PERSECUTED FOR SATIRE ON SOCIAL MEDIA

TEMIRLAN ENSEBEK
KAZAKHSTAN
WRITE FOR RIGHTS

20 YEARS OF WRITING LETTERS THAT CHANGE LIVES

When just a handful of people unite behind someone, the results can be amazing.

Twenty years ago, a small group of activists in Poland ran a 24-hour letter-writing marathon. Over the following years, the idea spread. Today, Write for Rights is the world’s biggest human rights event.

From 2,326 letters in 1991 to 4.5 million letters, tweets, petition signatures and other actions in 2020, people all over the world have used the power of their words to unite behind the idea that geography is no barrier to solidarity. Together, these individuals have helped transform the lives of more than 100 people over the years, freeing them from torture, harassment or unjust imprisonment.

This year’s campaign channels this support towards people targeted for their peaceful activism, views or personal characteristics. This includes LGBTQI activists, environmental defenders and peaceful protesters. These individuals have variously been beaten, jailed, shot at, harassed and intimidated. Through Write for Rights, they will receive individual messages of solidarity from thousands of people across the globe. They and their families know that their situations are being brought to public attention and they are not forgotten.

Alongside the letter writing actions, Amnesty also speaks to those who have the power to change these people’s situations, such as politicians in their countries. Write for Rights also gives visibility to these injustices through public events, and garners international attention on social media.

Individuals and groups featured in the campaign in previous years report the difference that these actions make, and often describe the strength they derive from knowing that so many people care about them.

Often, there is a noticeable change in the treatment of these individuals, and other people and groups in a similar situation, by the country’s authorities. Charges may be dropped and people released from detention. People are treated more humanely, and new laws or regulations addressing the injustice are introduced.

BEFORE YOU START

This human rights education activity can take place in a variety of online or offline settings, such as a school classroom, a community group, a family or an activist group. As a facilitator, you can adapt the activity to best suit the group you are working with. For example, you may want to consider what knowledge the group already has about the issues discussed, the size of your group and how to best organize the activity to allow for active participation, the physical setting of your activity and any limitations. When participants want to take action on a case, discuss whether it is safe for them to do so.

The activities are all based on participatory learning methods in which learners are not merely presented with information; they explore, discuss, analyze and question issues relating to the cases. This methodology allows participants to:

- DEVELOP key competences and skills
- HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY to form their own opinions, raise questions and gain a deeper understanding of the issues presented
- TAKE CONTROL of their learning, and shape discussions according to their interests, abilities and concerns
- HAVE THE SPACE required for them to engage emotionally and develop their own attitudes.

Visit www.amnesty.org/ to learn more about Write for Rights and the people we are fighting for.

Contact the Amnesty team in your country: www.amnesty.org/countries

Tweet your support to @Amnesty using the hashtag #W4R21
YOUR WORDS ARE POWERFUL

ACTIVIST FREED IN SAUDI ARABIA

Nassima al-Sada, a campaigner for women’s freedom, was arrested in 2018 for peacefully defending human rights. While in jail, guards beat her and banned everyone – even her lawyer – from visiting her. But thanks to supporters worldwide who wrote a massive 777,611 letters, tweets and more, Nassima walked free in June 2021, and is back with her family and friends.

FATHER OF THREE REUNITED WITH FAMILY

In April 2018, NGO worker and human rights defender Germain Rukuki was found guilty of a slew of sham charges and sentenced to 32 years in prison in Burundi. He was jailed before getting a chance to hold his youngest child, born just weeks after he was taken. His family fled the country for fear of reprisals. On 30 June 2021, Germain was finally freed, and with his family, thanks in part to the more than 436,000 actions calling for his release.

ONE STEP CLOSER TO JUSTICE IN SOUTH AFRICA

Friends Popi Qwabe and Bongeka Phungula were murdered while heading for a night out in May 2017. Until recently, their families had been distressed by irregularities and delays in the police investigation. However, in March 2021, police revived the case after receiving 341,106 petition signatures from supporters worldwide. The police have completed their investigation and handed over the case to the country’s National Prosecuting Authority. “I feel optimistic,” said Popi’s sister Thembelihle. “I feel like finally, something is about to change.”
ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS

Human rights are the basic freedoms and protections that belong to every single one of us. They are based on principles of dignity, equality and mutual respect – regardless of age, nationality, gender, race, beliefs and personal orientations.

Your rights are about being treated fairly and treating others fairly, and having the ability to make choices about your own life. These basic human rights are universal – they belong to all of us; everybody in the world. They are inalienable – they cannot be taken away from us. And they are indivisible and interdependent – they are all of equal importance and are interrelated.

Since the atrocities committed during World War II, international human rights instruments, beginning with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, have provided a solid framework for national, regional and international legislation designed to improve lives around the world. Human rights can be seen as laws for governments. They create obligations for governments and state officials to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of those within their jurisdiction and also abroad.

Human rights are not luxuries to be met only when practicalities allow.

THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS (UDHR)

The UDHR was drawn up by the newly formed United Nations in the years immediately following World War II. Since its adoption on 10 December 1948, it has formed the backbone of the international human rights system. Every country in the world has agreed that they are bound by the general principles expressed within the 30 articles of this document.

The UDHR itself is, as its name suggests, a declaration. It is a declaration of intent by every government around the world that they will abide by certain standards in the treatment of individual human beings. Human rights have become part of international law: since the adoption of the UDHR, numerous other binding laws and agreements have been drawn up on the basis of its principles. It is these laws and agreements which provide the basis for organizations like Amnesty International to call on governments to refrain from the type of behaviour or treatment that the people highlighted in our Write for Rights cases have experienced.
# Universal Declaration of Human Rights

## Civil Rights and Liberties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Article</th>
<th>Right</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Freedom and equality in dignity and rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Non-discrimination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Right to life, liberty and security of person</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Freedom from slavery</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Freedom from torture</td>
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## Legal Rights

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Article</th>
<th>Right</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>All are protected by the law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>All are equal before the law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>A remedy when rights have been violated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>No unjust detention, imprisonment or exile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Right to a fair trial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Innocent until proven guilty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Right to go to another country and ask for protection</td>
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## Social Rights

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Article</th>
<th>Right</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Privacy and the right to home and family life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Freedom to live and travel freely within state borders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Right to marry and start a family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Right to rest and leisure</td>
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<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Right to education, including free primary education</td>
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## Economic Rights

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<tr>
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<th>Right</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Right to a nationality</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Right to own property and possessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Right to social security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Right to work for a fair wage and to join a trade union</td>
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<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Right to a standard of living adequate for your health and well-being</td>
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## Political Rights

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Article</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Freedom of belief (including religious belief)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Freedom of expression and the right to spread information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Freedom to join associations and meet with others in a peaceful way</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Right to take part in the government of your country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Right to share in your community’s cultural life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Right to an international order where all these rights can be fully realized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Responsibility to respect the rights of others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>No taking away any of these rights!</td>
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## Cultural Rights, Solidarity Rights

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LEARNING ABOUT OUR HUMAN RIGHTS
ACTIVITY: FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

ACTIVITY
FREE THE JOKE

KEY CONCEPTS
- Freedom of expression

ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY
The activity examines the right to freedom of expression in the context of satirical news, and relate it to the participants life, using the real story of Temirlan Ensebek.

LEARNING OUTCOMES
Participants:
- Understand the concept of human rights and its importance in the context of political satire and fake news
- Feel empathy with those whose right to freedom of expression has been violated
- Know about Amnesty International’s Write for Rights campaign
- Write a letter in support of Temirlan Ensebek

AGE: 14+

TIME NEEDED
60 minutes

MATERIALS
- Handout: UDHR Article Cards
- Handout: Daily action cards
- Handout: Examples of satire and satirical news
- Handout: Temirlan Ensebek card
- Background information: Freedom of Expression
- Background information: W4R Campaign
- Letter template or paper

PREPARATION
- Copy the handouts for each participant

1. MATCH RIGHTS WITH DAILY ACTIONS

Welcome and divide participants into small groups and distribute eight UDHR Article Cards and eight Daily Action Cards to each group. Use the Handout on p. 10-11

Ask the groups to match the rights with the examples. Which Daily Action Card can be applied to which UDHR Article?

Regroup and ask participants to discuss their answers.

They should look like this:

- Article 19 I use social media and say what I think on different topics
- Article 3 I walk freely in my town without fearing for my life
- Article 12 I do not have to disclose my personal life to my teacher
- Article 13 I can go wherever I want in my country freely
- Article 25 I go to see a doctor if I am sick
- Article 18 I speak freely about my religion or beliefs
- Article 24 I play with my friends
- Article 26 I can go to school and study

There is more than one possible solution for some of the rights. This is a good opportunity to outline that rights are interconnected.

Thank the participants and briefly explain the concept of human rights using the information provided on p. 4 of this Lesson Plan. Highlight that freedom, justice and equality are values that underpin human rights and are enshrined in many international human rights treaties. Freedom of expression is one of the rights guaranteed by numerous international and regional human rights treaties. Focus on explaining human rights as obligations for governments to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of those within their jurisdiction and abroad.
2. EXPLORING THE RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Ask participants to share what they understand by “freedom of expression”.

Explore a little more with the following questions:

- What are the different ways that young people express themselves in your country?
- In what ways do you like to express your ideas and opinions?
- How do you use social media to express yourself? Is it important for you? Why?

Briefly explain, that the right to the freedom of expression is protected under article 19 of UDHR.

Read out or show the full definition on the whiteboard: “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers”.

Allow 1 minute for participants to familiarize themselves with the article and ask questions.

Introduce the concept of satire. You can use the following:

“Satire is a humorous way of criticizing people or ideas to show that they have faults or are wrong, or a piece of writing or a play that uses this style”.

Definition of satire from the Cambridge Academic Content Dictionary © Cambridge University Press

Allow 1 minute for participants to familiarize themselves with the concept and ask questions if any (article).

Ask participants to work in pairs.

Hand out examples of satire and satirical news on p. 12-13 and give 3 minutes to discuss the following questions:

- Which of the examples did you find most funny? Why?
- What faults or societal problems do they highlight?
- What do you think about satire about the government? How does it relate to the right to freedom of expression?

Bring participants back into one group. Ask volunteers to read out examples of satire or satirical news they found most funny. Invite participants to share any insights from the discussion in pairs.

Give participants some information on the right to freedom of expression using “Background Information: The Right to Freedom of Expression” on p 14.

Focus on the importance of this right to ensure different opinions are considered in any society. Underline that international human rights standards allow for freedom of expression to be restricted only in some very specific cases, for example incitement to violence that could endanger a person or groups of people. Satire or satirical news against the government do not usually endanger anyone; parody against corruption, and other societal problems can be important means of expressing your opinion and communicating ideas on matters of public interest.
3. TEMIRLAN’S STORY

Hand out the card on p. 15 about Temirlan Ensebek’s story to each participant. Explain that Temirlan is a young Instagram blogger from Kazakhstan and give participants a few minutes to read it through.

Explain that Temirlan Ensebek is one of the stories Amnesty International has included within the Write for Rights campaign. Provide some information on the campaign if people are not familiar with it. Please, see "Background Information: Write for Rights Campaign") on p. 2-3.

Invite participants to answer the following questions:

- What surprises you most about Temirlan’s story?
- What human rights violations is Temirlan subject to? What law was used by the government to censor Temirlan’s satirical blog?
- What impact does the legislation on “fake news” have on the right to freedom of expression and on people? How does it change society?

Thank participants and highlight that satire and satirical news are protected by the right to freedom of expression, especially if the satire is directed at politicians, government officials or other powerful interests.

4. TAKE ACTION: WRITE A LETTER – SAVE A LIFE

Share some of the success stories from previous Write for Rights campaigns and explain that Amnesty is encouraging people to demand justice for Temirlan Ensebek.

Encourage them to write to the Minister of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan at the following address:

Minister of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan
Name: Yerlan
Surname: Turgumbayev
Facebook: @Ерлан Тургумбаев
Address of the MOD:
Tauelsizdik Avenue 1, Nur-Sultan 010000, Republic of Kazakhstan
Chancellery: + 7 (7172) 72-22-31
Press office: + 7 (7172) 71-51-89
Ministry Email: kense@mvd.kz

Objective:
To take all steps needed to ensure Temirlan Ensebek is not prosecuted for exercising his right to freedom of expression and that the investigation into his Instagram blog Qaznews24 is dropped.
Participants can use the template letters in the letter writing toolkit which you can download on the Write for Rights web page or you can give them the following guidelines to write a more personal letter:

Tell the Minister of Internal Affairs of Kazakhstan something to make this a personal letter. You can consider telling him:

- something about yourself
- what shocks you about the story of Temirlan Ensebek
- why you think it is important governments respect the right to freedom of expression
- to drop the investigation against Temirlan and his Instagram blog

You can also ask that his government repeals article 274 of the Criminal Code that violates the right to freedom of expression.

Alternatively, participants can show solidarity with Temirlan by writing a letter to him:

To Temirlan Ensebek

Address:
NGO Erkindyk Kanaty
Nur-Sultan, Kenesary Street 8
Office 1417, 14 floor
010000 Kazakhstan

Objective:
To tell Temirlan Ensebek not to feel discouraged from writing jokes and exercising his freedom of expression.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Article</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Article 19: Right to Freedom of Expression, including the right to access information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Article 3: Right to life, liberty, and security of person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Article 12: Right to privacy and the right to home and family</td>
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<td>Article 18: Right to freedom of thought (including religious belief)</td>
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LEARNING ABOUT OUR HUMAN RIGHTS

ACTIVITY: FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

HANDOUT
DAILY ACTION CARDS

I USE SOCIAL MEDIA AND SAY WHAT I THINK ON DIFFERENT TOPICS

I WALK FREELY IN MY TOWN WITHOUT FEARING FOR MY LIFE

I DO NOT HAVE TO DISCLOSE MY PERSONAL LIFE TO MY TEACHER

I CAN GO WHEREVER I WANT IN MY COUNTRY FREELY

I GO TO SEE A DOCTOR IF I AM SICK

I SPEAK FREELY ABOUT MY BELIEFS

I PLAY WITH MY FRIENDS

I CAN GO TO SCHOOL AND STUDY
EXAMPLES OF SATIRE AND SATIRICAL NEWS

**HANDOUT**

**LEARNING ABOUT OUR HUMAN RIGHTS**

**ACTIVITY: FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION**

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**EXAMPLES OF SATIRE AND SATIRICAL NEWS**

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**ALL GOVERNMENT WITHOUT THE CONSENT OF THE GOVERNED IS THE VERY DEFINITION OF SLAVERY.**

JONATHAN SWIFT, ANGO-IRISH SATIRIST, BEGINNING OF 18TH CENTURY

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**IT IS ALLOWED, WHEN MEETING WITH HIGH-RANKING OFFICIALS, TO EXPRESS YOUR PLEASURE TO SEE THEM WITH RESPECTFUL AND REVERENT BODY MOVEMENTS.**

MIKHAIL SALTYKOV-SHCHEDRIN, RUSSIAN SATIRIST OF 19TH CENTURY

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**BURGOMASTER: ALL RIGHT. WHAT’S THE MOOD AROUND TOWN?**

**WARDEN: QUIET. BUT THEY ARE STILL WRITING.**

**BURGOMASTER: WRITING WHAT?**

**WARDEN: LETTER “L” ON THE WALLS. THAT MEANS LANCELOT [THE LEADER OF THE PROTEST].**

**BURGOMASTER: NONSENSE! “L” MEANS - “LOVE THE PRESIDENT”.**

**WARDEN: I SEE. SO, WE DON’T DETAIN THOSE WHO ARE WRITING?**

**BURGOMASTER: ARE YOU KIDDING? OF COURSE, WE DO. (PLAY “THE DRAGON”)**

EVGENY SHWARZ, SOVIET PLAYWRIGHT, BEGINNING OF 20TH CENTURY

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INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS FROM KAZAKHSTAN WILL BE BANNED FROM POSTING PHOTOS, VIDEOS AND INFORMATION ABOUT HIGH STANDARD OF LIVING ABROAD.

QAZNEWS24, SATIRICAL BLOG, KAZAKHSTAN, 2021

RUSSIAN SCIENTISTS HAVE INVENTED A COVID-19 VACCINATION CERTIFICATE.

SATIRICAL NEWS AGENCY “PANORAMA”, RUSSIA, 2021

CHAMBER APPROVES LAW OF IMPROBITY AND NOW POLITICIANS CAN ONLY BE ARRESTED IF ALREADY ARRESTED.

SENSACIONALISTA, HUMOROUS NEWS WEBSITE, BRAZIL, 2021

MINISTER SPERANZA WARNS: “FINES FOR THOSE WHO HAVE A TANNED FACE WITHOUT THE SIGN OF THE MASK”.

LERCIO, SATIRICAL NEWS AGENCY, ITALY, 2021

THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH IS LOOKING FOR TALENTED MATHEMATICIANS TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF DAILY COVID-19 CASES OVER 40,000 TO BELOW 1000 UNTIL THE TOURISM SEASON OPENS.

ZAYTUNG, SATIRICAL NEWS WEBSITE, TURKEY, 2021
ARTICLE 19, UDHR
“EVERYONE HAS THE RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF OPINION AND EXPRESSION; THIS RIGHT INCLUDES FREEDOM TO HOLD OPINIONS WITHOUT INTERFERENCE AND TO SEEK, RECEIVE AND IMPART INFORMATION AND IDEAS THROUGH ANY MEDIA AND REGARDLESS OF FRONTIERS.”

Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) protects the right to freedom of expression. Freedom of expression guarantees your right to hold your own opinions and to express them freely, without government interference. This includes the right to express views through public protests or through written materials, media broadcasts, the internet and works of art. The freedom to exercise this right is a very important aspect of life in any society. A free flow of ideas helps to ensure that different opinions are taken into account and different ideas are aired. Limiting the right to freedom of expression also undermines transparency and accountability and makes the fight for other human rights more difficult.

Freedom of expression is important not just to society as a whole, but also to the individual. Our opinions and thoughts are a fundamental part of what makes us human (and stopping people from expressing these is equivalent to cutting off a part of their personality)! The human rights treaties which expand the rights in the UDHR allow for the right to freedom of expression to be restricted only in some very specific cases. Most countries, for example, have laws against racist or other discriminatory speech. However, limits to the right to freedom of expression are only permitted where these are necessary for the protection of the rights of other people or groups of people, or to protect certain specified public interests including public health. (protect national security, public order or public health and morals.)

Satire and satirical news are protected by the right to freedom of expression. Moreover, states must ensure that any limitation on the right to freedom of expression is provided by a clear and accessible law, and is necessary and proportionate, for example, for the protection of public health or other relevant legitimate purpose under international human rights law. Blanket prohibitions on the dissemination of information based on vague and ambiguous concepts, such as “false news” or “spreading misinformation”, do not meet this test. Restrictions to freedom of expression that are incompatible with human rights law further risk having a chilling effect on the population and the media leading to self-censorship out of fear of reprisals.
When Temirlan Ensebek, a 25-year-old blogger and entrepreneur from Almaty, had launched his satirical Instagram blog he had no political agenda, he just wanted to show the absurdity of news broadcasted by official TV channels. 6 weeks after Temirlan was taken to a police station, and is now threatened with a criminal charge of distributing a knowingly false information (article 274 of the Criminal Code).

In the beginning of April 2021 Temirlan created a satirical Instagram blog Qaznews24, a mock account of non-existent news that quickly gained popularity. During its three weeks’ existence, it attracted more than 5,000 subscribers with millions readers in reach. Some of the most popular headlines addressed poverty, cult of a strong leader, corruption, and discrimination. On his Instagram page, Temirlan had a disclaimer warning that the news is a parody and not real.

On 29 April Temirlan received strange phishing links stating his full personal information, followed by threats on Instagram about Temirlan’s “provocative news” and “immediate consequences” if he would not stop blogging. He received bizarre phone calls, and later in the day an official from the army recruitment office came to his home and questioned his current medical exemption from military service (military service is compulsory in Kazakhstan). On 30 April following the pressure and threats, Temirlan had to disable his Instagram account.

On 15 May Temirlan was taken to a police station and was interrogated for 5 hours, his flat was searched and his computer, modem and two phones confiscated. He hasn’t had them back yet. Officially he is a Witness with the Right of Defence. Temirlan, is not restricted in his movement, but if called by police he must come back to Almaty. If charged the penalty is a large fine of approximately 17,000 euros or imprisonment for up to three years.

Tell Kazakhstan to stop prosecuting Temirlan Ensebek and to drop the investigation into his Instagram blog Qaznews24.

WRITE TO KAZAKHSTAN’S AUTHORITIES

Tell them to drop the investigation and ensure Temirlan Ensebek never face any charges.

Minister of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan

Tauelsizdik Avenue 1, Nur-Sultan 010000, Republic of Kazakhstan

Email: kense@mvd.kz
Facebook: @Ерлан Тургумбаев
Salutation: Dear Minister of Internal Affairs

SHOW TEMIRLAN YOU’RE WITH HIM

Send him your messages of solidarity and friendship. If you can find a satirical postcard or share some jokes Temirlan will appreciate it.

NGO Erkindyk Kanaty
Kenesary Street 8
Office 1417, 14 floor
Nur-Sultan 010000
Kazakhstan
Amnesty International is a global movement of more than 10 million people who take injustice personally.

We are campaigning for a world where human rights are enjoyed by all.

We investigate and expose the facts, whenever and wherever abuses happen. We lobby governments as well as other powerful groups such as companies, making sure they keep their promises and respect international law. By telling the powerful stories of the people we work with, we mobilize millions of supporters around the world to campaign for change and to stand in the defence of activists on the frontline. We support people to claim their rights through education and training.

Our work protects and empowers people – from abolishing the death penalty to advancing sexual and reproductive rights, and from combating discrimination to defending refugees’ and migrants’ rights. We help to bring torturers to justice, change oppressive laws, and free people who have been jailed just for voicing their opinion. We speak out for anyone and everyone whose freedom or dignity are under threat.