliver petitions signed by more than 200,000 people to Israeli authorities, calling on them to put an end to the demolition of Palestinian homes as a first step towards dismantling apartheid. Amnesty International's petition, Demolish Apartheid, Not Palestinian Homes, is addressed to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and has been signed by people in at least 174 countries.

Signatures are being submitted on the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination -observed annually by the international community in commemoration of 69 peaceful anti-apartheid protesters who were killed by South African police on March 21st, 1960.

“Israel’s discriminatory planning policies and systematic destruction of Palestinian homes exemplify the racism at the heart of its cruel system of apartheid. For decades, Israeli authorities have pursued their explicitly racist demographic aims by forcing Palestinians out of their homes and off their lands. Since the start of 2023 more than 400 Palestinians have been displaced as a result of demolitions and hundreds of thousands more are at risk,” said Heba Morayef, Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa at Amnesty International.

“Apartheid is a crime against humanity and a

grave human rights violation. The ongoing failure to hold Israeli authorities accountable is a stain on the conscience of the international community. Today, Amnesty International’s demand for an end to this injustice is backed by 203,410 people from countries all over the world. This solidarity is a reminder that the chorus of voices speaking out against Israel’s apartheid is growing steadily louder. We will not be silent until apartheid has been dismantled and Israeli authorities held to account.”

With the UN Human Rights Council in session, Amnesty International is calling for member states to support decisions and resolutions aimed at ending Israel’s apartheid. This includes renewing funding for the UN database on businesses involved in activities in or with illegal settlements. States must also live up to their legal obligations and take steps to hold Israel accountable for its violations, including through Israel’s Universal Periodic Review, which takes place at the Human Rights Council on 9 May. Amnesty International reiterates its call on all states to pressure Israeli authorities into ending home demolitions, forcible transfers and settlement expansion; lifting the blockade on the Gaza Strip; and ending impunity for unlawful attacks against Palestinians by the military and settlers.



## Urgent Action: China Ethnic Kazakh Artist at Risk of Torture

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Zhanargul Zhumatai (she/her)

Zhanargul Zhumatai, an ethnic Kazakh journalist and artist, was taken away from her mother's house in Urumqi, Xinjiang, on February 10th. The state security police detained her after she communicated with people abroad and spoke out for the land rights of Kazakh herding communities. Zhumatai had previously been detained in an internment camp for over two years, where she developed some heart problems reportedly due to lack of medical care. Without access to her family and lawyer of her choice Zhumatai remains at grave risk of torture and other ill-treatment.

Zhanargul Zhumatai, a 47-year-old ethnic Kazakh woman, resides in Urumqi, Xinjiang, at her mother's house. From a young age, Zhumatai had a passion for the arts and displayed impressive musical abilities. She aspired to showcase the music and culture of her community to a broader audience. According to her profile in the Xinjiang victims database, Zhumatai arrived in Kazakhstan for the first time in 1999, where she pursued her education at Al-Farabi Kazakh National University. Afterward, she worked as a journalist and established her own arts company. In 2008, she returned to China and dedicated herself to organizing exhibitions and events aimed at preserving Kazakh culture, for which she has received several awards.

In addition to her dedication to preserving Kazakh culture, Zhumatai took it upon herself to advocate for the rights of Kazakh shepherds in Xinjiang. This resulted in multiple instances of harassment by Chinese authorities who were unhappy with her speaking against government appropriation of ethnic Kazakh herding communities' lands. Zhumatai was subsequently taken to Dabancheng Vocational Training Center on March 2nd, 2018 where she was detained for two years 23 days. During her detention in the camp, she was shackled, handcuffed and subjected to beatings without access to adequate medical care.

Zhumatai, who previously worked as a journalist

for the state-run Kazakhstan channel, has the right to reside in Kazakhstan.

Xinjiang is one of the most ethnically diverse regions in China. More than half of the region's population of 22 million people belong to mostly Turkic and predominantly Muslim ethnic groups, including Uyghurs (around 11.3 million), Kazakhs (around 1.6 million) and other populations whose languages, cultures and ways of life vary distinctly from those of the Han who are the majority in "interior" China.

Since 2017, under the guise of a campaign against "terrorism" and "religious extremism", the government of China has carried out massive and systematic abuses against Muslims living in Xinjiang. It is estimated that over a million people have been arbitrarily detained in internment camps throughout Xinjiang since 2017.

The Chinese authorities had denied the existence of internment camps until October 2018, when they began describing them as voluntary, free "vocational training" centres. China's explanation, however, fails to account for the numerous reports of beatings, food deprivation and solitary confinement that have been collected from

former detainees.

The report "Like We Were Enemies in a War": China's Mass Internment, Torture, and Persecution of Muslims in Xinjiang is the most comprehensive account to date of the crushing repression faced by Uyghurs, Kazakhs and other predominantly Muslim ethnic minorities in Xinjiang. The evidence Amnesty International has gathered provides a factual basis for the conclusion that the Chinese government has committed at least the crimes against humanity of imprisonment, torture, and persecution.

In June 2021 Amnesty launched the international campaign Free Xinjiang Detainees highlighting the stories of 126 men, women, and children reportedly missing or subjected to enforced disappearance or believed to be arbitrarily detained in internment camps or prisons in Xinjiang. They are representative of the over one million people estimated to have been missing, enforced disappeared, and arbitrarily



detained in internment camps and prisons throughout Xinjiang since 2017.

In August 2022, the OHCHR released a long-awaited report reinforcing previous findings by Amnesty International and others that the extent of arbitrary and discriminatory detention of Uyghurs, Kazakhs and other predominantly Muslims in Xinjiang may constitute international crimes, in particular crimes against humanity. It also documented allegations of torture or other ill-treatment, incidents of sexual and gender-based violence, forced labour and enforced disappearances, among other grave human rights violations.

### Sample Letter

*Dear Secretary,*

*I am writing to express my concern for Zhanargul Zhumatai, who is an ethnic Kazakh artist, musician, and journalist. Zhumatai was detained by state security police from the Shayibak branch of the Urumqi police department at her mother's house on 10 February 2023, five weeks after the police urged her to check herself into a psychiatric facility simply for communicating with people abroad.*

*Zhumatai had previously been detained at the Dabancheng Vocational Training Center for two years and 23 days simply for purchasing a mobile phone in Kazakhstan that came with pre-installed Facebook and Instagram and having travelled to Kazakhstan. During her detention in the internment camp, she was reportedly shackled and handcuffed and developed some heart problems due to lack of medical care.*

*It is distressing to learn that Zhumatai and her family were threatened multiple times after she had written several letters, including to Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (Xinjiang) Legislative Office and the Secretary of the Party Committee of Xinjiang, about corruption among some local authorities and had written to local authorities about her communities' land rights.*

*With no information regarding the charges against Zhanargul Zhumatai or the conditions under which she has been held, and without access to her family and a lawyer of her choice, I am deeply concerned about her wellbeing.*

*I therefore urge you to:*

- Immediately release Zhanargul Zhumatai, unless there is sufficient, credible and admissible evidence that she has committed an internationally recognized offence;*

- Pending her release, allow her regular access to her family and a lawyer of her choice, and ensure she is not subjected to torture and other ill-treatment;*

- Pending her release, ensure that she has access to adequate medical care.*

*Yours sincerely,*

### Take Action:

Please write an appeal in your own words or use the sample letter provided. Please take action as soon as possible until May 2023. Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

Party Secretary of Xinjiang  
Ma Xingrui  
479 Zhongshan Lu,  
Tianshan Qu, Urumqi, 830041,  
Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region,  
People's Republic of China

Copy:  
Director - Urumqi Public Security Bureau  
Shayibake Branch  
4 Jingyi Lu, Urumqi, 830000,  
Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region

## 53 Groups Urge Passage of Senate 502B Resolution on Saudi Arabia

### AIUSA Group 48

<https://aipdx.org>  
[www.facebook.com/  
amnestygroup48/](https://www.facebook.com/amnestygroup48/)

#### Group Coordinators

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and Terrie Rodello**

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**Prisoners' Cases**  
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**Concert Tabling**  
**Will Ware**  
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**Central Africa/ OR State  
Death Penalty Abolition**  
**Terrie Rodello**  
tarodello@igc.org

**[www.amnestyusa.org](http://www.amnestyusa.org)**

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April 4, 2023--[Fifty-three groups](#) have signed a joint letter in strong support for S.Res.109, Senator Chris Murphy and Senator Mike Lee's resolution requesting a report on human rights conditions in Saudi Arabia under Section 502B(c) of the Foreign Assistance Act (22 U.S.C. § 2304). The Biden administration has repeatedly promised a re-evaluation of the U.S.-Saudi relationship: during the presidential campaign, once in office, and most recently in October 2022 following the decision of OPEC+, led by Saudi Arabia and Russia, to decrease its oil production, thereby helping finance Russia's invasion of Ukraine. That re-evaluation has not taken place, forcing Congress to take up a needed debate. A Section 502B(c) resolution, if passed in the Senate, will reassert Congress's crucial oversight role, require the executive branch to document the litany of destabilizing human rights abuses carried out by the Saudi government, to justify its continued security assistance to Saudi Arabia despite these abuses, and force a long overdue public conversation about the U.S.-Saudi relationship.

Civil society reporting and successive State Department Country Reports on Human Rights Practices mandated under Section 502B have recorded widespread human rights abuses by the government of Saudi Arabia.[2] Many of those meet the definition of gross violations of human rights under Section 502B, including executions for nonviolent offenses, forced disappearances, torture, mistreatment of detainees, and arbitrary arrest and detention, among others. State Department reporting also details continued discrimination against women, a lack of accountability for gender-based violence, and severe restrictions on religious freedoms. Outside of the country, U.S. government and civil society reports have documented widespread civilian harm resulting from the Saudi-led campaign in Yemen, including possible war crimes and other violations of international humanitarian law; and numerous cases of transnational repression, including abductions, forced repatriations, and intimidation of dissidents outside of Saudi Arabia, most notably the murder of Washington Post columnist and U.S. resident Jamal Khashoggi.

In light of this track record, S.Res. 109 represents a welcome revitalization of Section 502B as a tool for congressional oversight of U.S. security assistance. If passed in the Senate, the resolution would require a report from the Department of State on Saudi Arabia's human rights practices within thirty days of passage. The resolution and the debate it generates would open the door to follow-on congressional action, including the possibility of an eventual joint resolution to restrict certain U.S. security assistance to Saudi Arabia based on congressional concerns. Use of the 502B(c) mechanism fills a critical gap in current oversight mechanisms such as the Leahy Law[3] and Arms Export Control Act,[4] providing Congress with a flexible tool to assert human rights oversight for U.S. arms sales and security assistance.

It is long past time for a public conversation about the U.S.-Saudi relationship and a reassertion of congressional oversight. Our organizations support this resolution and strongly urge its swift passage.