

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PRESS RELEASE

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## **Two major international human rights awards celebrate the power of individual activism in the struggle for human dignity**

(Sydney/Johannesburg) Today, Amnesty International celebrated the power of principled leadership and individual activism with two major international human rights awards. In Johannesburg, Amnesty International bestowed upon Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela its most prestigious honour, the 2006 Ambassador of Conscience Award. At the same time, the Sydney Peace Foundation honoured Amnesty International's Secretary General Irene Khan with the Sydney Peace Prize for her "leadership as a courageous advocate of universal respect for human rights" and her "efforts to eliminate violence against women."

"The Ambassador of Conscience Award recognizes Nelson Mandela for his fearless leadership; the Sydney Peace Prize recognizes human rights activists for their uncompromising courage," said Irene Khan. "Amnesty International draws strength from Mandela's example to renew our own commitment to human dignity, human rights and justice."

"Nelson Mandela is a global icon of hope and a source of deep inspiration not only to Africans but to millions of activists around the world as we seek, through our personal and principled engagement, to change the world for the better," said Irene Khan.

In Johannesburg, Nelson Mandela expressed his joy at being honoured by Amnesty International.

Speaking in Sydney, Irene Khan accepted the Peace Prize in the name of "all people who choose to protest rather than remain silent, to stand up and be counted, to act rather than to turn a blind eye"

She recognized that "the need for individual activism has never been greater at a time when fear and failed leadership threaten peace and human rights today."

"A new agenda is in the making in which the rules are being rewritten for the benefit of the powerful and the privileged, while the real sources of insecurity, such as poverty, violence, discrimination and HIV/AIDS, which affect the lives of many more, go unaddressed," she said.

"Today the world badly needs the kind of enlightened leadership that exemplifies the life and work of Nelson Mandela."

"The man who refused to compromise with the injustice of apartheid has inspired a new vision of justice in which poverty is as evil and unjust today as apartheid was in the past. We honour Mandela -- once the world's most famous prisoner -- through our work to free those who are forgotten prisoners of poverty, prejudice and violence. We draw inspiration from Mandela's fearless leadership to demand justice for the people of Darfur, for women and girls suffering violence and for those living with HIV/AIDS."

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