



## Ilham Tohti China

*"I have relied only on pen and paper to diplomatically request the human rights, legal rights, and autonomous regional rights for the Uyghurs."*

**Ilham Tohti is an economics professor at the Minzu University in Beijing. He is also the founder of the website "Uighur Online", and is known for his criticism of the Chinese authorities for their discrimination of ethnic and religious minority groups. In 2014 he was sentenced to life in prison for "separatism", a charge often used against Uyghurs that speak out against human rights violations.**

The Uyghurs are a minority, situated mostly in the north west of China. Most of the Uyghurs are Muslim. Since the 1980s they have been victims of systematic and extensive discrimination. Many have experienced arbitrary arrests and torture or other cruel and degrading treatment. Their culture is under strong and systematic pressure, for example through strict limitation on the possibility to exercise their own language or practice their religion.

Many years ago, Tohti started the website "Uighur Online" where he commented on human rights violations against Uyghurs and other people in China. Even though the website was a legitimate use of the right to freedom of expression, it was shut down several times.

In January 2014 Tohti was arrested. For five months, he was held in isolation, and his lawyers claim he was not given food for an entire 10-day period. Six months passed before he could see his lawyers. At that point he had lost 16 kg.

In September 2014 Tohti was sentenced to life in prison. Amnesty International considers him a prisoner of conscience, incarcerated for having exercised his right to freedom of expression in a peaceful manner. His wife and two sons have also been placed under surveillance.

Read more about Ilham Tohti's story here: [www.amnesty.no/aksjon/ilham](http://www.amnesty.no/aksjon/ilham)

### **Write a letter of solidarity to Ilham Tohti**

When a prisoner of conscience is incarcerated, it is up to the authorities and the prison personnel to decide whether the prisoner should receive letters. In some cases, they do, in other cases they don't. Nonetheless, a solidarity letter can exercise pressure on the authorities, because it shows them that the world is watching. In many instances, it has led to improved treatment and better prison conditions. Show your solidarity by writing a letter, drawing something or sending a picture of yourself and your family/friends. Write what you like in the letter.

### **Write a letter to Premier Li Keqiang**

Human Rights violation thrive in the dark, where no one knows about them. Write a letter for Premier Li Keqiang to show him that you know what has happened to Ilham Tohti, and to demand that he is released immediately and unconditionally.

**Amnesty International is:**

- Calling on the authorities to release Ilham Tohti immediately and unconditionally, as he has been imprisoned solely for exercising his right to freedom of expression
- Calling on the authorities to ensure Ilham Tohti is not subjected to torture and other ill-treatment in prison, and is allowed access to his family and lawyer.

**Salutation:** Your Excellency

**Send the letters to:**

Amnesty International Norge,  
Att: Ilham Tohti  
Postboks 702 Sentrum,  
0106 Oslo

**Raise awareness about Ilham Tohti on Twitter**

Proposed message: Jailed for life for calling out discrimination #FreeIlhamTohti #W4R16



## Mahmoud Abu Zeid (Shawkan) Egypt

*“Tora Prison is like a cemetery. I sleep on a cold tiled floor, my belongings hanging on a nail in the wall over my thin mattress. There is a tiny “kitchen” where we prepare our food. We have a single element electric cooker, which we also use for warmth in the winter months. The ‘kitchen’ is adjacent to a squat toilet, which is basically a hole in the concrete floor. Both areas are separated by a hanging blanket to try and provide a sense of privacy. Our dignity was left at the prison gates.”*

**After witnessing Egyptian security forces strike down a mass demonstration in Cairo, photojournalist Shawkan was beaten and arrested. He has spent more than three years in prison without trial, which is illegal in Egypt. Shawkan has also been tortured. He could be sentenced to the death penalty.**

On the 14<sup>th</sup> of August 2013, Shawkan was doing his job as a photojournalist, taking pictures during a mass demonstration organized by supporters of ousted president, Mohamed Morsi. After a short while, security forces started to disperse the demonstration. Excessive use of force with teargas, shotguns and sharp ammunition led to the death of hundreds of protesters and eight members of the security forces.

On the 16<sup>th</sup> of August, Shawkan was interrogated by the public prosecutor, without the presence of a lawyer, although it is his right to have a lawyer present. The public prosecutor ordered Shawkan’s detention, without charge, while the investigations went on. Three years later Shawkan is still in prison. His lawyers have petitioned for his release as he has been detained for more than two years, the maximum limit one can be held without charge in Egypt. Shawkan is the only journalist that has been imprisoned for more than two years without charge in Egypt. In prison, he has also been subject to torture.

Shawkan faces trial together with 738 other people. The public prosecutor presented nine trumped-up charges against him on the 26<sup>th</sup> of March this year, including “joining a criminal gang”, “murder” and “attempted murder”. Several of the charges can lead to the death penalty.

Shawkan should never have been arrested, as he was only doing his job as a photojournalist, which is protected by the right to freedom of expression. Shawkan is therefore a prisoner of conscience. Amnesty International demands that he is released immediately and unconditionally.

Read more about Shawkan’s story here: [www.amnesty.no/aksjon/shawkan](http://www.amnesty.no/aksjon/shawkan)

### Write a letter of solidarity to Shawkan

Write a letter of solidarity to Shawkan, but avoid referring to Amnesty International to avoid creating any trouble for him, and to improve the probability that he will receive it. Focus on the fact that he is a prisoner of conscience, and what the right to freedom of expression means to you.

**Express your solidarity on Twitter**

Proposed message: Dear @ShawkanZeid we support you and your right to freedom of expression. You are not alone! #FreeShawkan #W4R16

**Write a letter to public prosecutor Nabil Sadek**

**Salutation:** Dear Counsellor

**Amnesty International is:**

- Urging the Egyptian authorities to drop all charges against Mahmoud Abu Zeid and release him immediately and unconditionally as he is a prisoner of conscience, detained solely for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression.
- Calling on them to provide Mahmoud Abu Zeid with any medical treatment he may require.
- Urging them to immediately release other journalists detained solely for exercising their right to freedom of expression.

**Send the letters to:**

Amnesty International Norge,  
Att: Shawkan  
Postboks 702 Sentrum,  
0106 Oslo

**Write to the Egyptian authorities on Twitter**

Proposed message: There is “unprecedented freedom of expression in #Egypt” said @AlsisOfficial. So why are journalists behind bars? #FreeShawkan



## Eren Keskin Turkey

**For years, Turkish human rights lawyer and former newspaper editor Eren Keskin, has fought for human rights and criticized the Turkish state. Now she is in danger of ending up in prison and losing her license to practice as lawyer, only because she has exercised her right to freedom of expression.**

11 years ago, Keskin held a speech that provoked the authorities in Turkey. In her speech, she criticized the State for “slaughtering a 12-year-old child”. She was referring to the Kurdish boy Uğur Kaymaz who had been killed by security forces along with his father.

The authorities reacted by charging her for “Denigrating the Turkish Nation”, allegedly in violation of Penal Code Art.301. After several rounds in court she was sentenced to 10 months in prison. The court ruled not to suspend the sentence or commute it to a fine based on the “defendant’s character, insufficient belief in the fact that she would not commit the offence again and her past convictions”. In December 2014, she appealed the sentence to the Supreme Court, where it is now pending.

Eren Keskin has repeatedly been persecuted or harassed for voicing her concerns. On several occasions, she has been accused of denigrating the Turkish State and the president for articles she has written for a Kurdish newspaper. Once she had to serve six months in prison for having used the word “Kurdistan” in an article she wrote. Another time she was punished for having written about abuse of Kurdish women.

Read more about Eren Keskin’s story here: [www.amnesty.no/aksjon/eren](http://www.amnesty.no/aksjon/eren)

### Write a letter of solidarity to Eren Keskin

Eren Keskin is not incarcerated and can receive letters of solidarity. It would be particularly nice if you could add a short message in Turkish to your letter. To avoid causing her extra trouble, it is preferred that you do not use any Kurdish symbols in your letters.

#### Proposed message:

“Sevgili Eren Keskin,  
İfade özgürlüğünüzün defalarca adil olmayan yargılamalarla ihlal edilmesini kınıyor, size olan desteğimi belirtmek istiyorum. Şiddet içermeyen düşüncelerin ifadesi suç değildir.  
Sonsuz desteğimle”

Dear Eren Keskin,

I/we wish to express our solidarity with you in defence of your right to freedom of expression, which has been violated in numerous and repeated prosecutions. Expressing nonviolent opinions is not a crime.

Yours in solidarity,

#### Express your solidarity on Twitter:

Proposed message: We support you @KeskinEren1 and your right to freedom of speech. You are not alone! #W4R16



## Write a letter to the Minister of Justice Bekir Bozdağ

**Salutation:** Dear Minister

**Amnesty International is:**

- Calling on her conviction to be overturned.
- Calling on Turkish authorities to repeal Article 301 and other articles in the penal code and anti-terrorism laws that unfairly limit the right to freedom of expression.

**Send the letters to:**

Amnesty International Norge,  
Att: Eren Keskin  
Postboks 702 Sentrum,  
0106 Oslo

### Write the Minister of Justice Bekir Bozdağ

Proposed message: Human Rights Defender @KeskinEren1 facing imprisonment in Turkey for exercising her right to freedom of expression @bybekirbozdag #W4R16



## **Annie Alfred and people with albinism Malawi**

**Annie Alfred is just 10-years old. She is from Malawi and lives with a condition called albinism. Thus, she is in constant danger. In Malawi, people with albinism are often abducted and killed, because of superstition that has led many to believe that their body parts can bring riches.**

It is estimated that between 7 000 – 10 000 people live with albinism in Malawi. Albinism is a condition that results in the absence of pigment in eyes, skin and/or hair. People with albinism are vulnerable to the sun and bright light. Thus, they often born visually impaired and are prone to developing skin cancer.

Superstition puts their lives in danger. Many are sacrificed in ritual killings because some believe their bones and body parts can bring riches. Just in the first six months of this year there were six such killings reported. The superstition is widespread, and the right to life is therefore continuously violated in Malawi.

The President of Malawi has condemned these killings and has stated his intent to improve the lives of those who live with albinism. Unfortunately, this has not been followed up by effective measures. Very few are arrested for such killings, and the few that have been arrested, are either acquitted or receive very mild punishments.

There is an urgent need for action from the authorities. It is a question of life and death.

Read more about Annie Alfred's story here: [www.amnesty.no/aksjon/annie](http://www.amnesty.no/aksjon/annie)

## **Write a letter of solidarity to Annie Alfred and people with albinism in Malawi**

Show your solidarity by writing a letter to Annie Alfred and people with albinism in Malawi. The Association of People with Albinism in Malawi (APAM – a local organization) will receive these letters and share them. Send drawings and pictures as we are sure Annie Alfred and the others will appreciate your support.

## **Write a letter to President Arthur Peter Mutharika**

**Salutation:** Dear Mr President

### **Amnesty International is:**

- Urging the authorities to prioritise providing effective protection for people with albinism and ensure their right to life and personal security, in accordance with Malawi's international human rights obligations and commitments.
- Calling for those suspected for crimes against people with albinism including abductions and killings to be brought to justice through trials that meet international standards of fairness.

**Send the letters to:**

Amnesty International Norge  
Att: Annie Alfred  
Postboks 702 Sentrum  
0106 Oslo

**Write to President Arthur Peter Mutharika on Twitter**

Proposed message: Take action! Stop ritual murders & discrimination against people with albinism @APMutharika #StopTheKilling #W4R16



## Máxima Acuña Peru

*"I will never give up. No Way!"*

**Máxima Acuña is a peasant farmer from Peru. Her family has ended up in a legal dispute with a mining company called Yanacocha. They have been threatened and harassed both by the police and security personnel, and are at risk of being forcibly evicted from their home.**

On the 8<sup>th</sup> of August 2011, the police came to Máxima's door. She was at home with her children. The police asked the family to leave their home. They came back again the day after, damaged the house and beat Máxima and her children. Without showing an eviction order, they forcibly evicted the family.

On January 30<sup>th</sup> 2013, the police returned to the family's home. They damaged the house, beat the family and tried to evict them once again. Private security guards have also harassed the family. This has happened even though the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) granted precautionary measures to 46 human rights defenders of peasant communities in Cajamarca, in the context of the pattern of threats, harassment and violence they suffered because of their human rights work. Máxima Acuña was one of these 46 people.

In 2012 Máxima was sentenced to a suspended prison sentence for illegal occupation of the land she lives on, but this ruling was later overturned. The mining company then took the case to a civilian court and therefore the ownership of the land continues to be disputed.

Máxima's experiences has made her a fierce defender of the right to food, health and the environment. Earlier this year she won "The Goldman Environmental Prize", one of the most recognized environmental awards in the world.

Read more about Máxima's story here: [www.amnesty.no/aksjon/maxima](http://www.amnesty.no/aksjon/maxima)

### Write a letter of solidarity to Máxima and her family

Amnesty's office in Peru will collect letters from the entire world and deliver them to Máxima and her family. Show your solidarity by sending a letter, drawing something or sending a picture of yourself and your family or friends.

#### Proposed messages:

"Señora. Máxima,  
Usted no está sola. Desde Noruega apoyo su lucha para  
proteger a su familia y defender los derechos humanos"

Dear Máxima,  
you are not alone. I support your fight to defend your family and your human rights all the way from Norway.



## Write a letter to the Minister of Interior Carlos Basombrío

**Salutation:** Dear Minister

**Amnesty International is:**

- Calling on the authorities to ensure effective protection Máxima Acuña and her family in a comprehensive manner and in accordance with their wishes, and guarantee that they are not forcibly evicted and enjoy their right to freedom of movement and access to the land where they live.
- Together with the police, respect, protect, and fulfil all human rights of Máxima Acuña and her family, and refrain from using violence against them, including harassment and intimidation.
- Order a prompt, thorough and impartial investigation into the attacks and harassment against Máxima Acuña and her family, make the results public and bring those responsible to justice.

**Send the letters to:**

Amnesty International i Norge  
Att: Máxima Acuña  
Postboks 702 Sentrum  
0106 Oslo

**Write the Minister of Interior Carlos Basombrío on Twitter**

**Proposed message:** We demand that @MininterPeru protect #MáximaAcuña from threats, harassment and intimidation! #W4R16



## Edward Snowden USA

*"I don't want to live in a society that does these sort of things (...) I do not want to live in a world where everything I do and say is recorded".*

**Edward Snowden informed the world about human rights violations, and started a global debate on mass surveillance. Now he faces decades in prison.**

In 2013, Edward Snowden left his home in Hawaii for Hong Kong carrying a range of National Security Agency (NSA) classified documents. These documents, which were leaked to journalists, revealed the existence of sweeping surveillance programmes operated by the NSA and UK Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ), as well as the so-called "Five Eyes alliance" – a secret arrangement of spying and intelligence-sharing agreements between Australia, the USA, Canada, New Zealand and the UK. These mass surveillance programmes violate the right to privacy, and Snowden's whistleblowing has led to legislative changes that can better protect the right to privacy in the USA.

Snowden claims that his only motive was "to inform the public as to that which is done in their name and that which is done against them." The American government has labelled him as a "traitor" and accused him of harming American national security interests.

On the 14<sup>th</sup> of June, Snowden was charged with espionage and having stolen public property, which can be punished with up to 30 years in prison. When the U.S. called for his extradition from Hong Kong, he fled to Russia. According to international law no one should be punished for revealing human rights violations.

Should Edward Snowden face trial in the USA, he would be refused the right to defend his actions by declaring that he did this with the public's interest at heart, and stating that he revealed violations of the law. The reason is that he has been charged under "the Espionage Act", that deprives him the opportunity of explaining his reasoning for revealing the information.

Read more about Edward Snowden's story here: [www.amnesty.no/aksjon/snowden](http://www.amnesty.no/aksjon/snowden)

### Write a letter of solidarity to Edward Snowden

Edward Snowden is often associated with the digital world, but he would surely appreciate greetings both online and physical mail. Take pictures of batches of letters and yourself.

### Write a solidarity message for Edward Snowden on Twitter

**Proposed message:** Dear @Snowden, you're a hero, not a traitor! Thank you for standing up for our rights! #PardonSnowden



## Write a letter to President Barack Obama

Write a letter to President Obama and demand that he pardons Edward Snowden before he leaves the White House on January 20<sup>th</sup> 2017.

**Salutation:** Dear President Obama

**Amnesty International is:**

- Calling on President Obama to pardon Edward Snowden in recognition of his actions taken in the public interest, to protect and defend human rights of US citizens and individuals worldwide.

**Send the letters to:**

Amnesty International Norge

Att: Edward Snowden

Postboks 702 Sentrum

0106 Oslo

### Write President Barack Obama on Twitter

**Proposed message:** Please @POTUS #PardonSnowden and recognize that his actions were taken in the public interest to protect and defend human rights.