





CHRISTMAS GREETINGS CAMPAIGN 2023 - ACTION BY CHRISTIANS AGAINST TORTURE (ACAT)

GUIDELINES TO FOLLOW WHEN SENDING CARDS - You do not need to send to everyone on the list – just select one or two if you like.

- Send simple messages of goodwill and support, perhaps saying that you are thinking of him/her and encourage them not to lose hope.
- Bible verses and Christian blessings are only acceptable where the information states that religious cards can be sent.
- Non-religious cards should not include a Christmas reference (not even a Christmas tree!) – use a general card or picture postcard.
- It is known that very bright coloured cards or picture postcards often bring a lot of joy to the recipients.
- Do not advance political views. Do not mention ACAT unless there is specific note that this is ok.

IMPRISONED HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS AND TORTURE VICTIMS

| Prisoner Name and Address | Details |
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| <p>Please send a non-religious greeting (do not mention ACAT) to:</p> <p>Ashfaq Masih District Jail Lahore Ferozepur Road Shadman 1 Shadman Lahore Punjab 54000 Pakistan</p> | <div style="display: flex; align-items: flex-start;">  <div style="flex-grow: 1;"> <p>Ashfaq Masih (34) has been in prison in Pakistan since 2017, when he was accused of blasphemy. He is still awaiting trial as his court hearings have been cancelled repeatedly because the judge or witnesses failed to appear. A bicycle mechanic from the Christian Mariam Colony in Lahore, he was accused of blasphemy after he was involved in a dispute with a Muslim customer over payment for repairing a bicycle. It is not unusual in Pakistan for Christians to be targeted in this way over minor business disputes that escalate into religious disputes. The customer claimed to be a poor sadhu (holy man) demanding a rebate on the cost of the bicycle repair. A crowd gathered and Ashfaq was accused of blasphemy for reportedly insulting the Prophet Muhammad by telling the bicycle owner that Christians believe Jesus was the final prophet. Police were called and arrested Ashfaq, who is imprisoned in the District Jail (aka Camp Jail), Lahore. Ashfaq’s family is very poor. On 4 July 2022 Judge Khalid Wazir sentenced Ashfaq to death for blasphemy. The appeal against his death sentence is still pending in the Lahore High Court.</p> </div> </div> |
| <p>Please send a non-religious message to him in the prison at the address below but do not mention ACAT.</p> <p>Mr Le Dinh Luong Ba Sao Prison Kim Bảng District Hà Nam Province Socialist Republic of Vietnam</p> | <div style="display: flex; align-items: flex-start;">  <div style="flex-grow: 1;"> <p>Le Dinh Luong, Vietnam, was detained by police in July 2017 for alleged subversion. Having written on an environmental disaster and campaigned for a clean environment and greater democracy, he was targeted by authorities for calling for an election boycott and for connections to Viet Tan, an overseas pro-democracy group. After a year of incommunicado detention he was finally allowed to meet with his lawyers but following an unfair trial was sentenced in August 2018 to 20 years for subversion, despite the emergence of news that a journalist, Nguyen Van Hoa, was beaten and forced into giving testimony used against him. Hoa later recanted on the witness stand, saying the statements were made under duress of the assault. It is also reported that the imprisoned founder of the Vietnam Republic Party, Nguyen Viet Dung, was also coerced into giving false testimony. Luong's lawyers were not allowed to meet with either witness and, after Dung recanted, his family was denied a visit to him in prison. Luong is a Roman Catholic, although this is not the main reason for his detention. On 18 October 2018 his appeal was rejected and in January 2019 he was transferred to Ba Sao prison in Nam Ha province, without prior notice to his family, who are in Ho Chi Minh City, thousands of kilometres away. In September 2019 prison authorities prevented his family from visiting him.</p> </div> </div> |

| Prisoner Name and Address | Details |
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| <p>Please send a non-religious greeting (do not mention ACAT) to:</p> <p>Ms Zhang Zhan Songjiang Women's Prison No.1601, Zhang Jing Road Sijing Town Songjiang District Shanghai People's Republic of China</p> |  <p>Freelance journalist Zhang Zhan, a well-known activist for human rights in China, was detained in May 2020 as a reprisal for her coverage of the Covid-19 pandemic from February 2020. She reported on the detention of other independent journalists in Wuhan and the harassment of families of victims seeking accountability. Her licence to practise as a lawyer has been revoked. During July and August 2021 she was hospitalised due to her deteriorating health as a result of an ongoing hunger strike begun in June 2020. Tied to a bed and force-fed, Zhang Zhan is in extremely poor health, suffering weight loss, severe malnutrition, a gastric ulcer, and swollen legs and feet. She has also undergone surgery for cancer. She was later transferred back to the Shanghai Women's Prison, where she is currently believed to be held. There is very grave concern about her well-being as China is known for the human rights defenders who have either died in prison or shortly after their release. Her case was featured at Christmas in 2021.</p> |
| <p>Please send a message (do not mention ACAT) to:</p> <p>Anastasia Loika Penal Colony No.4 3 Antoshikina Street Gomel, 246035 The Republic of Belarus</p> |  <p>Nasta (Anastasia) Loika is a Belarusian human rights defender working in the field of human rights education. She also analyses repressive 'anti-extremist' laws, and advocated for the protection of the rights of migrants in Belarus. Nasta was sentenced to 7 years in a penal colony for 'inciting radical, national, religious or other social enmity or discord' on 20 June 2023.</p> <p>On 6 September 2022 Nasta was arbitrarily detained as she was leaving Minsk City Court after attending a hearing in the trial against fellow human rights defenders Marfa Rabkova, Andrei Chapyuk, and their eight co-defendants. She was temporarily released on 5 October 2022, only to be detained again. Nasta was arrested on 28 October 2022 and has been arbitrarily detained ever since.</p> <p>During her detention, she was denied access to her lawyer, essential medical treatment and other basic necessities, including warm clothes and drinking water. Nasta reported she had been tortured through electric shock questioning and that whilst in detention she was left out in the courtyard for eight hours without outerwear in cold weather. Nasta has been consistently denied adequate medical care, which amounts to inhumane and degrading treatment.</p> |

More information at www.acatuk.org.uk

*Victims of torture, human rights groups and individuals under threat and persecuted Christians need our support and our prayers. Please take part in this Campaign and bring a little light into a prisoner's life. It is usually quite safe to add one's address and does give prisoners a slightly greater link to the sender. Cards tell the authorities that prisoners are not forgotten and can result in improved prison conditions, in a new investigation leading to a retrial and, on occasion, to freedom. A reply is occasionally received, but this should not be expected. If a reply is received, it is important that the ACAT office is informed; give the prisoner's name, prison address and country. **Postage overseas: a letter or card (e.g. postcard) weighing up to and including 100g costs £2.20***