

CONTENTS

Foreword, Irene Khan, Secretary General/i

PART 1

Introduction: Responsibilities have no borders/1

PART 2

Regional overviews:

Africa/15

Americas/19

Asia-Pacific/23

Europe-Central Asia/27

Middle East-North Africa/31

A-Z country entries

Afghanistan/35

Albania/37

Algeria/39

Angola/41

Argentina/43

Armenia/44

Australia/45

Austria/46

Azerbaijan/47

Bahamas/49

Bahrain/49

Bangladesh/50

Belarus/52

Belgium/54

Bhutan/56

Bolivia/57

Bosnia and Herzegovina/58

Brazil/60

Brunei Darussalam/63

Bulgaria/64

Burkina Faso/66

Burma (see Myanmar)

Burundi/66

Cambodia/69

Cameroon/71

Canada/72

Central African Republic/73

Chad/74

Chile/76

China/77

Colombia/80

Congo (Democratic Republic of the)/83

Congo (Republic of the)/86
Côte d'Ivoire/87
Croatia/89
Cuba/90

Cyprus/92
Czech Republic/93
Dominican Republic/94
East Timor (see Timor-Leste)
Ecuador/95
Egypt/96
El Salvador/99
Equatorial Guinea/100
Eritrea/102
Estonia/103
Ethiopia/104
Fiji/106
Finland/107
France/108
Georgia/111
Germany/113
Ghana/114
Greece/115
Guatemala/117
Guinea/119
Guinea-Bissau/119
Guyana/120
Haiti/121
Honduras/124
Hungary/125
India/127
Indonesia/129
Iran/131
Iraq/134
Ireland/138
Israel and the Occupied Territories/139
Italy/142
Jamaica/145
Japan/146
Jordan/147
Kazakhstan/148
Kenya/149
Korea (Democratic People's Republic of)/151
Korea (Republic of)/153
Kuwait/154
Kyrgyzstan/156
Laos/156
Latvia/158
Lebanon/159
Liberia/161
Libya/164

Lithuania/166
Macedonia/167
Malawi/169
Malaysia/170
Maldives/171
Malta/173
Mauritania/174
Mexico/175
Moldova/178
Mongolia/179
Morocco/Western Sahara/180
Mozambique/182
Myanmar/184
Namibia/186
Nepal/187
New Zealand/189
Nicaragua/190
Niger/191
Nigeria/191
Pakistan/194
Palestinian Authority/196
Papua New Guinea/198
Paraguay/199
Peru/200
Philippines/202
Poland/203
Portugal/204
Romania/206
Russian Federation/208
Rwanda/212
Saudi Arabia/214
Senegal/217
Serbia and Montenegro/218
Sierra Leone/221
Singapore/223
Slovakia/224
Slovenia/225
Solomon Islands/226
Somalia/227
South Africa/229

Spain/231
Sri Lanka/233
Sudan/235
Swaziland/238
Sweden/240
Switzerland/241
Syria/243
Taiwan/246
Tajikistan/247
Tanzania/248
Thailand/249
Timor-Leste/251

Togo/252
Trinidad and Tobago/253
Tunisia/254
Turkey/256
Turkmenistan/259
Uganda/261
Ukraine/263
United Arab Emirates/264
United Kingdom/265
United States of America/268
Uruguay/272
Uzbekistan/273
Venezuela/275
Viet Nam/276
Yemen/278
Zambia/280
Zimbabwe/281

PART 3

What does AI do?/287
Contact AI/291
Selected international human rights treaties/295
Selected regional human rights treaties/305

FOREWORD

By Irene Khan, Secretary General, Amnesty International

Last September in a makeshift camp outside El Jeniena in Darfur, Sudan, I listened to a woman describe the attack on her village by government-supported militia. So many men were killed that there were none left to bury the dead, and women had to carry out that sad task. I listened to young girls who had been raped by the militia and then abandoned by their own communities. I listened to men who had lost everything except their sense of dignity. These were ordinary, rural people. They may not have understood the niceties of “human rights”, but they knew the meaning of “justice”. They could not comprehend why the world was not moved to action by their plight.

It was yet another example of the lethal combination of indifference, erosion and impunity that marks the human rights landscape today. Human rights are not only a promise unfulfilled, they are a promise betrayed.

Take, for instance, the failure to move from rhetoric to reality on economic and social rights. Despite the promises in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international human rights treaties that every person shall have the right to an adequate standard of living and access to food, water, shelter, education, work and health care, more than a billion people lack clean water, 121 million children do not go to school, most of the 25 million people suffering from HIV/AIDS in Africa have no access to health care, and half a million women die every year during pregnancy or childbirth. The poor are also more likely to be victims of crime and police brutality.

In September 2000, world leaders adopted the Millennium Declaration, with human rights as a central thread, and a set of Millennium Development Goals, which established some concrete and achievable targets by 2015. They cover issues such as HIV/AIDS, illiteracy, poverty, child and maternal mortality, and development aid. But progress on the Goals has been agonizingly slow and woefully inadequate. They cannot be achieved without a firm commitment to equal respect for all human rights – economic, social and cultural as well as civil and political.

The indifference, apathy and impunity that allow violence against millions of women to persist is shocking. In countries around the world women suffer many forms of violence including genital mutilation, rape, beatings by partners, and killings in the name of honour. Thanks to the efforts of women's groups, there are now international treaties and mechanisms, laws and policies designed to protect women, but they fall still far short of what is required. In addition, there is a real danger of a backlash against women's human rights from conservative and fundamentalist elements.

Women's human rights are not the only casualty of the assault on fundamental values that is shaking the human rights world. Nowhere has this been more damaging than in the efforts by the US administration to weaken the absolute ban on torture.

In 1973 AI published its first report on torture. It found that: “torture thrives on secrecy and impunity. Torture rears its head when the legal barriers against it are barred. Torture feeds on discrimination and fear. Torture gains ground when official condemnation of it is less than absolute.” The pictures of detainees in US custody in Abu Ghraib, Iraq, show that what was true 30 years ago remains true today.

Despite the near-universal outrage generated by the photographs coming out of Abu Ghraib, and the evidence suggesting that such practices are being applied to other prisoners held by the USA in Afghanistan, Guantánamo and elsewhere, neither the US administration nor the US Congress has called for a full and independent investigation.

Instead, the US government has gone to great lengths to restrict the application of the Geneva Conventions and to “re-define” torture. It has sought to justify the use of coercive interrogation techniques, the practice of holding “ghost detainees” (people in unacknowledged incommunicado detention) and the “rendering” or handing over of prisoners to third countries known to practise torture. The detention facility at Guantánamo Bay has become the gulag of our times, entrenching the practice of arbitrary and indefinite detention in violation of international law. Trials by military commissions have made a mockery of justice and due process.

The USA, as the unrivalled political, military and economic hyper-power, sets the tone for governmental behaviour worldwide. When the most powerful country in the world thumbs its nose at the rule of law and human rights, it grants a licence to others to commit abuse with impunity and audacity. From Israel to Uzbekistan, Egypt to Nepal, governments have openly defied human rights and

international humanitarian law in the name of national security and "counter-terrorism".

Sixty years ago, out of the ashes of the Second World War, a new world order came into being, putting respect for human rights alongside peace, security and development as the primary objectives of the UN. Today, the UN appears unable and unwilling to hold its member states to account.

In the latest incident of paralysis, the UN Security Council has failed to muster the will to take effective action on Darfur. In this case it was held hostage to China's oil interests and Russia's trade in arms. The outcome is that poorly equipped African Union monitors stand by helplessly and bear witness to war crimes and crimes against humanity. It remains to be seen whether the UN Security Council will act on the recommendation of the International Commission of Inquiry to refer Darfur to the International Criminal Court.

The UN Commission on Human Rights has become a forum for horse-trading on human rights. Last year, the Commission dropped Iraq from scrutiny, could not agree on action on Chechnya, Nepal or Zimbabwe, and was silent on Guantánamo Bay.

At the national level, the ability of the state to protect human rights is in crisis. In some places, armed groups – warlords, criminal gangs or clan chiefs – hold sway over people's lives. In many countries, governance has been undermined by corruption, mismanagement, abuse of power and political violence. In a globalized economy, it is increasingly international trade agreements, international financial institutions and big business which are setting the terms. And yet there are few mechanisms for addressing their impact on human rights, and even fewer appropriate systems for accountability.

The time has come for a sober reappraisal of what needs to be done to revive the human rights system and our faith in its abiding values. That is the import of the judgments of the US Supreme Court on Guantánamo detainees and the UK Law Lords on indefinite detention without charge or trial of "terrorist suspects". That is the message of the spontaneous and massive turnout of millions of people in Spain protesting against the Madrid bombings, the popular uprisings in Georgia and Ukraine, and the growing debate on change in the Middle East.

Within the UN too, the appointment of a new High Commissioner for Human Rights in 2004, and the report commissioned by the UN Secretary-General from a High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, created an environment conducive to reform and renewal of the human rights system. This must be based on shared values and goals, on the rule of law rather than arbitrary power, on global cooperation rather than unilateral adventurism.

The credibility of the international human rights system rests on its ability to reassert the primacy of human rights, and their centrality in tackling the full range of threats to international peace and security. The leadership challenge for the UN and its member states is clear:

- Reaffirm and reassert human rights as embodying the common values and universal standards of human decency and dignity, equality and justice. Acknowledge them as the basis for our common security, not a barrier to it.
- Resist all efforts to water down the absolute ban on torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. Torture is unlawful, and morally reprehensible. It dehumanizes the victim and the perpetrator. It is the ultimate corruption of humanity. If the international community allows this fundamental pillar to be eroded, it cannot hope to salvage the rest.
- Condemn unequivocally human rights abuses by those who have taken humanity to new depths of bestiality and brutality by blowing up commuter trains in Madrid, taking school children hostage in Beslan, and beheading humanitarian workers in Iraq, but stand firm on the governments' responsibility to bring them to justice within the rule of law and the framework of human rights. Respect for human rights is the best antidote for "terrorism".
- Close the impunity and accountability deficit in human rights. At the national level, a full and independent investigation of the use of torture and other human rights abuses by US officials will go a long way to restoring confidence that true justice has no double standards. At the international level, the International Criminal Court must be supported to become an efficient deterrent for atrocious crimes and an effective lever to advance human rights.
- Listen to the voices of the victims, and respond to their cry for justice. UN Security Council members should commit themselves not to use the veto in dealing with genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes or other large-scale human rights abuses. They should promote an international treaty and other means to control the trade in small arms which kill half a million people every year.
- Reform the UN's human rights machinery urgently and radically in order to improve its legitimacy, efficiency and effectiveness. In particular, strengthen the capacity of the UN and regional organizations to protect people at risk of human rights abuse.
- Link the achievement of the quantitatively formulated Millennium Development Goals to the qualitative achievement of human rights, particularly economic and social rights, and equality for women. Bring corporate and financial actors into the framework of accountability for human rights.
- Protect human rights activists who are increasingly threatened and labelled as subversives. The space

for liberal thought is shrinking, and intolerance is on the rise. Be vigilant in protecting civil society, because the pursuit of freedom depends on it as much as on the rule of law, an independent judiciary, free media and elected governments.

Will governments and the UN take up this agenda? Now more than ever human rights activists must play their part, mobilizing public opinion to put pressure on governments and international organizations. In very different ways in the course of 2004, popular mobilization for the victims of the Madrid bombings and the Indian Ocean tsunami showed the power of ordinary people to promote hope over fear, action over inaction and solidarity over indifference. Amnesty International believes in the power of ordinary people to bring about extraordinary change, and with our members and supporters we will continue in 2005 to campaign for justice and freedom for all. We remain the eternal hope-mongers.

INTRODUCTION

RESPONSIBILITIES HAVE NO BORDERS

"When the institutions of collective security respond in an ineffective and inequitable manner, they reveal a much deeper truth about which threats matter. Our institutions of collective security must not just assert that a threat to one is truly a threat to all, but perform accordingly."

Report of the UN High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, December 2004

One of the defining events of 2004 happened in its closing days. On 26 December, in the seas off Indonesia, a powerful earthquake sent a series of deadly waves across the Indian Ocean, striking the shores of Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India, Thailand, Malaysia, Myanmar and east Africa. The devastation that followed was almost beyond comprehension. Nearly 300,000 people were killed, around 100,000 were missing and presumed dead, and over five million others were left homeless, hungry and at risk of disease.

The tsunami and its aftermath brought home our global interconnectedness and shared vulnerability. In a year in which "terrorism" dominated the international agenda, the disaster highlighted how the most devastating threats to security arise from a much greater range of sources than the suicide bomber. Whether environmental, political or economic in nature, today's most pervasive threats to human rights and human security are international in scope – they cannot be dealt with exclusively by individual countries, but require globally coordinated action.

The global response to the tsunami was just as striking in its scale and impact. Unprecedented levels of empathy and solidarity were shown by people around the world towards those with whom they seemingly shared nothing more than space on the planet. Everywhere, people were united in grieving and giving. Media outlets, weblogs and other new and informal media instantaneously linked people to the events and each other. The actions and generosity of citizens and non-governmental organizations embarrassed donor governments into substantially increasing their promised aid and assistance.

At least initially, the worldwide reaction to the disaster was cause for cautious optimism about an emerging sense of global citizenship. There were signs of an increased awareness that only multilateral action can contribute to global shared security. As 2004 drew to a close, the international community appeared to have recognized that in this age of globalization, the responsibility to protect human security transcends the borders of the nation state.

However, the reaction to the tsunami of the international community, including the response of ordinary people, was painfully at odds with the failure to deal effectively with other global crises which throughout 2004 left comparable numbers of victims in their wake. Economic interests, political hypocrisy and socially orchestrated discrimination continued to fan the flames of conflict around the world. The so-called "war on terror" appeared more effective in eroding the international framework of human rights principles than in countering the threat of international "terrorism". The security of women facing gender-based violence in the home, in the community or in situations of conflict barely received attention. The economic, social and cultural rights of marginalized communities continued to be largely ignored.

Armed conflict

"When we tried to escape they shot more children. They raped women; I saw many cases of Janjawid raping women and girls. They are happy when they rape. They sing when they rape and they tell us that we are just slaves and that they can do with us how they wish."

A., aged 37, from Mukjar in Darfur, Sudan

The failure of the community of nations to address human rights crises appropriately and effectively was seen most clearly in Sudan's Darfur region, where another humanitarian tragedy on a vast scale unfolded throughout 2004. Unlike the tsunami, this tragedy was not one of nature; it was man-made. And in this instance, the international community made relatively little effort to stop or alleviate the suffering.

Throughout the year, countless women and girls in Darfur were raped, abducted and forced into sexual slavery by the Janjawid, nomad militias armed, paid and supported by the Sudanese government. The mass rapes, including gang rapes of school children, were clearly war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The Janjawid, often dressed in Sudanese military uniform and accompanied by the Sudanese army, also burned villages, killed civilians and pillaged property and livestock. The Sudanese air force added to

the suffering by bombing villages, while the security forces routinely tortured those in their custody, often by heavy beatings with hoses, whips or boots and sometimes by ripping out nails or burning with cigarettes. By the end of the year, the conflict had forced more than one and a half million people to flee their homes, their villages destroyed, their herds and possessions looted. Nearly every village in the region was devastated. During the final months of the year the scale of the crisis in Darfur escalated, with attacks on civilians mainly by government forces and government-supported militias, fighting between government and rebel forces, and attacks on humanitarian convoys.

The brutality in Darfur was a critical test of the ability of the UN to respond effectively to major human rights crises. And, again, the UN failed the test. "Safe areas" designated by the Sudanese government and the UN for the internally displaced of Darfur, for example, proved to be anything but safe. Monitored by the government's security and military intelligence, the displaced people remained vulnerable to arbitrary arrests, rape and killings by government security forces. When the El-Geer camp was bulldozed and residents were assaulted and tear-gassed, with UN and African Union (AU) representatives present, the protests of the international officials were simply ignored.

Meanwhile, three UN Security Council resolutions in less than six months showed the UN largely failing the people of Darfur. It appeared that human rights protection sat awkwardly with attempts to secure a peace deal for the North-South conflict. By adopting a resolution in November that failed to send a strong message that human rights violations would not be tolerated, it is likely that the Security Council created the impression that the Sudanese government could act with impunity. The deployment of the enhanced AU Mission in Darfur had not, by the close of 2004, resulted in improved security and protection for civilians. Nor had it acted as a deterrent to attacks.

Despite clear international awareness of the abuses being committed in Darfur, a long list of governments knowingly or unwittingly allowed arms to be sent to the country that were then used by the Sudanese government forces and allied militias to commit atrocities. Calls by human rights groups for an arms embargo to end military and related supplies reaching all parties went unheeded, and the establishment of an international investigation to examine evidence of war crimes and crimes against humanity was only agreed at the end of 2004. The international community had at its disposal tools that could have saved lives and prevented suffering; the simple truth was that it chose not to use them. Instead, the violence and abuse in Darfur illustrated, starkly and bleakly, the continued failure of the UN Security Council – under strong pressure from some of its members – to prevent and punish crimes against humanity and war crimes.

In 2004 Darfur was not the only place where human rights became a casualty of the narrow interests of powerful states. The US-led military intervention in Iraq, justified in the name of security, left millions of Iraqis feeling deeply insecure as they faced widespread violence and growing poverty. In Chechnya, the conflict continued into a sixth year. Reports emerged of torture, rape and other sexual abuse of Chechen women by Russian soldiers. To cite just one case, 23-year-old Madina (not her real name) was detained by Russian federal forces on suspicion of being a suicide bomber. A mother with one child, she was kept incommunicado and allegedly tortured for two weeks at the Russian military base in Khankala. Madina told AI: "They warned me on the first day that I would be begging to be dead. But at that time I really wanted to live because I have my baby... I could not imagine that I would ask them for death... But on that day... exhausted, tired, breathless, I started to ask them to shoot me."

In 2004 people who had given up hope of securing justice in Russia and sought redress through the European Court of Human Rights found themselves deliberately targeted by the authorities, as did human rights defenders and activists who attempted to speak out within the region against injustice.

Half a world away, in Haiti, armed government opponents, led by men convicted of committing serious violations under the de facto military dictatorship of the early 1990s, attacked state institutions in February. Following the departure of President Jean Bertrand Aristide, a Multinational Interim Force arrived, mandated by the UN Security Council to help ensure law and order and protect human rights. Even though disarmament of armed groups and the re-establishment of the rule of law were clearly essential to ensure the safety of civilians, neither the Multinational Interim Force nor the interim government made any credible attempts to initiate comprehensive nationwide disarmament programmes.

Individuals responsible for serious human rights violations in Haiti steadily regained positions of authority. Devastating floods, and further outbreaks of violence in September and October, underlined the need for the international community to tackle the humanitarian and human rights crisis in the country.

The human rights situation deteriorated in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. There was an increase in killings and destructions of homes by the Israeli army in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Attacks by Palestinian armed groups against Israeli civilians continued.

The civil war in Côte d'Ivoire, meanwhile, was a reminder of how easily a country can lurch back into war if the root causes of conflict are left unaddressed. In November the Ivorian armed forces bombed the rebel-held town of Bouaké in the north of the country, breaking an 18-month ceasefire. In the aftermath, in the capital Abidjan, there

were indiscriminate attacks and violence against civilians, notably French and other foreign nationals who had lived in the country in some cases for decades. The violence was fuelled by xenophobia and allegedly led to rapes of some French and other foreign women by Ivorian civilians. In response to anti-French demonstrations, French troops, who were under a UN peacekeeping force mandate, used excessive force against civilians, most of them unarmed, and shot dead at least 15 of them. Other civilians were killed apparently while fleeing the shooting.

One of the major factors that fuels the continuation of wars is the proliferation of arms. Easy availability of weaponry and munitions tends to increase the incidence of armed violence, to prolong wars once they break out, and to enable grave and widespread abuses of human rights. The majority of current armed conflicts could not be sustained without the supply of small arms and light weapons and associated ammunition.

In Colombia's 40-year armed conflict, where rape and other sexual crimes have been committed by all parties to the conflict, military equipment, including large quantities of small arms, have been supplied in the past few years to the Colombian authorities by the USA, Israel, Brazil, France, Germany, Spain, South Africa, the Czech Republic and Italy. The failure to control the international arms trade has also enabled guerrilla groups to obtain large supplies of arms.

Most governments are still failing in their duty to take stringent measures to prevent the flow of arms to those who openly flaunt international human rights and humanitarian laws. A comprehensive international framework of controls is needed to close the loopholes that allow weapons and munitions to get into the wrong hands. That is why AI has joined forces with Oxfam and the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) in the Control Arms campaign, to work towards tighter controls, including an international Arms Trade Treaty.

Another characteristic of contemporary conflict is the role of powerful economic interests in fanning the flames and reaping the profits of conflict and militarization. As more conflicts are fought over natural resources in the future, the role of corporate actors will be all the more significant and decisive.

The role of external players in prolonging conflict can be seen starkly in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), where more than three million civilians have been killed or have died from hunger and disease since August 1998. This conflict has been characterized by illegal killings, torture and rape by forces on all sides, and by the intervention of other states and international corporations in pursuit of their own interests, regardless of the human costs. Many countries have continued to supply arms to the DRC, often arranged and delivered by international arms brokering networks using circuitous routes to breach the UN arms embargo on the DRC.

In 2004, almost all of eastern DRC, where numerous armed groups are fighting for control of the land and its resources, remained under the de facto control of different armed groups or militia. Unlawful killings and torture persisted. Men, women and children were attacked with machetes, homemade weapons and small arms. Sexual violence was used as a weapon of war. There was extensive looting and destruction of homes, fields, schools, medical and nutritional centres, and religious institutions. All armed forces used children as soldiers.

2004 witnessed horrific levels of gender-based violence committed with impunity against women of all ages, including very young girls, in the DRC. A young woman who was twice raped during the DRC conflict told AI: "In the community they made such fun of me that I had to leave the village and live in the forest... I am hungry, I have no clothes and no soap. I don't have any money to pay for medical care. It would be better if I died with the baby in my womb."

The scale of rape has created a human rights and health crisis requiring both an immediate and a long-term response. Yet although tens of thousands of women, children and even babies, as well as men, were systematically raped and tortured in eastern DRC, the government and international community failed to develop an organized or comprehensive response to assist survivors.

Violence against women

The DRC and Darfur were not exceptional in terms of the widespread abuse of women and girls. In other armed conflicts around the world, women and girls were raped or otherwise sexually attacked, mutilated and humiliated.

Those who committed the abuses were many and varied: soldiers of the state's armed forces; pro-government paramilitary groups or militias; armed groups fighting the government or at war with other armed groups; the police, prison guards or private security and military personnel; military forces stationed abroad, including UN and other peacekeeping forces; staff of humanitarian agencies; neighbours and relatives.

When AI launched its campaign to Stop Violence Against Women in March 2004, one of its pivotal aims was to end impunity for crimes of violence against women in conflict, building on the progress made by international tribunals and the International Criminal Court in identifying such crimes.

The campaign also seeks to demonstrate that the violence women suffer in conflict is an extreme manifestation of the discrimination and abuse they face in peacetime, when such attitudes contribute to the widespread acceptance of domestic violence, rape and other forms of sexual abuse against women. When political tensions degenerate into outright conflict, all forms of violence increase, including rape and other forms of sexual violence against women.

Many of the conflicts of 2004 were based on perceived racial, ethnic, religious, cultural and political differences, and set community against community. In such contexts, sexual violence was often used as a weapon of war, with the torture of women being seen as a means to attack the community's "honour". Moreover, most of the conflicts were internal – between governments and armed groups, or between several competing armed groups, rather than

between professional national armies. As a result, there was little chance that many of the atrocities suffered by women would be punished as it is notoriously difficult to hold armed groups to account for abuses.

During 2004, AI produced several reports to highlight different aspects of violence against women around the world. One focused on Turkey, where between a third and a half of all women are estimated to be victims of physical violence within their families. They are hit, raped and in some cases even killed or forced to commit suicide. Young girls are bartered and forced into early marriage. Husbands, brothers, fathers and sons are responsible for most of these abuses. This violence is widely tolerated and even endorsed by community leaders and at the highest levels of the government and judiciary. The authorities rarely carry out thorough investigations into women's complaints about violent attacks or murders or apparent suicides of women. Courts still reduce the sentences of rapists if they promise to marry their victim, despite recent moves by the government to end the practice.

Another report issued by AI in 2004 looked at the trafficking of girls and women into Kosovo for forced prostitution. It showed that many of the young women and girls come from the poorest countries of Europe and are vulnerable because of economic deprivation or because they have already been physically abused. They dream of a better life, which the traffickers use when offering them "work" in the West. But instead of getting a proper job, they find themselves trapped, enslaved, forced into prostitution. With clients including international police and troops, the women and girls are often too afraid to escape and the authorities fail to help them.

In countries around the world, poverty and marginalization continue to fuel violence against women. Women have a higher incidence of poverty than men; their poverty is more severe than that of men; and increasing numbers of women are poor. While globalization has opened up opportunities for women, it has also had negative effects. It has left more and more women trapped on the margins of society. Such women find it extremely difficult to escape abusive situations and to obtain protection and redress.

When AI launched its Stop Violence Against Women campaign, it deliberately set out to work with local women's groups in their own countries as well as with the international women's movements in order to build a new constituency for human rights. Women throughout the world have organized to expose and counter violence against women. They have achieved dramatic changes in laws, policies and practices. Above all, they have challenged the view of women as passive victims of violence.

One of the achievements of women's rights activists has been to demonstrate that violence against women is a human rights violation. This changes the perception of violence against women from a private matter to one of public concern and means that public authorities are required to take action. The parallel development of international and regional human rights standards reinforces this accountability. Women's rights activists were central to ensuring that the founding statute of the International Criminal Court explicitly recognizes rape and other forms of sexual violence as crimes against humanity and as war crimes. In December 2004 the International Criminal Court announced that its first investigation would examine allegations of mass murder, summary execution, rape, torture, forced displacement, and the use of children as soldiers in the DRC.

AI's campaign to Stop Violence Against Women aims to show that women's self-organization, bolstered by the solidarity and support of the human rights movement, is the most effective way to overcome violence against women. The campaign is designed to mobilize both men and women and to use the power and persuasion of the human rights framework to end violence against women.

'Terror', 'counter-terror' and the rule of law

"Then [the guard] brought a box of food and he made me stand on it, and he started punishing me. Then a tall black soldier came and put electrical wires on my fingers and toes and on my penis, and I had a bag over my head. Then he was saying 'which switch is on for electricity?' "

Iraqi detainee, Abu Ghraib prison, 16 January 2004 (statement given to US military investigators, obtained by *The Washington Post*)

US President George W. Bush has repeatedly asserted that the USA was founded upon and is dedicated to the cause of human dignity. It was a theme of his speech to the UN General Assembly in September 2004. Yet during his first term of office, the USA proved to be far from the global human rights champion it proclaimed itself to be.

These double standards were perhaps most vividly captured by the appalling photographs from Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq – a detainee, hooded, balanced on a box, arms outstretched, wires dangling from his hands with electric torture threatened; a naked man cowering in terror against the bars of a cell as soldiers threaten him with snarling dogs; and soldiers smiling, apparently confident of their impunity, over detainees forced into sexually humiliating poses.

The Abu Ghraib photographs prompted official investigations and reviews by the US authorities, but none was comprehensive in scope or had the independence or reach needed to investigate the role of the Secretary of Defense or agencies, departments or individual office holders outside the Pentagon. Moreover, a series of government memorandums that emerged after the Abu Ghraib scandal broke – which suggested that the administration was discussing ways in which its agents could avoid the international ban on torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment – indicated that the US administration's stated opposition to torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment was

paper-thin.

Throughout 2004, violence was endemic in Iraq, whether in the form of unlawful killings, torture and other violations by US-led Coalition troops and Iraqi security forces, or attacks against civilians and others by armed groups. Delivery of aid and reconstruction assistance was debilitated by the violence. Millions suffered the consequences of destroyed infrastructure, mass unemployment and uncertainty about their future. Dozens of hostages were brutally killed, some beheaded on film that subsequently received worldwide media attention. Criminal gangs kidnapped scores of Iraqis, especially children, for ransom. And there was little or no progress in bringing to justice those responsible for past and present human rights abuses.

Meanwhile, the main human rights body of the UN ignored the crisis in Iraq. In April, the UN Commission on Human Rights decided to discontinue its review of the situation in Iraq at a time when monitoring, assistance and cooperation were of crucial importance to a successful transition from a brutal dictatorship to a government respectful of human rights. By doing so, the Commission showed yet again it had no stomach for confronting grave abuses of human rights in the face of intransigent governments.

In June, in a resolution unanimously adopted on the transfer of power in Iraq, the UN Security Council included a commitment by all forces in the country to act in accordance with international law, including their obligations under international humanitarian law. However, a crucial opportunity to make clear the specific obligations of the multinational force and the Iraqi authorities under international human rights and humanitarian law was missed. A proposal to state these obligations in unambiguous terms and include them in the binding part of the resolution was blocked by the drafters of the resolution – the USA and the UK – even though a majority of Security Council members supported the proposal.

Meanwhile, Afghanistan slipped into a downward spiral of lawlessness and instability. Anti-government forces, which were aligned to the Taliban, carried out violent attacks on election staff and aid workers. Throughout the country, levels of violence against women were extremely high, and there were ongoing allegations of human rights violations including torture and ill-treatment by the US military in US-managed detention facilities.

The human rights abuses in Iraq and Afghanistan were far from being the only negative repercussions of the response to the terrible events of 11 September 2001. Since that day, the framework of international human rights standards has been attacked and undermined by both governments and armed groups.

The USA continued to hold hundreds of foreign detainees without charge or trial in the US naval base in Guantánamo Bay in Cuba. The refusal of the US authorities to apply the Geneva Conventions to the detainees and to allow detainees access to legal counsel or the courts violated international law and standards and caused serious suffering to detainees and their families. The ruling by the US Supreme Court in June that the US courts have jurisdiction to consider challenges to the lawfulness of such detentions appeared to be a step towards restoring the rule of law for the detainees, but the US administration sought to empty the ruling of any real meaning in order to keep the detainees in legal limbo. The USA also failed to clarify the fate or whereabouts of detainees that it held in secret detention in other countries.

Such serious abuses carried out by a country as powerful as the USA created a dangerous climate. The US administration's unilateralism and selectivity sent a permissive signal to abusive governments around the world. There is strong evidence that the global security agenda pursued since 11 September 2001, the US-led "war on terror", and the USA's selective disregard for international law encouraged and fuelled abuses by governments and others in all regions of the world.

In many countries, new doctrines of security continued to stretch the concept of "war" into areas formerly considered law enforcement, promoting the notion that human rights can be curtailed when it comes to the detention, interrogation and prosecution of "terrorist" suspects.

The "security excuse", whereby governments curtailed and abused human rights under the cloak of the "war on terror", was particularly apparent in a number of countries in Asia and Europe. For example, thousands of members of the ethnic Uighur community were arrested in China as "separatists, terrorists and religious extremists". In Gujarat, India, hundreds of members of the Muslim community continued to be held under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. In Uzbekistan, the authorities rounded up and detained hundreds of people said to be devout Muslims or their relatives, and sentenced many people accused of "terrorism-related" offences to long prison terms following unfair trials. In the USA, there have been reprehensible attempts by officials to argue that torture was not torture, or that the USA bore no responsibility for torture carried out in other countries, even if it had sent the victim there.

Despite widespread "counter-terrorist" measures aimed at securing nation states and their citizens, armed groups in many countries launched appalling acts of violence designed to increase levels of insecurity. The massacre of hundreds of people on their morning train journey to work in the Spanish capital Madrid in March, or the taking hostage of hundreds of

families, including children, in the middle of a festive school event in Beslan, Russian Federation, in September, showed complete contempt for the most fundamental principles of humanity.

Governments have a duty to prevent and punish such atrocities, but they must do so while fully respecting human rights. Not only is it a moral and legal imperative to observe fundamental human rights all the more stringently in the face of such security threats, in practice it is far more likely to be effective in the long term. Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms is not optional in efforts to defeat "terrorism". States' efforts to combat "terrorism" must be firmly and unconditionally grounded in the rule of law and respect for human rights.

The establishment of the International Criminal Court opens a number of new avenues for pursuing international criminal prosecutions, including against armed groups, although it will only be able to investigate and prosecute a limited number of cases itself. The continued opposition of the US administration to the International Criminal Court is therefore counter-productive to its own stated aim of countering "terrorism". The International Criminal Court needs strong political and practical support to be able to deliver justice for international crimes committed by armed groups or governments.

Economic and social insecurity

The persistence of poverty – more than a billion people live in extreme poverty – remained perhaps the gravest threat to human rights and collective security. The fact that so many people live in inhuman conditions, and that the gap between rich and poor is widening between and within countries, directly contradicts the notion that all human beings are born equal in dignity and rights.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international human rights treaties hold out the promise of a life with dignity, where every person enjoys an adequate standard of living and access to those essentials that give practical meaning to such a life – including food, water, shelter, education, work and health care.

These fundamental economic and social entitlements must be recognized as rights on an equal footing with the right not to be tortured or arbitrarily detained. Until the corresponding obligations are built into public policy at the national and international levels, efforts to tackle poverty will remain tokenistic and ineffectual.

In several countries, economic and social rights have been invoked successfully in efforts to remedy injustices. For example, the human rights framework has been used to confront the forced eviction of slum dwellers in the Angolan capital Luanda and the political manipulation of food shortages by the Zimbabwean government. In 2004 AI supported efforts in these countries to claim the right to housing and the right to food.

AI's work throughout the year also highlighted how poverty, marginalization and exclusion deprive people of the conditions for enjoying other rights, including freedom of expression and access to a fair trial. The relative powerlessness of the poor leaves them vulnerable to the arbitrary exercise of state power, from repressive policing in urban shanty towns to the denial of access to essential public services.

The UN Millennium Declaration set a range of targets, later complemented by the Millennium Development Goals, which include halving extreme poverty, promoting women's equality and reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS by 2015. The Millennium Development Goals should be seen not as a limited aspiration for selected countries, but as an opportunity to advance a broader range of economic and social rights obligations which apply to all states and to the international community as a whole. They should provide the context for promoting transnational obligations for human rights which should inform international decision-making on policy and practice in the fields of trade, aid and debt.

In 2004 these obligations continued to be woefully neglected in the international forums and global governance institutions charged with these matters. An indication of the relative neglect of economic, social and cultural rights was the slow progress made within the UN human rights system in adopting a new mechanism to hear complaints of violations of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Despite renewed momentum generated by non-governmental organizations and sympathetic governments, such a mechanism remains a distant prospect.

Another indication of the shortcomings of existing global governance structures is the lack of acceptance that corporate actors have human rights responsibilities. December marked the 20th anniversary of the gas leak in Bhopal, India, which left 20,000 people dead and 100,000 living with chronic illnesses. Twenty years on, the tragedy and contaminated environment continue to ruin the lives of the surrounding communities. The companies involved, Union Carbide Corporation (UCC) and Dow Chemicals, have still not cleaned up the site or stopped pollution that started when the plant opened in the 1970s. Survivors are still waiting for just compensation and adequate medical care. No one has been

held to account for the toxic leak. Dow Chemicals and UCC both deny legal responsibility, with UCC refusing to appear before Indian courts to face trial.

Businesses provide employment for countless millions of people and constitute the driving force in most national economies today. Companies therefore exercise tremendous influence and power, and many businesses have a global reach. Corporate activities have significant effects on the human rights of those they influence. In many countries government regulation and enforcement are inadequate to protect individuals when corporate activities harm workforces or communities. National systems are often unable or unwilling to hold companies operating in their countries accountable. The complex structure of multinationals can create obstacles for local courts in exercising jurisdiction over abuses committed by a corporation with headquarters outside the country.

Most companies oppose any move towards binding international regulations, although many businesses operate across boundaries in a way that exceeds the regulatory power of any one state. Voluntary codes and initiatives such as the Global Compact, the international network in support of responsible corporate citizenship, can be useful in promoting good practice, but have failed to reduce the negative consequences of corporate behaviour on human rights.

In 2004 the process to codify the human rights responsibilities of transnational corporations and related business enterprises gained momentum in the UN.

UN reform

2004 revealed the inadequacy of the UN's response to global human rights challenges, and the need for more effective and impartial mechanisms for human rights protection.

The UN came under strong criticism during 2004, some of it justified, some of it aimed at weakening the UN itself. AI believes that the role of the UN remains central to the protection and promotion of human rights, but needs to be strengthened through constructive reform of its human rights machinery. In order to recapture people's trust in the language of human rights, and to strengthen efforts to improve human security, the UN must reform. Governments must recognize that sidelining human rights creates greater insecurity, and greater scope for abuse.

The need for reform was recognized in the report of the UN High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change – *A more secure world: Our shared responsibility* – published in December 2004. The report provides a critical opportunity to strengthen the UN and to re-establish the central importance of human rights and the rule of law in tackling complex global threats and challenges. The governments that make up the UN must use this chance to strengthen human rights protection and promotion in the UN system by giving human rights the authoritative position which the UN Charter requires and by providing the UN's human rights machinery with the necessary political and financial support.

AI believes that the following reforms, among many others, are needed. In developing a comprehensive, principled "counter-terrorism" strategy, the UN must integrate human rights as a central component. The Security Council must be encouraged to address the human rights deficit in the work of its Counter-Terrorism Committee so that the instruments and measures it promotes remain strictly within a legal framework that is respectful of human rights.

The Security Council should invite the High Commissioner for Human Rights to participate routinely in relevant thematic and country debates. The High Commissioner has an invaluable contribution to make to the Security Council's debates, including on the mandates of peace operations, on early warning, and on the effective implementation of human rights-related provisions in its resolutions.

The Security Council's Permanent Members should commit themselves not to use the veto when dealing with genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes or other large-scale human rights abuses.

The Commission on Human Rights – the legitimacy of which has been undermined by the political manoeuvrings of its members – should be reformed to ensure the most effective protection and promotion of human rights in all countries at all times. Any proposal to expand membership of the Commission to include all UN member states should be undertaken only as part of a comprehensive strategy to strengthen the UN human rights machinery. Any institutional changes must ensure that the role of non-governmental organizations is maintained.

Governments should substantially increase financial support for the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. The lack of sustained and adequate financial support (it receives only two per cent of the UN budget) has hampered the human rights programme's ability to attract the stable, professional resources that are essential for effective work.

The High-level Panel's report on UN reform discusses the issue of shared responsibilities towards human rights, but the debate is framed largely in terms of a duty to intervene militarily in the case of mass human rights abuses. AI believes that this narrow focus is both limited and dangerous. The international responsibility to respect, protect and fulfil human rights goes well beyond the use of military force in so-called humanitarian interventions and covers a much broader range of obligations. These include:

taking early measures to prevent conflict; not selling arms to states that violate human rights; providing asylum to refugees fleeing persecution; and helping other states combat problems such as endemic inequalities, poverty and HIV/AIDS.

A challenging year

Human rights activists had a difficult year in 2004. The disturbing pictures of torture in Abu Ghraib highlighted the need to defend principles once thought inviolable, like the prohibition of torture. The prevalence of horrific sexual violence against women in conflicts was a reminder of how rapidly men thrown into battle are dehumanized, and how consistently women and girls are targeted. The escalating levels of xenophobia in many countries showed the importance of confronting every manifestation of racism. These, and many other problems, revealed the scale of the challenges facing human rights defenders around the world.

However, there were grounds for optimism. Five countries – Bhutan, Greece, Samoa, Senegal and Turkey – joined the growing list of states that have abolished the death penalty for all crimes. Prisoners of conscience were released in several countries. The International Criminal Court continued to make progress, providing new hope of justice for victims of horrendous crimes.

Around the world, vast numbers of ordinary people demonstrated the power and influence of civil society. The World Social Forum in Mumbai, India, in January; the European Social Forum in London, UK, in November; the widening debate on human rights in the Middle East; and the protests on the streets of Ukraine in December, were all examples of solidarity in action. The millions who massed on the streets of Madrid to protest against the train bombings showed the power of ordinary people to mobilize, to claim their right to live free from fear, to repudiate the acts of the "terrorist", and to demand that their governments be truthful and answerable to the people.

Global activism is a dynamic and growing force. It is also the best hope of achieving freedom and justice for all humanity.

AFRICA REGIONAL OVERVIEW 2004

Armed conflicts continued to bring widespread destruction to several parts of Africa in 2004, many of them fuelled by human rights violations. Refugees and internally displaced people faced appalling conditions. There were international initiatives to hold perpetrators of abuses accountable. Across the region, there was discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS, the vast majority of whom were denied the right to medical treatment. Political repression was widespread and human rights defenders came under attack. Pervasive violence against women was exacerbated by poverty and lack of access to health care and education.

Regional institutions, established to ensure respect for human rights, to carry out peacekeeping functions or to prevent and resolve conflicts, became operational. In addition, in January the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Establishment of an African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights entered into force. However, the Court was not fully established because a decision of the African Union (AU) Assembly to integrate it with the African Court of Justice caused considerable delays.

Governments reaffirmed commitments to promote and protect human rights. Yet broken promises, weak or collapsed criminal justice systems, corruption and illegal exploitation of resources contributed to deny basic rights to many.

Armed conflict

Killings, abductions and rape by government forces and armed opposition groups remained widespread in armed conflicts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Somalia, Sudan and Uganda. The progress made on a number of peace agreements remained fragile in Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire and Somalia, where sporadic outbreaks of violence persisted in localized areas.

The parties to the north-south warfare in Sudan made commitments to reach an overall peace agreement by the end of 2004. Wealth and power sharing agreements had already been signed, and interim security arrangements made. In stark contrast to these peace negotiations, thousands of people were killed or raped in the escalating conflict in Darfur, western Sudan, and hundreds of thousands driven from their homes, many of them by government supported militias. Ceasefire agreements were regularly violated by the various fighting forces.

In Somalia, in the final stages of a reconciliation process to end over a decade of state collapse and factional violence, a newly appointed President formed a government and a transitional parliament was created. Most of the faction leaders were made members of the newly formed government.

Eastern DRC remained volatile. Armed political groups continued to carry out killings, rapes and other torture of civilians, and occasionally resumed fighting with rival forces. The direct support of armed groups by neighbouring countries contributed to the persistent instability.

The role of peacekeeping missions in Africa expanded throughout 2004. The UN mission in Côte d'Ivoire and the African Mission in Burundi were transformed into UN peacekeeping missions, and additional troops strengthened the UN peacekeeping mission in the DRC. The AU Peace and Security Council sent a force to Darfur with a mandate to protect civilians. In spite of the increased presence of UN and AU forces on the ground, the protection of civilians often remained inadequate in Bukavu, DRC, or in Darfur.

The proliferation of small arms in the region continued to be a major cause of human rights abuses, and the UN Security Council declared an arms embargo against all non-governmental forces in Darfur. However, no proper monitoring mechanisms were put in place and the embargo was not extended to the Sudanese government, despite its direct responsibility for human rights violations. The Security Council also declared an arms embargo in Côte d'Ivoire but again failed to ensure adequate monitoring.

As armed conflicts ended, large-scale repatriation of refugees proceeded or was planned. In Burundi and Liberia, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees facilitated voluntary returns. In Angola, the repatriation of thousands of refugees continued. In countries with long-term refugee populations, such

as Tanzania, refugees often faced deteriorating living conditions, host governments reluctant to accept further refugees, and increased pressure to repatriate.

Conflicts such as in Darfur caused extensive displacement of people. The attack in August on Congolese refugees in a transit centre in Burundi, which killed more than 150 people, further demonstrated the need for enhanced protection of refugees and civilian populations in general.

International justice

There were important developments in addressing impunity for human rights violations in armed conflicts through the use of international justice mechanisms.

The governments of the DRC and Uganda referred war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in armed conflicts to the International Criminal Court (ICC), in the first cases in which ICC prosecutors would initiate such investigations. As the ICC can investigate and prosecute only a limited number of individual cases, there was still a need for comprehensive plans to end impunity for all such crimes, regardless of which side committed them and the perpetrator's level of responsibility. Uganda subsequently suggested that war crimes and crimes against humanity in Northern Uganda would be addressed in traditional reconciliation procedures, although its referrals to the ICC could not be withdrawn.

Trials started before the Special Court for Sierra Leone of people indicted for crimes against humanity, war crimes and other serious violations of international law, including rape, other forms of sexual violence and sexual slavery. The Court had previously ruled that the general amnesty granted in the 1999 Lomé peace agreement was "ineffective" in preventing it from prosecuting crimes against humanity and war crimes, and that Charles Taylor, former President of Liberia, had no immunity from prosecution. Charles Taylor, indicted for "bearing the greatest responsibility" for killings, mutilations, rape and other abuses through active support of armed opposition forces in Sierra Leone, remained in Nigeria. He had been granted refugee status, with apparent guarantees that he would be neither surrendered to the Special Court nor brought before Nigeria's own courts.

A commission of inquiry investigated reports of violations of international humanitarian law and human rights in Darfur following a Security Council resolution. Its brief included determining whether acts of genocide had occurred, and identifying the perpetrators with a view to ensuring accountability.

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights established an inquiry into reports of unlawful killings and excessive use of force against anti-government demonstrators in Côte d'Ivoire. Another international commission of inquiry, set up under the terms of the 2003 Linas-Marcoussis peace agreement in Côte d'Ivoire, had not yet reported publicly the findings of its investigations into human rights abuses since September 2002, which concluded during 2004. Its report was to be the basis for government prosecutions.

At the request of the Security Council, an assessment was made of the feasibility of establishing an International Judicial Commission of Inquiry in Burundi, as outlined in the 2000 Arusha peace agreement. Such an inquiry would investigate and determine responsibility for crimes under international law committed in the period between independence from colonial rule and signature of the peace agreement.

Violence against women

Women continued to be raped and subjected to other forms of sexual violence despite the ending of armed conflicts in the Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia. In Darfur and eastern DRC, such abuse was used as a weapon of war against women and girls who had already experienced years of violence. There was no safe haven for women, even in refugee camps. In the DRC, the collapse of the health system left survivors of rape without health care for sometimes fatal injuries and infections. This lack of even basic health care was common to many other states.

There was increasing evidence that the violence against women in conflicts and post-conflict situations was gender-based and an extreme manifestation of the discrimination and inequalities women experienced in peacetime. Women's physical integrity was threatened and their basic rights eroded on a daily basis. The violence that women faced in peacetime also contributed to a broad acceptance of violence in the home. In Nigeria, as in other countries, discrimination within the family and community was compounded by the existence of discriminatory laws.

Many girls living below the poverty line remained at risk of being enrolled as child soldiers, beaten, forced into sexual slavery, and even killed. In the DRC, there was continued recruitment of child soldiers despite a planned demobilization of the army that was still largely to be implemented by the end of the year. Programmes of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration failed to include specific provisions for those who had suffered sexual violence.

Death penalty

Senegal formally abolished the death penalty. Many other states remained abolitionist in practice. In Nigeria, a National Study Group on the Death Penalty called on the government to impose a moratorium on executions and to commute to life imprisonment the sentences of all death row prisoners whose appeals had been concluded. In Sierra Leone, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission recommended the immediate repeal of all laws authorizing the use of capital punishment. Nevertheless, shortly afterwards, 10 people convicted of treason were sentenced to death.

However, prisoners remained under sentence of death in countries including Burundi, Equatorial Guinea, Kenya and Mauritania, the majority of them after unfair trials. In Sudan, several hundred people were sentenced to death in 2004.

Economic, social and cultural rights

Africa continued to face severe economic conditions. Massive corruption and illegal exploitation of natural resources contributed to denying many, especially the most marginalized sectors of the population, their economic, social and cultural rights – in particular the rights to food, water, health, housing and education – as well as enjoyment of their civil and political rights, such as the right to a fair trial and the effective administration of criminal justice.

In Zimbabwe, communities were routinely deprived of their right to food, in part because of discriminatory policies by the government, which used food as a tool of political repression. The adequate implementation of the right to health in Rwanda, South Africa and Swaziland, and of the right to housing in Angola, continued to be denied, especially to women, children, the elderly, minorities and migrants. There was growing awareness of the basic needs of people living with HIV/AIDS, and access to anti-retroviral drugs was gradually made available through government and Global Fund programmes. However, considerable efforts were still needed to address discrimination, the impact of poverty and the severe shortage of medical staff as obstacles to the enjoyment of the right to health.

Political repression

Freedom of expression and association continued to come under attack by governments and remained restricted under the law in Swaziland. In Côte d'Ivoire, the government intimidated journalists and human rights defenders through manipulation of the print media. In Cameroon, Mauritania and Zimbabwe, the security forces were deployed to curb dissent or opposition to governments.

The leader of the opposition in Zimbabwe, Morgan Tsvangirai, was acquitted by a tribunal on charges of treason against the state, but questions remained about the independence of the judiciary. Youth militia in Zimbabwe were allowed to attack those perceived as critical of the government with impunity.

In Eritrea thousands of government critics and political opponents, many of them prisoners of conscience, were detained in secret. Some had been sentenced by panels of military and police officers in closed proceedings that flouted basic standards of fair trial. Those convicted were not informed of the accusations against them, had no right to defend themselves or be legally represented before the panels, and had no recourse to an independent judiciary to challenge abuses of their fundamental rights.

In Sudan, political opponents, supposed government critics, students and activists were detained under the National Security Forces Act, which allowed incommunicado detention without charge or trial for up to nine months. Many detainees were reported to have been tortured or ill-treated while held incommunicado under the Act.

The failure by the authorities to bring to justice members of the security forces suspected or accused of serious human rights violations contributed to the climate of impunity in many countries. In addition, the absence of thorough and credible investigations into allegations of torture and extrajudicial executions effectively weakened the rule of law.

Human rights defenders

Several governments imposed severe restrictions on the work of human rights defenders. The Non-Governmental Organizations Act (NGO Act) in Zimbabwe gave the government sweeping powers to interfere with civil society and human rights groups through a government-appointed NGO Council. Under the NGO Act, Zimbabwean groups were prohibited from receiving foreign funding for human rights work, and foreign human rights organizations were banned from working in Zimbabwe.

In Rwanda, the work of a leading independent human rights organization, the Rwandese League for the Promotion and Defence of Human Rights (LIPRODHOR), was effectively closed down. It was among a number of Rwandese NGOs recommended for dissolution on the grounds that they had supported the genocide, after investigations by a Parliamentary Commission that were neither fair nor transparent.

In Sudan, the government continued to arrest human rights defenders who exposed human rights violations instead of bringing the perpetrators of abuses to justice. The government of Eritrea did not allow national human rights organizations to operate, and denied international human rights

organizations access to the country. In Côte d'Ivoire, human rights defenders came under attack for expressing views perceived to be critical of the government.

A positive development was the establishment of a Special Rapporteur on human rights defenders by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. However the Commission continued to face many challenges, including lack of adequate resources to carry out its mandate.

AI regional reports

- Open letter to Permanent Representatives at the African Union (AU) regarding the case of Charles Taylor, former President of Liberia, indicted for crimes against humanity and war crimes (AI Index: IOR 63/007/2004)
- The Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa: Strengthening the promotion and protection of women's human rights in Africa (AI Index: IOR 63/005/2004)
- Towards the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Human Rights Defenders in Africa: Amnesty International's recommendations to the Focal Point on Human Rights Defenders of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (AI Index: IOR 63/004/2004)
- African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights: Checklist to ensure the nomination of the highest qualified candidates for judges (AI Index: IOR 63/001/2004)

AMERICAS REGIONAL OVERVIEW 2004

Respect for human rights remained an illusion for many as governments across the Americas failed to comply with their commitments to uphold fundamental human rights. Widespread torture, unlawful killings by police and arbitrary detention persisted. The US-led “war on terror” continued to undermine human rights in the name of security, despite growing international outrage at evidence of US war crimes, including torture, against detainees.

Democratic institutions and the rule of law were at risk throughout much of Latin America. Political instability – fuelled by corruption, organized crime, economic disparities and social unrest – resulted in several attempts to bring down governments. Most were by constitutional means but some, as in Haiti, by-passed the democratic process.

Political armed groups and criminal gangs, principally those engaged in drug trafficking, had an increasing impact on people’s fundamental rights. Poverty and discrimination affected millions of people, particularly the most vulnerable groups – women, children, indigenous people and Afro-descendant communities.

Positive developments were seen in the vigorous campaigns maintained by human rights defenders, who held both governments and armed groups to account, in defiance of harassment and persecution. Courts in several countries gave rulings that brought closer the prospect of bringing to trial military and political leaders responsible for massive human rights violations in previous decades.

National security and the ‘war on terror’

The blatant disregard for international human rights and humanitarian law in the “war on terror” continued to make a mockery of President George Bush’s claims that the USA was the global champion of human rights. Images of detainees in US custody tortured in Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq shocked the world. War crimes in Iraq, and mounting evidence of the torture and ill-treatment of detainees in US custody in other countries, sent an unequivocal message to the world that human rights may be sacrificed ostensibly in the name of security.

President Bush’s refusal to apply the Geneva Conventions to those captured during the international armed conflict in Afghanistan and transferred to the US naval base at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, was challenged by a judicial decision in November. The ruling resulted in the suspension of trials by military commission in Guantánamo, and the government immediately lodged an appeal. The US administration’s treatment of detainees in the “war on terror” continued to display a marked ambivalence to the opinion of expert bodies such as the International Committee of the Red Cross and even of its own highest judicial body. Six months after the Supreme Court ruled that the federal courts had jurisdiction over the Guantánamo detainees, none had appeared in court. Detainees reportedly considered of high intelligence value remained in secret detention in undisclosed locations. In some cases their situation amounted to “disappearance”.

The “war on terror” and the “war on drugs” increasingly merged, and dominated US relations with Latin America and the Caribbean. Following the US elections in November, the Bush administration encouraged governments in the region to give a greater role to the military in public order and internal security operations. The blurring of military and police roles resulted in governments such as those in Brazil, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and Paraguay deploying military forces to deal with crime and social unrest.

The US doubled the ceiling on the number of US personnel deployed in Colombia in counter-insurgency and counter-narcotics operations. The Colombian government in turn persisted in redefining the country’s 40-year internal conflict as part of the international “war on terror”.

Conflict, crime and instability

Civilians continued to be the principal victims of political violence. The human rights situation in Colombia remained critical, its civilians targeted by all sides in the conflict: the security forces, army-backed paramilitaries and armed opposition groups. Despite an agreed ceasefire and demobilization of some combatants, paramilitary forces were again responsible for widespread abuses. Security policies introduced by the government drew civilians further into the conflict.

Further evidence of spill-over from Colombia's internal war was seen in neighbouring countries. Frequent border skirmishes were reported in Venezuela and Ecuador, where the number of Colombians seeking refuge grew.

Political polarization and instability continued to affect Venezuela for much of the year. Levels of violence and protests diminished briefly after a referendum failed to unseat President Hugo Chávez, but the death of a high-profile special prosecutor in a car bombing raised fears of renewed political violence.

Long-standing instability in Haiti reached crisis levels after a military uprising toppled the government of President Jean Bertrand Aristide. Political violence and widespread human rights violations persisted, despite the presence of a UN military and police force. The severe loss of life and structural damage caused by a hurricane in September exacerbated instability and the breakdown of the rule of law, hampering distribution of international aid.

In a report on Guatemala, the UN warned that failure to bring about effective social, economic and political reforms could promote conflict.

Public protests against violent crime, particularly kidnapping, spread throughout Latin America. Crime levels remained high in Mexican and Brazilian cities, and in parts of Central America where poverty combined with the easy availability of weapons and the legacy of civil wars. Governments responded with tougher legislation, which sometimes violated constitutional and human rights safeguards. Vigilantism and mob lynchings of suspected criminals were reported in countries including Guatemala, Mexico and Peru, where confidence in the security forces continued to evaporate.

Impunity for human rights violations

Despite setbacks, efforts across the region to combat impunity for gross human rights violations in previous decades continued to gain momentum.

A series of rulings and actions based on international jurisdiction showed that military and security chiefs whose forces were responsible for human rights violations could no longer escape trial. An Argentine court issued an international warrant for the arrest of former Paraguayan President Alfredo Stroessner for his alleged involvement in human rights violations committed under Operation Cóndor, a joint plan to eliminate opponents by military governments of the 1970s and 1980s in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay. Spain's Supreme Court confirmed that the Spanish justice system had jurisdiction to try former Argentine navy officer Adolfo Scilingo for human rights violations under the military government of 1976-83. More than 20 years after the alleged crimes, a former Honduran intelligence chief faced a civil action in the US courts brought by relatives of Hondurans tortured and killed in the 1980s.

National courts also made significant, if slow, progress in shedding light on past human rights violations. The Chilean Supreme Court lifted former President Augusto Pinochet's immunity from prosecution, allowing proceedings to be opened against him for human rights violations during Operation Cóndor.

In Brazil, the Supreme Court ordered the federal government to open files on the military operations against armed opposition groups in the region of Araguaia, state of Pará, during the military dictatorship. These may enable relatives finally to locate the bodies of victims of military actions.

Military and police courts continued to claim jurisdiction, despite recommendations by international human rights bodies. In Bolivia, the military initially rejected a Constitutional Court ruling that officers charged with offences against civilians should be tried in civilian courts. In Peru and Colombia, cases of human rights violations continued to be transferred to military courts in spite of rulings by the respective Constitutional Courts that they had jurisdiction only over offences committed "in the line of duty". In Ecuador, police courts still claimed jurisdiction in cases involving abuses by police agents although the authorities had given assurances that they would be heard by civilian courts.

Trial before civilian courts was no guarantee of justice, however. In Colombia, against all the evidence, charges were withdrawn against former General Rito Alejo del Río, indicted for forming illegal paramilitary groups responsible for human rights violations in the 1990s.

The USA continued to pressure governments throughout the region to sign unlawful immunity agreements shielding US personnel from surrender to the International Criminal Court. Of 12 countries that had refused to sign, 10 had some military aid suspended as a result. In November the US Congress threatened to cut off development aid to countries that refused to sign.

Death penalty

The USA continued to flout international human rights standards by inflicting the death penalty on child offenders, people with mental disabilities, defendants without access to effective legal representation,

and foreign nationals denied their consular rights. In 2004, 59 executions were carried out by a capital justice system characterized by arbitrariness, discrimination and error. Scheduled executions of a number of child offenders were stayed pending a Supreme Court ruling on the case of a death row prisoner aged 17 at the time of the crime.

No judicial executions were carried out in the Caribbean, but the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council – the final court of appeal for most of the English-speaking Caribbean – reopened the possibility of a resumption of executions in Trinidad and Tobago by overturning a decision that the mandatory death penalty was unconstitutional. It ruled that mandatory death sentences for capital murder violated the Jamaican Constitution, and ordered new sentencing hearings for Jamaica's death row inmates. It also ruled that the mandatory death penalty was constitutional in Barbados.

Economic, social and cultural rights

Economic indicators improved in Latin America after a prolonged period of stagnation. However, growth was insufficient to significantly affect poverty levels. Extreme disparities in wealth, and in access to basic rights such as education, health, water and electricity, continued. Inequalities were persistently driven by race and ethnicity, particularly for indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples, who are among the poorest in the region.

According to a UN study on the spread of HIV/AIDs, the Caribbean is the second most affected region in the world. Social attitudes such as homophobia and stigmatization are cited by the UN among factors contributing to the spread of the epidemic.

Severe political violence and instability in Haiti exacerbated the long-standing denial of basic rights, including access to health services as the breakdown in health provision reached crisis proportions.

Disputes over land and labour conditions on plantations continued to fuel protracted conflicts and human rights violations in countries such as Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Guatemala and Paraguay. Both protesters and police officers were killed as claims for access to land by landless peasant families brought them into conflict with large landowners backed by the security forces or hired gunmen.

By the end of 2004, Central American governments and the Dominican Republic had approved a free trade agreement with the USA. Civil society groups raised concerns about the lack of guarantees on labour rights, on protection of the environment and on continued access to affordable medicines. In December, 12 South American countries signed an agreement to create a political and economic regional bloc.

Violence against women

Women and girls remained at serious risk of human rights violations across the Americas. The Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women – which marked its 10th anniversary – had received more ratifications than any other treaty on human rights in the region. Only Canada and the USA had failed to ratify. However, its provisions were largely ignored by governments across the region, and gender-related violence against women remained endemic in the home and the community.

A UN report on the state of the world's cities stated that Latin America had the highest risk of all types of sexual victimization, with approximately 70 per cent of reported incidents described as rapes, attempted rapes or indecent assaults. Despite efforts by the Mexican authorities, there were further killings of women in the state of Chihuahua, and the horrific brutality that characterized killings of women in Guatemala gave cause for growing international concern.

Women were particularly vulnerable in situations of conflict. In Colombia, all parties to the conflict subjected women and girls to sexual violence, including rape and genital mutilation. They were targeted to sow terror, wreak revenge on adversaries and accumulate "trophies of war".

There was a growing awareness of the impact of people trafficking in the Americas on human rights, particularly of women and girls. According to a study by the Organization of American States, over 100,000 men, women and children were "trafficked" across Latin America and the Caribbean each year, 80 per cent of them women and most for the purposes of sexual exploitation.

Human rights defenders

Human rights activists across the Americas campaigned vigorously to hold governments and armed groups to their obligations to respect international and domestic human rights standards.

Women's rights activists were acclaimed in Colombia for their work for thousands of innocent victims of conflict and for the meaningful involvement of women in peace negotiations and the political process. Indigenous activists in Ecuador championed their community's rights to defend their livelihoods during

disputes over the extraction of natural resources. Despite public hostility and prejudice, the work of Jamaican and Honduran sexual rights activists to promote equal rights and HIV/AIDS prevention was increasingly recognized and supported by human rights organizations at the international level.

The difficulties and dangers faced by activists in the Americas ranged from intimidation and restrictions on travel, to unfounded accusations of "terrorist" links or other violent activities, arbitrary detention, false criminal charges, and even death. Activists working locally on rural poverty and development, often in isolated areas, and journalists covering issues such as corruption were killed in Brazil, Colombia, Guatemala and Mexico.

On the international stage, governments gave commitments to support the work of human rights activists. However, some undermined the integrity of these pledges by tolerating slanderous statements by high-ranking government officials against those working for human rights. Appeals by women's rights activists for the authorities to examine their concerns and proposals seriously were frequently dismissed or ignored.

Only one government, Brazil, responded to a request by both the UN Special Representative on Human Rights Defenders and by AI for governments to draft, publish and make operational plans to implement the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

Regional initiatives

During the European Union/Latin America and Caribbean Summit in May, AI highlighted its concerns about the use of the judicial system to persecute human rights defenders. Delegates from AI's International Secretariat and from AI sections in the region attended the Americas Regional Social Forum in Quito, Ecuador, in August. In the same month, AI also participated in the III Human Rights Defenders Consultation in São Paulo, Brazil.

ASIA/PACIFIC REGIONAL OVERVIEW 2004

Human rights played a prominent role in elections in the region. The influence of issues such as poverty, the “war on terror” and impunity on political agendas raised hopes of renewed focus on human rights protection. Yet large pockets of repression remained, in which violations of the right to life and of freedom of expression and association were widespread. Grave human rights violations continued to take place as armed conflict raged in northeast India, Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam (NAD) province in Indonesia, and Nepal. A newly emerging conflict in southern Thailand raised concerns.

Even where opposing sides were pursuing attempts at conflict resolution, such as in India and Pakistan in relation to Jammu and Kashmir, in north-eastern Sri Lanka and in Mindanao province of the Philippines, there were frequent human rights abuses, including by armed political groups.

The “war on terror” continued to take a heavy toll in lives. Additional risks to human security arose from nuclear threats, the unrelenting arms race and widespread deprivation. Women, children, indigenous people and migrants faced impoverishment, discrimination and the politicization of aid. More than 1.5 million people were internally displaced.

At the end of the year, a massive earthquake and resulting tsunami killed more than 250,000 people in Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India, Thailand and other countries surrounding the Indian Ocean. There were grave concerns, particularly for the human rights of vulnerable groups affected by the tsunami.

Elections and denial of civil and political rights

Human rights shaped many political agendas during elections in Afghanistan, Australia, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Philippines and South Korea. In India, rural poverty and the repeal of the Prevention of Terrorism Act were key issues in negotiations between coalition parties in the new government of the United Progressive Alliance. In Indonesia, the presidential candidacy of former armed forces chief General Wiranto attracted international criticism because of his indictment by the UN-sponsored court in Timor-Leste for crimes against humanity. He was not elected.

Bhutan, Brunei and the Maldives were among countries that made tentative moves towards democratization and increased human rights protection. Repression of human rights continued to be reported, however. In the Maldives, demonstrations in support of a faster pace of reforms resulted in the imposition of a state of emergency, the mass arrest and arbitrary detention of scores of political activists and members of parliament, and allegations of sexual abuse and other ill-treatment.

Political dissent continued to be suppressed in countries including China, Laos, Myanmar, North Korea and Viet Nam. New, often draconian, regulations on use of the Internet restricted freedom of expression in China and Viet Nam. In Myanmar, despite the reconvening of the National Convention in May and a change of leadership in October, the political stalemate prevailing since 1988 offered little prospect of increased freedom of expression and association. Hundreds of prisoners, including National League for Democracy leaders Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and U Tin Oo, were wrongfully denied their liberty for peaceful acts that would not be considered crimes under international law. Thousands of prisoners were released in November, apparently because their imprisonment was the result of “improper deeds” by officials. Only about 40 political prisoners were believed to be among those released, and more than 1,300 remained behind bars. Sentenced after unfair trials, many of them had been convicted under security legislation and often solely for peaceful acts of dissent.

The legal framework for the protection of human rights in Asia remained weak. Ineffectual criminal justice systems provided little redress to the most vulnerable, including women and indigenous people, whose dominant reality continued to be hardship and discrimination. In countries such as Bangladesh, Malaysia, Pakistan and the Philippines, police corruption denied people the protection of human rights.

Armed conflict

Nepal slipped deeper into a security and political crisis. Despite scrutiny by the UN Commission on Human Rights, the authorities failed to put in place any meaningful mechanisms to increase respect for

human rights. For the second successive year, the highest number of “disappearances” reported to the UN were in Nepal.

In Sri Lanka, during the run-up to parliamentary elections in April, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam killed several candidates and supporters of rival political parties.

In NAD province in Indonesia, where the military emergency was officially downgraded to a civil emergency, the pattern of grave abuses of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights continued. The Indonesian security forces were primarily responsible for these violations, although the Free Aceh Movement (Gerakan Aceh Merdeka, GAM) also committed serious abuses, notably the taking of hostages and the use of child soldiers.

The death by suffocation of at least 78 demonstrators, piled on top of each other in lorries to be transferred to custody, brought to international attention the emerging conflict between the security forces and armed groups in the mainly Muslim part of southern Thailand. At the end of 2004, the death toll among both Buddhist and Muslim civilians was estimated to be around 500.

In India, particularly in Jammu and Kashmir and several states in the north-east, human rights abuses by the army and armed political groups continued, despite tentative moves towards political settlements. In Mindanao, the Philippines, a ceasefire agreement was periodically broken as forces of the separatist Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) clashed with government forces. During fighting that often forced local people from their homes, both sides reportedly breached international humanitarian law, in indiscriminate attacks by the armed forces and in the use of “human shields” by MILF forces.

The International Atomic Energy Agency warned in November of a race against time to stop a “nuclear outrage” by “terrorist” groups in Asia. In South Asia, as relations improved between India and Pakistan, a moratorium on nuclear tests by both countries was announced in June.

‘War on terror’

Human rights continued to be under attack in the global “war on terror”. In Afghanistan, hundreds of people suspected of being sympathizers of the Taliban or al-Qa’ida were held in long-term arbitrary detention at Bagram airbase and other detention centres run by the US armed forces. Without access to judicial authorities, the detainees were effectively beyond the reach or protection of the law. Armed political groups attacked aid and election workers, killing 12 election staff and injuring more than 30 during the presidential election campaign. In Pakistan, the military carried out arbitrary detentions, possible extrajudicial executions and the deliberate destruction of houses during operations to remove from South Waziristan tribal area people suspected of association with the Taliban or al-Qa’ida. Armed groups were reported to have taken hostages and in some cases to have killed them.

In Southeast Asia, armed groups killed civilians in attacks in Indonesia and the Philippines. Six people were charged in connection with the killing of over 100 passengers in a bomb attack on a ferryboat in Manila Bay, the Philippines, in February. The six were alleged to be members of Abu Sayyaf, a Muslim separatist armed group involved in kidnappings and accused of links with al-Qa’ida. Most of the victims of a number of bomb attacks in Indonesia, including on the Australian Embassy, were Indonesian civilians.

Arbitrary detentions and unfair trials took place under security legislation in force in China, India, Malaysia, Nepal and Pakistan. In the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region of China, members of the predominantly Muslim Uighur community continued to be detained as suspected “separatists, terrorists and religious extremists”. Unofficial mosques were closed and certain Uighur language books and journals banned.

Violence against women

The impact on women and children of long-standing conflicts across the region was severe. In Jammu and Kashmir, a paramilitary unit, the Rashtriya Rifles, was reported to be responsible for a series of sexual assaults on women. In Manipur, northeast India, the alleged sexual assault and killing in custody of a young woman, Thangjam Manorama, sparked calls for the repeal of security legislation that had facilitated human rights abuses for decades. In Laos, in one of the worst single incidents of the 30-year conflict, five children on a foraging mission were reportedly ambushed by up to 40 soldiers, mutilated and killed. Four of the children, girls aged between 13 and 16, had apparently been raped before they were killed.

In Afghanistan, a new Constitution provided for gender equality. In practice, discrimination against women was still pervasive. Many women in prison had been accused of “running away” from home, adultery and other unlawful sexual activity outside marriage (*zina* crimes). Women who were raped did not complain to the authorities, primarily for fear that they would themselves be prosecuted for unlawful sexual activity.

Impunity for violence against women, both during armed conflict and in the domestic sphere, was pervasive. One example was the failure of the authorities in the Solomon Islands, despite assistance

from a military-backed regional intervention force, to bring to justice those responsible for rape and other acts of sexual violence during the armed conflict of 1998-2003.

Refugees, internally displaced people and migrants

Millions of refugees and internally displaced people continued to be denied their rights. Refugees returning to Afghanistan faced prolonged insecurity, unemployment, inadequate shelter and a lack of access to land. The international community's attention was drawn to the plight of more than 1.5 million people displaced as a result of the tsunami. In contrast, the problems of hundreds of thousands of people in Myanmar, Nepal and Sri Lanka – driven from their homes as a result of internal conflicts and forced to find safety within their own countries – went largely unnoticed.

The conflict in NAD province of Indonesia forced refugees to flee to Jakarta and abroad, particularly to Malaysia, a destination of choice for many Indonesians seeking employment. The Malaysian authorities threatened to deport hundreds of thousands of migrants in a mass operation. An amnesty period, granted to allow migrants to return voluntarily to their home countries, was extended in November and again following the tsunami disaster.

In South Korea, Japan and many other countries in Asia, migrants frequently faced discrimination in accessing their rights to equality, housing, health care and labour rights.

Death penalty

Asia remained the continent with the highest number of reported executions, with China, Singapore and Viet Nam heading the list. In China, with few effective safeguards to protect the rights of defendants, large numbers of people continued to be executed after unfair trials. In October, the authorities announced reforms aimed at upholding the rights of criminal suspects and defendants, including reinstatement of Supreme Court reviews in death penalty cases. It remained unclear, however, when these measures would be introduced.

Countries that resumed executions after intervals of several years included Indonesia, where three people were put to death in the first executions since 2001. In April, Afghanistan conducted the first execution known to have taken place since the fall of the Taliban. In India, the first known execution since 1997 was carried out amid public protests across the country and the subsequent resignation of the hangman. The outcry drew attention to the commutations that had previously been granted in similar cases.

Bhutan, one of the few countries to go against this negative trend, abolished the death penalty in law. There was further hope that emerging public debate might result in reduced use of the death penalty in the Philippines, Singapore, South Korea and Tonga.

Human rights defenders

Human rights defenders in the region risked harassment, arbitrary detention and threats to their lives. In Nepal, the lives of activists and their families were often in danger from both sides in the armed conflict. In the course of their work, lawyers and members of human rights organizations and the National Human Rights Commission received threatening telephone calls from unidentified people believed to be members of or closely associated with the army.

In China, the authorities continued to bring charges of subversion or vaguely defined national security offences against peaceful civil society activists and advocates of reform. Lawyers, journalists, HIV/AIDS activists and housing rights advocates were among those harassed, detained or imprisoned for documenting human rights abuses, campaigning for reform, or attempting to obtain redress for those whose rights had been violated. Li Dan, an AIDS activist, was briefly detained and beaten up after his release by unidentified assailants. His school for AIDS orphans in Henan province, where up to one million people reportedly became HIV-positive after selling their blood plasma to state-sanctioned blood collection stations, had recently been closed down by the local authorities.

Human rights activists in the region mobilized across national boundaries, particularly to counter the impact of the "war on terror" on human rights. Asia hosted several international meetings on human rights. At the World Social Forum in January in Mumbai, India, tens of thousands of activists debated the impact of the "war on terror" and globalization on human rights and human dignity. In September in Seoul, South Korea, national human rights institutions (NHRIs) from around the world considered the need to protect human rights in the context of the "war on terror". At a regional gathering of such institutions in February in Kathmandu, Nepal, members of the Asia Pacific Forum of NHRIs considered the issue of "terrorism and the rule of law", including an interim report of its Advisory Council of Jurists.

EUROPE/ CENTRAL ASIA REGIONAL OVERVIEW 2004

Human rights continued to be casualties in the “war on terror”. Entrenched racism, discrimination and intolerance were seen in attacks on members of Arab, Jewish and Muslim communities, in interethnic violence, and in failures to afford dignity to people with mental disabilities. All too often, those responsible for human rights abuses such as torture and ill-treatment continued to enjoy impunity. The European Union (EU) – expanded in May with the accession of 10 new states – continued to show a lack of political will to confront human rights violations within its own borders.

‘War on terror’

Armed opposition groups brought death and destruction across the region – in suicide attacks in Uzbekistan, in bombings on rush hour trains in Spain, and in the school hostage-taking and siege in Beslan, Russia – claiming hundreds of lives.

Governments, in their turn, continued to roll back rights under the auspices of the “war on terror”. Although the highest court in the UK ruled in a landmark decision that indefinite detention without charge or trial of foreign “suspected international terrorists” was unlawful, 11 men still remained in detention – and one under effective house arrest – at the end of 2004. Earlier the Court of Appeal of England and Wales had ruled that “evidence” obtained by torture of a third party would be inadmissible in court proceedings only if UK agents had been directly involved in, or connived at, the torture. Throughout the year the UK also sought to circumvent its obligations under domestic and international human rights law by asserting that international human rights law did not bind its armed forces in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In Russia, parliament extended to 30 days the period that someone suspected of “terrorism-related” offences could be held without charge. Uzbekistan conducted sweeping arbitrary detentions of hundreds of men and women said to be devout Muslims or their relatives, and sentenced scores of people accused of “terrorism-related” offences to long prison terms after unfair trials. Russian federal security forces continued to enjoy virtual impunity for violations in Chechnya.

Refugees and asylum-seekers

On asylum provisions and the challenges of migration, governments continued to emphasize control and deterrence rather than protection, in breach of international human rights standards. In Greece, for example, coastguards and police may have engaged in practices aimed at discouraging migrants from entering Greek territory in ways that endangered their lives. Italy, which has long lacked an adequate and comprehensive asylum procedure, expelled large numbers of people to Libya, most of them of North African origin and including asylum-seekers. The hasty and summary expulsions raised suspicions that the government was determined to act, regardless of the cost to human rights. Such flagrant abuses were compounded by the failure of the EU to balance its overarching emphasis on curbing the influx of asylum-seekers and migrants with a clear refugee protection perspective.

Racism and discrimination

Manifestations of racism, discrimination and intolerance continued to plague the region.

Discrimination appeared in many forms, including in the barriers that prevented people from accessing their basic rights. In countries from Finland to Cyprus, Roma remained severely disadvantaged in key areas of life such as housing, employment, education and medical services. In countries of the former Yugoslavia, large numbers of people seeking to rebuild their lives after being displaced by war continued to face discrimination on ethnic grounds, particularly in obtaining employment, education and health care. The treatment of people with mental disabilities remained a disgrace in many areas. In Bulgaria and Romania, the living conditions and lack of care in some hospitals and social care homes were so deplorable they amounted to inhuman and degrading treatment. In Slovakia and the Czech Republic, cage beds continued to be used in some institutions as a method of restraint. Discrimination persisted

elsewhere, as in Ireland, where disability legislation introduced in 2004 was not rights-based, despite previous government pledges.

Racism by law enforcement officials continued as a backdrop to human rights violations in the administration of justice. Members of the Roma community, immigrants and asylum-seekers were among targets of racist abuse and ill-treatment. The perpetrators were rarely brought to justice.

Intolerance of others and their identities was also evident in the behaviour of private individuals and organizations. In France, people perceived to be immigrants or Muslims were subjected to waves of racist violence in Corsica. Individuals of Jewish origin and the symbols of their identity were attacked in countries such as Belgium, France and Ukraine. "Skinhead" groups in Russia subjected foreign students to race-hate attacks. Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in Poland were assaulted at marches calling for greater respect for the rights of sexual minorities.

Many governments lacked the political will to prevent, investigate and prosecute such attacks actively and with due diligence. In Georgia, hundreds of people who attacked religious minorities went unpunished. In Kosovo, some local police were accused of official complicity in incidents during the widespread inter-ethnic attacks that erupted throughout the province in March. The authorities – including international security contingents – failed to provide adequate protection to minority communities in some areas during the clashes. At the EU level, there was a persistent failure to put the criminalization of racism and xenophobia back on the legislative agenda.

Abuses by officials and impunity

Torture and ill-treatment, often race-related, were reported across the region, including in Belgium, Greece, France and Spain. From east to west, states often failed to implement or respect rights that could provide a safeguard against abuses in police custody or pre-trial detention. Authorities in a number of states did not allow detainees access to a lawyer from the moment of arrest, or did not ensure an effective, properly resourced and independent system to investigate complaints. Failure to conduct prompt, thorough and impartial investigations resulted in continued impunity for those responsible for torture and ill-treatment reported to be widespread in countries such as Albania, Georgia, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Tajikistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. In Turkey, torture and ill-treatment remained a serious concern despite positive changes to detention regulations. Turkey and many other states lacked independent scrutiny mechanisms to investigate such patterns of abuse. Reports continued that police in Bulgaria, Poland and Romania used firearms in violation of international standards on excessive force, sometimes with fatal results. In many countries, conditions in prisons, as well as in detention centres for asylum-seekers and unauthorized migrants, were cruel and degrading.

In the western Balkans, although there were some domestic prosecutions for war crimes, lack of political will and deficiencies in domestic justice systems led to continued and widespread impunity for wartime violations. Some war crimes suspects were transferred to the custody of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, but others continued to evade arrest, some apparently protected by authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia and Montenegro. Thousands of "disappearances" that occurred during the 1991-95 war, and others from the conflicts in Kosovo and Macedonia, remained unresolved – as did those of opposition figures and journalists in Belarus and Ukraine.

Repression of dissent

Civil, political and religious dissent was systematically and often brutally repressed in Belarus, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Demonstrations were banned, and peaceful protesters detained and often ill-treated in a range of countries including Turkey and Ukraine. Human rights defenders continued to face obstruction, intimidation and threats in Belarus, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. In Russia, human rights activists and others seeking justice through the European Court of Human Rights in connection with the Chechen conflict experienced harassment and torture. Some paid with their lives. In Turkmenistan, some critics were forced into exile and their relatives targeted in efforts to silence dissent.

As in previous years, some states showed scant tolerance for the conscience of those who objected to compulsory military service. In violation of international obligations, Armenia, Finland and Turkmenistan imprisoned those whose conscience would not allow them to serve. Other states such as Cyprus, Greece and Lithuania retained legislation that made alternative service a punitive option.

Violence against women

The human rights of women and girls remained under attack across the region. Violence in the family was still regarded by many governments as residing in the "private sphere" – a convenient excuse in many instances for failures to define domestic violence as a human rights issue and resource it as such.

From west to east, there were documented failures to provide support to women who had survived violence in the home, or to ensure their effective access to justice, redress and reparation. Some states did not introduce or implement adequately such basic provisions as comprehensive protection and restraining orders against abusers, or appropriate shelters for survivors of violence.

Trafficking of human beings, including women and girls for enforced prostitution, continued to afflict most countries throughout the region. In UN-administered Kosovo, the clients reportedly included international police and troops, and the women and girls – beaten, raped and effectively imprisoned by their owners – were often too afraid to escape. Survivors of this form of slavery were ill-served by many states with the power, and obligation, to do better. While many voices continued to press for state action against trafficking to be grounded in human rights protection, rather than through an agenda driven by organized crime and illegal migration, trafficked women were still failed by the authorities and judicial systems in countries of origin, transit and destination. Moldova, for example, remained a source country for women and girls trafficked for forced prostitution – the most vulnerable reportedly being women escaping domestic violence and children leaving institutional care. However, women were only exempted from prosecution in Moldova for crimes arising from being trafficked if they agreed to cooperate with law enforcement agencies. In Belgium, a destination country where trafficking for enforced prostitution reportedly continued to rise, the granting of residence permits was contingent on such cooperation – in accordance with EU legislation.

One potentially positive step to enhancing respect for the human rights of trafficked persons was the Council of Europe's draft Convention against Trafficking in Human Beings, which was discussed during 2004. Non-governmental organizations continued campaigning to strengthen its provisions.

Death penalty

There were some positive moves on the death penalty, reinforcing the regional trend towards abolition. The Greek parliament approved the abolition of the death penalty for all crimes. Tajikistan declared a moratorium on death sentences and executions. In Belarus, the Constitutional Court ruled that a number of provisions in the Criminal Code relating to the death penalty were inconsistent with the Constitution and international law, paving the way – should the political will exist – for abolition or at least a moratorium.

However, Belarus – together with Uzbekistan and Tajikistan before its moratorium – remained the region's last executioners. In addition, both Uzbekistan and Tajikistan flouted their international commitments during the year by ignoring requests from the UN Human Rights Committee to stay executions. In Tajikistan, four men were executed in secret just days before the moratorium. In two of these cases the Committee had urged a stay while it considered allegations of unfair trials and torture. Uzbekistan executed at least four men whose cases were under consideration for similar reasons. The total number of those executed annually in Uzbekistan – within a criminal justice system seriously flawed by widespread corruption and the failure of the courts to investigate allegations of torture – remained secret but was believed to be scores. As in previous years, the post-Soviet shroud of secrecy in executing states covered not just statistics, but blanketed the lives of those on death row and their relatives: neither were informed in advance of the date of executions. Families were denied the bodies of their executed relatives and even the knowledge of where they were buried.

Action for human rights

While many governments continued to ignore the concerns and recommendations of regional and other international organizations charged with a role in human rights protection, such bodies continued to strengthen human rights safeguards. As part of their contribution to combating racism, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe carried on highlighting the issue through a series of specific meetings, and the European Committee against Racism and Intolerance issued general policy recommendations on the struggle against anti-Semitism and on combating racism while fighting "terrorism". Regional bodies and mechanisms, including the Council of Europe's Commissioner on Human Rights, also took action against states' failure to improve or respect human rights. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe rejected a request by Belarus for reinstatement of special guest status on these grounds, and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development decided to cut aid and investment in Uzbekistan because it had not met the bank's human rights benchmarks.

The EU incorporated its Charter of Fundamental Rights into the new constitutional treaty and decided to set up an EU human rights agency. These developments should be an incentive to change the EU's complacent attitude to observing human rights within its own borders. A European Commission proposal for legislation on procedural rights in criminal proceedings was also a positive note, although it was feared that the content of the proposal might be watered down in negotiations between EU member states.

A powerful political will to drive reform in a positive direction was seen during the year in Turkey. Although implementation was uneven and at times resisted, the government pushed through many significant constitutional and legal changes to secure agreement to start negotiations on accession to the EU. The power of civil society to mobilize for change was also evident, from the platform for activism offered by the European Social Forum in London in November, to the streets of Ukraine during the presidential elections the following month. Human rights defenders, in the face of threats, intimidation and detention, remained resolute in continuing their work, inspiring others and achieving results.

AI regional reports

- Open letter to the Irish Presidency of the European Union (AI Index: IOR 61/002/2004)
- Amnesty International's Comments on the Interim Activity Report: Guaranteeing the Long-Term Effectiveness of the European Court of Human Rights (AI Index: IOR 61/005/2004)
- Concerns in Europe and Central Asia, July-December 2003 (AI Index: EUR 01/001/2004)
- Europe and Central Asia: Summary of Amnesty International's Concerns in the Region, January-June 2004 (AI Index: EUR 01/005/2004)
- Open letter: On the occasion of the EU Summit 4-5 November 2004 adopting the Hague Programme 'strengthening freedom, security and justice' in the EU (AI Index: EUR 01/006/2004)
- Belarus and Uzbekistan: The last executioners – The trend towards abolition in the former Soviet space (AI Index: EUR 04/009/2004)

MIDDLE EAST/ NORTH AFRICA REGIONAL OVERVIEW 2004

Grave and multiple human rights violations, including the killing of hundreds of civilians in armed conflicts and political violence, continued with impunity throughout the region. Political and human rights reforms were debated at national and regional levels, with significant input from civil society groups, writers and journalists. The League of Arab States adopted a revised version of the Arab Charter on Human Rights.

The political and human rights situation continued to receive international attention. In June the G8 summit of major industrialized states endorsed a US-sponsored "partnership" plan, the Broader Middle East and North Africa Initiative, which pledged support for "democratic, social and economic reform emanating from [the] region" and "effective guarantees in the areas of human rights and fundamental freedoms". The Initiative was met with a mixture of scepticism and interest among governments and civil society. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), at a gathering held in parallel to a follow-up G8 meeting in December in Morocco, pushed for a more effective mechanism to achieve reform. The NGOs recommended that reform be genuine and inclusive and that the G8 take a strong stand, collectively and as individual states, on progress towards democracy in the region. They called for the G8 to participate in monitoring elections and put pressure on the region's governments to stop harassing NGOs.

The European Union (EU) remained engaged with states in the region through the Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreements and through dialogue with Iran, Libya and the Gulf states. At the UN, the General Assembly adopted a resolution on human rights in Iran in November. In an advisory opinion, the International Court of Justice ruled that the construction by Israel of a fence/wall inside the occupied West Bank was unlawful under international law.

Armed conflict and impunity

Civilians bore the brunt of the casualties as the war in Iraq intensified and the death toll rose. Tens of thousands of men, women and children were reported to have been killed or injured since the armed conflict began in March 2003. Both the US-led occupying forces and armed groups operating in Iraq – often with the declared objective of resisting foreign occupation – continued to violate international human rights and humanitarian laws with impunity.

Throughout the year there were reports that scores of civilians had been killed unlawfully by the US-led forces during bombardments of Fallujah, Najaf and Samarra', and in various operations in Baghdad. Before the transfer of power to an interim Iraqi government in June, and in the run-up to general elections scheduled for January 2005, armed groups stepped up attacks against US-led forces, Iraqi police and army recruits, government personnel and professionals. Hundreds of civilians were killed in indiscriminate or direct attacks by armed groups, as in the attacks on Shi'a visitors to the holy shrines in Baghdad and Karbala in February. Scores of hostages, including Iraqis, foreign aid workers, journalists and security contractors, were abducted by armed groups, and dozens were killed. Although in several hostage cases political demands were made, for the withdrawal of foreign troops or companies for example, other hostages appeared to have been abducted to extract ransom payments.

Increasing numbers of Palestinians were killed and homes destroyed by the Israeli army in the Palestinian Occupied Territories. Some 700 Palestinians died, including about 150 children. Most were killed unlawfully, in reckless shootings, shellings or air strikes on refugee camps and other densely populated areas throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Israeli forces continued to carry out extrajudicial executions of members and leaders of Hamas and other Palestinian groups, in which bystanders were frequently killed or injured. Some 109 Israelis, most of them civilians and including eight children, were killed by Palestinian armed groups in suicide bombings, shootings and mortar attacks inside Israel and in the Occupied Territories.

Routine destruction of Palestinian homes, land and property in the West Bank and Gaza Strip was

stepped up in the biggest wave of house demolitions in the Gaza Strip since the beginning of the intifada (uprising). In May the Israeli army destroyed some 300 homes and damaged about 270 others in a refugee camp in Rafah, leaving close to 4,000 Palestinians homeless. In the West Bank, Israel continued to build a 600-kilometre fence/wall encircling and cutting off Palestinian towns and villages, despite the ruling by the International Court of Justice. The fence/wall and hundreds of Israeli army checkpoints and blockades throughout the Occupied Territories continued to hinder or prevent Palestinians' access to their land, their workplaces and to education, health and other crucial services.

Political violence and the 'war on terror'

Human rights violations continued to be justified by the global "war on terror" as security forces across the region responded to attacks by armed groups they accused of links with al-Qa'ida. Dozens of people, including children, were killed in Saudi Arabia as armed groups carried out bomb attacks, hostage-takings and targeted killings of Western nationals. Bomb attacks claimed the lives of over 30 civilians and injured more than 100 others, most of them Israeli tourists, in Taba, in the Sinai region of Egypt. In Yemen, there were reports that hundreds of people were killed, most of them as a result of excessive force by the security forces, in clashes with followers of Hussain Badr al-Din al-Huthi, a cleric from the Zaidi community.

Scores of people were detained in countries across the region on suspicion of "terrorist" acts or links to opposition armed groups. Hundreds remained in detention, denied their basic rights, after being arrested in previous years on similar grounds. Unfair trials of scores of suspects on "terrorist" charges were reported in Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and Yemen. In Algeria, Libya and Tunisia, torture remained a concern as the "war on terror" was used to justify arbitrary detentions and unfair trials.

States continued cooperating on security operations, also as part of the "war on terror". Suspects held on grounds of security were reportedly transferred between Iran, Saudi Arabia, Yemen and other Gulf countries without due regard to risks of human rights violations in the receiving countries. Those held or extradited within the "war on terror" framework were at risk of arbitrary detention, torture, ill-treatment and unfair trial. States in the region continued to implement the 1998 Arab Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism, which lacked safeguards against torture, unfair trial and other human rights violations. Dozens of detainees released from US custody at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, and in other countries were returned to their countries of origin, including Kuwait, Morocco and Yemen.

Women's rights and violence against women

Debate on women's rights increased at official levels and within civil society. A new Family Code issued in Morocco significantly improved the legal framework for women's rights. Women's groups and NGOs continued to press for the increased participation of women in public affairs, and a more robust approach to violence against women.

In Iraq, Israel and the Occupied Territories, violence against women was directly linked to conflict, or was exacerbated by the easy availability of arms and the social disruption of war. Across the region, violence within the home and family was perpetuated by state inaction, inadequate or discriminatory legislation, and social prejudice. Women in Iran faced discrimination in the courts and, in at least one case in 2004, a girl under the age of 18 was executed after a flagrantly flawed trial.

Refugees and migrants

In most countries in the region, there was no legal regime for the protection of refugees and asylum-seekers. Ratification of the 1951 Refugee Convention or its 1967 Protocol remained limited, the only countries that were party to them being Algeria, Egypt, Iran, Israel, Morocco, Tunisia and Yemen.

Restrictive immigration policies in many European countries resulted in migrants and asylum-seekers employing the help of criminal people-smugglers. Numerous would-be immigrants and asylum-seekers died in boat accidents, trying to cross the Mediterranean. In October and December, hundreds of people, most of North African origin, were deported from Italy to Libya under a bilateral agreement. They had no access to the protection of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), in either Italy or Libya. On several occasions throughout 2004, Libya expelled large numbers of individuals to countries where they might have been at risk of serious human rights violations, without giving them access to the UNHCR. The Algerian security services reported that they had arrested some 3,500 suspected illegal immigrants in the first 10 months of 2004, the majority from African countries. Most were apparently deported to neighbouring countries or to their home countries without any consideration of their protection needs. In Iran, the introduction of primary education fees and the non-renewal of residency cards for Afghan refugees pressured many of them to return to Afghanistan, where the preconditions for a sustained, safe and dignified return might not be guaranteed.

Palestinian refugees, one of the largest refugee groups in the world, continued to suffer hardship in their host countries, while their right to return remained unfulfilled. Many were prevented from receiving the assistance they needed because the resources of the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) were overstretched. Palestinian refugees continued to undergo particularly severe hardship in Lebanon, where discriminatory policies undermined their ability to earn their livelihoods and effectively restricted their access to economic and social rights.

Justice, impunity and the death penalty

Throughout the region, states continued to pay little regard to their obligations under international human rights law. Arbitrary arrests and detentions, torture and ill-treatment, and unfair trials – sometimes before exceptional courts – were routine. In Algeria, Iran, Libya, Syria, Tunisia, Yemen and other countries, the authorities regularly placed restrictions on freedom of expression and association, or carried out sporadic clampdowns, often resulting in the detention of prisoners of conscience. Political activists continued to face arbitrary detention or prolonged imprisonment after unfair trials in countries such as Iran, Libya and Syria.

Perpetrators of human rights violations continued to enjoy complete impunity in most countries in the region. However, in Morocco, in an unprecedented measure in the region, an Equity and Reconciliation Commission was inaugurated to look into cases of " and arbitrary detention in previous decades.

Death penalties continued to be imposed and carried out throughout the region. In Libya and other countries, death sentences were handed down after unfair trials, and in Iran, the execution of children under the age of 18 was still permitted. There was a setback in Lebanon, where capital punishment was reintroduced following a five-year de facto moratorium, when three executions were carried out at the beginning of the year. Human rights activists launched a campaign against the reintroduction of executions in Lebanon. There were public debates about the death penalty in Egypt and within the regional human rights NGOs.

The Arab Charter on Human Rights

In May the League of Arab States adopted a revised version of the Arab Charter on Human Rights, a redraft of a 1994 document. Submissions from international and regional NGOs, made to a Committee of Experts established by the League, were utilized in the Charter. AI submitted recommendations on restrictions and derogations of rights, the death penalty, torture, women's rights, the independence of the judiciary, and freedom of expression, many of which were reflected in the final text adopted by the League. However, concerns remained over provisions in the new Charter that were inconsistent with international human rights law. These included, among other things, provisions for death penalties to be passed and carried out on minors if allowed under national laws, and for the right to life to be subject to derogations in states of emergency. In addition, the Charter was silent on the subject of cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment, although it contained a prohibition of torture.

Human rights defenders

Human rights activists throughout the region continued their efforts to defend and promote human rights. As public debate on human rights spread, new human rights groups emerged in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, and human rights organizations received official recognition in Kuwait.

Yet human rights defenders and bodies continued to be restricted in their activities and freedom of movement. In most states, they were at risk of intimidation and harassment. In Egypt, the authorities denied human rights organizations official registration, then prosecuted their members for pursuing "illegal activities". Several governments continued to use the criminal justice system to harass, threaten and restrict the activities of human rights defenders. In 2004 human rights defenders in Algeria, Bahrain, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Syria were arbitrarily detained. Many of them were brought before courts that failed to meet international standards for fair trial. In certain cases, for example in Iraq, the authorities provided no protection to women's rights activists and other human rights defenders who received death threats from private individuals or organizations because of their human rights work.

Regional initiatives

In March, AI carried out a regional launch of its global Stop Violence Against Women campaign in Amman, Jordan. A symposium brought together participants from across the region to discuss legal reform strategies on strengthening women's rights and ending violence against women. AI raised concerns about the effect of reservations entered by the majority of countries in the region to the UN Women's Convention, which reinforced discrimination against women and undermined their protection and freedom from violence.

In April, AI organized a Conference, Human Rights for All, in Sana'a, Yemen, in cooperation with the National Organization for the Defence of Rights and Freedoms, a Yemeni organization. The participants included regional and international lawyers, human rights activists, and relatives of the victims of abuses. The Conference called on the US and Gulf governments to end the legal limbo of "terrorist" suspects in US custody, including those held in undisclosed locations, and to grant them full access to lawyers, doctors, families and the International Committee of the Red Cross. A Sana'a Committee was subsequently established to follow up the conference and to coordinate information exchange between detainees, lawyers and families in different countries.

AI regional reports

- Reservations to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women: Weakening the protection of women from violence in the Middle East and North Africa region (AI Index: IOR 51/009/2004)
- The Gulf and the Arabian Peninsula: Human rights fall victim to the "war on terror" (AI Index: MDE 04/002/2004)

WHAT DOES AI DO?

Amnesty International (AI) mobilizes volunteer activists – people who give freely of their time and energy in solidarity with the victims of human rights abuses. At the latest count there were more than 1.8 million AI members and supporters in over 150 countries and territories in every region of the world.

AI members come from many different backgrounds, with widely different political and religious beliefs, united by a determination to work for a world where everyone enjoys all human rights. AI members may be organized in groups in local communities, schools and colleges. Others participate in networks focused on particular countries and themes or using particular campaigning techniques.

During 2004, AI's members and supporters in countries around the world campaigned to stop the global human rights scandal of violence against women, which devastates the lives of countless women and girls. They sought to build controls over the international arms trade, which fuels conflict, poverty and human rights abuses. They urged their governments to support the International Criminal Court and end impunity for the perpetrators of the worst crimes known to humanity. They tried to protect human rights defenders working on the frontline and to defend the rights of refugees and asylum-seekers in an often hostile environment. Networks of activists focused on the rights of children and of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. Other networks worked on issues to do with business and economic relations. Some networks mobilize particular sectors: these include students and youth; trade unionists; and health professionals.

One of the year's main campaigns drew attention to the human rights crisis in Darfur, Sudan, where thousands of civilians were killed, tens of thousands made homeless and thousands of women were raped by government-backed militias. AI called for an end to arms transfers that perpetuate the conflict and for those responsible for human rights crimes to be brought to justice. Other major campaigning projects addressed: people-trafficking in Europe; the human rights crisis in Haiti; "disappearances" in Nepal; continuing human rights concerns in Iraq in the wake of the US-led invasion and occupation; and child soldiers across the world. On the 20th anniversary of the gas explosion in Bhopal, India, AI highlighted the facts that the survivors have still not received just compensation or adequate medical help, the plant site has still not been cleaned up and so continues to contaminate the area, and no one has been held responsible for the deaths of over 20,000 people and the debilitating illnesses of thousands of others.

Whatever the particular focus, the activities of AI's members, supporters and staff aim to support the victims of human rights abuses and people working on their behalf and to influence those who have the power to make a difference.

A democratic movement

AI is a democratic, self-governing movement. Major policy decisions are taken by an International Council made up of representatives from all national sections. The Council meets every two years, and has the power to amend the Statute which governs AI's work and methods. (The Statute is available from the International Secretariat or on the AI website, www.amnesty.org.) The Council elects an International Executive Committee of volunteers which carries out its decisions and appoints the movement's Secretary General, who heads up the International Secretariat and is the movement's chief spokesperson.

AI's Secretary General is Irene Khan (Bangladesh), and the members of the International Executive Committee (elected for 2003-5) are Margaret Bedgood (New Zealand), Alvaro Briceño (Venezuela), Ian Gibson (Australia), Paul Hoffman (USA, chair until September 2004), Mariam Lam (Senegal), Claire Paponneau (France), Marian Pink (Austria), Hanna Roberts (Sweden) and Jaap Rosen Jacobson (Netherlands, chair from September 2004).

AI's national sections and local volunteer groups and networks are primarily responsible for funding the movement through donations from members and the public. No funds are sought or accepted from governments for AI's work investigating and campaigning against human rights violations. Information about AI's finances is published annually in the *Amnesty International Review*.

Information about AI is available from national section offices, on the AI website, www.amnesty.org, and from the International Secretariat, Peter Benenson House, 1 Easton Street, London WC1X 0DW, United Kingdom.

AI's guiding principles

AI is independent of any government, political persuasion or religious creed. AI does not support or oppose the views of the victims whose rights it seeks to protect. It is concerned solely with the impartial protection of human rights.

AI forms a global community of human rights defenders whose principles include international solidarity, effective action for the individual victim, the universality and indivisibility of human rights, impartiality and independence, and democracy and mutual respect.

AI's vision is of a world in which every person enjoys all the human rights enshrined in the

Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights standards. Its ambition is to promote ethical globalization to strengthen the forces of justice – the forces that provide hope for the many people worldwide whose rights have been abused.

AI's mission is to undertake research and action focused on preventing and ending grave abuses of the rights to physical and mental integrity, freedom of conscience and expression, and freedom from discrimination, within the context of its work to promote all human rights.

AI's areas of work

AI's work to build a better world is organized around eight global goals.

Reform and strengthen the justice sector

The central importance of the rule of law for any field of human activity is widely recognized across societies and governing systems. Yet many of the domestic institutions which are meant to uphold the rule of law are seriously flawed, resulting in continuing widespread human rights violations, committed with impunity. Such human rights violations include the imprisonment of prisoners of conscience, unfair political trials, torture and ill-treatment, "disappearances" and unlawful killings. International mechanisms to compensate for domestic failures have evolved rapidly in the last decade, but remain still embryonic and contested.

AI's objectives are to:

- Reform police practice and strengthen the judiciary.
- Address discrimination in the justice sector, particularly with regard to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender people (LGBT) and ethnic and religious minorities.
- Consolidate international criminal justice, specifically by supporting the International Criminal Court and universal jurisdiction.
- Ensure human rights in transitional justice.
- Strengthen national, regional and international mechanisms of state accountability, focusing in particular on UN reform.
- Further develop international standards, for example on "disappearances" and with regard to companies.
- Study the impact of corruption on the administration of justice.

Abolish the death penalty

The momentum for abolition of the death penalty continues, particularly at the inter-governmental level, through the emergence of a World Coalition against the Death Penalty, and the work of national organizations working to abolish the death penalty. However, a sizeable number of countries remain opposed to abolition, and the threats of "terrorism", drugs and organized crime are being used to justify the retention or even in some cases the reinstatement of capital punishment.

AI's objectives are to:

- Promote abolition of the death penalty and moratoriums on its use, in specific countries and internationally, especially by showing the impact of discrimination.
- Monitor death penalty developments globally and respond quickly to events such as action on emblematic cases.
- Produce global statistics, thematic reports and action.
- End the use of the death penalty for child offenders.

Protect the rights of defenders

Human rights defenders are at the frontline of work on human rights. There is increasing recognition of the important role that activists play in promoting human rights. Throughout the world, however, they are deliberately targeted in a variety of ways. Governments use many pretexts to stifle legitimate criticism of their policies, including security and the "war on terror".

AI's objectives are to:

- Engage defenders from all sectors of society, building coalitions, skills and greater visibility for women.
- Highlight the contribution of defenders to the security of society at large and address abuses impacting on their rights, including those arising from security measures.
- Promote the protection and safety of human rights defenders and counter the misuses of the judicial system to persecute them.
- Widen and deepen the use of the UN Declaration on human rights defenders, and support the work of UN and regional protection mechanisms.

Resist human rights abuses in the 'war on terror'

The framework of international law and multilateral action is undergoing the most sustained attack since its establishment. International human rights law and international humanitarian law are being challenged as ineffective in responding to security issues. Governments are eroding human rights standards. Armed groups continue to carry out abuses, and some operate in a loose global alliance. Public opinion is polarized.

AI's objectives are to:

- Address the human rights impact of "counter-terrorism" measures, focusing specifically on detention and trial safeguards, torture, killings and discriminatory laws and practices.
- Address the impact of cooperation agreements among states on human rights protection.
- Engage with the development of treaties on "terrorism".
- Promote international and regional mechanisms for state accountability.
- Report on abuses by armed groups, and explore strategies for raising human rights concerns with these groups.
- Advance progressive interpretations of international human rights and humanitarian law as relevant to the "war on terror".

Uphold the rights of refugees and migrants

The debate relating to the rights of refugees, migrants and the displaced has become increasingly high profile, controversial and politicized. People will continue to move across borders seeking protection from persecution or driven by the prospects of economic opportunities. Demand for cheap and exploitative migrant labour will continue. Xenophobic and racist responses to refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants will continue in both developed and developing countries. Restrictive migration control measures and security measures targeting non-nationals will force people "underground". The vulnerability of non-nationals to a wide variety of human rights abuses will increase.

AI's objectives are to:

- Defend refugees' right not to be returned to countries where they might suffer abuses of their fundamental human rights.
- Defend the right of asylum-seekers to access fair and satisfactory asylum procedures.
- Ensure a human rights approach to solutions to refugee problems.
- Promote the human rights of migrants.
- Monitor and address arbitrary detention practices applied to refugees and migrants.
- Enhance economic, social and cultural rights of refugees and migrants.
- Improve protection of refugee and displaced girls and women vulnerable to sexual exploitation and abuse.

Promote economic, social and cultural rights for marginalized communities

Growing global inequities, and the failure of governments to significantly reduce the number of people living in extreme poverty, are among the defining human rights issues of our times. There is still little acceptance that poverty raises fundamental issues of human rights. However, there is growing activism around economic, social and cultural rights. Mass social movements are beginning to use the language of rights in global campaigns on issues including trade, aid, investment, debt and access to medicines.

AI's objectives are to:

- Promote economic, social and cultural rights as human rights, including by participating in global processes such as those on trade.
- Strengthen legal recognition of economic, social and cultural rights, through national law reform initiatives and development of international standards and mechanisms.
- Address severe abuses of economic, social and cultural rights suffered by marginalized communities
- Address abuses arising from HIV/AIDS.
- Highlight the obligations of economic actors such as companies and expose abuses, for example

discrimination in employment.

- Promote human rights principles for privatization and in investment and trade agreements.

Stop violence against women

Violence against women is one of the most widespread and pervasive human rights violations. It is also one of the most hidden. It cuts across cultural, regional, religious and economic boundaries. It is manifested in the context of the family, in the community, in state institutions and in conflict and post-conflict situations. Thanks in particular to the women's movement, there have been significant advances in the promotion of women's rights in international law, including criminal law. However, such advances have made little difference for women on the ground and much remains to be done.

AI's objectives are to:

- Demand that governments criminalize rape and ratify the UN Women's Convention without reservations.
- Challenge impunity for rape and other forms of violence against women, including by armed groups, in conflict and post-conflict situations.
- Ensure that states protect, respect and fulfill women's rights, using the standard of due diligence nationally and internationally to hold states accountable to their obligations.
- Challenge the tolerance of violence against women within society and urge traditional and informal authorities to take effective action to fight it.
- Support women human rights activists.
- Develop policies to address reproductive health rights and other related concerns.

Protect civilians and close the taps that fuel abuses in conflict

In parts of the world conflict appears chronic. Identity issues, poverty and, paradoxically, mineral wealth are among the causes. Sometimes weak states are confronted with economically powerful armed groups; often conflict is prolonged by foreign governments, private companies and diaspora communities. Mass abuses against civilians persist, and despite significant international and national legal developments, impunity still reigns. Effective protection seems to depend too often on the presence of foreign troops.

AI's objectives are to:

- Demand accountability for abuses in armed conflict by states and armed groups.
- Promote an agenda for protecting civilians, including through peacekeeping and peace-building.
- Campaign against the use of child soldiers.
- Demand accountability of external actors complicit in abuses, including second states and economic actors.
- Campaign to restrict the arms trade, including by promoting an arms trade treaty.
- Campaign against indiscriminate weapons, such as cluster weapons.
- Advance the debate on the use of military force.

You can make a difference

AI works to improve human rights through the actions of ordinary people around the world. AI's members and supporters have a record of real achievement. Prisoners of conscience have been released. Death sentences have been commuted. Torturers have been brought to justice. Governments have been persuaded to change their laws and practices.

Sometimes solidarity keeps hope alive. Hope is a precious weapon for prisoners battling to survive, relatives trying to obtain justice or human rights defenders bravely continuing their work despite danger and isolation. However bleak the situation, AI's members and supporters, acting together, can make a difference.

CONTACT AI

AI SECTIONS

Algeria Amnesty International, BP 377, Alger,
RP 16004
e-mail: amnestyalgeria@hotmail.com

Argentina Amnistía Internacional,
Av. Rivadavia 2206 - P4A,
C1032ACO Ciudad de Buenos Aires
e-mail: info@amnesty.org.ar
<http://www.amnesty.org.ar>

Australia Amnesty International, Locked Bag 23, Broadway, New South Wales 2007
e-mail: hello@amnesty.org.au
<http://www.amnesty.org.au>

Austria Amnesty International, Moeringgasse 10,
A-1150 Vienna
e-mail: info@amnesty.at
<http://www.amnesty.at>

Belgium Amnesty International (Flemish-speaking), Kerkstraat 156, 2060 Antwerpen
e-mail: directie@aivl.be
<http://www.aivl.be>
Belgium Amnesty International (francophone),
rue Berckmans 9, 1060 Bruxelles
e-mail: aibf@aibf.be
<http://www.aibf.be>

Benin Amnesty International, 01 BP 3536,
Cotonou
e-mail: aibenin@leland.bj

Bermuda Amnesty International, PO Box HM 2136, Hamilton HM JX
e-mail: aibda@ibl.bm

Canada Amnesty International (English-speaking),
312 Laurier Avenue East, Ottawa, Ontario, K1N 1H9
e-mail: info@amnesty.ca
<http://www.amnesty.ca>
Canada Amnistie Internationale (francophone),
6250 boulevard Monk, Montréal, Québec, H4E 3H7
e-mail: info@amnistie.qc.ca
<http://www.amnistie.qc.ca>

Chile Amnistía Internacional, Oficina Nacional,
Huelén 188 A, 750-0617 Providencia, Santiago
e-mail: info@amnistia.cl
<http://www.amnistia.cl>

Côte d'Ivoire Amnesty International, 04 BP 895, Abidjan 04
e-mail: amnestycotedivoire@aviso.ci

Denmark Amnesty International, Gammeltorv 8, 5, 1457 Copenhagen K.
e-mail: amnesty@amnesty.dk
<http://www.amnesty.dk>

Faroe Islands Amnesty International, PO Box 1075,
FR-110 Tórshavn
e-mail: amnesty@amnesty.fo
<http://www.amnesty.fo>

Finland Amnesty International,
Ruoholahdenkatu 24,
D 00180 Helsinki
e-mail: amnesty@amnesty.fi
<http://www.amnesty.fi>

France Amnesty International, 76 Bd de La Villette, 75940 Paris, Cédex 19
e-mail: info@amnesty.asso.fr
<http://www.amnesty.asso.fr>

Germany Amnesty International, Heerstrasse 178,
53111 Bonn
e-mail: info@amnesty.de
<http://www.amnesty.de>

Greece Amnesty International, Sina 30,
106 72 Athens
e-mail: info@amnesty.org.gr
<http://www.amnesty.org.gr>

Guyana Amnesty International, PO Box 101679, Georgetown
e-mail: rightsgy@yahoo.com

Hong Kong Amnesty International,
Unit D, 3F, Best-O-Best Commercial Centre,
32-36 Ferry Street, Kowloon
e-mail: admin-hk@amnesty.org
<http://www.amnesty.org.hk>

Iceland Amnesty International, PO Box 618,
121 Reykjavík
e-mail: amnesty@amnesty.is
<http://www.amnesty.is>

Ireland Amnesty International,
Sean MacBride House, 48 Fleet Street,
Dublin 2
e-mail: info@amnesty.ie
<http://www.amnesty.ie>

Israel Amnesty International, PO Box 14179,
Tel Aviv 61141
e-mail: amnesty@netvision.net.il
<http://www.amnesty.org.il>

Italy Amnesty International,
Via Giovanni Battista De Rossi 10, 00161 Roma
e-mail: info@amnesty.it
<http://www.amnesty.it>

Japan Amnesty International,
2-7-7F Kanda-Tsukasa-cho, Chiyoda-ku,
Tokyo, 101-0048
e-mail: info@amnesty.or.jp
<http://www.amnesty.or.jp>

Korea (Republic of) Amnesty International, Gwangehwamun PO Box 2045, Chongno-gu,
Seoul, 110-620
e-mail: amnesty@amnesty.or.kr
<http://www.amnesty.or.kr>

Luxembourg Amnesty International,
Boîte Postale 1914, 1019 Luxembourg
e-mail: amnesty@pt.lu
<http://www.amnesty.lu>

Mauritius Amnesty International, BP 69,
Rose-Hill
e-mail: amnestymtius@intnet.mu

Mexico Amnistía Internacional,
Zacatecas 230, Oficina 605, Colonia Roma Sur, Delegación Cuahutemoc, CP 06700,
Mexico DF
e-mail: informacion@amnistia.org.mx
<http://www.amnistia.org.mx>

Morocco Amnesty International,
281 avenue Mohamed V, Apt. 23, Escalier A,
Rabat
e-mail: admin-ma@amnesty.org

Nepal Amnesty International, PO Box 135,
Balaju, Kathmandu
e-mail: amnesty@ccsl.com.np
<http://www.amnestynepal.org>

Netherlands Amnesty International, PO Box 1968, 1000 BZ Amsterdam
e-mail: amnesty@amnesty.nl
<http://www.amnesty.nl>

New Zealand Amnesty International, PO Box 5300, Wellesley Street, Auckland
e-mail: campaign@amnesty.org.nz
<http://www.amnesty.org.nz>

Norway Amnesty International, PO Box 702,
Sentrum, N-0106 Oslo
e-mail: info@amnesty.no
<http://www.amnesty.no>

Peru Amnistía Internacional, Enrique Palacios 735-A, Miraflores, Lima
e-mail: admin-pe@amnesty.org
<http://amnistia.org.pe>

Philippines Amnesty International,
17-B, Kasing Kasing Street, Corner K-8th, Kamias,
Quezon City
e-mail: amnestypilipinas@meridiantelekoms.net

Poland Amnesty International,
Piękna 66 a lok.2, 00-672, Warszawa
e-mail: amnesty@amnesty.org.pl
<http://www.amnesty.org.pl>

Portugal Amnistia Internacional,
Rua Fialho de Almeida 13-1,
PT-1070-128 Lisboa
e-mail: aiportugal@amnistia-internacional.pt
<http://www.amnistia-internacional.pt>

Puerto Rico Amnistía Internacional,
Calle El Roble 54-Altos, Oficina 11,
Río Piedras, 00925
e-mail: amnistiapr@amnestypr.org

Senegal Amnesty International,
BP 269 Dakar Colobane
e-mail: aisenegal@sentoo.sn

Sierra Leone Amnesty International, PMB 1021,
16 Pademba Road, Freetown
e-mail: aislf@sierratel.sl

Slovenia Amnesty International, Beethovnova 7,
1000 Ljubljana
e-mail: amnesty@amnesty.si
<http://www.amnesty.si>

Spain Amnistía Internacional, Apdo 50318,
28080 Madrid
e-mail: amnistia.internacional@a-i.es
<http://www.es.amnesty.org>

Sweden Amnesty International, PO Box 4719,
S-11692 Stockholm
e-mail: info@amnesty.se
<http://www.amnesty.se>

Switzerland Amnesty International,
PO Box 3001, Bern
e-mail: info@amnesty.ch
<http://www.amnesty.ch>

Taiwan Amnesty International, No. 89,
7th floor #1, Chung Cheng Two Road,
Kaohsiung
e-mail: aitaiwan@seed.net.tw
<http://www.aitaiwan.org.tw>

Togo Amnesty International, BP 20013, Lomé
e-mail: aitogo@cafe.tg

Tunisia Amnesty International,
67 rue Oum Kalthoum, 3ème étage, Escalier B,
1000 Tunis

e-mail: admin-tn@amnesty.org

United Kingdom Amnesty International,
The Human Rights Action Centre, 17-25 New Inn Yard, London EC2A 3EA
e-mail: info@amnesty.org.uk

<http://www.amnesty.org.uk>

United States of America Amnesty International,
5 Penn Plaza, 14th floor, New York, NY 10001
e-mail: admin-us@aiusa.org
<http://www.amnestyusa.org>

Uruguay Amnistía Internacional, Colonia 871,
apto. 5, CP 11100, Montevideo
e-mail: amnistia@chasque.apc.org
<http://www.amnistiauruguay.org.uy>

Venezuela Amnistía Internacional,
Apartado Postal 5110, Carmelitas, Caracas 1010A
e-mail: admin-ve@amnesty.org
<http://www.amnistia.int.ve>

AI STRUCTURES

Belarus Amnesty International, PO Box 10P,
246050 Gomel
e-mail: amnesty@tut.by

Bolivia Amnistía Internacional, Casilla 10607, La Paz
e-mail: perescar@ceibo.entelnet.bo

Burkina Faso Amnesty International,
303 rue 9.08, 08 BP 11344, Ouagadougou 08
e-mail: aburkina@sections.amnesty.org

Croatia Amnesty International, Martićeva 24,
10000 Zagreb
e-mail: admin@amnesty.hr
<http://www.amnesty.hr>

Curaçao Amnesty International, PO Box 3676, Curaçao, Netherlands Antilles
e-mail: eisdencher@interneeds.net

Czech Republic Amnesty International,
Palackého 9, 110 00 Praha 1
e-mail: amnesty@amnesty.cz
<http://www.amnesty.cz>

Gambia Amnesty International, PO Box 1935, Banjul
e-mail: amnesty@gamtel.gm

Hungary Amnesty International, Rózsa u. 44,
II/4, 1064 Budapest
e-mail: info@amnesty.hu
<http://www.amnesty.hu>

India Amnesty International, C-161, 4th Floor,
Hemkunt House, Guatam Nagar,
New Delhi 110-049
e-mail: admin-in@amnesty.org
<http://www.amnesty.org.in>

Malaysia Amnesty International, E6, 3rd Floor, Bangunan Khas, Jalan 8/1E, 46050 Petaling Jaya,
Selangor
e-mail: amnesty@tm.net.my
<http://www.aimalaysia.org>

Mali Amnesty International, BP E 3885, Bamako
e-mail: amnesty.mali@afribone.net.ml

Moldova Amnesty International, PO Box 209,
MD-2012 Chişinău
e-mail: amnestym@araxinfo.com

Mongolia Amnesty International, PO Box 180, Ulaanbaatar 21 0648
e-mail: aimncc@magicnet.mn
<http://www.amnesty.mn>

Pakistan Amnesty International, B-12,
Shelezon Centre, Gulsan-E-Iqbal, Block 15,
University Road, Karachi - 75300
e-mail: amnesty@cyber.net.pk

Paraguay Amnistía Internacional,
Tte. Zotti No. 352 e/Hassler y Boggiani,
Asunción
e-mail: ai-info@py.amnesty.org

Slovakia Amnesty International, Benediktiho 5,
811 05 Bratislava
e-mail: amnesty@amnesty.sk
<http://www.amnesty.sk>

South Africa Amnesty International,
PO Box 29083, Sunnyside 0132, Pretoria,
Gauteng
e-mail: info@amnesty.org.za
<http://www.amnesty.org.za>

Thailand Amnesty International,
641/8 Vara Place, Ladprao Soi 5, Ladprao Road, Chatuchak, Bangkok 10900
e-mail: info@amnesty.or.th
<http://www.amnesty.or.th>

Turkey Amnesty International,
Muradiye Bayiri Sok, Acarman ap. 50/1,
Tevsikiye 80200, Istanbul
e-mail: amnesty@superonline.com
<http://www.amnesty-turkiye.org>

Ukraine Amnesty International, PO Box 60,
Kiev-15, 01015
e-mail: office@amnesty.org.ua

Zambia Amnesty International, PO Box 40991,
Mufulira
e-mail: azambia@sections.amnesty.org

Zimbabwe Amnesty International, Office 25 E,
Bible House, 99 Mbuya Nehanda Street, Harare
e-mail: amnesty@mweb.co-zw
AI GROUPS

There are also AI groups in:
Angola, Aruba, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Barbados, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana,
Cameroon, Chad, Dominican Republic, Egypt,
Estonia, Grenada, Jamaica, Jordan, Kuwait,

Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Liberia, Lithuania, Malta, Mozambique, Palestinian Authority, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia and Montenegro, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, Yemen

AI OFFICES

International Secretariat (IS)
Amnesty International, Peter Benenson House,
1 Easton Street, London WC1X 0DW,
United Kingdom
e-mail: amnestyis@amnesty.org
<http://www.amnesty.org>

ARABAI (Arabic translation unit)
c/o International Secretariat,
Peter Benenson House, 1 Easton Street,
London WC1X 0DW, United Kingdom
e-mail: arabai@amnesty.org
<http://www.amnesty-arabic.org>

Éditions Francophones d'Amnesty
International (EFAI)
17 rue du Pont-aux-Choux, 75003 Paris, France
e-mail: ai-efai@amnesty.org
<http://www.efai.org>

Editorial de Amnistía Internacional (EDAI)
Calle Valderribas 13, 28007 Madrid, Spain
e-mail: mileo@amnesty.org
<http://www.edai.org>

European Union (EU) Office
Amnesty International, Rue d'Arlon 37-41,
B-1000 Brussels, Belgium
e-mail: amnesty-eu@aieu.be
<http://www.amnesty-eu.org>

IS Beirut – Middle East and North Africa
Regional Office Amnesty International,
PO Box 13-5696, Chouran Beirut 1102 - 2060,
Lebanon
e-mail: mena@amnesty.org

IS Dakar – Development Field Office
Amnesty International, Sicap Liberté II,
Villa 1608, BP 47 582, Dakar Liberté, Dakar,
Senegal
e-mail: Kolaniya@amnesty.org

IS Geneva – UN Representative Office
Amnesty International, 22 rue du Cendrier,
4ème étage, CH-1201 Geneva, Switzerland
e-mail: gvunpost@amnesty.org
IS Hong Kong – Asia Pacific Regional Office Amnesty International, 16/F Siu on Centre,
188 Lockhart Rd, Wanchai, Hong Kong
e-mail: admin-ap@amnesty.org

IS Kampala – Africa Regional Office
Amnesty International, Plot 20A,
Kawalya Kaggwa Close, Kololo, Uganda

e-mail: admin-kp@amnesty.org

IS Moscow – Russia Resource Centre
Amnesty International, PO Box 212, Moscow 119019, Russian Federation
e-mail: msk@amnesty.org
<http://www.amnesty.org.ru>

IS New York – UN Representative Office
Amnesty International, 777 UN Plaza, 6th Floor,
New York, NY 10017, USA

IS Paris – Research Office
Amnesty International, 76 Bd de la Villette,
75940 Paris, Cédex 19, France
e-mail: pro@amnesty.org

IS San José – Americas Regional Office
Amnistía Internacional,
75 metros al norte de la Iglesia de Fatima,
Los Yoses, San Pedro, San José, Costa Rica
e-mail: admin-cr@amnesty.org