

July 29, 2020

Hello from Amnesty International Group 22 (Pasadena/Caltech)!

Members of Group 22 are striving to continue working for human rights during the pandemic. You can contact aigp22@caltech.edu to receive information about our virtual Letter Writing and Book Group meetings.

We have been sending short updates about recent Group 22 activities in place of the usual monthly newsletters. This month, in addition to Letter Writing, Book Group, and POC reports, we are happy to include Stevi Carroll's Death Penalty News, a featured column in every issue of our newsletter for many years.

LETTER WRITING

Thanks to group member Paula for hosting Zoom Letter Writing on July 14. Group coordinator Kathy provided a selection of current Urgent Actions. She reported totals of 36 letters and 58 emails for the various actions. There were 7 letters, 6 emails, and 1 tweet on UA 105.15 for our adopted prisoner of conscience Narges Mohammadi.

Kathy's list of current Urgent Actions is available at https://www.its.caltech.edu/~aigp22/current_ua.html.

This will be updated for our next Letter Writing on Tuesday, August 11.

BOOK GROUP

Our Book Group selection for July was a novel, "In the Midst of Winter" by best-selling Chilean author Isabel Allende. Kathy was our Zoom host and Stevi led the discussion and provided supplementary info.

For several of us, this was the first Allende book we read. I think we all liked it, although perhaps it was a bit less substantial than we expected. Diane recommended Allende's book "Portrait in Sepia".

August is our traditional month for a mystery, and we will read "Gold of Our Fathers" by Kwei Quartey, featuring Ghana detective inspector Darko Dawson. Zoom meeting will be Sunday, Aug 16, 6:30 pm.

PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE NARGES MOHAMMADI

Here's some good news from English PEN:

<https://www.englishpen.org/posts/campaigns/iran-covid-19-fears-for-writer-and-rights-defender-narges-mohammadi/>

"UPDATE 27 July 2020: We were very glad to learn that Narges Mohammadi was finally allowed to call her son Ali. The call came shortly after he and his twin sister Kiana released a video appeal urging supporters to 'Be our voice so that we may hear our mother's voice', having reportedly not spoken to her for 11 months."

Here's the Twitter video by Ali and Kiana, July 23:

<https://twitter.com/AmnestyIran/status/1286316075500670982?s=20>

Take action for Narges!

Amnesty Urgent Action for Narges, issued 14 July 2020

<https://www.amnestyusa.org/urgent-actions/urgent-action-update-human-rights-defenders-life-at-risk-of-covid-19-iran-ua-105-15/>

Change.org petition for Narges, from AI Group 48 in Portland, Oregon:

<http://chnng.it/VrqYN28mp8>

DEATH PENALTY NEWS by Stevi Carroll

The Good News

Kareem Johnson is 170th Person Exonerated from Death Row in the U.S.

- July 8, 2020. To read more about this go to

<https://eji.org/news/kareem-johnson-is-170th-person-exonerated-from-death-row-in-the-u-s/>

"Santa Clara County will no longer seek death penalty, DA says"

- July 22, 2020. To read more about this go to

<https://palooaltonline.com/news/2020/07/22/santa-clara-county-will-no-longer-seek-death-penalty-da-says>

Federal Executions

Sadly, AG William Barr, the Justice Department, and the Trump administration decided to resume Federal executions. After 17 years, the USA resumed Federal executions. To read more about this go to

<https://www.npr.org/2020/07/10/889667257/federal-executions-set-to-resume-after-17-years-with-3-deaths-scheduled-soon> <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-53401021>

<https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/federal-government-resume-capital-punishment-after-nearly-two-decade-lapse>

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2020/06/29/federal-death-penalty-supreme-court-allows-executions-resume/3199174001/>

Articles you may find interesting: "Witnesses to the Execution" July 24, 2020

<https://www.themarshallproject.org/2020/07/24/witnesses-to-the-execution>

"Federal Government Executes Daniel Lee Despite Opposition from Victims' Family, Judges, and Prosecutor" July 14, 2020

<https://eji.org/news/federal-government-executes-daniel-lee-despite-opposition-from-victims-family-judges-and-prosecutor/>

Recent executions

5/19/2020 - Walter Barton – MO

- Lethal Injection 3-drug Midazolam 26 years from sentence to execution

7/8/2020 - Billy Joe Wardlow - TX
- Lethal Injection 1-drug Pentobarbital - 25 years from sentence to execution
7/14/2020 - Daniel Lewis Lee - Federal
- Lethal Injection 1-drug Pentobarbital - 21 years from sentence to execution
7/16/2020 - Wesley Ira Purkey - Federal
- Lethal Injection 1-drug Pentobarbital - 17 years from sentence to execution
7/17/2020 - Dustin Lee Honken - Federal
- Lethal Injection 1-drug Pentobarbital- 14 years from sentence to execution

Peace and all good,
Joyce, Stevi, and Kathy

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.

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<http://www.its.caltech.edu/~aigp22/home.html>