

TIKTOKER JAILED FOR CRITICIZING PRESIDENT

WRITE
FOR
RIGHTS

AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL



Neth Nahara,
Angola

Human Rights
Education
Activity





WRITE FOR RIGHTS

WRITING LETTERS CHANGES LIVES

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

More than 20 years ago, a small group of activists in Poland ran a 24-hour letter-writing marathon. In the years that followed, the idea spread. Today, Write for Rights is the world's biggest human rights event.

From 2,326 letters in 2001 to nearly 6 million letters, tweets, petition signatures and other actions in 2023, people the world over have used the power of their words to unite behind the idea that geography is no barrier to solidarity. In 2023 alone, more than 1.4 million people were engaged through human rights education activities. Together, our actions have helped transform the lives of more than 100 people over the years, by releasing activists from detention, securing justice for those whose rights have been abused and protecting people who advocate for change.

This year's campaign once again includes people from around the world. They are connected because their human rights have been violated simply for who they are or because they exercised their rights. Together, we can fight for them to receive justice. Through Write for Rights, each of the individuals will receive personalized messages of solidarity from thousands of people across the globe. The awareness that their situations are gaining public attention offers reassurance to them and their families that they are not forgotten. And, by writing directly to the authorities to demand that they end the injustice, we can create a more just and equal world.

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 others in a similar situation. Charges may be dropped and people released from detention. People are treated more humanely, and new laws or regulations addressing the injustice are introduced.

“From the bottom of my heart, this campaign has kept me alive, it's what has stopped them from killing me because they know that you are there.”

Jani Silva, environmental defender, 2021

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 context and 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, delivering it in-person or online, and any limitations. When participants want to take action for an individual or group, 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, analyse and question issues relating to the individuals' stories. This methodology allows participants to:

DEVELOP key competencies and skills

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.



Letter writing with friends in Czechia for Write for Rights 2023.

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Read about the people we're fighting for: [amnesty.org/writeforrights](https://www.amnesty.org/writeforrights)

Contact the Amnesty team in your country: [amnesty.org/countries](https://www.amnesty.org/countries)

Tweet your support to @Amnesty using the hashtag #W4R24

If you are not familiar with participatory learning methods, look at Amnesty International's **Facilitation Manual** before you start: [amnesty.org/en/documents/ACT35/020/2011/en/](https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/ACT35/020/2011/en/)

Amnesty International offers online human rights education courses, including a short course about human rights defenders which introduces the **Write for Rights campaign**: academy.amnesty.org/learn



YOUR WORDS ARE POWERFUL

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER ACQUITTED

Rita Karasartova is a human rights defender and an expert in civic governance. For more than a decade she has dedicated her life to providing independent legal advice, helping people whose rights had been violated by a corrupt and unreliable legal system. Alongside 26 others, Rita was arrested for opposing a new border agreement giving control of a freshwater reservoir to Uzbekistan. Charged with attempting to “violently overthrow the government”, which carries a maximum sentence of 15 years’ imprisonment, Rita and at least 21 other defendants were acquitted on 14 June 2024.

“I would like to express my huge, huge gratitude... Your timely actions – these letters, petitions, signatures, and the huge number of letters that went to the court, that went to the prosecutor’s office – it was all very powerful. In fact, it was very empowering to us all... Of course, the acquittal was totally unexpected. I don’t even know how to process it in my head. We had been playing with all sorts of scenarios, different outcomes in our heads, but we didn’t think we would all be acquitted!... I thank you all.”

Rita Karasartova
from Kyrgyzstan



© Private

“I feel so relieved, and I thank you for the amazing Write for Rights campaign. I am forever indebted. It is like a huge weight has been lifted off my shoulders. Reading all the letters and cards made me feel so loved and appreciated.”

Cecillia Chimhiri from Zimbabwe



OPPOSITION ACTIVISTS FREED

Opposition activists Cecillia Chimhiri, Joanah Mamombe and Netsai Marova were abducted, tortured and imprisoned after attending a protest in Zimbabwe. They were charged with “communicating falsehoods” and “obstructing the course of justice”. Netsai fled Zimbabwe following the attack. After being featured in Write for Rights 2022, Cecillia and Joanah were acquitted by the High Court.



Amnesty supporters in the Netherlands (far left) and Togo (left) at events for Write For Rights 2023.

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.



Write for Rights event in Benin in 2023.



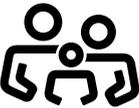
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THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS (UDHR)

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 to be 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 to 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 based on 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

 <p>Civil rights and liberties Right to life, freedom from torture and slavery, right to non-discrimination.</p>	<p>Article 1 Freedom and equality in dignity and rights</p> <p>Article 2 Non-discrimination</p> <p>Article 3 Right to life, liberty and security of person</p> <p>Article 4 Freedom from slavery</p> <p>Article 5 Freedom from torture</p>
 <p>Legal rights Right to be presumed innocent, right to a fair trial, right to be free from arbitrary arrest or detention.</p>	<p>Article 6 All are protected by the law</p> <p>Article 7 All are equal before the law</p> <p>Article 8 A remedy when rights have been violated</p> <p>Article 9 No unjust detention, imprisonment or exile</p> <p>Article 10 Right to a fair trial</p> <p>Article 11 Innocent until proven guilty</p> <p>Article 14 Right to go to another country and ask for protection</p>
 <p>Social rights Right to education, to found and maintain a family, to recreation, to health care.</p>	<p>Article 12 Privacy and the right to home and family life</p> <p>Article 13 Freedom to live and travel freely within state borders</p> <p>Article 16 Right to marry and start a family</p> <p>Article 24 Right to rest and leisure</p> <p>Article 26 Right to education, including free primary education</p>
 <p>Economic rights Right to property, to work, to housing, to a pension, to an adequate standard of living.</p>	<p>Article 15 Right to a nationality</p> <p>Article 17 Right to own property and possessions</p> <p>Article 22 Right to social security</p> <p>Article 23 Right to work for a fair wage and to join a trade union</p> <p>Article 25 Right to a standard of living adequate for your health and well-being</p>
 <p>Political rights Right to participate in the government of the country, right to vote, right to peaceful assembly, freedoms of expression, belief and religion.</p>	<p>Article 18 Freedom of belief (including religious belief)</p> <p>Article 19 Freedom of expression and the right to spread information</p> <p>Article 20 Freedom to join associations and meet with others in a peaceful way</p> <p>Article 21 Right to take part in the government of your country</p>
 <p>Cultural rights, solidarity rights Right to participate in the cultural life of the community.</p>	<p>Article 27 Right to share in your community's cultural life</p> <p>Article 28 Right to an international order where all these rights can be fully realized</p> <p>Article 29 Responsibility to respect the rights of others</p> <p>Article 30 No taking away any of these rights!</p>

ACTIVITY

THE RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

KEY CONCEPTS

- Right to freedom of expression
- Arbitrary detention
- Right to health
- Shrinking civic space

ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

Participants will learn about the right to freedom of expression through the real story of Neth Nahara, a digital influencer in Angola who has been arbitrarily detained for her outspoken views on social media. Participants will engage in discussions, creative activities and letter writing to advocate for her release.

AGE: 14+

TIME NEEDED

60 minutes – you may want additional time for the **Take Action** section.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Participants will:

- **understand** concept of the right to freedom of expression and its importance.
- **describe** the consequences of a violation of the right to freedom of expression.
- **feel** empathy for individuals whose right to freedom of expression has been violated.
- **learn** about Amnesty International's Write for Rights campaign.
- **write** letters in support of and showing solidarity with Neth Nahara.

PREPARATION

- Print the **handout Neth Nahara's story** and copies of the simplified UDHR for each participant/group.
- Read the background information on page 10.

MORE INFORMATION

Learn more about human rights including the right to freedom of expression at the Amnesty Academy: www.amnesty.org/en/get-involved/online-courses/

MATERIALS

- **Handout: Neth Nahara's story** (page 11)
- **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)** simplified version (page 5)
- **Creative materials**
- **Paper, pens and envelopes** (if sending letters)
- Optional: Video of Neth Nahara from www.amnesty.org/w4r-videos
- Optional: "Write for Rights: Take action" video from www.amnesty.org/w4r-videos
- Optional: Template letters from www.amnesty.org/writeforrights/

PRECAUTIONS

This activity discusses the right to freedom of expression, assuming that participants generally experience a high level of freedom in expressing their thoughts, ideas, identities, religious beliefs, and so on. However, this may not be the case for everyone. Some participants may have faced significant limitations on their right to freedom of expression, which can evoke strong emotional responses. Facilitators should assess the participants' backgrounds and experiences beforehand, adjust questions and discussions to be sensitive to these experiences and provide a safe space for participants to express their feelings and offer support as needed.

1. UNDERSTANDING THE RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Welcome participants and ask them to close their eyes and think for one minute about how they express themselves, their ideas and their concerns. Provide prompts:

- **Think of a time when you were concerned about something happening around you. Did you express those concerns? How? Where? To whom?**
- **Why is it important to be able to express yourself? What does it mean to you personally to be able to have your voice heard?**

Invite two or three participants to share their thoughts.

Discuss the importance of the right to freedom of expression. Explain that the right to freedom of expression includes the freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, through any media. Use the background information on page 10 to complement the discussion.

Ask:

- **How do you think your life would change if you were restricted from expressing your thoughts and opinions freely, or you were being censored?**



Share these words with the group: *“Your voice matters. You have the right to say what you think, share information and demand a better world. You also have the right to agree or disagree with those in power and to express these opinions in peaceful protests. Exercising these rights – without fear of unlawful interference – is central to living in an open and fair society; one in which people can access justice and enjoy their human rights.”*

End by telling participants that they will now examine a powerful example of how the right to freedom of expression can be violated, focusing on a real-life case that highlights the profound impact of such restrictions on the life of one social media influencer and singer.

If this is the first time that participants are introduced to the UDHR, you should focus on building a shared understanding of what it is first, using the information starting on page 4.

2. NETH NAHARA'S STORY



Hand out Neth's story from page 11 and copies of the simplified UDHR from page 5. Ask a volunteer to read her story aloud. After listening, ask the participants:

- **Is there anything that surprises you about Neth's story?**
- **Which human right(s) can you identify that have been violated in Neth's case?**

Point out that Neth Nahara's detention is considered arbitrary. Arbitrary detention means being held without a legitimate reason or without legal process, often as a way to suppress people's right to freedom of expression and other human rights.

Divide participants into small groups or pairs and ask:

- **How do violations of the right to freedom of expression put other rights at risk?**

Ask each group/pair to choose one or two rights from the UDHR list and discuss how these might be affected.

After about 10 minutes, bring everyone back together and have a short debriefing. Ask a few people to share the main points from their group's discussion.

Following on from the points raised by the groups, the plenary discussion might include the following topics:

- How restrictions on the right to freedom of expression can limit the right to access information, which is crucial for education and personal development.
- How censorship of artistic expression restrains creativity and cultural development, possibly violating the right to culture.
- How limitations on the right to freedom of expression can lead to arbitrary detentions or house arrests for political reasons, restricting the right to freedom of movement.
- How prosecution based on expressing religious beliefs can violate the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.
- How government surveillance to suppress the right to freedom of expression intrudes on personal privacy.

These are just a few examples. Participants are encouraged to think of other possible impacts.

If time allows, use these additional prompts:

- **Did you find any surprising connections between the right to freedom of expression and other rights?**
- **What emotions did Neth's story evoke in you, and why?**



3. CREATIVE VOICES FOR FREEDOM

Neth Nahara is a TikTok influencer, an artist and a singer. Invite participants to express their support for Neth through a creative activity. Tell participants:

“Imagine that, like Neth, you use social media to speak out about topics that concern you. Now, express yourself in support of Neth.”

Participants can choose any creative way to express their support. For example, they could draft a social media message, create an artistic poster, write a poem or song, or script a TikTok video.

Have them consider what their message or appeal would be, and to whom they would direct the message.

In the creation of this message, participants might consider the importance of the right to freedom of expression, share a detail about Neth’s story, make an emotional appeal, or include a call to action or justice for Neth.

If time allows, you can finish this part of the activity by inviting a few participants to share their creations with the group, or by having participants display their posters, poems or messages around the room and doing a group gallery walk.

As a final reflection, share these words with participants: *“As is the case for many people who speak up when something is wrong, Neth became a victim of a system that has repeatedly arrested, tortured and even killed people for peaceful dissent. Speaking up for Neth is speaking up for the right to freedom of expression. Supporting Neth’s case sends a strong message to people and authorities that the world is watching, and that human rights violations in the country do not go unnoticed.”*

4. TAKE ACTION

Explain about Amnesty International’s Write for Rights campaign. Explain that Amnesty International is encouraging people to demand justice for Neth Nahara. You can give examples from last year’s campaign (page 3) demonstrating how successful writing letters and taking other actions can be, or watch the “Write for Rights: Take action” video from www.amnesty.org/w4r-videos

If there isn’t enough time for participants to take action within the time allowed, encourage them to organize how to do so afterwards or divide the actions among the groups. Encourage them to be creative. They might be able to use their creative outputs from activity three above.

 15 MINUTES

 15 MINUTES

Show participants the video of Neth Nahara which can be found here: www.amnesty.org/w4r-videos (available in English).





WRITE A LETTER

Encourage participants to write to the President of Angola using the contact information on the right.

- Tell the president and his government something about yourself to make this a personal letter.
- Tell them what shocks you about the case of Neth Nahara.
- Tell them why you think it is important that governments respect and uphold the right to freedom of expression.
- Demand that **Neth Nahara is immediately and unconditionally released, since her conviction and ongoing arbitrary detention stem solely from the peaceful exercise of her human rights, including the right to freedom of expression.**

President of Angola

Palácio Presidencial
Cidade Alta
Rua 17 de Setembro
Luanda
Angola

Email: secretariageral@oapr.gov.ao

Facebook: www.facebook.com/cdajoalourenco

X: [@jlprdeangola](https://twitter.com/@jlprdeangola)

Hashtags: #FreeNethNahara

#NethLivre #W4R24

#ProtectTheProtest

Salutation: Your Excellency

SHOW SOLIDARITY

Show Neth that she is not alone. Send your message of solidarity and hope to keep Neth's spirits up. She likes to dance and sing. You could draw a microphone or draw Neth with her two children (a five-year-old boy and a two-year-old girl). Be creative! Then send your message to the address to the right. **Make sure you include Neth's real name – Ana da Silva Miguel – when addressing your letter to the prison.**

Neth speaks English and Portuguese. Here are some example messages to include:

Portuguese: **“Muita força Neth. Desejo que você saia da prisão o mais rápido possível. Você foi forte por exercer seu direito de liberdade de expressão e desejo que você continue se expressando sem medo.”**

English: **“Lots of strength, Neth. I hope you get out of prison soon. You are strong for exercising your right to freedom of expression and I hope you can continue expressing yourself without fear.”**

Portuguese: **“Estou a torcer pela sua liberdade. Você poderia ter calado, mas você preferiu falar e exercer seu direito de liberdade de expressão. Que você saia da prisão de cabeça erguida e com a mesma coragem.”**

English: **“I'm rooting for your freedom. You could have remained silent, but you preferred to speak out and exercise your right to freedom of expression. May you leave prison with your head held high and with the same courage.”**

Ana da Silva Miguel (Neth Nahara)

Estabelecimento prisional feminino
de Viana
Vila de Viana
Avenida 11 de Novembro
Rua Nzinga Mbande
Luanda
Angola



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

THE RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

ARTICLE 19 OF THE 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) guarantees the right to freedom of expression including the right to hold your own opinions and to express them freely, without government interference. This also includes the right to express views through public protests or through written materials, media broadcasts, the internet and works of art. This right is regarded as a very important feature in any society. We need a free flow of ideas to ensure that different opinions are taken into account and different points of view are aired. Limiting the right to freedom of expression undermines transparency and accountability and also undermines other human rights.

The right to freedom of expression is important to society as a whole and to individuals. Our opinions and thoughts are a fundamental part of what makes us human. 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 on 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 national security, public order or public health.

Protesters at a pro-democracy rally in Hong Kong in May 2020.



NETH NAHARA'S STORY

Ana da Silva Miguel, known online as Neth Nahara, is a 32-year-old singer and mother of two young children. For her, life in Angola was frustrating and hard. How could a country with so much potential allow so many of its people to live in poverty? Fed up with the lack of schools, employment and opportunities, she took to TikTok to share stories of her life with her followers, the good times and the bad. She was bubbly, fun and unafraid to speak her truth. Neth encouraged women to seek out education and gain independence. She also bravely shared that she had HIV and gave advice on how to stay healthy.

On 12 August 2023, Neth went live on her TikTok channel, openly criticizing President João Lourenço. The next day, she was arrested. She was summarily tried, convicted and sentenced to six months in prison. On 27 September 2023, her sentence was increased to two years' imprisonment.

The Angolan authorities are using a controversial law (Article 333 of the Penal Code) to silence critical voices like Neth's. The law was passed during the Covid-19 pandemic – a time when the Angolan people took to the streets to express their discontent with the president's leadership – and makes “insulting” the president a crime.

During Neth's first eight months in arbitrary detention, she was denied the daily medication needed to treat HIV. She was only given the necessary medicine after repeated requests from her lawyers. Neth Nahara and others like her are being detained and mistreated simply because they dare to speak out.



© Neth Nahara



© José Silva Pinto

From the top: Neth Nahara; View of Luanda, Angola.

ABOUT AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Amnesty International is a movement of 10 million people which mobilizes the humanity in everyone and campaigns for change so we can all enjoy our human rights. Our vision is of a world where those in power keep their promises, respect international law and are held to account. 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.

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