



May 2023

**Our Next Meeting:
May 11th on Zoom**

Sri Lanka: Protect the Protest Campaign

The Sri Lankan Minister of Justice Wijeyadasa Rajapakshe announced that he will be accepting feedback from the public, including civil society organizations, on the newly announced Anti Terrorism Act (ATA) until May 30 of this year. This comes as a great relief as we have been pressing the Sri Lankan authorities to listen to civil society calling for the ATA to either be substantially revised or withdrawn (and for the draconian Prevention of Terrorism Act to be repealed).

Last week, AIUSA Local Group 133's Get on the Bus virtual event included Sri Lanka and had Leeladevi Ananthanadarajah, a Tamil activist from the north of Sri Lanka as a speaker, among other activists from across the world. You can access the recording [here!](#)

Please continue to take action by visiting our webpage: <https://www.amnestyusa.org/slcampaign/>

Urgent Action: China

Uyghur student detained for posting protest video

Name and Pronoun: Kamile Wayit (she/her)

Kamile Wayit, a Uyghur student studying in Henan, was taken away by the police on December 12th, 2022, after she returned to her home in Atush, Xijiang, for a holiday. In November 2022, Kamile posted a video on WeChat about the "A4 protests" that took place across China after a fire in Urumqi. Soon after that, Kamile's father received a warning call from the police and she deleted the post, which is believed to be one of the reasons for her detention. Kamile has now been detained for more than four months. Without access to her family or a lawyer of her choice, it is possible that Kamila might be subjected to torture and other ill-treatment.

Kamile Wayit is a student at the Henan Shangqiu Institute of Technology, majoring in preschool education. She was born in in Atush City (the capital of the Kyrgya autonomous prefecture of Kizilsu, Xinjiang) and completed her primary school there. At the age of 14, she had to live alone in Urumqi for two years between 2017 and 2019, because her father was held in a 're-education' camp during that period. Despite her young age, Kamile's brother describes her as 'very mature and thoughtful'.

On Thursday, November 24th, a fire broke out in an apartment building in Urumqi, killing at least 10 people, according to government sources. Many blamed Covid-19 restrictions for the deaths but local authorities have disputed this claim. This did not stop protests from breaking out in Urumqi, the capital of the western region of Xinjiang. The next morning, the government declared that the Covid-19 outbreak was under control and the city would ease lockdowns, following more than 100 days of severe restrictions on people's movements.

Since November 25th, videos shared on social media showed protests breaking out across universities and cities throughout China, including in Beijing, Guangdong, Shanghai and Wuhan. Peaceful protesters commemorated the victims of the Urumqi fire and called for the easing of lockdown measures. Many also demanded that censorship end and some called for President Xi to step down. Large numbers of people were detained for participating in peaceful protests against Covid-19



restrictions. It remains unclear how many remain in detention. Videos circulated online show police beating protesters during arrests.

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 are different 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 widespread and systematic human rights violations 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 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 a minimum the crimes against humanity of imprisonment, torture, and persecution.

The Chinese government has gone to great lengths to cover up the human rights violations taking place in Xinjiang, and to prevent members of the Uyghur diaspora from speaking up about them. Amnesty International has documented numerous cases where Uyghurs, Kazakhs and other Turkic Muslim people in Xinjiang had been detained simply for living, travel-

ling, or studying abroad or for communicating with people abroad. Many were detained simply for being "connected" with people who lived, travelled, studied, or communicated with people abroad.

In June 2021 Amnesty launched the international campaign Free Xinjiang Detainees highlighting the stories of 126 men, women, and children reportedly missing, 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 be missing, forcibly disappeared, or arbitrarily detained in internment camps and prisons throughout Xinjiang since 2017.

In August 2022, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights released a long-awaited report reinforcing previous findings by Amnesty International and others. These findings reveal the extent of arbitrary and discriminatory detention of Uyghurs, Kazakhs and other predominantly Muslims in Xinjiang, which 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 Director Chen,

I am writing to express concern about the detention of Uyghur student Kamile Wayit, who was taken away on December 12th, 2022 by the police after returning home to Atush, Xinjiang for a holiday. According to her brother, she might be currently

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



detained at a detention centre in Atush, the capital of Krygyz autonomous prefecture of Kizilsu in Xinjiang. Without access to her family lawyer of her choice, and information on her condition, it is possible that she might be subjected to torture and other ill-treatment.

Kamile Wayit is a 19-year-old first-year student at the Shangqiu Institute of Technology, located in Henan. It is believed that her detention may be related to a video that she posted on WeChat in November 2022 about the protests that took place across China to commemorate the victims of a fire in Urumqi. Soon after that, Kamile's father received a warning call from the police, and she deleted the post. Additionally, during the same period, Kamile also reconnected with her brother who is currently living abroad and has spoken out on Uyghur's issues. Her communication with her brother might have played a role in her detention.

With no information regarding the reason for Kamile Wayit's detention, or the conditions under which she is held and without access to her family and a lawyer of her choice, I am deeply worried about her wellbeing and the risk of her being subjected to torture and other ill-treatment.

I therefore urge you to:

- Immediately release Kamile Wayit, unless there is sufficient, credible and admissible evidence that she has committed an internationally recognised criminal offence;*
- Pending her release, reveal her whereabouts, allow her regular access to her family and a lawyer of her choice;*
- Pending her release, ensure that Kamile Wayit has access to adequate medical care, and she is not subjected to torture and other ill-treatment.*

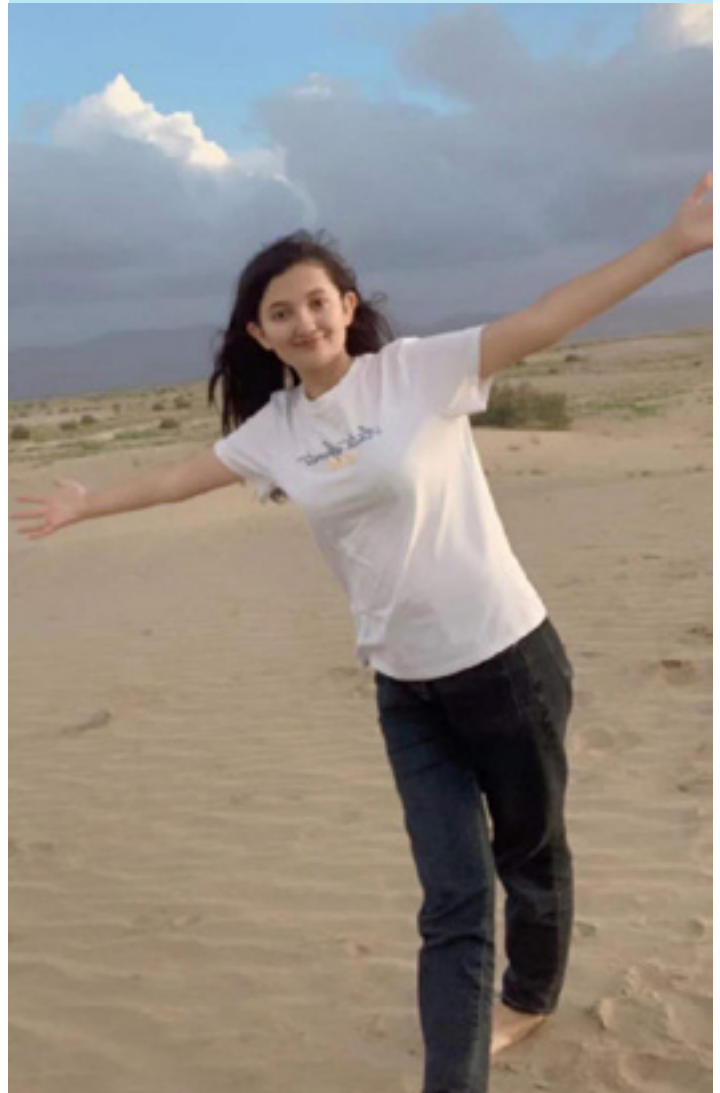
Yours sincerely,

Take Action:

Write an appeal in your own words or use the supplied model letter.

Director of Public Security Bureau
Pamir East Road, Atushi City
Kizilsu Kirgiz Autonomous Prefecture
Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region
843500, People's Republic of China

Please take action as soon as possible until May 30th, 2023. Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.



Urgent Action: Burundi Release Journalist Jailed for Critical Views

Name and Pronoun: Floriane Irangabiye (She/Her)

On March 30th, the Court of Appeal of Mukaza in Bujumbura, Burundi held a hearing session on the case of Burundian journalist Floriane Irangabiye. She had appealed the January 2nd decision of the High Court of Mukaza, which convicted her of the trumped-up charge of “undermining the integrity of the national territory” and sentenced her to 10 years in prison and a fine of one million Burundian francs (around USD 482). The Court of Appeal has 30 days to rule on the appeal. Floriane Irangabiye has been detained since August 2022. Her prosecution stems from the peaceful exercise of her human rights and for her work as a journalist. Amnesty International calls for her immediate and unconditional release and for her conviction to be quashed.

Floriane Irangabiye has been living in Rwanda for more than a decade. Before the 2015 crisis, she used to make regular trips between the capital, Kigali, where she resides, and Bujumbura, Burundi, where her family lives.

When former President Pierre Nkurunziza decided to run for a third term in office in April 2015, many Burundians took to the streets to express their frustration against the decision that they believed violated the 2005 Burundian Constitution which limited presidential terms to two terms of 5 years.

Burundi’s civil society and media organizations were among the first targets of the government repression in 2015. The government suspended or closed most independent human rights organizations and media outlets and drove them into exile. Despite promises by President Ndayishimiye to normalize relations with the media in 2021, the Burundian government continues to view the press and human rights work with suspicion, and severe restrictions on human rights, including the right to freedom of expression, remain in place.

Most independent human rights organizations have been unable to resume their activities in Burundi, especially as the Burundian authorities have issued arrest warrants for many of their leading activists, who live in exile.

On February 14th, five human rights defenders, Sonia Ndikumusabo, president, and Marie Emerusabe, general coordinator, of Association of Women Lawyers in Burundi (Association des femmes juristes du

Burundi, AFJB), Audace Havyarimana, legal representative, Sylvana Inamahoro, executive director, Prosper Runyange, land project coordinator, of Association for Peace and Promotion of Human Rights in Burundi (Association pour la paix et la promotion des droits de l’Homme, APDH) were arrested and accused of rebellion and of undermining internal state security and the functioning of public finances. The charges appear to relate to their relationship with an international organization abroad and the funding they have received from this organization. 12 human rights defenders and journalists were among a group of 34 people sentenced to life in prison in absentia in June 2020 on accusations of involvement in an attempted coup in May 2015; the Supreme Court judgment was not made public until February 2021.

Arrest or detention as punishment for the peaceful exercise of human rights, including the right to freedom of expression, is arbitrary and violates the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights both of which Burundi has ratified. The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention has determined that those detained solely for the peaceful exercise of their human rights must be immediately released.

Sample Letter

Dear Minister,

I am concerned by the continued arbitrary detention and unfair prosecution of journalist Floriane Irangabiye.

On March 30th, the Court of Appeal of Mukaza in Bujumbura, Burundi, held a hearing on the appeal against her conviction and sentencing to ten years in prison and one million Burundian francs (around USD 482). The court will make its decision within 30 days of the hearing.

On August 30th, 2022, Floriane Irangabiye was arrested by Burundian security forces while on a family visit in Bujumbura. The High Court of Mukaza’s found her guilty of “undermining the integrity of the national territory” on January 2nd. According to her lawyers the High Court failed to consider procedural irregularities during her arrest –including the denial of access to her lawyer when she was first interrogated-



and the lack of any admissible evidence against her.

During her trial at the end of 2022, the prosecution presented comments made during an August 2022 show on Radio Igicaniro. At this Burundian online media outlet, Floriane Irangabiye and her guests criticized the government of Burundi. In an audio record of the show retrieved by the prosecutor, she purportedly said: “the population is resigned to the evils of the leaders of Burundi, citizens do not express themselves for fear of being killed, we call on Burundians to brave the fear.” The prosecution also presented as evidence photos of her posing with President Paul Kagame of Rwanda and former President Pierre Buyoya at public events. She was also accused of participating in meetings held by Burundian youths in exile in Rwanda.

Floriane Irangabiye’s prosecution is politically motivated and a sign that the Burundian authorities intend to continue restricting the civic space, despite promises by President Evariste to improve the country’s human rights record.

I urge you to take all necessary steps to ensure that Floriane Irangabiye is immediately and unconditionally released.

Her conviction and ongoing arbitrary detention are in violation of her rights to freedom of expression and fair trial.

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 13.23. 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.

Minister of Justice

Mme Domine Banyankimbona
PO Box: 1880
Bujumbura, Burundi
E-mail: minjustice@gmail.com
infosburundi@gmail.com

Ambassador of Burundi to the United States

H.E Jean de Dieu NDIKUMANA, Ph.D.

Embassy of the Republic of Burundi

2233 Wisconsin Ave. NW

Washington DC 20007

Phone: 202 342 2574

Contact form: <https://burundiembassyusa.com/index.php/contact>

Salutation: Dear Ambassador

Please take action as soon as possible until
June 14th, 2023

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



Tell the US Government: Help Civilians Harmed by US Drone Strikes

The U.S. Government claims it's keeping Americans safe by using drones, air strikes and Special Forces operations to kill people it calls "militants" or "terrorists" around the world. But in reality, it has killed thousands of civilians, usually without explanation or any effort to compensate survivors or their families for their devastating losses.

The U.S. Government claims to investigate civilian killings caused by its military actions, but it also seems to assume that the people killed are "militants" or "terrorists" when they are actually civilians.

Under international law, the U.S. Government in a recognized armed conflict may only kill members of the armed forces of a party to the conflict. If it's not clear whether certain individuals are combatants, then the government must presume they are civilians.

And outside of an armed conflict zone, everyone is a civilian: the government can only kill individuals who pose an imminent threat to human life.

Unfortunately, the U.S. Government does not acknowledge the applicability of international human rights law to its actions abroad. It has also refused to disclose how it is interpreting international law as it relates to its use of lethal force. And it has refused to explain how it decides someone is a "militant" or "terrorist" that the U.S. can kill.

What is clear, however, is that the US has killed thousands of civilians in recent years, with little explanation and no accountability. Those victims continue to suffer today, without acknowledgement or reparation from the U.S. government.

Take Action Now: Tell the U.S. Government to meaningfully investigate claims of civilian casualties, and to help civilians who have been harmed. See the action here: <https://act.amnestyusa.org/page/29017/action/1?ea.tracking.id=cp>

Free Leonard Peltier Campaign

Native American activist Leonard Peltier has been imprisoned in the United States for over 46 years despite serious and ongoing concerns over the fairness of his trial and conviction. Amnesty International is calling on President Biden to grant clemency to Leonard Peltier and release him on humanitarian grounds and as a matter of justice.

Amnesty is not alone: many others have called for clemency for Leonard Peltier, including Archbishop Desmond Tutu, other Nobel Peace Prize Laureates; former FBI agents Coleen Rowley and John Ryan;

Indigenous Tribes, including the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe; US Senators like Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren; and even the U.S. Attorney, James Reynolds, whose team led the prosecution and appeal of Leonard Peltier's case.

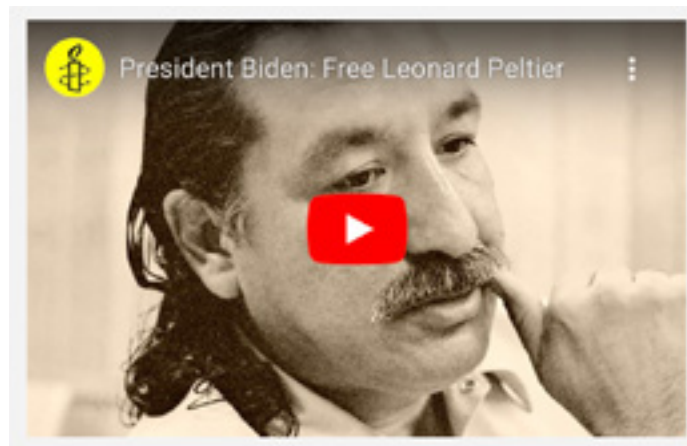
This Amnesty USA campaign will run from April 18th, which is the anniversary of Leonard

Peltier's conviction, and September 12th, his birthday. We're going to use the power of collective action—each of us doing a small part—to influence President Biden on the case ahead of the next presidential election. It's urgent because Leonard Peltier has health concerns and he has already spent over four decades in prison.

We urge you to do one or more of the following actions (and to engage other people to join you):

Sign and share Amnesty's online petition to President Biden. • Send a postcard from your city or town to the President at the White House (you can also call the White House comment line and write a letter) • Use the Urgent Action Guide here for details. • Ask your federal Representative and two Senators to urge Biden to grant clemency. • Send a note of solidarity to Leonard Peltier • Write an op-ed in your local paper (we'll help you) • Contact us to brainstorm and collaborate on other creative and effective tactics

The Campaign landing page is here: <https://www.amnestyusa.org/free-leonard-peltier/> A short video produced by Amnesty International on his case can be seen here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T22gp-Bq8VPg>



AIUSA Group 48

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

Group Coordinators

**Marty Fromer
and Terrie Rodello**

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**Central Africa/ OR State
Death Penalty Abolition**
Terrie Rodello
tarodello@igc.org

www.amnestyusa.org

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Urgent Action: Urge Clemency for Native American Activist

Native American activist Leonard Peltier has been imprisoned in the USA for over 46 years, some of which was spent in solitary confinement, serving two life sentences for murder despite concerns over the fairness of his trial. He has always maintained his innocence. Now 78 years old, he contracted COVID-19 in 2022 and suffers from several chronic health ailments, including one that is potentially fatal. Not eligible for parole again until 2024, his lawyers submitted a new petition for clemency in 2021. President Biden must grant Leonard Peltier clemency on humanitarian grounds and as a matter of justice.

Leonard Peltier, an Anishinaabe-Lakota Native American, was a member of the American Indian Movement (AIM), which promotes Native American rights. On June 26th, 1975, during a confrontation involving AIM members on the Pine Ridge Indian reservation in South Dakota, FBI agents Ronald Williams and Jack Coler were shot dead. Leonard Peltier was convicted of their murders in 1977 and sentenced to two consecutive life sentences. Leonard Peltier has always denied killing the agents.

A key alleged eyewitness to the shootings was Myrtle Poor Bear, a Lakota Native woman who lived at Pine Ridge. Based on her statement that she saw Leonard Peltier kill both FBI agents, Leonard Peltier was extradited from Canada, where he had fled following the shootings. However, Myrtle Poor Bear later retracted her testimony. Although not called as a prosecution witness at trial, the trial judge refused to allow Leonard Peltier's attorneys to call Myrtle Poor Bear as a defense witness on the grounds that her testimony "could be highly prejudicial to the government". In 2000, Myrtle Poor Bear issued a public statement to say that her original testimony was a result of months of threats and harassment from FBI agents.

In 1980 documents were released to Leonard Peltier's lawyers as a result of a lawsuit under the Freedom of Information Act. The documents contained ballistics evidence which might have assisted Leonard Peltier's case, but which had been withheld by the prosecution at trial. However, in 1986, the U.S. Court of Appeal for the Eighth Circuit denied Leonard Peltier a retrial, stating that: "We recognize that there is some evidence in this record of improper conduct on the part of some FBI agents, but we are reluctant to impute even further improprieties to them."

The U.S. Parole Commission has always denied parole to Leonard Peltier on the grounds that he did not accept criminal responsibility for the murders of the two FBI agents. This is even though, after one such hearing, the Commission acknowledged that, "the prosecution has conceded the lack of any direct evidence that you personally participated in the executions of two FBI agents". Leonard Peltier would not be eligible for another parole hearing until 2024. Furthermore, James H. Reynolds, the US Attorney whose office handled the criminal case prosecution and appeal of Leonard Peltier, wrote that he supported clemency "in the best interest of Justice in considering the totality of all matters involved."

Leonard Peltier suffers from a variety of ailments, including kidney disease, Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, a heart condition, a degen-

erative joint disease, and constant shortness of breath and dizziness. A stroke in 1986 left him virtually blind in one eye. In January 2016, doctors diagnosed him with a life-threatening condition: a large and potentially fatal abdominal aortic aneurysm that could rupture at any time and would result in his death. He currently uses a walker due to limited mobility and contracted COVID-19 in 2022. He continues to be at risk of re-infection while in detention.

In 2015, several Nobel Peace Prize winners—including Archbishop Desmond Tutu—called for Leonard Peltier’s release. The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and the National Congress of American Indians have also called for his release. Leonard Peltier’s attorney applied for clemency to President Biden in July 2021. President Biden committed to granting clemency on a rolling basis during his administration. However, as of February 2023, no decision has been made on his application. He has previously sought clemency, most recently from President Obama in 2016, but his petition has been denied each time. Due to the numerous issues at trial, the exhaustion of all his legal avenues for appeal, the amount of time he has already served, his continued maintenance of innocence along with his chronic health issues, Amnesty International supports calls for clemency for Leonard Peltier.

Sample Letter

Dear President Biden,

Leonard Peltier is a member of the American Indian Movement (AIM), which promotes Native American rights. In 1975, during a confrontation involving AIM members, two FBI agents were killed. Leonard Peltier was convicted of their murders but has always denied killing the agents.

There are serious concerns about the fairness of proceedings leading to his trial and conviction, including for example the prosecution’s withholding of evidence that might have assisted Leonard Peltier’s defence. In light of these concerns, the former US Attorney who supervised the prosecution team post-trial, James Reynolds, has since called for clemency.

Leonard Peltier is now 78 years old, has spent more than 46 years in US prisons, and has been repeatedly denied parole. There are serious concerns about Leonard Peltier’s deteriorating health, including potential re-exposure to COVID-19. His lawyers submitted a

new petition for clemency in 2021.

*I urge you to grant Leonard Peltier clemency on humanitarian grounds and as a matter of justice.
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 16.19. 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 Joseph Biden

The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20500, USA
White House Comment line: (202) 456-1111
<https://www.whitehouse.gov/contact/>

Please take action as soon as possible until May 29, 2023. Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.