



PROJECT MUSE®

Endangered Scholars Worldwide

Ebby Sharifi

Social Research: An International Quarterly, Volume 82, Number 3, Fall 2015,
pp. v-xxi (Article)

Published by Johns Hopkins University Press



➔ For additional information about this article

<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/603147>

Endangered Scholars Worldwide

Social Research was founded in 1934 by a group of scholars known as the University in Exile, refugees from Nazi Europe who found a home at the New School where they were able to continue the work they had been prevented from doing in Europe because of their religion or political stance. Since the summer of 2007, we have published in each issue the names and details of scholars, researchers, and students who have been threatened or imprisoned, along with ways to offer them support. We see this effort as consistent not only with our own history as a journal but with the need to call attention to the increasing and often brutal attempts to silence our colleagues around the world.


If you are aware of a scholar or student whose case you believe we should investigate, please contact us at esw@newschool.edu.

The information in this report is current, to the best of our knowledge, as of August 17, 2015. For additional and more recent information about many of these cases, as well as letters of protest, our website at <http://www.endangeredscholarsworldwide.com/>. Please also like us and follow our posts at <https://www.facebook.com/endangeredscholars>.

NEW AND CONTINUING CASES

BAHRAIN

Scholars and Researchers: Endangered Scholars Worldwide is gravely concerned about the court decision, issued on May 14, 2015, to deport Professor MASAUD MIRZA JAFFAR JAHROMI, who had his citizenship revoked on January 31, 2015, along with 70 other people. Professor Jahromi does not have a second nationality and so has no clear place to seek refuge. The decision to revoke his passport in January 2015 was based on an order from the Minister of the Interior following allegations of “damage to the interests of the country and loyalty to the king.” The court issued an order for his deportation and a fine of 100 dinars.



Professor Jahromi holds a PhD in telecommunication networking from the University of Kent at Canterbury in the United Kingdom, and he was the chairman of the telecommunication engineering department at Ahlia University. In 2011, Jahromi was imprisoned for five months.

Previously featured scholars from Bahrain who remain in prison include prisoner of conscience MAHDI 'ISSA MAHDI ABU DHEEB, former president of the Bahrain Teachers' Association, sentenced to five years' imprisonment on September 21, 2012, on charges of "inciting hatred against the regime" and "attempting to overthrow and change the regime by force." He is being denied medical assistance and his health has been deteriorating. ABDUL-JALIL AL-SINGACE, head of the department of engineering at the University of Bahrain, was sentenced to life in prison by the military National Safety Court on charges of "plotting to topple" the government in June 2011. As of this report, Professor Al-Singace's family has confirmed that he has again been denied medical attention and family visits. He has gone on several hunger strikes since March 21, 2015, to protest against police brutality and torture that took place following a riot in Jau prison in March. According to his lawyer professor, he has not received proper medical treatment. Endangered Scholars Worldwide emphasizes that denying prisoners' medical care and treatment is considered a breach of international human rights conventions and national laws, which hold regardless of the crime.

Scholars at Risk has set up a petition letter in support of DR. AL-SINGACE. The petition letter and sample letters can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/release-al-singace>.

Students: Previously featured students from Bahrain who remain in prison include AHMAD HASSAN ALI MSHAIMA', arrested on December 28, 2013, and charged on April 16, 2014, with "illegal gathering with an intent to commit crimes and disturb public security" following protests to mark the second anniversary of the uprising on February 14, 2013. According to the Bahrain Center for Human Rights, Mashima'

has repeatedly been beaten in the aftermath of the March riot in Jau prison. Mashima' now is facing new charges for participating in the protest. Also still in prison is AHMED AL ARAB, 23, a nursing student from Bani Jamra, who was arrested on January 9, 2014, in Hamad Town, and reportedly has been tortured in extracting a confession, based on which he was sentenced to life imprisonment in September 2014.

AHMED AOUN was arrested by authorities when he sought treatment in a hospital following an eye injury inflicted by police during protests on May 21, 2015; he has suffered from shoulder, knee, and back injuries inflicted by security forces in the aftermath of a prison riot. Six other students, arrested on March 5, 2012, as part of a crackdown on student involvement in pro-democracy demonstrations also remain in prison: JAWAD AL-MAHARY, SHAWQI RADHI, JASSIM AL-MUKHODHER, YOUSIF AHMED, and JASSIM AL HULAIBI, all sentenced to 15 years imprisonment and excessive monetary fines. According to the Bahrain Youth Center in Al- Wafaq, all of these students have been severely tortured in order to extract confessions.

Please send appeals to:

His Majesty Sheikh Hamad bin Isa
Al-Khalifa
Office of His Majesty the King
The Amiri Court
P.O. Box 555
Rifa'a Palace, Al-Manama
Kingdom of Bahrain
Fax: +973 176 64 587
Website: <http://www.mofa.gov.bh/>

Sheikh Khalid bin Ali Al-Khalifa
Minister of Justice and Islamic Affairs
Diplomatic Area
P.O Box #450
Al-Manama

Kingdom of Bahrain
Fax: +973 175 13 333

Dr. Fatima Al-Balooshi
Minister of Human Rights and Social
Development, Acting Minister of Health
Ministry of Human Rights and
Development
Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain
Tel: +973 176 82 422
Email: fatima.albalooshi@social.gov.bh /
dr.albalooshi@gmail.com
Facebook: [https://www.facebook.com/](https://www.facebook.com/fatima.albalooshi.3)
fatima.albalooshi.3

CHINA

Scholars and Researchers: On July 10, 2015, Chinese authorities detained at least 242 people in a nationwide crackdown, among them the prominent lawyer and law professor CHEN TAIHE. Taihe, a law professor at Guilin University of Electronic Technology, has been serving as a legal consultant for many organizations and acting as legal counsel to petitioner Zhang Xiaoyu. On July 13, Taihe was placed in criminal detention on suspicion of “provoking a serious disturbance.” As of this report, his whereabouts and health condition remain unknown. XU ZHIYONG, 41, was sentenced in July to four years in prison for “gathering a crowd to disturb public order.” The charge stems from a series of small protests he organized between 2012 and 2013 to advocate for rural children’s education rights and for official transparency. As of this report, Zhiyong’s whereabouts and condition remain unknown.

ILHAM TOHTI, an economics professor and distinguished scholar of China’s Uyghur Muslim minority, received a life sentence on September 23, 2014, for “separatism” by a court in northwestern China’s troubled Xinjiang region. He was also deprived of political rights and all of his assets were confiscated. Tohti’s wife, in an interview with Radio Free Europe on May 22, 2015, stated that Chinese authorities have denied his relatives permission to visit him in prison or send him clothing and money. Both *Scholars at Risks* and *Endangered Scholars Worldwide* are gravely concerned about the ongoing unfair treatment of this prominent scholar.

A number of scholars featured in previous issues remain in prison, including GUO QUAN, a former literature professor at Nanjing Normal University who was sentenced to 10 years in prison and 3 years’ deprivation of political rights in October 2009 on charges of “inciting subversion of state power”; and LIU XIAOBO, a Nobel Peace Prize laureate and *Social Research* author, who has been held in Jinzhou Prison since his arrest in December 2008 for “inciting subversion of state power.” On August 3rd 2015, Liu Xiaobo was granted permission to receive a visit from his brothers for the first time in 13 months.

Special Thanks

Endangered Scholars Worldwide would like to thank those who signed the petition for the Nobel laureate and human rights activist Liu Xiaobo. On August 3, 2015, Liu Xiaobo was permitted to receive a visit from his brothers for the first time in 13 months. According to the Information Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, Xiaobo and his brothers were permitted to talk for about an hour, though they were separated by a glass partition and under the surveillance of police, who interrupted them whenever sensitive topics came up during conversation. Nevertheless, Liu appeared to be in good health and reported that he spends most of his time reading and exercising.

Students: Previously featured students who were accused of separatism because of their connection to Professor Ilham Tohti, and sentenced on December 8, 2014, to between three and eight years, remain in prison. These students were arrested in January 2014 along with Professor Tohti. PERHAT HALMURAT, SHOHRET NIJAT, AND LUO YUWEI confessed on state television that they had been instructed by Tohti to publish articles that could exacerbate ethnic tensions. The other four students who remain in prison are MUTELLIP IMIN, ABDUQEYUM ABLIMIT, ATIKEN ROZI and AKBAR IMIN. All but Luo are Ughurs.

Also imprisoned is WANGCHUK DORJE, a Tibetan student leader at the Middle School of Humanities in Rebkong County. He was sentenced in June 2013 to four years in prison for his alleged role in organizing student protests.

Please send appeals to:

His Excellency Xi Jinping
President of the People's Republic of
China
Zhong Nhaihai
Beijing 100032
People's Republic of China
Facebook group in support of LIU XIAOBO:
<http://www.facebook.com/Free.Liu>
Calls for letters on behalf of ILHAM TOHTI:

<http://goo.gl/RIscCG>
Mr. Shengjun Wang
President, Supreme People's Court
No. 27 Dong Jiao Min Xiang
Beijing 100745
People's Republic of China
Fax: +86 10 6529 2345 (c/o Ministry of
Communication)
Website: www.court.gov.cn

EGYPT

Scholars and Researchers: On May 19, 2015, an Egyptian court sentenced the ousted Egyptian President Mohammed Morsi to death. The ruling applies to another 106 people, among them the editor-in-chief of the *Oxford Encyclopedia of Islam* and professor of political science EMAD SHAHIN. Professor Shahin was sentenced in absentia to death, accused of colluding with Iran and the Palestinian group Hamas to destabilize Egypt. Fortunately, Professor Shahin currently lives in the US and is a visiting professor at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service.

Endangered Scholars Worldwide and Amnesty International are gravely concerned about this instance of yet another mass death sentence handed down by an Egyptian court.

Students: Previously featured students who remain in prison include MAHMOUD MOHAMED AHMED HUSSEIN, 19, who has spent over 18 months in pre-trial detention after being arrested for wearing a tee shirt with the "Nation Without Torture Campaign" logo. On August 26, 2015, Hussein was taken to Cairo's Abbassia Court for an unexpected court proceeding, according to Amnesty International. He had appeared in court two days earlier, when his detention was renewed, so he was not expected in court for another six weeks.

Under Egyptian law, a person may be held in pre-trial detention for two years if accused of crimes punishable by life imprisonment or death. The accusations against Mahmoud Hussein include offenses that carry the penalty of life imprisonment, but they relate solely to a videotaped "confession" that he was forced to give under torture after he was arrested on January 25, 2014. During the pre-trial period, the defendant must appear in court every 45 days before a judge, who can either order his release or renew his detention. In Mahmoud Hussein's case, the authorities have on several occasions failed to transfer him to court before the 45-day period had expired, meaning that he was being held without a court order and therefore in contravention of the law. The judicial authorities noticed this after the August 24 court proceed-

ing, and so ordered Mahmoud Hussein back in court on August 26. A retroactive order for 45 days of detention was announced on August 26 cover the 30 to 35 days when he was held without a court order, according to his lawyer.

SHERIF GABER, 22, a student from Suez Canal University, was given a one-year prison sentence on February 17, 2015, for contempt of religion relating to activities on campus and atheist statements online. Even though being anti-religion is not explicitly illegal, following the military coup d'état in 2013, the new Egyptian judiciary enacted a penal code that includes charges of contempt of heavenly religions, desecrating religious symbols, and mocking religious rites in public. Each can carry a sentence of up to five years in prison. Based on this new penal code, on January 25, 2015, student KARIM AL-BANNA was given a three-year prison sentence on charges of contempt of religion and insulting the divine.

Please send appeals to:

Ambassador Mohamed M. Tawfik
Egyptian Embassy to the United States
3521 International Ct. NW
Washington DC 20008
USA
Email: contact@egyptembassy.net
Website: <http://www.egyptembassy.net>

Ambassador Mootaz Ahmadein Khalil
Egyptian Permanent Representative to the
United Nations
United Nations
800 Second Avenue
New York, NY 10017
USA

ETHIOPIA

Scholars and Researchers: Previously featured scholars and researchers who remain in prison in Ethiopia include BEFEKADU HAILU, a former lecturer and current staff member at St. Mary's University College, who was arrested along with members of the Zone 9 bloggers, ABEL WABELA, ATNAF BERAHANE, BEFEQADU HAILU, NATNAEL FELEKE. All were detained on April 26, 2014, and charged with terrorism. While five of the Zone 9 bloggers were unexpectedly released in July 2015 (see the releases section below), the trial of the remaining members has been adjourned at least 29 times, unnecessarily prolonging their imprisonment.

Please send appeals to:

Prime Minister
His Excellency Hailemariam Desalegn
Office of the Prime Minister
PO Box 1031
Addis Ababa
Ethiopia
Fax: +251 11 1552020
E-mail: national.parliament@telecom.
net.et
national.parliament@ethionet.et
Website: www.mfa.gov.et/

Mr. Getachew Ambaye
Ministry of Justice
P.O. Box 1370
Addis Ababa
Ethiopia
Fax: +251 11 5517775 / 5520874
Email: ministry-justice@telecom.net.et

Calls for letters on behalf of Prof. Kibret
and Mr. Hailu: <http://goo.gl/dH1tR5>

IRAN

Scholars and Researchers: Previously featured scholars from Iran who remain in prison include SAEED MADANI, a sociologist and member of the Nationalist-Religious Front, sentenced on June 21, 2013, to six years in prison and ten years in exile; and KAMRAN MORTEZAIE and VAHID MAHMOUDI, connected to the Baha'i Institute for Higher Education, who were arrested following coordinated attacks on the institute in May 2011 and each sentenced to five years in prison. DR. MOSTAFA ALAVI, an Iranian doctor and researcher, was sentenced to fifteen years' imprisonment in August 2008 on ungrounded charges of "plotting against the regime." ABDOLREZA GHANBARI, a university lecturer of Persian literature, arrested following the 2009 presidential election protests, was initially sentenced to death. His death sentence was reduced to fifteen years' imprisonment and exile to the south of Iran in June 2013 by the court of appeals.

Students: OMID KOKABEE, a previously featured PhD student in physics was sentenced to six years' imprisonment in July 2012 on charges of communicating with hostile governments and taking illegal earnings apparently on the basis of his scholarship funding. He remains in prison despite the fact that the Iranian Supreme Court reviewed his case and issued a ruling stating that there was no evidence of his wrongdoing.

Reports indicate that he has been transferred to solitary confinement several times, and his health remains critical. In February 2015 he accepted the prestigious American Association for the Advancement of Science award through a letter published from prison.

ARASH SADEGHI, an Iranian student rights activist who was sentenced to 15 years imprisonment by the Islamic Revolutionary Court, also remains in prison. Iran's security forces went to his office on September 17, 2014, and arrested him on charges of "collusion against the regime," "propaganda against the regime," and "insulting the Supreme Leader of Iran."

Other previously featured students who remain in prison include VAHID RANJBAR, a member of the student union from the University of Sistan and Baluchistan, arrested in his home on August 12, 2014. He is suffering from a gastric ulcer. As of this report, his whereabouts remain unknown. MASOUMEH GHOLIZADEH, a former student activist and student in Turkey, was arrested on May 23, 2014, shortly after his return to Tehran for a family visits. According to her family, she is suffering from heart failure and needs regular medical supervision. In October 2014, she was called to serve her sentence of ten months on charges of "advocacy against the regime."

HAMID BABAELI, a PhD student at the University of Liege in Belgium, was arrested by the ministry of intelligence in August 2013 shortly after his return to Tehran for a family visit. After four months in detention, including three weeks in solitary confinement, Babaei was sentenced to six years in prison on December 21, 2013, for allegedly acting against national security by "communicating with hostile foreign governments and spying." SAYED ZIAODDIN (ZIA) NABAVI, serving a ten-year sentence after attending protests following the 2009 elections, is currently in critical condition.

BAHAREH HEDAYAT, a distinguished student activist sentenced to nine-and-a-half years in prison for her involvement in antigovernment protests in 2009, also remains in prison. Hedayat was expected to be released in August 2015 after serving her original sentence in

full; however, the week of her expected release she was told that she will spend an additional two years in prison as a result of a suspended sentence from 2006. She is in critical condition, at risk of torture, and in need your support.

Amnesty International and the Committee of Concerned Scientists have set up a petition for immediate release of KOKABEE that can be found at http://freomid.org/?page_id=1136.

Scholars at Risk has set up a petition letter in support of BABAEL. The petition letter and sample letters can be found at http://www.scholarsatrisk.nyu.edu/Documents/LOA_Babaei_04-02-2014.pdf.

Please send appeals to:

His Excellency Ayatollah Ali Khamenei
The Office of the Supreme Leader
Jomhouri St, Keshvar Doust Street
Tehran

Islamic Republic of Iran

Fax: +98 21 644 11

Website: <http://www.leader.ir/langs/en/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/www.Khamenei.ir>

Ayatollah Sadeqh Larijani

Howzeh Riyasat-e Qoveh Qazaiyeh (Office of the Head of the Judiciary)

Pasteur St., Vali Asr Ave., south of Serah-e Jomhouri

Tehran

Islamic Republic of Iran

President Hassan Rouhani

The Office of the President

Palestine Avenue, Azerbaijan Intersection
Tehran

Islamic Republic of Iran

Javad Zarif, Minister of Foreign Affairs

Imam Khomeini Sq. Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The Minister's Office

Tehran

Islamic Republic of Iran

Fax: +98 21 66743149

Website: <http://www.mfa.gov.ir>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/jzarif>

LAOS

Students: Student protestors THONGPASEUTH KEUAKOUN, SENG-ALOUN PHENG-PHANH, and BOUAVANH CHANHMANIVONG remain in prison following their arrest on charges of treason in 1999 for displaying posters calling for economic, political, and social change during demonstrations. Even after fifteen years, it is not known in which prison the three students are being held or if they are still alive.

Please send appeals to:

President Choummaly Sayasone
Office of the President

Vientiane
Laos

MONGOLIA

Scholars and Researchers: A previously featured scholar, ROLMAAJIDIIN TSENGEL, a southern Mongolian historian and translator, remains in prison. He was arrested on May 6, 2012, on charges of “attempting to overthrow the government of Mongolia and conspiracy to plot a coup.” Tselgel was last known to be held in the Mongolian capital Ulan Bator’s pre-trial detention center no. 461. He has been subject to torture during his detention and banned from having visitors or legal representation.

Please send appeals to:

Ministry of Justice and Home Affairs
Kuhdaldaany Street 6/1
Chingeltei District 210646
Ulaanbaatar
Mongolia

Ambassador Och Od
The Permanent Mission of Mongolia to
the United Nations
6 East 77th Street
New York, NY 10075
USA
Website: <http://www.mfa.gov.mn>

RUSSIA

Scholars and Researchers: Previously featured scholars from Russia who remain in prison are SVYATOSLAV BOBYSHEV and YEVGENY AFANASYEV, both professors at Baltic State Technical University in St. Petersburg, who were sentenced at a closed trial in June 2012 to 12 years in prison on charges of espionage and passing secret information to the Chinese government.

Please send appeals to:

Vladimir Putin
President of Russia
Ilinka Str, No. 23
103132, Moscow
Russia
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Putin-Vladimir/27275371642>

Mr. Yuriy Chaika
General Public Prosecutor of the Russian
Federation
GSP-3, 15a B. Dimitrovka Street
125993, Moscow
Russia

Ambassador Sergey I. Kislyak
Russian Embassy to the United States
2650 Wisconsin Avenue, NW
Washington DC 20007, USA

Phone: +1 202 298 5700
Fax: +1 202 298 5735
Website: <http://www.russianembassy.org/>

SAUDI ARABIA

Scholars and Researchers: Previously featured scholars from Saudi Arabia who remain in prison include ABDUL KAREEM YOUSEF AL-KHODR, a professor of comparative jurisprudence at Qassim University, sentenced on June 24, 2013 to eight years' imprisonment and a ten-year travel ban; SA'UD MUKHTAR AL-HASHIMI, a medical doctor and faculty member at the King Abdulaziz University, sentenced in November 2011 to thirty years in prison, which is to be followed by a thirty-year travel ban; and YUSUF AL-AHMAD, an Islamic scholar who teaches at Imam Muhammad bin Sa'ud University in Riyadh, arrested after posting a YouTube video critical of long-term detentions of security suspects without due juridical process, sentenced to five years' imprisonment and a five-year travel ban on April 11, 2012. All are at risk of torture and need your support.

Please send appeals to:

His Royal Highness Prince Saud al-Faisal
bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Nasseriya Street
Riyadh 11124
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Fax: +966 1 403 0645

Prince Turki bin Khaled Al-Sudairy
President
Human Rights Commission
P.O. Box 58889
Building No. 373
King Fahad Road
Riyadh 11515
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Fax: +966 1 4612061

SUDAN

Scholars and Researchers: A previously featured university lecturer, SIDIG NOREEN ALI ABDALLA, who has taught at West Kordofan, remains in prison. According to the African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS) report dated March 25, 2015, there are growing safety concerns for the detained scholar, who has been held incommunicado and without charge by Sudan's National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS). Reports indicate that he may have been subjected to torture.

Please send appeals to:

His Excellency Lt. Omar Hassan Ahmad
Al-Bashir
President of the Republic of Sudan
President's Palace
P.O. Box 281
Khartoum
Sudan
Fax: +249 183 783 223

His Excellency Mohamed Boshara Dosa
Minister of Justice and Attorney General
Ministry of Justice
P.O. Box 302
Al Nil Avenue
Khartoum
Sudan
Fax: +249 183 78 07 96/ +249 183 770883

His Excellency Ambassador Daffa-Alla
Elhag Ali Osman
Permanent Representative to the United
Nations
Permanent Mission of the Republic of
Sudan to the United Nations in Geneva
Avenue Blanc 47
1202 Geneva
Switzerland
Fax: +41 22 731 26 56
Email: mission.sudan@bluewin.ch,
mission.sudan@ties.itu.int

SYRIA

Scholars and Researchers: Scholars from Syria who remain in prison include MAHMOUD BAHBOUH, a university professor who was arrested in June 2013 by Syrian authorities and has been incommunicado since his arrest. As of the date of this report, his location and condition remain unknown. Bahbouh was a professor of chemistry at Al'baath University. ABDULRAHMAN ALKHATEB has been imprisoned since September 28, 2013. He was the head of the Syrian Arab Crescent Branch in Talbisah, Homs and the chair of the civil engineering department at Al'Baath University.

Students: ANAS SHUGHRI, a third-year economics student, remains in prison without any specific charge.

The crisis in Syria continues to have a devastating impact on professors, researchers, students and all of the higher education system in Syria. We at Endangered Scholars Worldwide are closely following the Syrian crisis and are in contact with a number of threatened scholars and students inside Syria. However, for security reasons we are unable to publish their names and information.

Please send appeals to:

President Bashar al-Assad
Presidential Palace
al-Rashid Street
Damascus
Syrian Arab Republic
Fax: +963 11 332 3410
Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Foreign Affairs
Walid al-Mu'allim
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
al-Rashid Street
Damascus
Syrian Arab Republic
Fax: +963 11 214 6251/2/3
Salutation: Your Excellency

THAILAND

Students: On February 27, 2015, a student and an activist who were arrested last year on charges of insulting the monarchy for staging a play called *The Wolf Bride* at Thammasat University back in 2013 were each sentenced to two-and-a-half years in prison for “damaging the monarchy.” PATIWAT SARAIYAEM, 23, a student at Khon Kaen University’s Fine and Applied Arts Faculty, performed in the play, while activist PORNTHIP MANKONG, 26, coordinated the production. *The Wolf Bride*, which is about a fictional monarchy, was staged as part of Thammasat University’s commemoration of the fortieth anniversary of pro-democracy student demonstrations that occurred in October 1973. The two were convicted on one count of Thailand’s strict *lese majeste* laws, which protects the royals from any insults.

Please send appeals to:

Ambassador Thani Thongphakdi
Permanent Mission of Thailand to the
United Nations and Other International
Organizations
United Nations
5 Rue Gustave-Moynier

CH 1202 Geneva
Switzerland
Fax: + 41 22 715 1000
Website: <http://www.thaimission.ch/>
Email: mission.thailand@ties.itu.int

VIETNAM

Students: Previously featured students who remain in prison in Vietnam include DINH NGUYEN KHA and NGUYEN PHUONG UYEN, sentenced at a trial in May 2013 to eight and six years in prison, respectively, on charges of “conducting propaganda against the state.” The two were arrested in October 2012 for handing out leaflets critical of the government.

Please send appeals to:

His Excellency Troang Tan Sang
President of the Socialist Republic of
Vietnam
c/o Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Hanoi
Socialist Republic of Vietnam
Salutation: Your Excellency

RELEASES

CAMEROON

We are happy to report that Cameroonian writer ENOH MEYOMESSE was finally freed from prison. Meyomesse, one of the five “Writers at Risk” cases selected by PEN last year, was released after spending more than three harrowing years in the overcrowded Kondengui Central Prison in the Cameroonian capital of Yaoundé. PEN International believes that the charges against the Cameroonian poet, essayist, and political activist were politically motivated, and that he was imprisoned because of his criticism of the government and his political activism.

CHINA

We are happy to report that GUO YUSHAN, a Chinese academic and a founder of the Transition Institute, a think tank that researches business regulations, reform, and civil society, who was detained on October 9, 2014, on the charge of “causing a disturbance,” was released on bail in September 7, 2015, after serving 11 months in prison.

ETHIOPIA

We are happy to report that ABRAHA DESTA, an Ethiopian political science lecturer at Mekelle University, who was arrested on July 8, 2014, and detained in connection with his involvement with the legally registered Arena Tigray Party, was released in August 2015 after approximately one year and enduring torture.

We are happy to report that ZELALEM KIBRET, a professor of law at Ambo University in Ethiopia, was released along with other Zone 9 bloggers MAHLET FANTAHUN, ASMAMAW HAILEGIORGIS, EDMON KASSAYE, and TESFALEM WALDYES, in August 2015, weeks before US president Barack Obama visited the country. All charges against them were dropped.

We are happy to report that MANYAZEWA ESHETU, a previously featured Ethiopian student at Addis Ababa University, who was charged with criminal defamation for allegedly posting criticism of university and city officials for corruption on his Facebook page in October 2013, was released on September 2, 2015, without charge.

IRAN

We are happy to report that four members of the Baha'i Institute for Higher Education, RAMIN ZIBAIE, MAHMOUD BADAVAM, FARHAD SEDGHI, NOUSHIN KHADEM, and RIAZ SOBHANI were released in May 2015 upon serving their complete four-year sentences.

Two Iranian cultural figures, educator FARHAD VAKILINIA, sentenced to three years, and NAEEM NAJAFI, a student sentenced to four years, both charged with “acting against national security” by supporting Kurdish opposition groups in August 2011, have served their terms and were released in July 2015.

We are happy to report that MAJID TAVAKOLI, a prominent student leader and activist, was released on April 20, 2015, after serving six years of his eight-year sentence. He still must abide by the five-year ban, against political activities and the five-year travel ban, which makes it impossible for him to leave the country.

We are happy to report that MARYAM SHAFIPOUR, who was being held in a women's wing of Evin prison in Tehran, was released from prison on July 16, 2015. Shafipour was arrested in July after being summoned for questioning and was kept in solitary confinement for more than two months without access to her lawyer. In 2013 Shafipour was found guilty of “spreading propaganda” and “gathering and colluding” against the ruling system.

SOURCES

Amnesty International <http://www.amnesty.org>

Bahrain Center for Human Rights <http://www.bahrainrights.org/en>

Committee of Concerned Scientists <http://concernedscientists.org>

Council for Assisting Refugee Academics <http://www.academic-refugees.org>
English PEN <http://www.englishpen.org/writersinprison>
Human Rights in China <http://www.hrichina.org>
Human Rights Watch <http://www.hrw.org>
Hurriyet <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr>
The International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran
<http://www.iranhumanrights.org>
Islamic Human Rights Commission <http://www.ihrc.org>
The New York Times <http://www.nytimes.com>
Scholars at Risk <http://scholarsatrisk.nyu.edu>
Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center <http://www.smhric.org>
UN Watch <http://blog.unwatch.org>

—Written by Ebby Sharifi