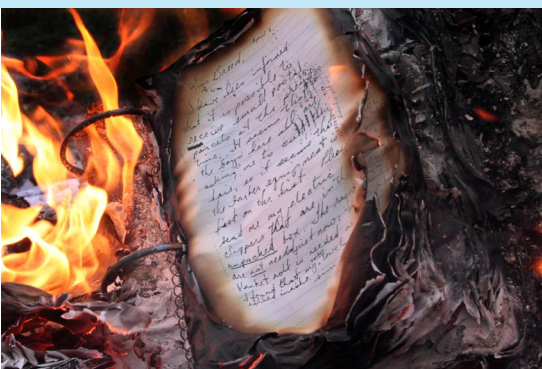




AI Group 48 Portland, Oregon

Septmeber 2026 Newsletter

Next Meeting September 10th on Zoom



Banned Books Week 2026: Defending the Human Right to Freedom of Expression

The National Banned Books Week is October 4–10. To commemorate this week, Amnesty International USA will spotlight seven cases. These cases reveal the punishments people around the world receive for their writing, speech, and other forms of artistic and cultural expression.

This year's featured cases include a journalist, social media influencer, poet, photojournalist, Indigenous rights activists, and others from the United States, Mali, Algeria, Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Iran, the Philippines, and an Indigenous community in Russia.

For this campaign, Group 48 will have an event to take action for Banned Books Week at Bold Coffee and Books Portland (<https://boldcoffeeandbooks.com/>) on October 10, 2026, from 2 to 5 pm.

Current Cases:

<https://www.amnestyusa.org/campaigns/banned-books/bbw2026/#spotlight-cases>

Urgent Action: China

Human Rights Defender Disappeared While Seeking Medical Care

NAME AND PRONOUN: Yin Xu'an (He/him - Yin is his surname, Xu'an is his given name)

Human rights defender Yin Xu'an was reportedly taken away by authorities in August 2025, after traveling to Beijing to seek urgently needed medical treatment. Since then, his fate and whereabouts remain unknown despite repeated efforts by his family and supporters. Given his health condition and the authorities' previous interference with his access to medical care, there are grave concerns for his wellbeing. Amnesty International calls on the authorities to immediately disclose his whereabouts, ensure he has access to his family and lawyers of his choosing, and adequate medical care, and release him if he is being detained solely for the peaceful exercise of his human rights.

Yin Xu'an is a long-time human rights defender and petitioner from Daye City, Hubei Province. For nearly two decades, he has sought accountability for alleged human rights violations, including wrongful convictions, arbitrary detention, forced evictions, and land expropriation. He has also advocated for legal reforms and for China to ratify and implement international human rights treaties.

As a result of his peaceful activism, Yin Xu'an has faced years of harassment and reprisals by the authorities. He has previously been imprisoned on multiple occasions in connection with his human rights work. In 2017, he was sentenced to three and a half years' imprisonment for "picking quarrels and provoking trouble". In 2021, he was again sentenced to four and a half years' imprisonment on the same charge. "Picking quarrels and provoking trouble" is a vaguely defined offense frequently used by the Chinese authorities to criminalize the peaceful exercise of human rights, including freedom of expression.

Due to years of harassment, detention, and imprisonment, Yin Xu'an reportedly developed and continued to suffer from several serious health conditions, including severe hypertension and coronary heart disease. According to available information, local hospitals in Hubei Province were unable to provide the specialist treatment he required. On July 28, 2025, Yin Xu'an reportedly traveled to Beijing carrying a referral issued by a hospital in Hubei Province for treatment at Fuwai Hospital. However, upon arriving at Beijing West Railway Station, he was allegedly intercepted by officials and forcibly returned by personnel from the Daye Public Security Bureau to his home.

As his condition continued to deteriorate, Yin traveled to Beijing again on August 10, 2025 and temporarily stayed with a friend while preparing to attend a medical appointment the following day. On August 11, 2025, officials reportedly led by Xu Yuefei, Secretary of the Political and Legal Affairs Commission of Bao'an Town, located and took him away. Since then, his family and supporters have been unable to obtain any information regarding his whereabouts, legal status, or physical condition.

Yin Xu'an's case reflects a broader pattern of retaliation against human rights defenders in China. Amnesty International has documented the

Graphics used are either in the public domain or from Amnesty International

use of arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance, prolonged incommunicado detention, restrictions on access to lawyers, and the criminalization of peaceful human rights activism through offenses such as “picking quarrels and provoking trouble”.

Enforced disappearance is a crime under international law and a multiple and continuous violation of human rights. It is an autonomous crime with multiple and interconnected elements that might constitute violations of several rights. Any individual who has suffered harm as the direct result of an enforced disappearance is a victim of an enforced disappearance. This includes the families of disappeared persons. The denial of the right to know the truth about the whereabouts of a person forcibly disappeared results in turn in a form of cruel and inhuman treatment for the immediate family.

Sample Letter

Dear Secretary Li,

I am concerned about the enforced disappearance of Yin Xu'an, a human rights defender from Daye City, Hubei Province, whose fate and whereabouts have remained unknown since August 2025.

According to available information, Yin Xu'an was

taken into custody by the authorities on August 11, 2025 after traveling to Beijing to seek urgently needed medical treatment for serious health conditions, including severe hypertension, coronary heart disease, and renal artery stenosis. Since then, his family and supporters have been unable to obtain any information regarding his whereabouts, legal status, or physical condition.

The urgency of the case stems not only from the disappearance itself, but also from the continuing and ongoing nature of the apparent violation and the serious concerns for Yin Xu'an's health. Enforced disappearance is considered a continuing human rights violation until the person's fate and whereabouts are clarified.

I call on you to immediately disclose Yin Xu'an's whereabouts and legal status and ensure that he is protected from torture and other ill-treatment. I urge you to ensure that Yin Xu'an has prompt and regular access to his family, lawyers of his choice, and any medical treatment he requires, including specialist care where medically necessary. If he is being detained solely for the peaceful exercise of his human rights, he must be released immediately and unconditionally.

Yours sincerely,

Take Action:

Write a letter to the government official(s) listed.

Secretary Li Wenbo
Secretary of the Political and Legal Affairs Commission
Huangshi Municipal Committee of the Communist Party of China
No. 1 Hangzhou East Road, Xialu District
Huangshi City, Hubei Province
People's Republic of China

Send a copy of your letter to the address below:
Embassy of China in the United States
Ambassador Xie Fang
3505 International Place, NW,
Washington DC 20008
Email: chinaembpress_us@mfa.gov.cn

Click [here](#) to report your action(s) on UA 80.26. We share this number with the officials we are trying to persuade. Please take action as soon as possible until December 31, 2026



China: Maximum sentence for artist Gao Zhen is an assault on artistic freedom

Responding to news that Chinese artist Gao Zhen has been convicted of the offence of “slandering China’s heroes and martyrs” and sentenced to three years in prison, Amnesty International’s China Director Sarah Brooks said:

“The lengthy pre-trial detention and, ultimately, decision to convict Gao Zhen and sentence him to the maximum three-year prison term under this offence illustrate the authorities’ determination to deter others from engaging in independent artistic expression.

“No artist should face criminal punishment for creating work that challenges official narratives or encourages critical reflection on history.

“This trial demonstrates how broadly worded and politically motivated laws are used – and worse, in this case, used retroactively – to silence artists, activists and other individuals who dare to express views that differ from those of the Chinese government.”

The repressive outreach of the authorities has extended beyond Gao Zhen himself. His wife and child have not been accused of any crime, yet they have reportedly been subject to harassment and intimidation and have been unable to leave China since his detention.

Brooks added, “The retaliation against Gao Zhen’s family members is a deeply troubling tactic and amounts to a form of collective punishment.

“Gao Zhen’s conviction should be overturned, all charges against him should be dropped, and he should be released immediately and unconditionally. Harassment and threats against Gao Zhen’s family must end, and his wife and child should be allowed to leave the country freely.

“The Chinese authorities must repeal the law on

heroes and martyrs unless they can ensure that it is in line with international human rights standards, and must cease criminalizing peaceful expression and artistic creation.”

Chinese artist and US permanent resident Gao Zhen was detained in August 2024 on suspicion of the offence of “infringing upon the reputation and honour of heroes and martyrs”. The charges relate to artistic works, dating back a decade or more, that authorities claim insulted revolutionary figures.

On August 25th, 2026, the Sanhe City People’s Court in Hebei Province sentenced him to three years’ imprisonment, with his sentence due to end on August 25th, 2027. Gao Zhen has decided to appeal the conviction and sentence.

Gao Zhen is part of the internationally known Gao Brothers artistic duo. The brothers are renowned for their contemporary artworks examining Chinese history, state power and social change.

There are also concerns about his health and well-being in detention.

Gao Zhen, now 70, reportedly suffers from multiple health conditions, including lumbar spine disease and fluid accumulation in his knees. According to reliable information, he has collapsed several times during his detention. His communication with family has also reportedly been severely restricted since May 2025.

According to reports, Gao’s wife is subject to exit ban on alleged national security grounds, preventing both her and their son from leaving China. In August 2026, Amnesty International highlighted Gao Zhen’s case in a letter to European Union leadership concerning the use of exit bans against human rights defenders and their family members in China.



Nursing Mother of Two Arrested Without Warrant by ICE, Held 700 Miles From Her Children in Violation of the Agency's Own Policy

July 30, 2026 Joint press release from: Sanctuary of the South, Tennessee Immigrant & Refugee Rights Coalition, The ACLU of Louisiana, The Robert & Ethel Kennedy Human Rights Center and Amnesty International USA

Ms. Maria Perez* was arrested without a warrant by ICE while taking both of her children to the doctor. Ms. Perez is mother to a ten-month-old, whom she is breastfeeding, and a two-year-old with Down syndrome. Her arrest violates ICE's own Directive 11032.4, which states that the agency should not "detain, arrest, or continue to detain individuals known to be pregnant, postpartum or nursing" except under exceptional circumstances.

Ms. Perez is now at the South Louisiana ICE Processing Center, nearly seven hundred miles away from her infant daughter and special needs toddler, who requires intensive, ongoing medical treatment and therapy for multiple health complications. With their mother forcibly removed, the children have missed their critical medical appointments and are now in the care of a neighbor, as Ms. Perez has no other support network in the area. She is currently suffering the physical effects of suddenly being unable to nurse, made worse by diabetes, which she had been actively managing before she was detained.

Ms. Perez is seeking asylum from Guatemala as a survivor of severe domestic violence. She has no criminal history and has complied with every requirement in the immigration process since entering the United States in 2022.

Sanctuary of the South (SOS) and Tennessee Immigrant & Refugee Rights Coalition (TIRRC), Ms. Perez's legal counsel, have partnered with the ACLU of Louisiana, the Robert & Ethel Kennedy Human Rights Center, and Amnesty International to submit a formal complaint to the Department of Homeland Security, urging the immediate release of Ms. Perez, and reiterating a commitment to pursuing all legal avenues to reunite her with her children, and seek relief for the profound harm the family has suffered as a result

of their separation.

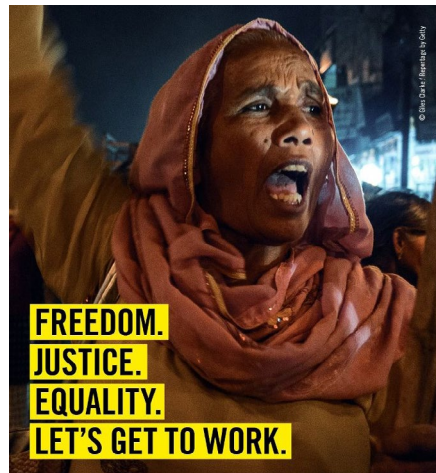
"SOS denounces the cruelty and complete lack of humanity in ICE's decision to separate mother from children, especially nursing mothers from babies at such a tender age," said Katie Blankenship, founder and managing attorney at SOS. "Being held in detention threatens Maria's right to due process and is an unnecessary act of violence towards an immigrant mother and survivor of domestic violence. Families across the country share similar traumatic stories. We condemn family separation by ICE and demand Ms. Perez's immediate release, so she may return to her children who so desperately need her."

Spring Miller, Senior Director of Legal Strategy at TIRRC, added: "ICE and DHS continue to show blatant disregard not just for their own policies but for basic humanity. Ripping a nursing mother from her vulnerable children and shipping her to another state is almost unimaginable, yet ICE has turned a blind eye to their own directives and has done just that to Maria. Her case demonstrates the extraordinary cruelty these agencies inflict on people every day, and the multiple points at which people in detention are denied access to due process. We demand the immediate release of Ms. Perez to her children and condemn the countless ways ICE and DHS continue to separate families

across the country."

Ms. Perez's case has drawn condemnation from major human rights and civil liberties organizations across the country, who have joined SOS and TIRRC in demanding her immediate release.

"The government's continued torture of women is patently outrageous," said Nora Ahmed, legal director for the ACLU of Louisiana. "Every person who claims to care about family values in this nation should be up in arms over these atrocious abuses. Why would ICE violate its own rules just to target a nursing mother who has followed all the legal steps of the immigration system? ICE has destroyed a family in the process and is directly responsible for putting children's lives at risk. Everyone, regardless of political beliefs, should be



outraged on behalf of Ms. Perez.”

“ICE snatched Maria from her nursing baby and shipped her to a detention center hundreds of miles from home,” said Anthony Enriquez, VP of U.S. Advocacy and Litigation at the Robert & Ethel Kennedy Human Rights Center. “This cruel and degrading treatment of new mothers and pregnant women has been repeated hundreds of times over the last two years. We call on ICE to immediately release Maria.”

“To have your children taken from you is a parent’s worst nightmare,” said Amy Fischer, Director for Refugee and Migrant Rights, Amnesty International

USA. “That’s what ICE agents did when they took Maria’s children from her, traumatizing all of them. Maria is still nursing her two children, one of whom has special needs. What ICE is doing in communities throughout the U.S. is cruel, inhumane, pointless, and against the law. Maria, and all parents, should be able to care for their children and go about their daily lives without fear of being forcibly separated. This cruelty must end. ICE must release Maria and ensure she is back with her children, and stop wreaking havoc in our communities.”

* Pseudonym used to protect the client’s safety

Day of the Disappeared, August 30

This annual international day honors those who suffer “enforced disappearances,” which occur when government officials, groups, or individuals arrest, detain, or abduct a person against their will or deprive them of their liberty, while the government overlooks these actions.

A refusal to disclose the fate or whereabouts of a disappeared person, or even their disappearance itself, usually follows their disappearance. As a result, the disappeared person loses legal protection and faces other human rights violations.

Families and children of the disappearance face multiple difficulties that can lead to psychological and physical illness. They can also face economic difficulties, particularly if the victim was the principal source of income.

Although the August 30 date has passed, we must still advocate for the selected cases of disappeared, call for action to prevent such violations, and demand



that governments take responsibility for their actions. This day dedicates itself to raising awareness about enforced disappearances and honors the memory of individuals subjected to such acts.

Current Day of the Disappeared Cases

<https://www.amnestyusa.org/campaigns/enforced-disappearances/#current-cases>

Group Coordinators

Marty Fromer and Terrie Rodello

Newsletter -- Daniel Webb

OR Area Coordinator -- Marty Fromer

Indonesia actions -- Max White

China / Uyghur actions -- Marty Fromer

Central Africa/ Oregon State Death

Penalty Abolition-- Terrie Rodello

Postage Rates:

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standard envelope size

\$0.65 - Domestic Postcard

International Postage

\$1.75 - Up to 1 oz



Urgent Action: United States Woman Facing Execution for Crime at Age 18

Name and pronouns: Christa Pike, she/her

Christa Pike, aged 50, is scheduled to be executed in Tennessee, USA, on September 30, 2026. She was convicted in 1996 of a 1995 murder committed when she was 18, barely out of a childhood in which she endured rape, sexual and physical violence, abuse, and neglect. The state failed to protect her as a child despite having knowledge of what she was facing. Her court-appointed lawyers then failed her at her trial, presenting little of the mitigating evidence of this abuse or its psychological consequences. We urge the governor to stop this execution and grant clemency.

On January 12, 1995, a 19-year-old female student in the Job Corps, a program for troubled youth in Knoxville, Tennessee, was murdered. Three teenagers in the program were charged with her murder: 18-year-old Christa Pike, her 17-year-old boyfriend, and an 18-year-old female. The boyfriend was exempt from the death penalty because of his age, and was sentenced to life imprisonment with parole, and the female teenager received six years' probation and credit for time served.

At her 1996 trial, Christa Pike was convicted of first-degree murder. Her two court-appointed lawyers had no prior capital case experience. The night before the sentencing phase, the lawyers abandoned their mitigation plan, deciding not to put their sole witness on the stand – a mitigation specialist (a psychologist) who had produced a three-volume social history of Christa Pike's childhood. The lawyers had not pursued any of the mitigation witnesses suggested by the psychologist, so opted to present three people available at short notice – Christa Pike's parents and an aunt. The limited presentation left jurors in the dark about the extent of the violence and abuse in the defendant's childhood and without expert analysis to help them understand its impact on her.

In 2001, a psychiatrist retained by the appeal lawyers concluded that Christa Pike met the criteria for bipolar disorder, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and had frontal lobe brain damage from birth. Another expert described her as being “the product of an almost unbearably abusive background”. In 2023, a psychologist with expertise in trauma-related disorders and 30 years of experience in the field concluded that Christa Pike's childhood was characterized by “poverty, extreme and chronic sexual, physical, and emotional abuse as well as neglect”. This

abuse and neglect qualified as “truly extreme”, she wrote, and the level of trauma she experienced was “almost impossible to grasp” because of its severity. The psychiatrist assessed Christa Pike for Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and found that she had experienced 9 out of 10 ACEs, a “highly unusual” quantity. Moreover, a single perpetrator was not the cause of any or each ACE. “Rather, many adults mistreated and abused her in a multitude of ways”, compounding the trauma. Throughout her childhood, she was “a victim of violent predators”.

A 1984 U.S. Supreme Court ruling requires that a high level of deference be given to the performance of capital trial lawyers in appeal claims of ineffective assistance of counsel. This high bar under U.S. law requires that anyone facing the death penalty is provided “adequate legal assistance at all stages” and “above and beyond the protections afforded in non-capital cases.”

For more than 25 years, because she was the only woman on death row in Tennessee, Christa Pike was held in de facto solitary confinement. According to a therapist, this treatment was “ruinous” to Christa Pike's mental health, exacerbating the symptoms of her bipolar disorder and PTSD. The use of the death penalty against individuals with serious mental disabilities is prohibited under international law and standards. There have been 23 executions in the USA in 2026. Tennessee has executed 11 people since 2018. Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases unconditionally.

Sample Letter

Dear Governor,

Please stop the September 30, 2026 execution of Christa Pike. I do not seek to downplay the seriousness of the crime of which she was convicted. However, I urge you to consider the appalling treatment that marked her childhood – a childhood she was barely out of when the murder occurred – and to consider whether the jurors were presented with a full and cohesive narrative of her short life until that point to inform their life-or-death decision-making. I submit to you that they were not.

On the eve of the 1996 trial's sentencing phase, the inexperienced court-appointed lawyers abandoned their plan to present as their sole mitigation witness

the psychologist who had produced a three-volume history of their young client. They had no back-up plan and did not seek more time to make one. They had not pursued any other witnesses and decided to put the defendant's parents and an aunt on the stand. At a post-conviction hearing, the lead lawyer conceded that he should have called many of the individuals interviewed by the psychologist.

In 2001, a psychiatrist/neurologist retained by the appeal lawyers for post-conviction proceedings concluded that Christa Pike met the criteria for bipolar disorder, and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, and had frontal lobe brain damage from birth. Another expert described Christa Pike as being "the product of an almost unbearably abusive background". In 2023, a psychologist with 30 years of experience in trauma-related disorders concluded that the abuse and neglect endured by Christa Pike as a child was "truly extreme" and its severity was "almost impossible to grasp".

The state failed to provide Christa Pike the protection she needed as a child despite multiple state actors having knowledge about what she was facing. Please do not perpetuate this failure and the failure of the trial lawyers by allowing this execution to proceed.

I appeal to you to grant clemency and to commute this death sentence.

Sincerely,

Take Action:

Write a letter to the government official(s) listed. Use the sample letter below as a guide or use your own words.

Click [here](#) to report your action(s) on UA 83.26. We share this number with the officials we are trying to persuade.

Governor Bill Lee
1st Floor, State Capitol
600 Dr Martin L. King, Jr. Blvd.
Nashville, TN 37243, USA
Webmail: <https://www.tn.gov/governor/contact-us/share-opinion.html>

Please take action as soon as possible until September 30, 2026

Congress Must Stop Murderous Year-Long Campaign of Air Strikes at Sea

August 31st, 2026--As the U.S. military's deadly, ongoing and illegal campaign of air strikes against boats in the Caribbean and Eastern Pacific nears one year, Amnesty International USA's National Director for Government Relations, Amanda Klasing, said:

"For one year, the U.S. military has carried out a campaign of extrajudicial killings at sea that has left more than 225 people dead, with the most recent four deaths just six days ago. For just as long, we have called on Congress to take meaningful action to stop these killings, which are illegal under both international and U.S. law.

"U.S. authorities have yet to offer a shred of evidence to support their claims against the people they have killed. They have not even named the dead. But even if the victims were transiting narcotics as the administration alleges, international law absolutely prohibits summary killings of criminal suspects.

"Unfortunately, with a few notable exceptions, lawmakers have done little to try to halt this horrific campaign of murder at sea. And let us be clear: extrajudicial killings are a form of murder. How many more people will die at sea from this administration's illegal actions before Congress does its job?

"We look forward to the day when the architects and perpetrators of this campaign of extrajudicial killings are investigated and face justice, including the people who ordered these operations: President Donald Trump, Secretary of State Marco Rubio, and Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth. Until then, we will continue pushing Congress to do its job to stop this ongoing policy of murder, and we urge people to call their representatives and do the same.

"But the blame does not solely rest on U.S. authorities. Any authorities in Latin America who have aided these killings with equipment or intelligence must stop collaborating in this illegal air strike campaign and likewise face justice."

The U.S. air strike campaign in the Caribbean and Eastern Pacific began on September 2, 2025. Since then, administration officials have announced 227 total deaths.