

Thanks, Farideh, for sending us this important update.

Subject: Keeping You Connected 23 June 2016 (Parts 1 and 2)

Part 1

Dear All:

Keeping you connected 23 June 2016

Quick updates and developments

Angie Hougas

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1 GOOD NEWS (Individuals At Risk - IAR) GLOBAL CASES

2 ACTION: 26 June (Sunday) INTERNATIONAL DAY IN SUPPORT OF VICTIMS OF TORTURE

3 SURVEILLANCE / DOMESTIC COUNTERTERRORISM

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1 GOOD NEWS (Individuals At Risk IAR) GLOBAL CASES

- **Father Ly (Case Commitment):** Father Thadeus Nguyen Van Ly, a prisoner of conscience, was reportedly released in Vietnam. AIUSA Local Groups 19 in Palo Alto, CA; 277 in Des Moines, IA; and 11 in NYC had the case as a Case Commitment.
- **José Marcos Mavungo (Urgent Action):** The Angolan Supreme Tribunal acquitted human rights defender José Marcos Mavungo on 19 May and he was released the following day. He is now home with his family. Human rights lawyer Arão Bula Tempo still risks 5 to 12 years in jail if the court allows his case to proceed to trial.
- **Mohammed Saleh al-Bajadi (Urgent Action):** Human rights defender Mohammed Saleh al-Bajadi was released in Saudi Arabia on 7 April from a rehabilitation centre where he had spent four months after being discharged from prison in November 2015. He remains banned from travelling until 2020. Please keep all of this information confidential.
- **Yecenia Armenia Graciano (Write for Rights and Case Commitment):** Great news: Yecenia was released! Yecenia Armenta Graciano was arbitrarily detained by Sinaloa state investigative police in Mexico on 10 July 2012 and beaten, near-asphyxiated and raped during 15 hours of torture until she was forced to “confess” to involvement in the murder of her husband. She was in last year’s Write for Rights. AIUSA generated an estimated 318 705 actions in her case. Of those, AIUSA generated 10 426 letters to the government, 1 398 solidarity letters directly to her, and 153 online actions. For more information, please see the attachment of Marselha’s letter or visit AIUSA’s related [press release](#). AIUSA Local 134 in Richmond, VA had her as a Case Commitment.

- **Zainab al-Khawaja (Urgent Action):** Prisoner of conscience and human rights defender
Zainab al-Khawaja was reportedly released by Bahrain.

2 ACTION: 26 June (Sunday) INTERNATIONAL DAY IN SUPPORT OF VICTIMS OF TORTURE

As this day approaches, we [think of torture survivors like Mustafa al-Hawsawi](#). He was one of the more than 100 men taken to secret CIA prisons after the attacks of 9/11. The CIA tortured him. More specifically, the CIA sodomized him.

The clinical language of the U.S. government describes his treatment as a “rectal exam” conducted with “excessive force.”

Mr. al-Hawsawi lives today in daily agony, with a gruesome condition serving as a daily reminder of his torture. In medical terms: he suffers from rectal prolapse, anal fissure (torn rectum) and chronic hemorrhoids. That means that, every time he defecates or strains, he is forced, in spite of excruciating pain, to manually re-insert the prolapsing tissue back into his rectal cavity with his fingers.

A surgery could correct these injuries, but he is at Guantánamo and cannot get one. He and his representatives have asked multiple times for medical treatment to alleviate this pain, without success.

Mr. al-Hawsawi faces charges before the unfair and illegitimate military commission system at Guantánamo. Regardless of his guilt or innocence, no one should be left to suffer this way. This year, for the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, will you join us in taking action? Here are two ways:

- [**Tell the Department of Defense: No one should be tortured or left to suffer from the effects of the torture to which they were subjected. Give Mustafa al-Hawsawi the medical care he needs.**](#)
- **Write a letter to Mr. al-Hawsawi.** His attorneys tell us that people knowing his experience of torture is tremendously meaningful to him. Letters of concern can be mailed to:

3 SURVEILLANCE / DOMESTIC COUNTERTERRORISM

*As Congress responds to the Orlando shooting, AIUSA is monitoring proposals to increase FBI powers to conduct surveillance without a court order and increase the reach of law enforcement through fusion centers that collect and mine information about communities and activists;

*A coalition letter that AIUSA joined opposing FBI’s efforts to expand its warrantless surveillance powers was cited by the media, including the [Washington Post](#).

AIUSA also joined a letter opposing expansion of registries on facial recognition that could disproportionately impact communities of color and activists, and our support as cited in the [Washington Post](#) and several other outlets.

4 GUANTANAMO / TORTURE

The House of Representatives passed the defense appropriations bill, which included new restrictions on transferring detainees out of Guantanamo. AIUSA joined coalition partners in a letter opposing these provisions, and we continue to monitor the bill’s movement through the Senate and find ways to ensure the restrictions are removed in the final legislation.

5 ARTS FOR AMNESTY (USA)

BET Awards Weekend event **June 24th at 7PM with Soho House (For their Soho Good Initiative)** bringing together music labels, visual artists, and entertainment executives for a conversation with SOHO house executives and members on Art and Human Rights
Canvases of Courage College Tour: had successful events at Drexel University, and Rhode Island School of Design. Now planning to renew efforts in the fall to West Coast Colleges/Universities.

Art For Rights: We're in the initial process of plotting out Art for Rights Philly (part of the Write For Rights work). Taking feedback from Art for Rights New Orleans A4A USA is hoping to create a cross-departmental planning group for the event, ensuring that each department is in the mix from the start, and that the event elevates all of our work. This was an initial meeting in Philadelphia with key stakeholders interested in finding financial support for the event.

6 MEDIA MENTIONS

ORLANDO

6/12/16 [Violence Against Gay People Is Not Going Away](#), Slate. Quotes Tarah Demant.
6/15/16 [A Time for Solidarity -- And Action](#), Huffington Post. By Margaret Huang.
6/15/16 [After Orlando. We Need Solidarity. Not Suspicionless Surveillance](#), Medium. By Naureen Shah.
6/15/16 [Orlando shootings: Would Trump's national security plan work?](#), BBC News. Quotes Naureen Shah.
6/16/16 [LGBT Muslims hope for a time of unity, understanding](#), Atlanta Journal Constitution
6/16/16 [Kerry and Saudi prince pledge to fight extremism after Orlando shooting, while LGBT Saudis face execution](#), Salon
6/16/16 [Local gun-reform advocates gather for letter-writing](#), Pittsburgh City Paper
6/15/16 [Yorkers planning vigil Thursday night to honor Orlando nightclub victims](#), Central Penn Business Journal

COUTERTERRORISM

6/10/16 Thom Hartmann Show, appearance by Naureen Shah

ISRAEL/PALESTINE

6/16/16 [Palestinians say man detained by Israel as a terrorist is actually a circus clown](#), Washington Post

SAUDI ARABIA

6/16/16 [Worried About "Stigmatizing" Cluster Bombs. House Approves More Sales to Saudi Arabia](#), The Intercept. Quotes Sunjeev Bery.

SEX WORKERS

- 6/5/16 [A better way to make sex work safer](#), Washington Post, letter by Margaret Huang
- 6/9/16 [5 Reasons Decriminalization Protects Sex Workers' Rights](#), Rolling Stone, by Margaret Huang
- 6/7/16 [Protecting the vulnerable](#), Toledo Blade

SAUDI ARABIA

- 6/10/16 [U.N. Blasted For 'Pandering To Saudi Arabia' Over Children Killed In Yemen](#), NPR. Appearance by Margaret Huang
- 6/7/16 ARD radio, appearance by Renzo Pomi
- 6/6/16 [When the White House said 'No' to the Saudis](#), WPRI
- 6/8/16 [UN responds to accusations it caved to Saudis on Yemen kids](#), Associated Press
- 6/7/16 [Amnesty blasts U.N.'s "shameful pandering to Saudi Arabia over children killed in Yemen."](#) Salon
- 6/7/16 [Saudis exerted 'massive' pressure on U.N. to be removed from blacklist](#), CNN.com
- 6/7/16 [UN Removes Saudi Arabia From Human Rights Blacklist After Just One Week. Faces Intense Backlash](#), Think Progress
- 6/3/16 [New Convictions Reveal Saudi Arabia's Disregard for Human Rights](#), Care2

IAHCR

- 6/9/16 [A \\$1-million shortfall is threatening help for human rights victims in the Americas](#), LA Times. Quoted Marselha Gonçalves Margerin

MALAWI

- 6/8/16 [Albinos are being killed in record numbers for their body parts](#), Washington Post
- 6/8/16 [Albino people increasingly killed for their body parts in Malawi](#), USA Today

BRAZIL

- 6/3/16 [Police Brutality Has Surged In Brazil. It's About To Get Even Worse.](#), Think Progress

TEL AVIV

- 6/9/16 [After Attack, Israel Imposes New Movement Restrictions On Palestinians](#), NPR Two-Way

GERMANY

- 6/10/16 [German Authorities Fail To Protect Refugees From Violence](#), Think Progress

IRAQ

- 6/10/16 [Civilians Fleeing Fallujah Face Danger from ISIS and Iraqi Forces: UN](#), Military.com

PRESS RELEASES

- 6/16/16 [Ruling upholding anal tests on gay men in Kenya unacceptable](#)
- 6/15/16 [Indonesia must allow stranded Sri Lankan Tamil asylum seekers to disembark](#)
- 6/15/16 [Reckless deportations from Dominican Republic leaving thousands in limbo in Haiti](#)
- 6/13/16 [Imminent forced eviction of Indigenous Peoples in Brazil flagrantly unjust](#)
- 6/13/16 [Israel renews detention without charge of Palestinian circus performer for further six months](#)
- 6/13/16 [Rights of people with albinism must be guaranteed in Malawi](#)
- 6/13/16 [EU risks fuelling horrific abuse of refugees and migrants in Libya](#)
- 6/12/16 [Attack in Orlando Shows Utter Contempt for Human Life](#)
- 6/10/16 [Amnesty International USA Statement in Response to Shooting at Love Field in Dallas](#)
- 6/10/16 [Stubborn politics accelerate catastrophic humanitarian crisis in Venezuela](#)
- 6/9/16 [Nigeria: Killing of unarmed pro-Biafra supporters by military must be urgently investigated](#)
- 6/9/16 [Groundbreaking UN decision rules Ireland's ban on abortion violates human rights](#)
- 6/9/16 [Amnesty International: Tel Aviv attack displays total disdain for human life](#)
- 6/9/16 [Germany failing to tackle rise in hate crime](#)
- 6/8/16 [Amnesty International USA Responds to Claims of Former Guantánamo Detainees Launching Attacks](#)
- 6/8/16 [Authorities must rein in forces amid allegations of torture and deaths in custody in Iraq](#)
- 6/8/16 [Disgraceful shootings of students must be promptly investigated in Papua New Guinea](#)
- 6/7/16 [Mexico: Woman tortured by police is released from prison after four years of injustice](#)
- 6/7/16 [UN: Shameful pandering to Saudi Arabia-led coalition over children killed in Yemen conflict](#)
- 6/7/16 [Malawi: Killing spree of people with albinism fuelled by ritual practices and policing failures](#)
- 6/6/16 [Two months and 10 killings later, a climate of impunity still prevails in Bangladesh](#)
- 6/6/16 [Security forces must refrain from excessive use of force during rural protests in Colombia](#)
- 6/6/16 [Evidence Counters UK Claims That No British-Made Cluster Munitions in Yemen](#)

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7 REPORTS

Uganda: Letter from 31 Ugandan and International Organizations

Website link: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr59/4248/2016/en/>

AI index number: AFR 59/4248/2016

Publish date: 13/06/2016 14:35 [GMT+1]

Abstract: We, the undersigned national and international organizations engaged in various ways in work in Uganda, are writing to express our grave concern about a wave of break-ins targeting offices of Ugandan civil society groups.

South Sudan: Open Letter to the Chairperson of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation

Website link: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr65/4285/2016/en/>

AI index number: AFR 65/4285/2016

Publish date: 17/06/2016 00:00

Abstract: We, the undersigned non-governmental organisations working in and outside of South Sudan, urge you to be un-deterred by an opinion article in the New York Times on 7 June attributed to the President and First Vice-President of South Sudan to forgo establishment of a Hybrid Court. We call on you to utilize all the means at your disposal to ensure that the Transitional Government of National Unity commit themselves to the court's establishment, and to urge the African Union to press ahead with the court's development as a matter of urgency.

Myanmar: Ending discrimination and violence against the Rohingya: Amnesty International's written statement to the 32nd session of the UN Human Rights Council 13 June - 1 July 2016

Website link: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa16/4147/2016/en/>

AI index number: ASA 16/4147/2016

Publish date: 30/05/2016 00:00

Abstract: In this written statement to the UN Human Rights Council, Amnesty International highlights ongoing concerns about the situation of the Rohingya minority, which face ongoing discrimination and other violations of their rights in Myanmar. While there are no quick solutions to the problems the Rohingya face, there are immediate and concrete actions the government can take to end entrenched discrimination against them and alleviate their suffering. UN Member States have an important role to play in this regard, and must place the human rights and dignity of the Rohingya at the centre of their engagement with the new government.

Kazakhstan: Submission to the United Nations Human Rights Committee

Website link: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur57/4122/2016/en/>

AI index number: EUR 57/4122/2016

Publish date: 14/06/2016 00:00 BST

Abstract: This briefing outlines Amnesty International's main concerns in advance of the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Committee's review of Kazakhstan's second periodic report during its 117th session in June 2016.

Open letter to the Dutch Presidency of the Council of the European Union and the Member States of the European Union

Website link: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/ior60/4250/2016/en/>

AI index number: IOR 60/4250/2016

Publish date: 13/06/2016 11:50 BST [GMT +1]

Abstract: An open letter from 130 civil society organisations including Amnesty International calling on European Union member states to adopt a strong law on conflict minerals.

Part 2

Subject: Part II Keeping You Connected 23 June 2016

Here is some of the content AIUSA put out for World Refugee Day. AIUSA is using the occasion to advance the strategy of creating more empathy for refugees, beginning to educate people about migrants in the Americas, and underscoring the urgent need for action, by connecting with people's values, given both AI's research and unique vantage point as a grassroots organization.

Here are some of the pieces

- An op-ed from Margaret that ran Monday on the main homepage Medium, the most influential and well-read new media platform for opinion and broad-based thought leadership. The op-ed is pasted in below and [linked here](#).
- An action alert mobilizing people to write personal notes of welcome to refugees who recently arrived in the U.S. AIUSA is working with refugee assistance centers to distribute these notes; [action is linked here](#).
- A video with Brave New Films (Robert Greenwald's group) giving a broader historical context on refugees and also uses animation to deepen people's understanding about how the Syrian refugee crisis has evolved. The video is [linked here](#).
- An op-ed ran in the Huffington Post, highlighting anti-refugee rhetoric and driving people to view the video and sign AIUSA's petition. The op-ed is [linked here](#).
- A range of social media, driving people to AIUSA's action to write welcoming notes to refugees, driving people to AIUSA's congressional petition, and highlighting the personal stories of refugees in order to help deepen public understanding and engagement in this work. Here are some of our initial links on Twitter, Facebook, and Tumblr:
<https://twitter.com/amnesty/status/744897176925503488>,
<https://twitter.com/amnesty/status/744909505352318976>,
<https://www.facebook.com/amnestyusa/posts/10153564163321363>,
<http://amnestyusa.tumblr.com/post/146210946033/if-you-had-to-run-for-your-life-would-you-want-to> .
- A new piece on the AIUSA blog, which other sites and partners are linking to today, highlighting one refugee's story, and driving people to our actions. It's [linked here](#).
- AIUSA is working with Art for Amnesty at the IS on a partnership with Ai Wei Wei, who is curating content on Instagram for World Refugee Day that we're pushing out. Here is the first of the images he helped develop, and there will be more each day this week:
<https://www.instagram.com/p/BG4Sp4Nrguw/?taken-by=artforamnesty&hl=en> .

<https://medium.com/@amnesty/lives-on-hold-and-in-danger-db8c49a7620b#.pulc1fka2>

Featured Opinion

Lives On Hold and In Danger

By Margaret Huang

We're marking World Refugee Day during the largest refugee crisis since World War II. More than 20 million people worldwide have fled their homes due to armed conflict and other violence or persecution. Many of them are leaving Syria. They have nowhere to go but they have no choice but to leave, given the horrific violence in their home country.

It's difficult to really comprehend a crisis this large. And it's even harder when you realize that the crisis extends well beyond Syria, and well beyond the 20 million people who are already designated as refugees.

Hundreds of thousands of people have fled their homes to escape violence in Central America and specifically in the so-called Northern Triangle Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala over the past several years. The area is one of the most violent regions of the world, with each country's murder rates in the top five globally. Unlike people fleeing Syria, they often aren't considered refugees which means they have even fewer protections even as they, too, flee violence and persecution.

The most vulnerable refugees and migrants around the world are children, and many of them are traveling alone. Tens of thousands of unaccompanied children are living in refugee camps in Europe, just as tens of thousands of unaccompanied children continue to arrive at our border with Mexico.

Since October 2015, more than 23,000 unaccompanied children from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras traveled to the U.S. border. They are often fleeing immediate threats of violence from gangs, organized crime, and other criminal actors, including trafficking, forced military service, labor exploitation, or child abuse.

Girls, specifically, often flee because they face sexual violence. As one girl told the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), "I am here because the gang threatened me. One of them 'liked' me. Another gang member told my uncle that he should get me out of there because the guy who liked me was going to do me harm. In El Salvador they take young girls, rape them, and throw them in plastic bags."

Unfortunately, this threat isn't just in their home country but imperils girls and women around the world. The widespread fear, sexual abuse and violence at refugee camps in [Greece](#) and [Libya](#) have been well documented by Amnesty International, and the journey from the Northern Triangle to the U.S. is just as perilous for women and girls. The United Nations has reported that

women who are migrants or refugees have reported that they take birth control when fleeing because they know they're likely to be raped while trying to get to safety. One woman [told UNHCR](#), "if you are raped, you will not end up pregnant. And you will only have the trauma of the event, but not the baby in the future from the rape."

We cannot allow this to happen in the U.S. or anywhere else in the world.

The U.S. and other countries should welcome migrants and refugees, and we must do more to protect them from harm while they are in transit. These are people who are trying to rebuild their lives, and they should be able to do that safely and with dignity.

No matter what brings someone to the U.S., we have to ensure that there's a fair and efficient process to examine each person's case. The U.S. has a legal and moral obligation to ensure that any person who is at risk of violence or persecution can seek asylum in this country and have their case heard.

When people say they are afraid to return to their home countries, the U.S. government must review their claims on a case-by-case basis, not detain them without access to translators or attorneys and then deport them without ever considering their claims. Such decisions have been documented in a number of cases right now along the Mexico border it's a violation of international law, it's endangering the lives of thousands, and it's wrong.

Millions of people's lives are on hold and in danger. Many of the countries currently accepting refugees block them from education and employment opportunities, leaving them with nothing to do but sit in refugee camps and making it impossible for them to integrate into communities.

It's entirely possible to police our borders, protect people's human rights, and meet our legal obligation to refugees, all at once. Not only can we do all of these things we must. Today, on World Refugee Day, the U.S. and President Obama must commit to do more for the millions of people who are looking for the safety, peace, and hope that all human beings deserve.

Margaret Huang is the interim executive director of [Amnesty International USA](#)