

WRITING LETTERS ON AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CASES

If you have never written a letter on behalf of Amnesty International, this is a quick introduction. There is a lot more information available elsewhere in AI if you want to follow up.

Most important, writing letters is very simple, as long as you remember:

- Write in English (unless you are quite fluent in the national language), using Amnesty International Group 30 letterhead unless (rarely) we are told otherwise.
- No one will read the letter word for word, most likely. (There are exceptions, of course.) However, your letter may become a point of information that will affect policy on the case you raise. It still matters very much, and it will be counted by the authorities everywhere it goes.
- Our goal, normally, is to have as many letters counted as possible, to create the impression that the prisoner or the case is **VERY WELL KNOWN ABROAD AND A POTENTIAL PUBLIC RELATIONS PROBLEM.**

With that in mind, we offer the following tips on writing letters:

- **ALWAYS** be polite, regardless of what you may think of the government or leaders involved.
- Keep them **SHORT**. Better to write two short letters to two Ministers than one long harangue to one Minister.
- **BE CLEAR** about the prisoner or case, so that it will be counted correctly. Mention the name or the issue in the first paragraph — in bold type or underlined or in capitals, or all three. That way, even if the person opening your letter is not fluent in English, they will know what it's about.
- **ALWAYS** send a CC to the Ambassador, no matter whom you write to, and always indicate the recipient of the CC at the bottom of the letter. All embassies send reports to their home offices about public opinion in the host country. In fact, you can send CCs to any official listed in the letter instructions or Urgent Action. It's an easy way to enable your letter to make two or three times the impact it might normally make.

And that's about it! On the following page you will find a sample letter that illustrates some of the practices outlined above.

SAMPLE LETTER

Secretary of the XUAR Regional Chinese Communist Party Committee
Wang Lequan Shuji
Zhonggong Xinjiang Weiwuer Zizhiqu Weiyuanhui
Wulumuquishi 830041
Xinjiang Weiwuer Zizhiqu
People's Republic of China

Dear Secretary,

I write to urge your government to release **REBIYA KADEER**. Rebiya Kadeer is a Women's Rights activist and a successful businesswoman. She is Uighur. She had previously incurred police attention and travel restrictions by forming the Thousand Mother's Movement, which encouraged Uighur women to create their own businesses.

Rebiya Kadeer was imprisoned in March of 1999 for eight years on the grounds that she had in her possession 'state secrets'. She is reported to have been carrying newspaper articles regarding the Uighur independence movement. All of the articles were legally published in Chinese newspapers.

Amnesty International considers Rebiya Kadeer a prisoner of conscience. She has committed no recognizable crime, unless to possess newspaper articles is a crime in China. In light of this, the U.S. Congress has passed a resolution calling for her release, as has Great Britain.

I urge your government to release Rebiya Kadeer without condition.

James Cummings

Amnesty International USA Group 30
XXXX Union Street
San Francisco, California, 94109

cc:
His Excellency Zhou Wenzhong
Embassy of the People's Republic of China
2300 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20008