

**WRITE  
FOR  
RIGHTS**

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



**NASSIMA AL-SADA, SAUDI ARABIA**

**LOCKED UP  
FOR DEMANDING  
WOMEN'S RIGHTS**

## HUMAN RIGHTS INTRODUCTION

# WRITE FOR RIGHTS

Amnesty International's "Write for Rights" campaign takes place annually around 10 December, which is Human Rights Day (commemorating the day when the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted in 1948). Write for Rights aims to bring about change to the lives of people or communities that have suffered or are at risk of human rights violations. Among the many actions that take place as part of Write for Rights, Amnesty raises cases of individuals, groups and communities with decision-makers who can change the situation, gives visibility to those cases by organizing public actions, and brings international attention through media and internet exposure.

A major part of the Write for Rights campaign consists of a letter-writing marathon and involves millions of people around the globe. As a result of the international call to action, decision-makers are bombarded with letters. This year's cases cover people imprisoned for defending their rights and expressing their opinions, LGBTI activists targeted

for who they are, peaceful protestors beaten and shot at and environmental defenders harassed and intimidated or other human rights violations. They will receive messages of solidarity from thousands of people in far-off corners of the globe. Those suffering the violations and their families know that their cases are being brought to public attention. They know that they are not forgotten.

The results of similar campaigns in previous years have been striking. Individuals affected by the violations report the difference that these letters make, they express their gratitude to those who have written, and they often describe the strength they derive from knowing that so many people are concerned about their case.

Often there is a noticeable change by officials towards these individuals: charges are dropped, treatment becomes less harsh, and laws or regulations addressing the problem are introduced.

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

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

Tweet your support to @Amnesty using the hashtag #W4R20

## HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

# BEFORE YOU START

This **human rights education activity** can take place in a variety of settings, such as a school classroom, a community group, a family group, an activist group, online or offline. As a facilitator, you can adapt the activity to best suit the needs and context of 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 take action on a case, discuss with them whether it is safe for them to do so – why or why not?

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 is very important for the wider learning objectives because participants will:

- **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 shapes discussions according to their interests, abilities and concerns.
- **have the space** required for them to engage emotionally and develop their own attitudes



Students and school teachers in Taiwan organized letter writing events with Amnesty International for the Write for Rights campaign 2019.  
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If you are not familiar with participatory learning methods, look at Amnesty International's **Facilitation Manual** before you start. This can be found at [www.amnesty.org/en/documents/ACT35/020/2011/en/](http://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/ACT35/020/2011/en/)

Amnesty International offers further human rights education courses on different human rights issues through **the Amnesty Academy**, including a short course about human rights defenders which introduces the **Write for Rights Campaign**:  
<https://academy.amnesty.org/learn>

## SUCCESS STORIES FROM THE 2019 CAMPAIGN

# HOW YOUR WORDS HAVE CHANGED LIVES

### JAIL SENTENCE REDUCED IN IRAN

In 2019, Yasaman Aryani was sentenced to 16 years in prison for handing out flowers to train passengers while unveiled. In February 2020, her sentence was substantially reduced, thanks in part to the more than 1.2 million messages written worldwide for her freedom. We won't stop until she's free.



### "We are joining hands around the world to combat all the injustice."

Crystal Swain of Grassy Narrows



### HEALTHCARE WIN FOR GRASSY NARROWS, CANADA

For decades, the Grassy Narrows Indigenous community have been suffering the effects of mercury poisoning in one of Canada's worst health crises. The youth of Grassy Narrows have been particularly affected, and have been at the forefront of the fight for a healthy future for their community. *After years of delay, a \$19.5 million (CDN) agreement to build a care facility was finally signed on 2 April 2020 – a victory for the people of Grassy Narrows.*

### DEATH SENTENCE REVOKED IN SOUTH SUDAN

Magai Matiop Ngong was only 15 when he was sentenced to death. But thanks to the amazing support of people like you, his death sentence was cancelled in July 2020. People around the world took an incredible 765,000 actions, including letters and tweets, calling for Magai's life to be spared – and it worked.

**"Thank you so much.  
I have no words.  
You have no idea  
how my heart is filled  
with happiness."**

Magai Matiop Ngong



## HUMAN RIGHTS INTRODUCTION

# 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 or state officials to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of those within their jurisdiction and also abroad.

***Human rights are not luxuries that can be met only when practicalities allow.***



Members of Amnesty International Togo joining in the Write for Rights campaign, 2019. Every year they mobilize people throughout the country to take part.

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## HUMAN RIGHTS INTRODUCTION

# 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 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.

## HUMAN RIGHTS INTRODUCTION

# UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS



### CIVIL RIGHTS AND LIBERTIES

Right to life, freedom from torture and slavery, right to non-discrimination.

Article 1 Freedom and equality in dignity and rights

Article 2 Non-discrimination

Article 3 Right to life, liberty and security of person

Article 4 Freedom from slavery

Article 5 Freedom from torture



### LEGAL RIGHTS

Right to be presumed innocent, right to a fair trial, right to be free from arbitrary arrest or detention.

Article 6 All are protected by the law

Article 7 All are equal before the law

Article 8 A remedy when rights have been violated

Article 9 No unjust detention, imprisonment or exile

Article 10 Right to a fair trial

Article 11 Innocent until proven guilty

Article 14 Right to go to another country and ask for protection



### SOCIAL RIGHTS

Right to education, to found and maintain a family, to recreation, to health care.

Article 12 Privacy and the right to home and family life

Article 13 Freedom to live and travel freely within state borders

Article 16 Right to marry and start a family

Article 24 Right to rest and leisure

Article 26 Right to education, including free primary education



### ECONOMIC RIGHTS

Right to property, to work, to housing, to a pension, to an adequate standard of living.

Article 15 Right to a nationality

Article 17 Right to own property and possessions

Article 22 Right to social security

Article 23 Right to work for a fair wage and to join a trade union

Article 25 Right to a standard of living adequate for your health and well-being



### POLITICAL RIGHTS

Right to participate in the government of the country, right to vote, right to peaceful assembly, freedoms of expression, belief and religion

Article 18 Freedom of belief (including religious belief)

Article 19 Freedom of expression and the right to spread information

Article 20 Freedom to join associations and meet with others in a peaceful way

Article 21 Right to take part in the government of your country



### CULTURAL RIGHTS, SOLIDARITY RIGHTS

Right to participate in the cultural life of the community.

Article 27 Right to share in your community's cultural life

Article 28 Right to an international order where all these rights can be fully realized

Article 29 Responsibility to respect the rights of others

Article 30 No taking away any of these rights!

## ACTIVITY

# DEMANDING WOMEN'S RIGHTS

### FOLLOW COVID-19 MEASURES

Be sure to comply with public health advice in your area during the Covid-19 Pandemic and conduct your activity ensuring safety and any physical distance measures in place.

If you are doing the activity online:

- **Choose** a platform that provides participation and interaction while being secure.
- **Adapt** the activity to allow for relevant reflections and debriefing (in small groups)
- **Provide** technical support for participants to allow for good participation.

In light of Covid-19 and the various digital spaces in which schools and other groups now have to come together to continue their normal activities, Amnesty is developing additional material to support the delivery of these activities online. Check the **Write for Rights** webpage [www.amnesty.org/writeforrights](http://www.amnesty.org/writeforrights)

### KEY CONCEPTS

- Women human rights defenders
- Right to liberty
- Right to a fair trial
- Freedom of speech
- Solitary confinement
- Women's rights

### ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

Participants are inspired to take action in support of Nassima al-Sada's fight for women's rights after understanding the human rights violations she has been subjected to.

### TIME NEEDED:

60 minutes

AGE: 14+

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Participants know about the male guardianship system in Saudi Arabia and the situation for women's equality.
- Participants identify the human rights violations Nassima al-Sada, a woman human rights defender in Saudi Arabia, is subjected to.
- Participants know about Amnesty International's Write for Rights campaign and prepare to write a letter in support of one of the cases.

### PREPARATION AND RESOURCES

- Copies of the case cards about Nassima for all participants page 11
- Copies of the summary UDHR for all participants page 5
- Copies of the list of human rights violations in the case of Nassima al-Sada page 10
- Pens/pencils/highlighters and paper for drawing and writing

## 1 MY DECISION – MY LIFE

 10 MINUTES

Welcome participants and ask each of them to draw a flower with five or six large petals on a piece of paper. Ask them write in each petal something they feel is very important **to them to decide on for themselves**. For example, what they wear, what they study, what music they listen to, who they are friends with, what hobbies or sports they want to practise, how they spend their money, how they spend their free time, who they have a relationship with, what they read, among other things.

Once everyone has completed their flower, ask participants to read out the things they wrote down and write them up on a board or flipchart, visible to all. Add new items to the list.

Looking at the list, ask participants all together:

- **How do you feel when you can't decide on something yourself?**
- **How would you feel if someone else was given responsibility to approve, or not, the decisions you feel are important for you to decide?**
- **Is there any difference in your community or country between what people of different genders are able to decide? Why, or why not?**

Ask them to share their responses with the group.

*Participants may reflect on how they feel when parents or a guardian make decisions that they feel they should make. It is important that this activity is not about debating whether parents should make decisions for young people but rather exploring how it feels when someone makes decisions about your life that you feel are important for you to make.*

## **2 MALE GUARDIANSHIP SYSTEM**

**10 MINUTES**

Explain that for a woman in Saudi Arabia, no matter what her age is, the answers to the previous questions may look different. The male guardianship system there requires all women to legally have a male guardian (who can be father, husband, brother, or son) to make decisions and give permission for different aspects of their lives. In some cases where a woman is widowed, their male guardian may be their son, regardless of age, who has the authority to make decisions on behalf of their mother.

Share with participants the information on male guardianship in Saudi Arabia on page 9.

Ask participants to think about the following:

- **Which human rights might be at risk under the system of male guardianship?**
- **Why do you think male guardianship exists in Saudi Arabia and what should be done to ensure equal rights for women?**

After a few minutes, collect some of the responses from the group. Some of the human rights at risk under a male guardianship system include the rights to freedom of expression and of thought, the right to liberty, freedom of movement.

*If you haven't discussed human rights before with participants use the chance to build a shared understanding of what human rights are and introduce the UDHR, using the information at the start of this activity page 5.*

## **3 NASSIMA'S STORY**

**20 MINUTES**

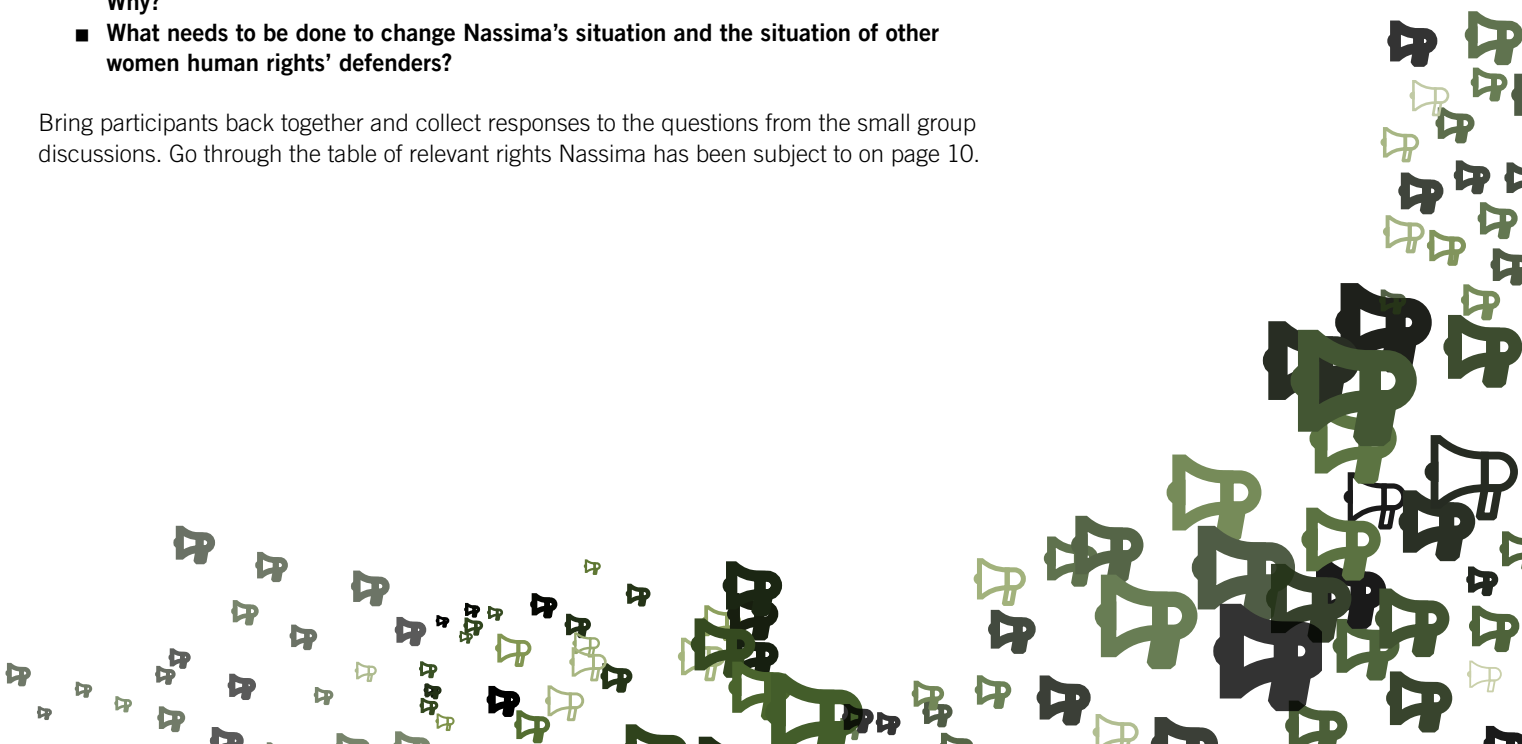
Inform participants that women human rights defenders have been fighting for women's rights and speaking out against the male guardianship system in Saudi Arabia for years. They will be learning more about one of them.

Hand out the case card for Nassima al-Sada and a copy of the UDHR summary if you have not handed it out earlier.

Split participants into small groups, give them time to read Nassima's story and ask them the following:

- **How did it feel to read Nassima's story?**
- **What are the human rights that have been violated in Nassima's case?**
- **What is the situation for girls and women in your country? Are there decisions that women cannot make but men can? Are women and men treated the same way? Why?**
- **What needs to be done to change Nassima's situation and the situation of other women human rights' defenders?**

Bring participants back together and collect responses to the questions from the small group discussions. Go through the table of relevant rights Nassima has been subject to on page 10.



## 4 DISCUSSION

🕒 10 MINUTES

Conclude with a discussion using the following questions as a guide:

- Why might women human rights defenders be at more risk than others for persecution?
- What can be done in order to take action and to support Nassima al-Sada in achieving justice?
- How would this change the everyday lives of women in Saudi Arabia?

## 5 TAKING ACTION FOR NASSIMA AL-SADA

🕒 10 MINUTES

Explain to participants that Amnesty is calling on people around the world to take action on behalf of Nassima. Share some of the success stories from previous Write for Rights campaigns and explain that Amnesty is encouraging people to write letters to authorities and show solidarity for Nassima.

If there isn't enough time for participants to take action by writing letters and joining solidarity actions immediately, they can organize how to do so afterwards or divide the actions among themselves. Encourage them to be creative.

*If you have time you can share the 5 min introductory video on Write for Rights link <https://youtu.be/Tm8tzokmAik>*

## WRITE A LETTER – SAVE A LIFE

- Encourage them to write to the King of Saudi Arabia at the following address:

**His Majesty King Salman bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud**  
Office of His Majesty the King  
Royal Court, Riyadh  
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia  
Twitter: @KingSalman  
Salutation: Your Majesty

Participants can use the template letters in the letter writing toolkit which you can download on the **Write for Rights** web page at [www.amnesty.org/writeforrights](http://www.amnesty.org/writeforrights).

Or you can give them the following guidelines to write a more personal letter:

### Tell the King something to make this a personal letter:

- Tell him something about yourself
- Tell him what shocks you about the case
- Tell him to free Nassima and other women's rights activists immediately and unconditionally

## SHOW SOLIDARITY

Encourage participants to write to Nassima expressing their solidarity or any encouraging words to help **keep Nassima's spirit strong**.

Nassima al-Sada loves animals and cherishes her garden back home. Post a photo of you gardening, of some beautiful flowers or nature, or a drawing of animals or plants on your social media channels. You can incorporate the flowers participants created in

the activity earlier and take a photo with your flower or put them all together to make a garden. Include a personal message to Nassima.

Remember to tag her **@nasema33**, as well as **@KingSalman**, and use the hashtag **#FreeNassima** in each post.

Send hardcopies to Amnesty International  
For Moussa  
Postbus 1968  
1000 BZ Amsterdam  
Netherlands



# MALE GUARDIANSHIP IN SAUDI ARABIA

In August 2019, in a positive and long-overdue development, the authorities announced major reforms to the discriminatory male guardianship system. Among other things, these allowed women aged over 21 to apply for and obtain a passport and travel without the permission of a male guardian; women aged over 18 to register the birth of a new born child, the death of a relative and their own marriage or divorce, as well as to apply for and obtain a family record; and women to act as the head of a household.

While the reforms brought the recognition of women's rights in these areas into line with those of men and also eased major restrictions on women's freedom of movement, they did not abolish the guardianship system. The reforms did not allow women to marry without the permission of a guardian or to provide consent for her children to marry. Women and girls continued to face systematic discrimination in law and in practice in other areas such as marriage, divorce, inheritance and the ability to pass on citizenship to their children.

Women and girls remained inadequately protected from sexual and other forms of violence. They continued to need a male guardian's permission to leave shelters for those who had experienced domestic abuse.

## HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN SAUDI ARABIA

In 2019, the authorities in Saudi Arabia escalated repression of the rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly. They harassed, arbitrarily detained and prosecuted dozens of government critics, human rights defenders, including women's rights activists, members of the Shi'a minority and family members of activists. Shi'a activists and religious clerics remained on trial before a counter-terror court for expressing dissent.

The authorities used the death penalty extensively, carrying out scores of executions for a range of crimes, including drug offences. Some people, from the country's Shi'a minority, were executed following grossly unfair trials.

The authorities implemented major reforms to the repressive male guardianship system, including allowing women to obtain passports, travel without the permission of a male guardian and become heads of households; however, women continued to face systematic discrimination in law and practice in other areas and remained inadequately protected against sexual and other violence.

The authorities granted hundreds of thousands of foreign nationals the right to work and access to education and health care, but arrested and deported hundreds of thousands of irregular migrant workers, who were exposed to labour abuses and exploitation by employers and torture when in state custody. Discrimination against the Shi'a minority remained entrenched.

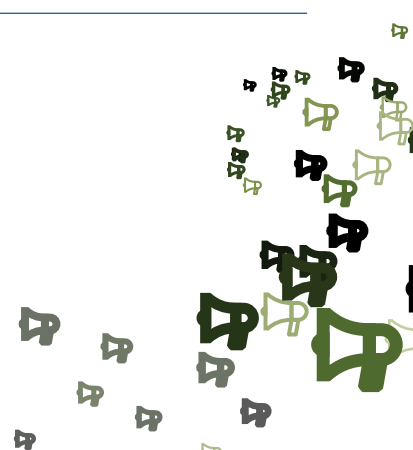


Nassima al-Sada

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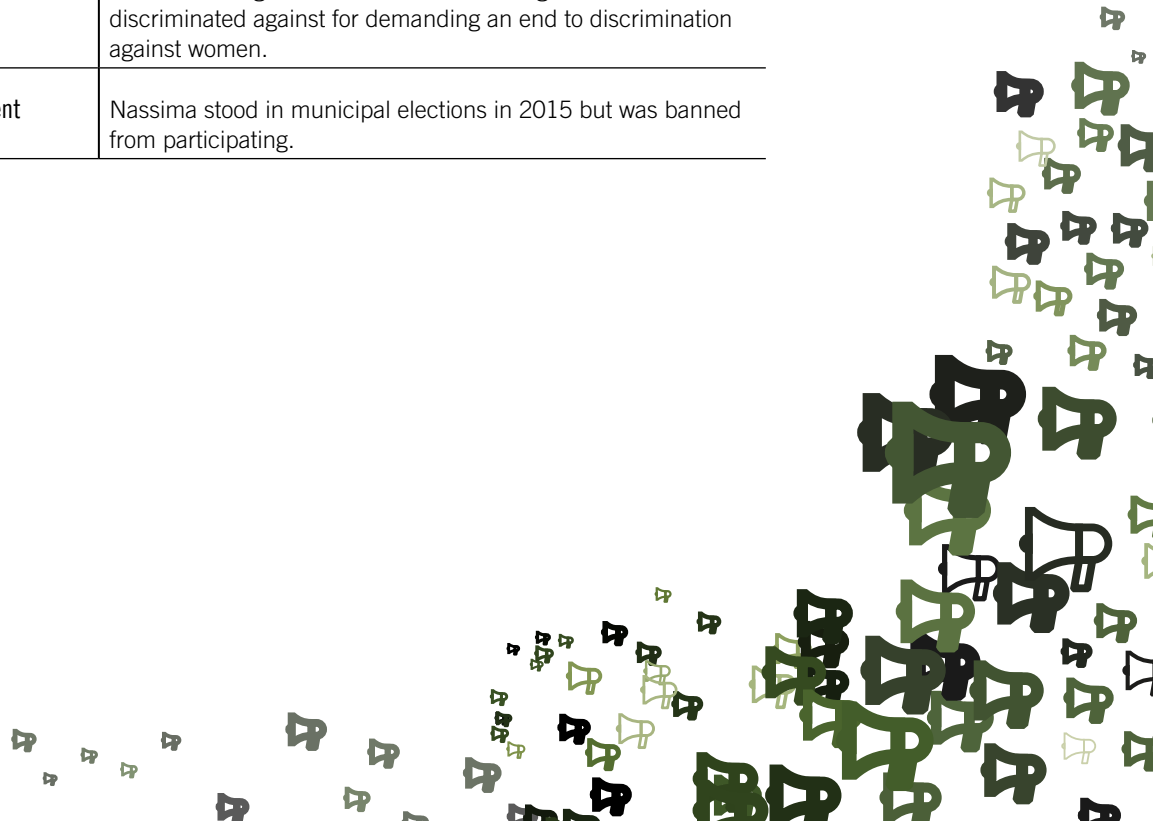
You can access a virtual timeline- Two years of Saudi Arabia's brutal crackdown on women human rights defenders, here:

[https://cdn.knightlab.com/libs/timeline3/latest/embed/index.html?source=1iJrpiNp45E3r-QTCFy0q9JuH9rpaRJBROxrDvmrde00&font=Default&lang=en&initial\\_zoom=2&height=650](https://cdn.knightlab.com/libs/timeline3/latest/embed/index.html?source=1iJrpiNp45E3r-QTCFy0q9JuH9rpaRJBROxrDvmrde00&font=Default&lang=en&initial_zoom=2&height=650)



# HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN THE CASE OF NASSIMA AL-SADA

NAME OF HUMAN RIGHT	RELEVANCE TO NASSIMA'S CASE
Right to a fair trial	Nassima was detained without charge for over a year and has not been able to meet with her lawyer. Diplomats, journalists and independent monitors have been banned from attending her trial sessions.
Right to security	Before Nassima's arrest, she received some online threats on Twitter.
Right to liberty	Nassima has been detained since July 2018 without charges or trial and has been placed in solitary confinement from February 2019 until beginning 2020.
Right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty	Nassima was threatened verbally and tied to her chair during interrogation.
Right to freedom of expression	Nassima has been detained for trying to educate others and speak up demanding human rights for women.
Right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty	Nassima was detained without charges or trial from July 2018 until June 2019. She has also been placed in solitary confinement from February 2019 until beginning 2020.
Right to be free from discrimination	Nassima is targeted as a woman human rights defender and is discriminated against for demanding an end to discrimination against women.
Right to take part in the government of your country	Nassima stood in municipal elections in 2015 but was banned from participating.



# NASSIMA AL-SADA, SAUDI ARABIA

Nassima al-Sada loves animals and cherishes her garden back home. Even in her prison cell, she has a carefully tended plant. It is her only link to the outside world she must sorely miss.

For much of her life, Nassima campaigned for women's freedom in Saudi Arabia. In doing so, she's lost her own. She was one of several prominent activists demanding women's rights to drive and the right to carry out their daily business without the permission of a male guardian.

Saudi Arabia's guardianship laws required women to seek a man's permission to go out, and for other basic needs. While these laws have been eased in recent months, the women who have campaigned to end the guardianship system remain behind bars. "Why should an under-age boy be the guardian of a woman who is an adult?" Nassima wrote in 2016. "Why isn't there an age at which a woman becomes an adult, responsible for her decisions and her life? Why should there be a man responsible for her life?"

Nassima was arrested for her peaceful human rights work in July 2018. While in jail, she was ill-treated. She was placed in a cell alone, in complete isolation from other detainees from February 2019 to February 2020. She is allowed one weekly phone call with her family, but no visits, not even from her lawyer.

She said "When a woman feels that she can't carry out basic tasks as a citizen without her male guardian, this restricts her humanity."

**Still, Nassima and her family aren't giving up. Nor should we.**

***"When a woman feels that she can't carry out basic tasks... this restricts her humanity"***  
Nassima al-Sada



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# ABOUT AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

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Amnesty International is a global movement of more than 7 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.

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## AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT

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