

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**NOTE: NO MONTHLY MEETING IN AUGUST.**

**Tuesday, September 12, 7:30–9:00 PM.** *Letter writing meeting* at Caltech Athenaeum, corner of Hill and California in Pasadena. In the summer we meet outdoors at the "Rath al Fresco," on the lawn next to the building. This informal gathering is a great way for newcomers to get acquainted with Amnesty.

**Sunday, September 17, 6:30 PM.** *Rights Readers Human Rights Book Discussion Group.* This month we read "Until We Are Free" by Shirin Ebadi.

**Thursday, September 28, 7:30 PM.** *Monthly Meeting.* We meet at the Caltech Y, Tyson House, 505 S. Wilson Ave., Pasadena. (This is just south of the corner with San Pasqual. Signs will be posted.) We will be planning our activities for the coming months. Please join us! Refreshments provided.

## COORDINATOR'S CORNER

Hi everyone

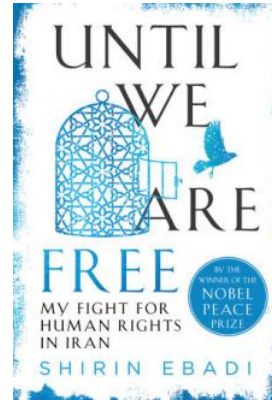
The first two weeks of school have finished for LAUSD and hopefully the pace will slow down soon...our secretary's position was eliminated due to budget cuts and now I am answering the phone in addition to my regular duties!

Last month we read a mystery novel set in the Philippines, which was very interesting to me as many of my fellow school nurses are Filipinos. The novel dealt with the killing of young boys from a Manila slum and the Jesuit priests who help discover and bring the killer to justice.

In real life, since Rodrigo Duterte became president of the Philippines, he has waged an all out war against drug and crime suspects, allowing the police to gun them down indiscriminately. Most Filipinos are devout Catholics and the Archbishop expressed opposition to the extrajudicial killings by having church bells rung nightly for 3 months. A statement was also read last Sunday in churches opposing Duterte's actions.

Here's the latest AI release on the situation:  
<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2017/08/philippines-32-killed-in-a-day-as-dutertes-war-on-drugs-hits-new-levels-of-barbarity/>

Con Cariño, Kathy



**Next Rights Readers Meeting**

**Sunday, September 17  
6:30 PM**

**Vroman's Bookstore  
695 E Colorado Blvd.  
Pasadena**

***Until We Are Free***

**by Shirin Ebadi**

## BOOK REVIEW

By Jenny Nordberg, March 20, 2016,  
New York Times Sunday Review of Books.

**UNTIL WE ARE FREE**

**My Fight for Human Rights in Iran**

By Shirin Ebadi

The nuclear deal with Iran has been reached, and sanctions have been lifted. In Iran's recent parliamentary election, reformists took more seats. To the outside world, it may appear as though the country could be on the verge of taking a new turn. But this is still a place where those who say the wrong thing risk being thrown into solitary confinement, where women are not allowed to work or hold a passport without permission from their husbands, and where the charge of "insulting sanctities" by writing poetry could be punished by a public lashing.

Through a powerful and deeply disturbing account of her own work as a human rights lawyer and activist, Shirin Ebadi's latest memoir, "Until We Are Free: My Fight for Human Rights in Iran," offers little optimism that more personal freedoms and rights for Iranians will come anytime soon. Rather, her chilling description of how the country treats its own citizens — including her, its Nobel Peace Prize laureate — builds on the fear expressed by many Iranians at this moment: that precisely because of the nuclear deal, the religious leadership may feel a need to crack down even harder on its own people to reassert power and demonstrate its autonomy.

A former judge (and Iran's first female judge), Ebadi was deemed too "fickle and indecisive and unfit" to issue legal rulings after the 1979

revolution because she was a woman. But unlike the Iranians who emigrated in the decades that followed, Ebadi found it necessary to stay behind, and navigate the “duplicity and compromises” required for survival in Iran to this day.

Armed with her training in both Sharia and civil law, and taking on the cases of persecuted reporters, dissidents and minorities, she enters a trench war within Iran’s deteriorating and corrupt legal system. At times, she can only offer “words and tea” to her clients and their families, like the parents of a blogger whose mysterious death was ruled a suicide, or the wife of a journalist who slowly starves himself to death in prison. But as she speaks publicly about such cases, she also becomes a credible whistleblower; her words advocate for freedom of expression, both to Iranians and to the outside world.

After Ebadi was awarded the Peace Prize in 2003, Iran’s intelligence apparatus ramped up its endlessly creative battery of intimidations. Ebadi writes that she was surveilled, interrogated, detained and threatened. The human rights organization she created with the Nobel money was raided and shut down. Her home was attacked by a mob. One after another, her colleagues and members of her staff left, went into hiding or ended up in prison. That is still only a prelude to the cruelty she is later subjected to, in her “second life.” After remaining in post-revolutionary Iran for three decades, by the time of the student protests and their violent dissolution in 2009, she decided not to return after a trip abroad, knowing that she had long been on an official kill list.

Set against the backdrop of her mournful and intense struggle for her country in exile, the second half of her book continues to describe many interesting contradictions of the religious leadership and its foot soldiers, its infighting and the dangerous paranoia that permeates the country. Ebadi also puts Iranian involvement in the Syrian civil war into context, arguing that Iran’s leadership not only wants to advance its geopolitical interests but also aims to demonstrate to its own people how a popular uprising at home would be mercilessly struck down.

Her excruciating personal story, glimpsed through her restrained and careful prose, tells of the almost unthinkable human cost of one

person’s battle against a much stronger and very sophisticated enemy. The Islamic Republic eventually found a new way to get to Ebadi in exile when they targeted the family she left behind. To have one’s sister taken away at night and imprisoned; to be humiliated by the betrayal of a lonely husband who has lost his dignity — such degradations feel like lashes to the soul.

“This is what they do,” she writes of her enemies.

In the end, although her memoir underscores that a slow change will have to come from within Iran, it is also proof of the stunning effects of her nonviolent struggle on behalf of those who bravely, and at a very high cost, keep pushing for the most basic rights.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Shirin Ebadi is an Iranian human rights lawyer. She has represented clients who have fallen foul of the Iranian political system, and has been subject to intense scrutiny from her own government.

As a practicing lawyer, Ebadi has been willing to take up the cases of unpopular dissident figures who have fallen out of favor with the political and judicial establishment.

In 2003, she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for her work in promoting human rights in the face of difficult conditions.

“For her efforts for democracy and human rights. She has focused especially on the struggle for the rights of women and children”

Since receiving the Nobel Peace Prize, Ebadi has used her highly public profile to travel around the world speaking on human rights. With other female Nobel Peace prize winners, she formed the Nobel Women’s initiative. She has also agreed to represent political dissidents and members of Iran’s minority Baha’i community.

Although Ebadi is critical of the Iranian regime she has supported Iran’s right to pursue nuclear technology. She is against forced regime change and has stated the most important goal is to promote democracy and human rights in Iran.

Ebadi is a Muslim and argues that the religion of Islam is compatible with human and women rights, but in Iran, the authorities have been highly selective.

"It is not religion that binds women, but the selective dictates of those who wish them cloistered. That belief, along with the conviction that change in Iran must come peacefully and from within, has underpinned my work."

In 2012, she sought to launch an international campaign for human rights in Iran – in particular stressing the need to work for the release of three opposition leaders.

Citation : Pettinger, Tejvan. "Biography of Shirin Ebadi ", Oxford, UK – <http://www.biographyonline.net>  
Last updated 12th Aug 2014

## DEATH PENALTY NEWS

By Stevi Carroll

### The Good News

Just a few hours before Marcellus Williams was scheduled to die by lethal injection, Missouri Governor Eric Greitens issued a stay of execution. DNA evidence found on the murder weapon belongs to someone other than Mr. Williams. In a statement, Governor Greitens said, "A sentence of death is the ultimate, permanent punishment, [...] To carry out the death penalty, the people of Missouri must have confidence in the judgment of guilt."

Missouri's attorney general, Joshua D. Hawley, believes compelling non-DNA evidence supplies enough facts to find Mr. Williams guilty.

At this point, Governor Greitens has appointed a board of inquiry to consider Mr. Williams's clemency request. This board will issue a report about whether he should be executed or have his sentence commuted.

Missouri officials have had their own set of problems with the drugs they use for executions because of an ongoing shortage of these drugs.

For now though, Mr. Williams's case has new life breathed into it.

### The Bad News

As we know, Proposition 66 passed last November. This proposition's main point is to speed up executions. August 24, 2017, the California Supreme Court upheld the measure, but "severely diluted a key provision aimed at ending a backlog of appeals." As we know, one part of Prop 66 is that all death penalty appeals must be decided within five years. The court decided these deadlines are more "directives" than requirements.

Executions could begin again in a few months unless Governor Brown decides to commute death sentences. Because Governor Brown is ending his time in office, Michael Rushford, president of the pro-death penalty Criminal Justice Legal Foundation, which helped write the ballot measure, is concerned the governor will commute the sentences of death row inmates before he leaves office. Inmates who have exhausted their appeals will not have too much time before they will be executed.

To read more on this, go to <http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-death-penalty-decision-prop-66-20170824-story.html>.

### Exonerations

**Jabbar Washington** - State: NY - Date of Exoneration: 7/12/2017

In 1997, Jabbar Washington was sentenced to 25 years to life in prison for murder, attempted murder, and armed robbery in New York City. He was exonerated in 2017 after an investigation into the detective who handled his case revealed a long-standing pattern of misconduct and because the prosecution had withheld critical evidence of his innocence.

**Fred Weichel** - State: MA - Date of Exoneration: 8/7/2017

In 1981, Fred Weichel was sentenced to life in prison without parole for a murder in Braintree, Massachusetts. He was exonerated in 2017 by evidence concealed by police that pointed to another man as the killer.

**Frederick Clay** - State: MA - Date of Exoneration: 8/8/2017

In 1981, Frederick Clay was sentenced to life in prison without parole for murdering a cab driver at age 16 in Boston, Massachusetts. He was exonerated in 2017 after evidence showed the eyewitness identifications of him were unreliable and pointed to other, more likely suspects.

**Lamarr Monson** - State: MI - Date of

Exoneration: 8/25/2017

In 1997, Lamarr Monson was sentenced to 30 to 50 years in prison for murdering a 12-year-old girl. He was exonerated in 2017 after a bloody fingerprint of the real killer was identified on the murder weapon.

**Stays of Executions**

**August**

15	Omar Shariff Cash	PA
22	Marcellus Williams	MO
30	Steven Long	TX

**Executions**

**July**

26	Ronald R. Phillips	OH	Lethal Injection 3-drug (midazolam)
27	TaiChin Preyor	TX	Lethal Injection 1-drug (Pentobarbital)

**August**

24	Mark James Asay	FL	Lethal Injection 3-drug (etomidate)
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<b>GROUP 22 AUGUST LETTER COUNT</b>	
Urgent Actions	31
POC	17
Total	48

**PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE**

**Narges Mohammadi**

**By Joyce Wolf**

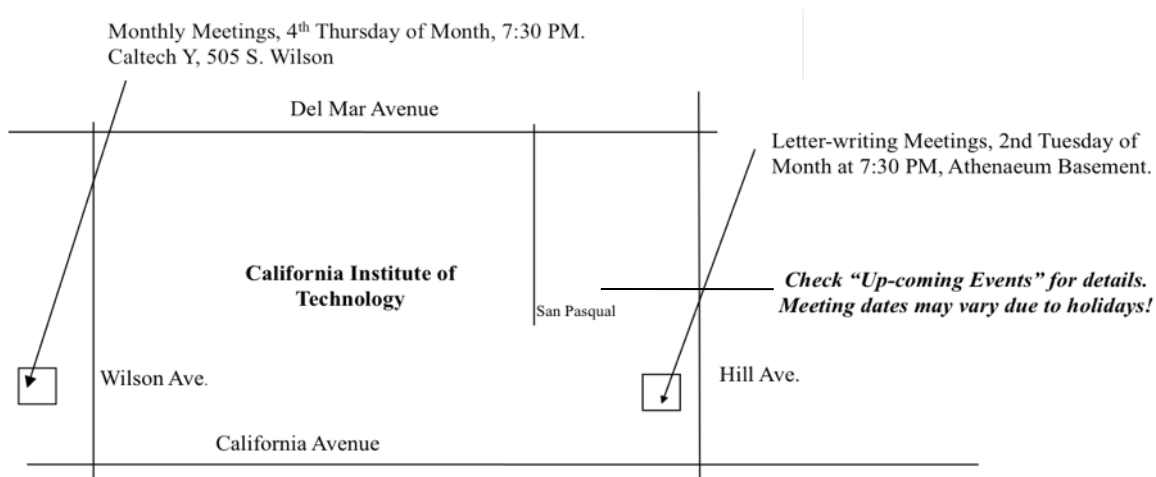
At our letter-writing meeting on August 8, Alexi told us about a new campaign for Narges Mohammadi, Group 22's adopted Prisoner of Conscience in Iran. We will join with a number of other Amnesty groups in the US and Europe to appeal to female members of the Iran Parliament and ask them to convey our messages of support to Narges in Evin Prison in Tehran. We got started by writing 9 requests to two female Iran MPs to deliver enclosed messages to Narges. Alexi will keep us updated about this campaign.

On Twitter, FreeNarges reported on August 20 that Narges had started a hunger strike on August 17, but I could not find any recent updates as to whether she was still on hunger strike. (Search hashtag #FreeNarges)

Amnesty has issued a new report about human rights defenders in Iran, *Caught in a web of state repression: Iran's human rights defenders under attack*, 2 August 2017.

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/md/e13/6446/2017/en/>

I'm looking forward to reading our September book selection by Nobel Peace laureate Shirin Ebadi and learning more about the background of human rights in Iran. (See the review in this newsletter.) I'm also anticipating the opportunity to learn more about women's rights in the Middle East from Simin Taylor, a Pepperdine student who is doing a project on this topic and plans to work with Alexi and participate in Group 22 meetings this fall.



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.

Amnesty International Group 22  
 The Caltech Y  
 Mail Code C1-128  
 Pasadena, CA 91125  
[www.its.caltech.edu/~aigp22/](http://www.its.caltech.edu/~aigp22/)  
<http://rightsreaders.blogspot.com>



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.