

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS CAMPAIGN 2016

For this campaign we suggest that you write a simple card or greeting to the individual saying, for instance, that you are thinking of him/her and/or perhaps urging them not to lose hope (or words to that effect). A picture postcard is always welcome and cheapest to send. You can include your name and address but do not mention ACAT (unless otherwise advised below) as this can endanger the prisoner.

Cards should be posted by the senders and not sent to the ACAT office for posting on.

Small donations to cover the costs of producing the List would be welcome from anyone who is not an ACAT member or in an ACAT group.

ACAT has campaigned for the tortured, those under threat of torture, the disappeared, those subjected to death threats and to extrajudicial execution since 1984. It is a small ecumenical registered charity with no paid staff. It produces a Newsletter and takes part in the International Prayer Vigil for the Tortured at the end of June.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Zaw Zaw Latt and Pwint Phyu Latt, Myanmar (Burma)

In Myanmar (Burma) human rights defenders Zaw Zaw Latt and Pwint Phyu Latt were arrested in July 2015 and sentenced to four years in prison with hard labour on trumped up charges. They are Muslim campaigners and members of Thint Myat Lo Thu Myar (Peace Seekers and Multiculturalist Movement), an interfaith foundation founded by a Buddhist monk. The authorities detained Zaw Zaw Latt following a campaign by Buddhist nationalists on social media demanding his arrest for insulting their religion by encouraging interfaith "mating" and working with a "Buddhist monk who betrays Buddhism." His colleague Pwint Phyu Latt was arrested soon after. Both were told that they were detained for visiting the Kachin Independence Organisation (KIO) as part of their interfaith trip and for allegedly illegally crossing into India. They were charged under 17(1) of the Unlawful Association Act and the 1947 Burma Immigration Act. On 26 February 2016 they were sentenced to two years imprisonment with hard labour under the Immigration Act, increased on 8 April 2016 by a further two years under the Unlawful Association Act. They are currently serving their prison sentences in Obo prison in Mandalay.

Send a letter or card (non-religious) to:

Zaw Zaw Latt (use the same address for Pwint Phyu Latt)
c/o The Governor of Obo Prison
Obo Prison
Mandalay
Myanmar



Yang Hua (aka Li Guozhi), China.

When Yang Hua's wife, Wang Hongwu, came to pick him up on 20 December 2015, from the detention centre in China where he had been held since 9 December for his involvement with the Living Stone Church (also known as

Huoshi Church), she witnessed four men from "Detention Management" throw her husband into an unmarked van. Yang Hua (also known as Li Guoshi, his legal name) serves as a pastor in his church in the southwestern city of Guiyang. He is a third-generation pastor and has been detained before. His father was gaoled in the late 1960s for his Christian faith and the authorities continue to pressure the church to join the government-sanctioned Three-Self Movement or face destruction. Members are monitored, interrogated, and prohibited from attending prayer groups.

Yang Hua was transferred to criminal custody on 22 December and his arrest approved in January 2016, when he was accused of "divulging state secrets" but given no trial date. His wife and lawyers were initially denied permission to visit him, but when they were finally allowed they observed his poor health and harsh treatment. More recently Yang Hua reported that government prosecutors have threatened his life, along with those of his wife and children, and stomped on his feet in an effort to force his cooperation. One of the prosecutors told him, "I am a torture expert. I know how to beat you up without leaving a mark on your body for people to see. Doctors won't be able to diagnose you. Even you won't know what you died of."

Please send a card (non-religious) to:

Li Guozhi
#1-3 North, Nanming Detention House
Attn: Li Guozhi
Wangchengpo
Chaoyangdong Road
Guiyang City
Guizhou Province
People's Republic of China



Ebrahim Firouzi, Iran

A Christian convert from Islam, Ebrahim Firouzi has been in and out of prison in Iran since 2011, and although he was due to be released in January 2015, authorities retried him and extended his sentence by five years. He was first arrested on 11 January 2011. After interrogation and incommunicado detention for 154 days, he was conditionally released, which in Iran means that the authorities can re-arrest you at any time to complete your sentence. In March 2013 he was arrested again and held for 53 days. On July 13, 2013 a court sentenced him to one year in prison following two years of exile for propagandizing against the Islamic regime of Iran, organizing evangelistic activities, contacting foreigners and anti-Islamic revolutionary networks, and administering a Christian website. On 21 August 2013, while on short leave from prison, Ebrahim was arrested once more and accused of spying. He was held in Evin Prison in Tehran until October 2014 before transfer to Rajai Shahr Prison near Karaj. Due for release on 13 January 2015, he was instead kept in detention, retried in March 2015 and charged with "acting against national security, gathering, and collusion." He was sentenced to five years in prison.

Please send a card (non-religious) to:

Ebrahim Firouzi
Rajaei-Shahri Prison
Karaj City
Albourz State
Iran



Yklas Kabduakasov, Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan's secret police arrested Yklas Kabduakasov, a 54-year-old Christian convert from Islam, on 14 August 2015. He was arrested after police searched his home and confiscated Christian books. The church where Kabduakasov worships was searched the same day. On 15 August a court in the capital city of Astana ordered him to be held for two months in pre-trial detention for spreading "religious discord." Kabduakasov now faces a criminal case with a possible 5-10 year prison sentence. Christians in Kazakhstan believe that Kabduakasov was targeted for his conversion from Islam and for sharing the gospel with other Muslims. They believe the secret police are using these intimidation tactics because they want to make Kabduakasov an example and send a message to all Kazakhs that they will face a similar fate if they convert to Christianity.

Please send a card (non-religious) to:

Yklas Kabduakasov
Kazakhstan
140000 g. Pavlodar
Severnaya promyshlennaya zona
Uchr. AP-162/3, 4 otryad
Kabduakasovu Yklasu Kairullinovichu



Huang Quirui, China

Huang Quirui, a house church elder, was one of three Christians arrested and sentenced to two years in prison and fined 5,000 yuan (US \$800) for "illegal business operations" by the Liunun District Court of Liuzhou. He is alleged to have organized the shipping of textbooks published by the school. Police detained school director Cheng Jie at Liangren Church School on 18 February 2014. On 24 June 2014 authorities also arrested church elder Huang Quirui and church member Li Jiatao in their homes.

Authorities claimed that the defendants, all part of the Liangren house church which founded the school, illegally made a profit from the creation and publication of a kindergarten curriculum. The curriculum does not mention God or Jesus but uses stories and games to teach children about honesty and trustworthiness. The school charged students only with the cost of printing the books. His original lawyers were disqualified and replaced by the court during the trial on 9 February 2015. Authorities have carried out a long-running campaign against the Liangren Church and its school for promoting Christianity among students. The school is accused of violating the "Law of Education" by forcing citizens to believe in a religion. Following the arrests the Liangren Church closed the school, refunded tuition, and reassigned teachers to other locations.

Please send a card (non-religious) to:

Huang Quirui
Cell No. 506
The First Detention Centre
Nanhuan Road Liuzhou City
Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region
People's Republic of China
545001



Dr. Kiflu Gebremeskel, Eritrea

Dr. Kiflu Gebremeskel, a leading figure of the Full Gospel Church of Eritrea, was arrested on 23 May 2004 at his home in Asmara Gejeret. Dr. Gebremeskel was a mathematics lecturer, department and faculty head at the University of Asmara until 1999, when he became a full-time pastor at the Southwest Full Gospel Church. His wife and four children have not been able to visit him.

About 2,000 Eritrean Christians are believed to be under arrest because of their religious beliefs, being held in police stations, military camps and prisons in 12 known locations across Eritrea, although some were released after signing a pledge to stop attending religious services. The Eritrean government began forcibly closing evangelical Protestant churches in 2002. It has not allowed any of the independent Protestant churches to register and reopen, even though 11 have applied to do so. Dr. Gebremeskel is one of 28 clergymen in detention, including Kidane Weldou (see below) and Haile Nayzgi. Goaled Protestants are routinely subjected to physical beatings and severe psychological pressure to deny their religious beliefs. Police and military authorities continue to demand the prisoners return to one of the three "official" Christian denominations recognized by the government — the nation's historic Orthodox, Catholic and Lutheran churches — although even these have incurred government disfavour, experiencing threats from police and security and imprisonment of members.

Please send a card (non-religious) to:

Dr. Kiflu Gebremeskel
Karsheli Prison
2nd Police Station Zone 7 Northern East
Zoba Maakel
Asmara, Eritrea



Pastor Kidane Weldou, Eritrea

Pastor Kidane Weldou disappeared in 2005 and is presumably detained by Eritrean security forces, possibly in Karsheli prison after his vehicle was found abandoned in Asmara. He is a senior pastor of the Full Gospel Church and has been a leader in the church for many years. For several days his family, including wife and four daughters, were unable to learn of his whereabouts. Pastor Weldou is also a member of the executive committee of Gideons International in Eritrea. On 19 February 2005 a group of Sunday school teachers and students were arrested and detained by police after a raid on the Medhane Alem Orthodox Church in Asmara. They were later released. According to Compass Direct, the pastors of the banned Protestant churches were reportedly ordered not to inform anyone outside Eritrea of their problems. However, these pastors rejected this advice and reported what was happening to the outside world. Some of those arrested were being held in metal shipping containers.

Please send a card (non-religious) to:

Kidane Weldou
Karsheli Prison
2nd Police Station Zone 7 Northern East
Zoba Maakel
Asmara, Eritrea



Petr Jašek and Rev. Kuwa Shamal, Sudan

Arrested in December 2015, Petr Jašek, a Czech Christian aid worker, is currently on trial in Sudan along with two Sudanese pastors, Rev. Kuwa Shamal, Rev. Hassan

Abduraheem, and another Sudanese man, Abdulmonem Abdumawla. They are accused of funding rebel movements, although all they have done is show compassion for a student from Darfur who was badly burnt during a demonstration. Their crimes include 'waging war against the state' and spying, for which the maximum penalty is death. After Rev Hassan highlighted the student's plight at an international Christian conference in November 2015, Petr travelled to Khartoum to give the student \$5,000 towards his medical costs, at a meeting organised by Hassan and Abdulmonem. Petr was detained on arrival at Khartoum Airport and the others were arrested days later, along with Pastor Kuwa. The allegation of rebel sympathies seems to be based on the fact that the two pastors are from the Nuba mountains in South Kordofan. Petr Jašek has worked for 20 years in the medical field and has helped provide care to persecuted Christians in Sudan and Nigeria, including victims of Boko Haram. He most recently appeared in court in Khartoum on 17 October 2016 accused of tarnishing Sudan's reputation through his reports that are claimed to be critical of the government's military assault on suspected rebel targets in South Kordofan. The offence carries the death penalty.

Please send a card (non-religious) to:

Petr Jasek and family
C/o Release International
PO Box 54
Orpington
BR5 4RT



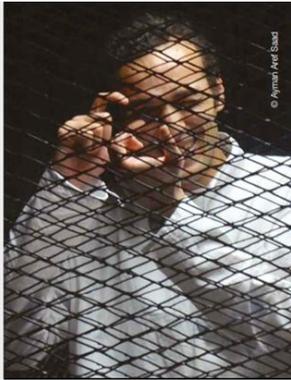
Ghada Jamsheer, Bahrain

Women's rights defender Ghada Jamsheer is currently serving combined sentences in Issa Town Detention Centre in Bahrain. Detained on 15 August 2016 at Bahrain's airport on arrival from London, she was sentenced for her criticism on social media of the alleged corruption by the management of the King Hamad hospital, run by the Bahrain ruling family. Her health is deteriorating as she is suffering from rheumatoid arthritis which requires specialized treatment that has been denied to her by prison authorities. While in detention she was seen only once by a general practitioner who recommended referral to a specialist. The authorities have repeatedly rejected this and have failed to provide her with adequate medical care. Ghada Jamsheer has been targeted in the past for her human rights work, and is currently a defendant in a prolonged trial on charges of "assaulting a police officer".

Women comprise nearly one-fifth of the total Bahraini prison population. Of the 20 prisons in the country, Issa Town Detention Centre is the only women's facility. Its total inmate population is approximately 150, with fewer than 10 political detainees. The majority of inmates are migrant workers. Those who do not speak Arabic or English are not provided a translator and cannot understand the charges being brought against them. Health conditions in Bahrain's prisons are also poor, especially with regard to women's health issues. Unclean bathrooms and showers coupled with limited access to toilets contribute to a high number of urinary tract infections. Prisoners must pay for soap and toothbrushes, making basic sanitation products inaccessible to many. The crowded cells also promote the transmission of infectious diseases, including Hepatitis A and B.

Please send a card (non-religious) to:

Ghada Jamsheer
C/o Issa Town Detention Centre
Town postal code area 800
Bahrain



Mahmoud Abu Zeid (Shawkan), Egypt

Photojournalist Mahmoud Abu Zeid, known as Shawkan, was covering a sit-in on 14 August 2013 in Cairo when security forces, police and tanks swept in, using bullets and tear gas. When the police found out Shawkan was a journalist, they arrested him, tied his hands together with plastic cables that cut through his skin, and beat him. Up to a thousand people were killed on that day across Egypt and Shawkan was among hundreds arrested. He has now been detained without charge for over three years, in contravention of Egyptian law. He has hepatitis C, but has been denied adequate medication and his health is deteriorating. Shawkan faces nine trumped-up charges, including "joining a criminal gang" and "murder". If convicted he could face the death penalty.

Please send a card (it can be religious) to:

Free Shawkan
c/o Ahmed Abu Seif
211 E. Ohio St. Apt #2523
Chicago, Illinois
60611, USA



Johan Teterissa, Indonesia

Teacher Johan Teterissa is serving a 15-year jail sentence for raising a flag banned by the Indonesian government. In 2007 he led a group of people, mainly teachers and farmers, in a peaceful protest in front of the president. They performed a traditional war dance, before unfurling a "rainbow" flag, a historical symbol of independence for the eastern province of Maluku. Police officers removed Johan and the others, punching and beating them. They forced them to crawl on their stomachs on hot asphalt, whipped them with electric cables, and beat their ears with rifle butts until they bled. After an unfair trial, the protestors were convicted of "rebellion" and Johan was sentenced to life, later reduced to 15 years. He is in prison thousands of kilometres away from his family and friends.

Please send a non-religious card to:

Johan Teterissa
Lembaga Pemasyarakatan (Lapas)
Klas 1 Batu
Nusa Lambangan
Tambakreja
Cilacap Selatan
53213, Cilacap
Central Java, Indonesia



Annie Alfred, Malawi

11-year-old Annie Alfred lives with her parents and has many friends, but her life is in constant danger because, alongside 7,000-10,000 Malawians, she has the genetic condition of albinism. They are in danger of being abducted, mutilated or killed because of erroneous beliefs and superstitions, with children like Annie at particular risk. Even after death their bones are often stolen for use in witchcraft rituals. Attacks against Malawians with albinism are rising and there have been six reported killings in 2016. The few perpetrators who have been arrested have been acquitted or given light sentences. The president says he supports greater protection for people with albinism, but little progress has been made.

Please send a card (it can be religious) to:

Association of People with Albinism in Malawi (APAM)

c/o FEDOMA

Private Bag 797

Limbe, Blantyre

Malawi

[APAM will distribute the cards to people with albinism and families who have lost loved ones.]



Gong Shengliang China

Gong Shengliang is a Christian pastor dying in prison. Over the past 14 years he has received countless beatings in Chinese jails. In the 1980s, he founded and led a Protestant evangelical community which has grown in China. Arrested in 2001, he was subsequently sentenced at an unfair trial, based on a confession obtained under torture, then seriously wounded in the face after being beaten by a fellow prisoner. Following one such assault he became deaf in his right ear. Since suffering a stroke in detention in 2012, he has lost the use of his legs. He can no longer speak nor swallow. The urgent medical care he requires is not given to him.

Please send a simple (non-religious) message of greeting to:

Gong Shengliang
Prison Hongshan
Province de Hubei Wuhan 430223
People's Republic of China

The following two cases have already been featured in ACAT appeals but are included in order to highlight the value of maintaining links to those imprisoned for very long periods.



Nazadin Zaghari-Ratcliffe, Iran

Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe was featured in the September/November 2016 Newsletter, where we focussed on urging the UK government to help her. This time you are invited to send a card to Nazadin herself.

The card can be religious, include your name and address and information about yourself and/or ACAT. It is not known whether she will be allowed to receive it, but her family asks that you send one.

Nazadin Zaghari-Ratcliffe
Evin Prison
District 2
Behesht St
Tehran
Iran

Lahpai Gam, Myanmar (Burma)

Lahpai Gam is a Kachin farmer, who was arrested in June 2012 by the military-backed government in Burma. He was charged under Article 17/1 of the Unlawful Association Act, and he is serving a 21 year prison sentence in Myitkyina Prison. Lahpai Gam was living in a refugee camp for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) with his family after fleeing from conflict areas in Northern Burma. To support his family he requested permission from a camp supervisor to work as a herdsman outside the camp. While taking a lunch break during the trip, he and his friends were taken by the Burmese Army 37th battalion for questioning. He was eventually accused of being a soldier from the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), and carrying out bombing operations near Myitkyina. The KIA is the armed wing of the Kachin Independence Organisation, which works for democracy and more autonomy for the Kachin people.

Brutally tortured and forced to make a false confession about his connection with the KIA and different bombings in the area, Lahpai Gam was also accused of leaving the refugee camp several times to attend military training sessions with the KIA. According to family members, during the interrogations he was repeatedly kicked, beaten, forced to drink water mixed with fuel, and was forced to have sexual intercourse with another male prisoner. After over a year in detention he was sentenced to 2 years in prison in November 2013, with an additional 5 years added in December. A further 14 years were added on 5 June 2014. He is now serving a 21 year sentence in Myitkyina Prison. On 30 January 2014, the United Nations Working Group On Arbitrary Detention ruled that the detention of Kachin farmer Lahpai Gam is arbitrary, contravenes the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and demanded his immediate release.

Please write or send a card to:

Lahpai Gam
C/o The governor of Myitkyina Prison
Myitkyina Prison
Myitkyina Town
Kachin State
Myanmar