

**UPCOMING EVENTS –
CANCELLED!**

Tuesday, April 14, would have been our regular Letter-writing meeting. You can still write letters on your own: go to <https://www.amnestyusa.org/take-action/urgent-action-network/>. Check the AIUSA home page for online actions and updates on coronavirus and human rights.

Sunday, April 19, was our scheduled Human Rights Book Group meeting. Vroman's has cancelled all of their upcoming book group meetings and their other events. We will let you know if we can arrange an online or email discussion. Our April selection is "The End of Ice" by Dahr Jamail.

COORDINATOR'S CORNER

Hello everyone,

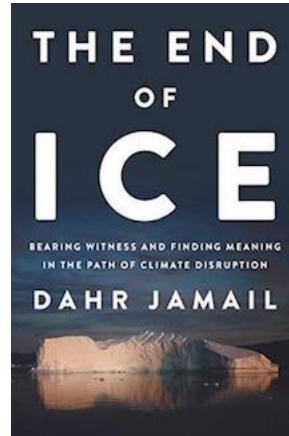
Hoping this finds you sane and healthy as we are self-isolating (at least here in California and New York). It's a strange and frightening time. We are having to change the way we do things because of the activity limitations imposed on us in the goal of "flattening the curve" aka slowing the spread of the coronavirus so that hospitals are not overwhelmed (as they are in Italy) to the point where they are having to refuse care to certain types of patients.

The Rathskeller, Vroman's Bookstore and the Caltech Y are all closed. Perhaps we can "meet" via the Zoom app. It's free, easy to set up and participants can see and hear one another. I've participated in Zoom meetings for work and other events (including a yoga class earlier this week!) and it works great. Let me know what you think. Otherwise if we meet at someone's home, we'd have to sit 6 feet apart per the state guidelines!

We are circulating a tribute to one of our members who passed away from cancer, Candy D'Addario. She came to book group and letter writing on a regular basis and was active in the Pasadena chapter of the League of Women Voters. Her husband had organized a memorial in a local park, but this may be postponed due to the state-wide stay at home order.

Please obey the governor's orders and stay safe and healthy.

Con Carino, Kathy



*The End of Ice:
Bearing Witness
and Finding
Meaning in the
Path of Climate
Disruption*

by

Dahr Jamail

KIRKUS REVIEW

<https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/dahr-jamail/the-end-of-ice/>

A war journalist and mountaineering aficionado chronicles his global travels to witness the stakes of humanity's greatest battle: the destruction of our planet.

Award-winning journalist Jamail (*The Will to Resist: Soldiers Who Refuse to Fight in Iraq and Afghanistan*, 2009, etc.) began covering climate disruption—the term he prefers over the more common “climate change”—in 2010 and has since “published more than one hundred articles” on the subject. For his latest book, he traveled to the front lines of extreme shifts in habitat and ecology: Denali in Alaska, where glaciers are rapidly melting; the Pribilof Islands in the Bering Sea, where increasingly horrific storms and “large-scale die-offs” decimate the local culture; the Rock Islands of Palau in the western Pacific ocean, where corals experience often fatal “bleaching”; and the Amazon, whose famous biodiversity is threatened by deforestation, warming temperatures, and various other human-caused effects. The book is assiduously researched, profoundly affecting, and filled with vivid evocations of the natural world. Jamail’s deep love of nature blazes through his crisp, elegant prose, and he ably illuminates less-discussed aspects of climate disruption, like the Alexandrium toxin, a “marine dinoflagellate” responsible for the mass deaths of birds and fish, and white pine blister rust, “one of the single largest threats to trees in the continental United States.” The constant assessment of Earth’s grim status can be a tad repetitive, but perhaps that’s the point, as Jamail infuses the book with a sense of reluctant futility. Near the end, he writes that he has surrendered his hope that “bludgeoning people

with scientific reports about increasingly dire predictions of the future would wake them up about the planetary crisis we find ourselves in." Now, he grieves, which "is a way of honoring what we are losing."

A passionate, emotional ode to the wonders of our dying planet and to those who, hopelessly or not, dedicate their lives to trying to save it.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

(https://www.dahrjamaail.net/biography/)



In late 2003, weary of the overall failure of the US media to accurately report on the realities of the war in Iraq for the Iraqi people, Dahr Jamail went to the Middle East to report on the war himself, where he has spent more than one year in Iraq as one of only a few independent US journalists in the country. Dahr has also reported from Syria, Lebanon, Turkey and Jordan. He has also reported

extensively on veterans' resistance against US foreign policy, and is now focussing on anthropogenic climate disruption and the environment.

Dahr's stories have been published with Truthout, Inter Press Service, Tom Dispatch, The Sunday Herald in Scotland, The Guardian, Foreign Policy in Focus, Le Monde, Le Monde Diplomatique, The Huffington Post, The Nation, The Independent, and Al Jazeera, among others. Dahr is currently and has been a feature writer for Truthout.org for five years, and his climate feature page there is titled 'Climate Disruption Dispatches'.

His writing has been translated into French, Polish, German, Dutch, Spanish, Japanese, Portuguese, Chinese, Arabic and Turkish. On radio as well as television, Dahr has reported for Democracy Now! and Al-Jazeera, and has appeared on the BBC, NPR, and numerous other stations around the globe.

Dahr's reporting has earned him numerous awards, including the 2008 Martha Gellhorn Award for Journalism, The Lannan Foundation Writing Residency Fellowship, the James Aronson Award for Social Justice Journalism, the Joe A. Callaway Award for Civic Courage, and five Project Censored awards.

Celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Izzy Award, in 2018 the Park Center for Independent Media (PCIM) at Ithaca College awarded Dahr an Izzy for his "path-breaking and in-depth reporting in 2017" exposing "environmental hazards and militarism." The Izzy Award, presented for outstanding achievement in independent media, is named in memory of I.F. "Izzy" Stone, the dissident journalist who launched I.F. Stone's Weekly in 1953 and challenged McCarthyism, racism, war and government deceit.

SECURITY WITH HUMAN RIGHTS

By Robert Adams

HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCATES WITH MEDICAL AND LEGAL EXPERTISE CALL ON GOVERNORS, STATE HEALTH OFFICIALS TO DIRECT REDUCTION, RELEASE OF IMMIGRATION DETAINEES TO PREVENT CORONAVIRUS SPREAD

03/17/2020

Calling on governors and state health officials to use their authority to act in the interest of public health and protect immigration detainees, Human Rights First, Amnesty International USA and Physicians for Human Rights asked that these officials direct drastic reductions in detention occupancy and pressure the federal government to release immigration detainees being held in their states, in letters sent out today.

State-level officials have proven themselves decisive in the face of the coronavirus pandemic, taking action to limit social interaction, pulling health permits for large events, canceling concerts and closing schools and public buildings. Advocates from the three groups also sent a similar letter appealing to the acting head of the Department of Homeland Security.

"One of the most critical steps you can take to immediately reduce the spread of COVID-19 is to utilize your public health and licensing authority to instruct federal immigration detention facilities, county and local jails to substantially reduce their detainee occupancy capacity," the letter reads. "Given the documented inadequacies of medical care and basic hygiene in immigration detention facilities, it is of vital importance for state public health authorities to address the state-wide risk posed by crowded immigration detention facilities."

Immigrants detained by ICE, as well as lawyers and those working in the detention facilities and in immigration courts face grave risks if they are exposed to infection in immigration detention facilities. Already, a staff member employed at an ICE detention center in Elizabeth, New Jersey is being tested after exhibiting symptoms of coronavirus. Rapid spread within crowded detention centers is a major concern.

"The COVID-19 pandemic exposes immigrants and staff at detention facilities to unacceptable, unnecessary and grave risks. These facilities also threaten the health and safety of the broader community and country," said Dr. Michele Heisler, medical director at Physicians for Human Rights. "You can't practice social distancing in a crowded detention facility. Given the well-documented medical neglect, poor sanitation, and often inadequate supplies of necessities such as soap in

many detention facilities, it is essential that state authorities act now to safeguard the health and human rights of detainees and the public.”

Public health experts have already recommended reducing the population in prisons and detention centers in response to the pandemic. The letter to governors and state health officials explained that the release of detained immigrants by ICE is already authorized under existing federal laws, regulations and agency guidance, including the legal authority to release people under its parole authority.

“Detention for traumatized asylum-seekers and other immigrants awaiting their day in immigration court has never been necessary or humane, but now it also presents a danger to their health and the health of the community,” said Human Rights First’s Director of Refugee Protection Eleanor Acer. “The legal authority to release people in immigration detention already exists, all that is needed is for the Department of Homeland Security to begin to parole people. We are asking governors and state health officials to press their federal counterparts to do what is in the best interest of public health and human rights. Depriving asylum seekers and immigrants of visits from family or friends, but leaving them stuck in densely populated facilities, is not the answer. It’s a recipe for a health and human rights disaster.”

ICE’s current protocols include suspending visitation by family members for all facilities and isolation for people who meet the exposure risk criteria. ICE has said that it will transfer those requiring a higher level of care to hospitals, but creating additional strain on the U.S. healthcare system can be avoided by dramatically reducing the population of detention centers now.

“All people should have the same access to care and safety, and immigrants and asylum-seekers can’t be treated as an afterthought. As the U.S. responds to the COVID-19 pandemic, the men, women and children locked up in U.S. immigration detention are left behind in crowded facilities with limited access to care and exposed to greater risk of infection,” said Denise Bell, Researcher for Refugee and Migrant Rights at Amnesty International USA. “Governors and state health officials should urge the U.S. government to safeguard the universally recognized human right to health and immediately mitigate the risk of infection, illness and death by releasing immigrants and asylum-seekers from detention.”

GROUP 22 MARCH LETTER COUNT	
UA for POC Narges Mohammadi (Iran)	13
Other UAs	35
POC Gao Zhisheng (China)	12
Total	60

IN MEMORIAM
Candy D'Addario (1946-2020)

Group 22 members are very sad to learn of the death of Candy D'Addario, one of our most active and cherished members, on January 19. We extend our heartfelt condolences to her husband Larry and her family.



Candy began participating in Group 22 activities in 2006 after she and Larry moved to Pasadena from Tucson, Arizona. She attended our book group

meetings regularly and always contributed thoughtful insights to the discussions. Actions against the death penalty and efforts for Prisoners of Conscience were among her special interests in our Letter Writing monthly meetings. She was a key supporter of Group 22 participation in many community events such as the Earth Day Fairs and Doo Dah parades. More photos of Candy at with Group 22 are available at <https://photos.app.goo.gl/SDBvZjMnZ5p1wq3C9>

Candy also devoted much of her time to the League of Women Voters in Pasadena. The LWS published a very nice article about her, which you can read here: <https://tinyurl.com/LWS-Candy-D>.

During the years when I organized our annual Write For Rights events, Candy was always the first one there, often helping me set up. Sharing my admiration for Pete Seeger, she wrote, "Joyce, Pete Seeger is my hero, too. I went to a concert that he gave at the American University of Beirut when I was there. It was in the lounge in the student union and the only payment he asked for was to have some Arab musicians perform at the same concert so that he could hear them."

I am grateful for the privilege of knowing Candy, and I will miss her very much.

-Joyce Wolf

DEATH PENALTY NEWS

By Stevi Carroll

Coronavirus - COVID 19

First of course, I want everyone to stay safe, stay healthy, and stay strong. We have had deplorable directions from our Federal level of government which have left us confused and perhaps even frightened, except when Dr Fauci speaks, and left our state and local governments to figure out how best to respond not only to this health crisis, especially for our frontline healthcare providers and hospitals, but also to the economic ramifications essentially shutting down much of our country. One thing I learned from the 2008 crash is that 70% of our GDP comes from our consumption. Many of our sisters and brothers find themselves without work. Businesses from the bakery down the block where we may have picked up our weekend treats to movie theaters to school districts to movie and TV productions to that intimate restaurant we liked going to on Friday night after work are closed. The workers are left without 'billable' hours and perhaps even without health insurance benefits. We have an opportunity to be a very different country when we finally emerge from the full brunt of this pandemic. As one meme says (and here I paraphrase) we are a society of people, not an economy. May we spend this time caring for one another - from a distance of course, and may we spend this time thinking about what kind of country we want to live in going forward, along with what we are willing and able to do to help create that country. And come November, let's remember. VOTE. For many of us, our sisters and brothers fought hard, some even died, for this right. Let's exercise it.

Colorado: the 22nd State to Abolish the Death Penalty

This is more or less good news. Now with that said, the abolition applies only to 'offenses charged on or after July 1, 2020,' but Colorado has only three people on death row at this time: Nathan Dunlap, Robert Ray, and Sir Mario Owens. James Holmes who murdered 12 people and tried to kill 70 others in a theater in Aurora, Colorado, in 2012, was sentenced to life without parole when one juror voted against the death penalty.

Colorado Governor Jared Polis could grant a formal clemency for the three men presently on death row. One problem with executions Colorado has is the drugs used for lethal injection. The state is unable to obtain sodium thiopental since the drug companies do not want their drugs to be used for administering government-ordered death. Prison officials said they would "take any steps we needed to take" should they be ordered to execute someone. Presently, the Colorado drug protocol includes pancuronium bromide that causes paralysis and stops breathing and potassium chloride that stops a person's heart. Annie Skinner, a spokeswoman for the Department of Corrections said, "In addition, as has been reported previously, sodium thiopental is no longer available on the open market for executions."

So Colorado - welcome to the club of abolition states: Alaska, 1957; Connecticut, 2012; Delaware, 2016; Hawaii, 1957; Illinois, 2011; Iowa, 1965; Maine, 1887; Maryland, 2013; Massachusetts, 1984; Michigan, 1847; Minnesota, 1911; New Hampshire, 2019; New Jersey, 2007; New Mexico, 2009; New York, 2007; North Dakota, 1973; Rhode Island, 1984; Vermont, 1972; Washington, 2018; West Virginia, 1965; Wisconsin, 1853, and those states with gubernatorial moratoria: California, 2019; Oregon 2011; and Pennsylvania, 2015. The District of Columbia has also abolished the death penalty.

Alabama

Sweet Home Alabama seems not to come to me when I consider its prison system nor its death penalty. Governor Kay Ivey definitely wants to win a lifetime hypocrisy award. In May of 2019, Alabama passed and Governor Ivey signed into law an abortion law that could make it a felony for a doctor to perform an abortion in nearly all cases. Doctors who performed an abortion at any stage of pregnancy would face a minimum of 10 years in prison - unless the life of the woman were at risk. When she signed the law, Governor Ivey said, "To the bill's many supporters, this legislation stands as a powerful testament to Alabamians' deeply held belief that every life is precious and that every life is a sacred gift from God." Maybe yes and maybe no.

This section will have two parts: the Alabama prison system and the execution of Nathaniel

Woods. As we look at these, let's remember Governor Ivey's declaration and the powerful testament to Alabamians "every life is precious and that every life is a sacred gift from God."

The Alabama Department of Corrections, prisons, has one of the highest homicide rates of any state prison system. In 2019, the US Department of Justice issued a report that says Alabama prison conditions violate the Constitution.

The case of Billy Smith is an example. Mr Smith, 35, died from massive brain injuries. First, he was injured in a fight with another inmate. Then he was beaten and hog-tied by guards who denied him treatment for hours. What was done to him? He was doused with water when he was unresponsive and a nurse refused to treat him. His mother, Teresa Smith, was understandably distressed when she found out he'd been injured. She called the prison for information. Her calls went to voicemail. When Ms Smith finally found her son at Jackson Hospital in Montgomery, he lay handcuffed, unconscious, rigid, and twitching with a bandage covering his head and bruises on his body. He was connected to a life support machine. After weeks of visiting him, Ms Smith finally got an answer to her question about her unresponsive son: he was brain dead. Ms Smith was told her son belonged to the state, so the decision to remove life support was theirs to make. In late November, Mr Smith was taken off life support. He died on December 9, 2017.

What contributed to Billy Smith's fight? Drugs. While Governor Ivey has appointed a panel to recommend how to solve the violence in the Alabama prisons, the violence continues, and drugs are part of the problem. According to some inmates, drugs and weapons are easy to get. Where do the drugs come from? One inmate in a Donaldson Correctional Facility said he buys from a corrections officer. An inmate at Staton Correctional Facility said whatever drugs an inmate wants can be found within the prison walls. He went on to say, "You might as well be on the street." This adds to the chaos, confusion, and corruption within the prison system.

Steven Davis, 35, was beaten to death by guards at Donaldson Correctional Facility. Accounts from guards and other witnesses differ but the guards said Mr Davis rushed them with a weapon in each hand. When his mother, Sandy Ray, visited him in the hospital, she said she

saw "a man so severely beaten, his head was misshapen. A man who looked nothing like the son she knew, who barely looked human." (When I read that sentence, I thought of the photos of Emmett Till after he was murdered.)

Not only is the freedom of the incarcerated human beings taken from them, but in Alabama, they also then are housed where violence is commonplace. In 2019, more inmates were killed by other inmates than any other year in the past 10 years. The Justice Department has used consent decrees to reform prisons, but under the Trump Administration, the Justice Department has curtailed their use, which leaves civil rights advocates worried about widespread abuse that will be left unchecked. Alabama lawmakers say the Justice Department will let the state fix its own problems. Or as Governor Ivey said, "This is an Alabama problem that must have an Alabama solution."

With that in mind, one might remember that Alabama has harsh sentencing laws that has led to overcrowding, understaffing, and underfunded prisons, a situation one would believe could benefit from more federal oversight.

This brings us to the case of Nathaniel Woods. Despite many people imploring the high court and Governor Ivey to intervene, Mr Woods was executed on March 5. In 2004, Mr Woods was involved in the murder of three Birmingham police officers. He was not the shooter. Kerry Spencer, who is also on death row, was. The officers were murdered during a drug bust in the house with both Mr Spencer and Mr Woods present.

Like so many people who end up on death row, Mr Woods had incompetent representation. His counsel failed to conduct an adequate investigation and missed key deadlines for his appeals. His counsel also told him he wouldn't be convicted of a capital crime because he was not the triggerman; therefore, when he was offered a plea deal, he did not take it. Also, when the jurors deliberated his fate, their decision was 10 in favor of the death sentence and two opposed. In most states this would have been enough to spare his life - but not in Alabama.

Additionally, a civil suit alleges that Mr Woods was targeted for execution because he would not participate in the selection of his execution

method. Yes, in some states, having inmates decide how they will be killed is real.

So let's go back to Governor Kay Ivey's declaration: Every life is precious and that every life is a sacred gift from God. Given the violence unleashed in Alabama's prisons within the prison population and by the prison staff, as well as the side business of drug and weapons dealing with which some of prison staff increase their incomes, and ability of a person to be sentenced to die even if the jury is not unanimous and the person did not himself commit a capital crime, I believe Governor Kay Ivey can be granted a the honor of a Lifetime Hypocrisy Award.

Recent Exonerations

James Fletcher, Jr. - State: IL
- Date of Exoneration: 1/30/2020
In 2005, James Fletcher Jr. was sentenced to life in prison without parole for a murder in Chicago in 1990. He was exonerated in January 2020 after a witness recanted her identification and evidence showed detectives manipulated witnesses to lie.

Sean Washington and Kevin Baker - State: NJ
- Date of Exoneration: 2/11/2020
In 1996, Kevin Baker and Sean Washington were sentenced to 60 years to life in prison for a double homicide in Camden, New Jersey. They were exonerated in 2020 after forensic evidence showed that the sole eyewitness's account was wrong.

Ricky Davis - State: CA
- Date of Exoneration: 2/13/2020
In 2005, Ricky Davis was sentenced to 16 years to life in prison for a murder in El Dorado County, California. He was exonerated in 2020 after DNA excluded him and implicated another man in the murder.

Stays of execution

March			
18	John Hummel	TX	60-day stay
25	Tracy Lane Beatty	TX	60-day stay
April			
16	Stanley T Adams	OH	reprieved
16	John Stumpf	OH	reprieved

One Recent Execution

March
5 Nathaniel Woods AL
Lethal Injection 3-drug (Midazolam)
Years from Sentence to Execution 14

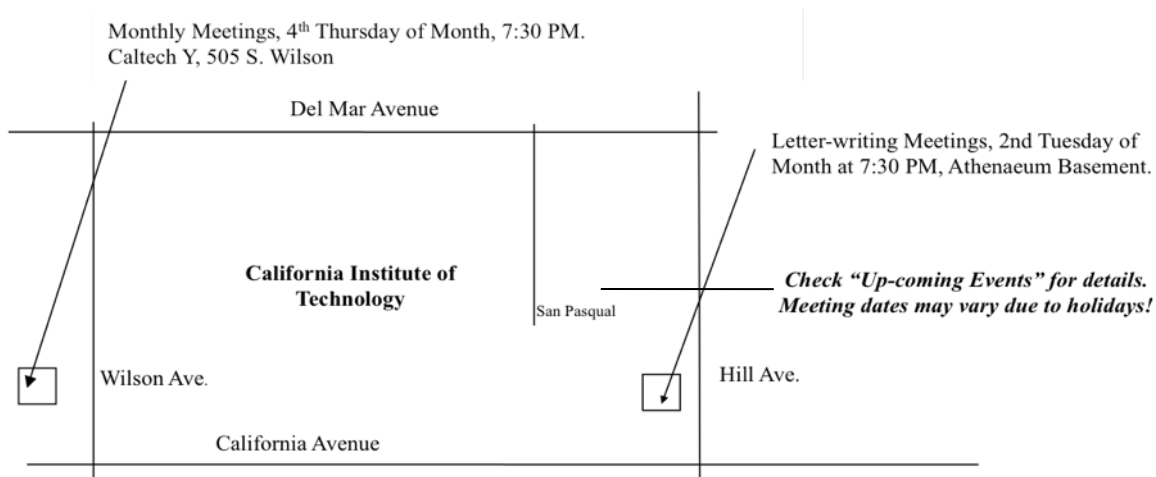
PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE
Narges Mohammadi
By Joyce Wolf

Narges Mohammadi has received threats to her life and safety in violence-prone Zanjan Prison, according to a letter written by her mother to Head of Judiciary Ebrahim Raisi. As if that wasn't bad enough, Iran is rapidly becoming a new epicenter for the COVID-19 pandemic, right after China and Italy. Iran's political prisoners with medical conditions are especially vulnerable [irannewsupdate.com, March 11].

Jean-Christophe of Amnesty Belgium provided the following English version of a March 10 article from French news network Marianne, which includes a quote from Taghi Ramani, husband of Narges.

The families of the prisoners are worried. In an open letter, several of them asked the authorities "for their release, or at least temporary exit permits, in order to prevent a human catastrophe. One of the signatories to this letter is Taghi Rahmani, Narges Mohammadi's husband. Contacted by Marianne, he reveals that the journalist and human rights activist was transferred to Zanjan prison in north-west Iran, after having organized a peaceful sit-in denouncing the prison conditions in Evin, more than two months ago. Suffering from a severe pulmonary embolism, her husband fears that the coronavirus infection would be fatal if she was contaminated: "Deprived of all medical care, her requests for discharge were systematically rejected. While according to the regulations, she must be able to be granted parole to protect herself from the virus. In reality, she is not serving her sentence there, she suffers revenge for daring to protest. "

You can join members of Group 22 in writing on the recent Urgent Action for Narges by downloading <https://www.amnestyusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/f8u10515.docx>. (You might mention fears for Narges being exposed to coronavirus in prison.) Please also consider sending a card of support to Taghi Ramani and perhaps to other families of Iran prisoners of conscience; visit the Amnesty action at <https://www.amnestyusa.org/nowruz-action-to-bring-comfort-to-prisoners-of-conscience/>



From the 210 exit on Lake Avenue, head south, turn left on Del Mar
 From the 110 continue on Arroyo Parkway north, turn right on California
 Street parking is generally available.

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Amnesty International's mission is to undertake research and action focused on preventing and ending grave abuses of the rights to physical and mental integrity, freedom of conscience and expression, and freedom from discrimination, within the context of its work to promote all human rights.