

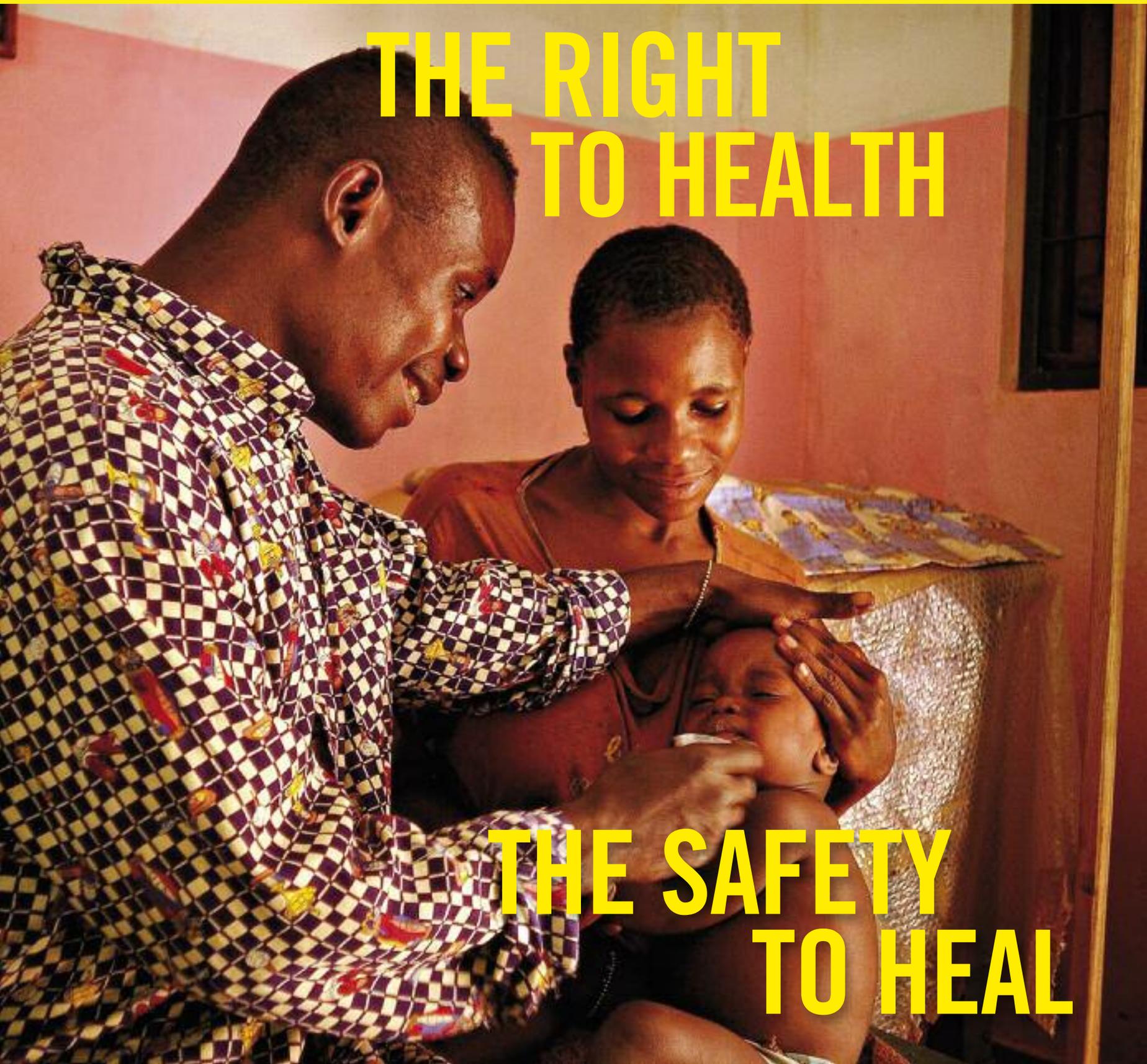
WIRED

FOR ACTIVISTS AND INTERNATIONAL MEMBERS
APRIL/MAY 2009 VOLUME 39 ISSUE 002

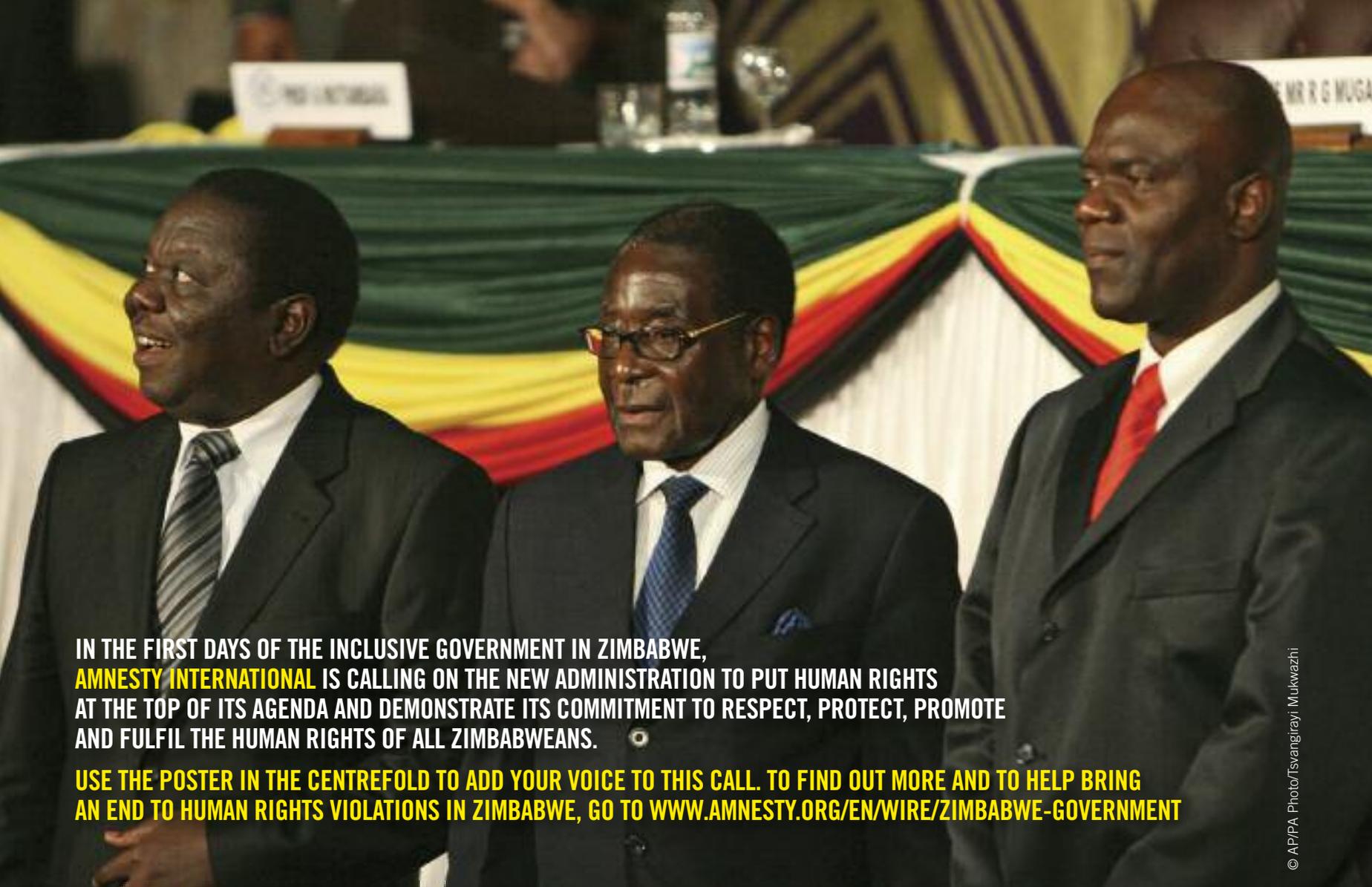
AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL



THE RIGHT TO HEALTH



THE SAFETY TO HEAL



© AP/PA Photo/Tsvangirayi Mukwazhi

IN THE FIRST DAYS OF THE INCLUSIVE GOVERNMENT IN ZIMBABWE, **AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL** IS CALLING ON THE NEW ADMINISTRATION TO PUT HUMAN RIGHTS AT THE TOP OF ITS AGENDA AND DEMONSTRATE ITS COMMITMENT TO RESPECT, PROTECT, PROMOTE AND FULFIL THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF ALL ZIMBABWEANS.

USE THE POSTER IN THE CENTREFOLD TO ADD YOUR VOICE TO THIS CALL. TO FIND OUT MORE AND TO HELP BRING AN END TO HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN ZIMBABWE, GO TO WWW.AMNESTY.ORG/EN/WIRE/ZIMBABWE-GOVERNMENT

THIS IS YOUR WIRE

PLEASE LET US KNOW IF YOU LIKE IT

- » Have you used the actions?
- » Have you shared the information with anyone?
- » What would you like to see more of in future issues?
- » Do you have photos or articles that you would like to share with other members?
- » And finally, have you visited the new blog www.amnesty.org/livewire?

Send all your comments and suggestions to:

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 International Secretariat
 Peter Benenson House
 1 Easton Street
 London WC1X 0DW
 United Kingdom

or email us on yourwire@amnesty.org

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Cover photo: Central African Republic: a people's dispensary in Zoumea, created by the sisters of the Catholic Mission, where free health care is given to Aka pygmies.
© Seguin/Andia.fr/Still Pictures

This page: President of Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe, centre, flanked by his new Prime Minister, Morgan Tsvangirai, left, and the deputy Prime Minister Arthur Mutambara, right, at the signing of the power sharing deal ceremony in Harare, September 2008.

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GETTING WIRE

Would you like know more about Amnesty International's campaigns or use the **WIRE** actionzine for your own activism?

WIRE is available to download online at www.amnesty.org. To receive your free print copy, all you need to do is join our international membership – go to the final page of this issue for more details.

Institutions are welcome to purchase copies. The price for six copies a year for institutions is **£35/US\$54/€41**. Amnesty International sections can purchase copies for their own members. Email us on wire.subscribe@amnesty.org or call **+44 207 413 5814/5507**.

INSIDE THIS WIRE

WORLD HEALTH DAY

In Gaza and Sri Lanka, health workers have been killed and facilities attacked. In Zimbabwe, with no medicine or resources, hospitals are unable to cope with the ongoing cholera epidemic. Read these stories and take action. **PAGE 2**



WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY

Russian journalists and human rights defenders continue to die for speaking out. Read about the recent killings of Stanislav Markelov and Anastasia Baburova and send a postcard to the Russian President – let him know: the persecution must stop and the impunity must end. **PAGE 8**



INTERNATIONAL WORKERS' DAY

Migrant workers all over the world are vulnerable to discrimination and human rights abuses. In South Korea, migrant workers face a wave of raids, ill-treatment and deportations. **WIRE** looks at their stories. **PAGE 7**



Q&A

Somali photojournalist and human rights activist **ABUKAR ALBADRI** tells **WIRE** about the constant threat to his life. **PAGE 13**

CHILDREN CAUGHT IN CONFLICT

Colombia's children are paying a high price in the country's 40-year-old armed conflict. Join **WIRE** in calling on the Colombian authorities to ensure that children are not recruited as soldiers, and that their safety is protected. **PAGE 15**



SPREAD THE WORD

Read and share with others Amnesty International's five-point plan to the new government in Zimbabwe. The other side of our poster (*above*) marks World Health Day. Tear it out, use it, show the world.

WORLDWIDE APPEALS
READ, DISTRIBUTE, ACT NOW
SEE OUR INSERT

WHAT ELSE?

There is so much more for you to do! Take action on **WORLDWIDE APPEALS**; send a postcard to the Zimbabwean government and urge it to provide access to health care to everyone in the country; read and send a postcard that calls for an end to death penalty in Belarus (**PAGE 18**); call on the French authorities to end police abuses (**PAGE 18**); learn about the state of rights in the Iraq region of Kurdistan (**PAGE 19**); find out what other Amnesty International members are doing (**PAGE 14**); and look at the update from the Livewire blog on **PAGE 6**

WHEN RESCUERS BECOME CASUALTIES



© Muhammad Sabah, B'Tselem

EMERGENCY HEALTH WORKERS AND FACILITIES SAVE LIVES DURING ARMED CONFLICTS, EPIDEMICS AND NATURAL DISASTERS. WHEN THEY ARE HARMED, THOSE WHO RELY ON THEM SUFFER. THIS WORLD HEALTH DAY, WE SAY: RESPECT AND PROTECT HEALTH SERVICES.

Three Palestinian paramedics were rushing through a field on the outskirts of Gaza City. It was 4 January 2009, the fighting between Hamas militants and the Israeli army was in full force, and the paramedics were on their way to rescue two wounded men in a nearby orchard. They never got there. The three paramedics, Anas Fadhel Na'im, Yaser Kamal Shbeir and Raf'at Abd al-'Al, were killed by Israeli army missiles.

Twelve-year-old Omar Ahmad al-Barade'e was outside his home and was pointing towards the wounded men. He was also killed. An ambulance crew tried to collect the bodies of the paramedics and the boy, but came under fire from Israeli forces. Two days went by before the crew was able to approach their bodies.

On 12 January 2009, two Israeli missiles hit a six-storey apartment building in Jabalia, north Gaza. As ambulances rushed to the scene, local residents were already trying to evacuate the wounded and the dead from the upper floors.

Dr Issa Abdel Rahim Saleh and paramedic Ahmad Abdel Bari Abu Foul were the first emergency health workers to arrive at the scene. They immediately started evacuating the wounded. As they climbed down the

stairs between the sixth and fifth floors, an Israeli tank shell came through a window and sliced through the doctor's head and body. There were several ambulances in the street below at the time and paramedics at the scene were plainly visible by their phosphorescent jackets. Yet the tank crew did not hold its fire.

Emergency health workers in Gaza repeatedly came under attack from Israeli forces while carrying out their duties during the recent conflict. At least seven medical workers were killed and more than 20 injured while transporting or attempting to collect the wounded and the dead. They did not receive the protection guaranteed to them under international law.

As death tolls rise in times of emergency, such as the recent conflict in Gaza, health workers battle to save lives. All around the world, doctors, nurses, ambulance drivers and paramedics provide critical support to the injured and the sick. They provide emergency treatment in the midst of conflict and in the aftermath of natural disasters. They provide medication to civilian populations caught in the grip of epidemics and continue to provide ongoing medical care, such as maternity services, immunizations and HIV treatments.



Far left: Fire damage caused by Israeli white phosphorus artillery shell at Red Crescent Hospital, Tel al-Hawa, Gaza City, January 2009.



Left: Khaled Yousif Abu Sa'ada, the driver of an ambulance hit by a missile from an Israeli tank shell while picking up wounded men in Beit Lahiya, Gaza, January 2009.

Below: Health workers demonstrate in Harare against the virtual collapse of the health system in Zimbabwe, which has led to an outbreak of cholera, the closure of maternity wards and the severely reduced capacity of hospitals throughout the country, November 2008.

They may have to work in harsh and dangerous conditions. All too often, health workers are injured and sometimes killed, services are interrupted and hospitals and equipment are damaged and even destroyed. The shortage of medical supplies and facilities that ensues has devastating consequences for public health, both immediately and in the long term.

COLLAPSE OF ZIMBABWEAN HEALTH CARE

In Zimbabwe, the health system is on the verge of collapse after struggling to cope with severe economic depression, hyper inflation and neglect by the state. Most health centres are barely functioning with faulty equipment, no medicines and with health workers on strike over poor working conditions and low wages. Most patients cannot afford the long journeys to and from the few health institutions that are still operating, and the vast majority of Zimbabweans cannot afford private health care. They have no access to even the most basic treatments. Their health is, quite simply, uncared for.

An inadequate supply of safe drinking water and broken down sanitation systems resulted in a severe cholera outbreak in August 2008. With no health system to contain and manage the outbreak, it has caused thousands of preventable deaths. More than 3,800 Zimbabweans have died of cholera so far. As the major hospitals fail to provide care to those who need it, people are continuing to die. Without an effective response, this cholera epidemic is likely to be the worst recorded in Africa.

“First, in the initial phase of the response there simply were no supplies [...] to treat the many cases,” a senior government official in Zimbabwe recently explained to the NGO Physicians for Human Rights. “Second, few clinics or hospital staff were sufficiently experienced or trained to respond to cholera, and many patients died even in facilities that did have adequate

supplies. Finally, the issue of transport costs for patients and staff, exacerbated by the closure of the public hospitals, meant that many patients either could not reach care, or reached care in very advanced stages of dehydration, and could not be saved.”

The high demand for cholera treatment has had an impact on patients with other health needs. Around 3,000 women per month give birth in public hospitals in Harare. Nearly 300 of them require life-saving caesarean sections. These and other maternity services are no longer available in many public hospitals; the majority of women cannot afford going to private hospitals, which charge in US dollars.

Failing to provide affordable and accessible health care to all people in Zimbabwe is a violation of their right to health. The government of Zimbabwe must act now and do everything in its power to strengthen health services in the country.

HOSPITAL ATTACKED IN SRI LANKA

In Sri Lanka, fighting between the government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam has trapped more than a quarter of a million civilians in the Wannu region in the north of the country without adequate food, water and medical assistance.

The main hospital in the town of Puthukkudiyiruppu in the Wannu region was shelled on 4 February 2009. Hundreds of patients and medical staff were evacuated from the building. The hospital, which had been subjected to several attacks in previous days, was bombarded by shelling for 16 hours. None of the warring parties took responsibility for the attack.

“At least nine people were killed and at least 20 others injured as a result of the first three shellings”, said a representative of the International

Left and right: Wounded civilians and patients waiting for medical treatment in the Vanni, Sri Lanka, February 2009.



© Private



© Private

Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). "The hospital sustained direct hits three times in less than eight hours: twice between 3pm and 4pm local time, then again at 10.20pm local time. On Monday evening at 6.40pm, the hospital was hit a fourth time. On Sunday the hospital's kitchen was hit first, then its church and later a ward with women and children. On Monday it was another ward. It is likely that there were casualties outside the hospital, too, but we do not have the exact figures yet. Despite the shelling, people injured in the ongoing fighting continue to arrive at the hospital. When it was hit the third time, more than 800 people, including 500 in-patients, were sheltering in the hospital."

This was the last hospital to remain open in Puthukkudiyiruppu. In early February hundreds of injured civilians in the region were left with no proper medical facilities. Doctors are performing operations without anaesthetic and patients wait up to a week for urgent treatment. For some, the wait may be too long.

International humanitarian organizations, such as the ICRC, have been organizing the transfer of patients to a more secure area controlled by the government. Amnesty International has called on both parties in the conflict to create humanitarian corridors that would allow civilians trapped in the Vanni region to escape the fighting. They must also let food, water, and medical assistance reach those who cannot leave.

World Health Day, on 7 April 2009, is a celebration of the courage and readiness of those who treat and rescue others affected by emergencies. On this day, we need to protest against attacks on hospitals, against the negligence and carelessness that bring about the collapse of vital health services, and against impunity for those who violate the right to health. 

ACT NOW

Please use the poster in the centrefold to mark World Health Day.

Please call on the Israeli Defence Force's Judge Advocate General to ensure that an independent and impartial investigation is carried out into all cases of attacks against emergency health workers and facilities by Israeli forces during the recent military operation in the Gaza Strip. Please urge him to ensure that those responsible for such unlawful attacks are brought to justice.

Please write to:
General Avihai Mandelblit
Judge Advocate General
The Office of the Judge Advocate General
Building 22, 6 David Elazar Street
HaKiryat, Tel Aviv 02329, Israel

Email: avimn@idf.gov.il
Fax: +972 3569 4526

Please sign and send the attached postcard to Zimbabwe's Minister of Health and Child Welfare. The postcard calls on him to strengthen health services in the country and to prioritize the provision of adequate, affordable and accessible health care for the entire population of Zimbabwe.

You can read more on health services in Gaza on www.amnesty.org/en/wire/gaza-health. To find out more on the health crisis in Zimbabwe, go to www.amnesty.org/en/wire/zimbabwe-health. More details on Amnesty International's call for humanitarian corridors in Sri Lanka are on www.amnesty.org/en/wire/srilanka-health.

Late last year, Amnesty International issued recommendations to then President-elect Barack Obama, challenging him to Counter Terror with Justice. The three key steps were: to close Guantánamo and end illegal detention, eradicate torture and other ill-treatment, and end impunity.

In the days preceding his inauguration, Amnesty International members and activists organized public actions, demonstrations and events in 30 countries. In Kenya, for example, more than 4,000 people took part in an SMS action and signed a petition. In Indonesia, activists put on white masks in solidarity with those detainees still held in indefinite detention and urged members of the public to sign messages to the President-elect. All over the world, 18,661 people have so far signed an online petition to the President.

President Obama was inaugurated on 20 January 2009. Within his first two days in office, he signed executive orders to close the detention facility at Guantánamo Bay within one year; suspend trials by military commission; close CIA secret detention centres and ban the use of “enhanced” interrogation techniques that amount to torture and other ill-treatment. The orders are very important moves in the right direction.

In his executive order on the closure of Guantánamo on 22d January 2009, President Obama acknowledged the impact of international opinion on his decision. He wrote: “In view of the significant concerns raised by these detentions, both within the United States and internationally, prompt and appropriate disposition of the individuals currently detained at Guantánamo and closure of the facilities in which they are detained would further the national security and foreign policy interests of the United States and the interests of justice.”

President Obama has signaled a break with the past. But more needs to be done. Amnesty International is continuing the campaign and challenging the President to continue to Counter Terror with Justice. We need your support once again. 

Top: Demonstration for the closure of Guantánamo, Rome, Italy, January 2009.

Below: Close Guantánamo SMS action from Amnesty International Kenya to mark the inauguration of President Barack Obama. Nairobi, Kenya, January 2009.

IN DECEMBER 2008, WIRE PUBLISHED A POSTER WITH AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL'S HUMAN RIGHTS CHECKLIST FOR US PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA'S FIRST 100 DAYS IN OFFICE. IT WAS PART OF OUR LONG-STANDING CAMPAIGN TO COUNTER TERROR WITH JUSTICE. OUR WORK HAS FINALLY BEGUN TO PAY OFF. THANKS IN NO SMALL PART TO THE WORK OF AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL MEMBERS WORLDWIDE, THE ADMINISTRATION HAS TAKEN SOME IMPORTANT POSITIVE STEPS. BUT MORE NEEDS TO BE DONE.



ACT NOW

Please call on President Barack Obama to ensure prompt and lawful resolution of the cases of all those detained by US authorities in the context of counter-terrorism and accountability for past human rights violations. Please urge him to follow up on his high executive orders of 22 January 2009 by:

- Ensuring that the Guantánamo detainees are promptly charged with recognizably criminal offences or are immediately released;

- Ensuring that those detainees who are to be charged receive fair trials in US federal courts;

- Ensuring that an independent inquiry into the USA's counter-terrorism detention and interrogation practices since 11 September 2001 is set up.

Please write to:
President Barack Obama
The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania
Ave NW, Washington, DC 20500, USA.

To find out more, go to
<http://obama100days.amnesty.org>

ON THE RIGHTS WAY TO JUSTICE



Go to www.amnesty.org/livewire to catch up with what people around the movement are doing, watch footage and listen to audio clips from actions, missions, high-level meetings and events.

GRIEF IS STILL SO RAW

Elana Dallas reports from Sierra Leone, where she is part of an Amnesty International team researching maternal mortality.

“3 February: Today we meet some families of women who’ve died in childbirth in the past few months and the medical staff in their cases. It’s really tough listening to people whose grief is still so raw and absorbing the brief glimpses we have into their lives.

“One husband is clearly depressed – he says of his wife, “we used to advise each other”. He has three surviving children (his wife died giving birth to twins, which hadn’t been picked up in her ante-natal checks), and his wife’s sister, who they live with, has five of her own.

“He has very little work and it’s a daily struggle to feed eight children. They get some supplementary food, but live on a diet of one meal of rice a day. At his house, he shows us photos of his wife, who was lovely.

“When we ask him how he would feel about us using his family’s story and the photos in our campaign, he says it would make him very happy for us to use whatever we can so that other families don’t have to go through what he’s been through.”



© Amnesty International

The grieving husband of Hawa Dabor, who died in childbirth, and one of her surviving children, Koinadugu, northern Sierra Leone, February 2009.

THE TASK OF RECONSTRUCTION WILL BE TRULY IMMENSE



© Sharif Sathian

Destroyed building in Gaza, January 2009.

Donatella Rovera, Amnesty International researcher on Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, reports from the Gaza Strip.

“As we leave after more than two weeks in Gaza, we are still shocked and horrified at the scale of the destruction caused by the 22-day offensive the Israeli army launched on 27 December. [...]”

“Reconstructing Gaza will be a gargantuan task. Even clearing the rubble left over from the destruction of homes and factories, which must be done before any proper rebuilding can be started, presents a mammoth challenge. It requires heavy machinery and the fuel to operate it, but neither of these is available in Gaza.”

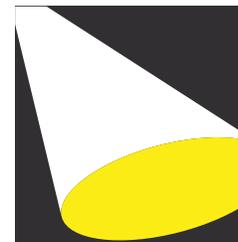
100 DAYS CAMPAIGN IN KENYA

Jennifer Bilec-Sullivan and Natasha Sturgeon from Amnesty International, report from Nairobi, Kenya.

“Three of our staff were standing on the islands between the lanes of traffic handing out flyers to drivers who were stuck in traffic jams. Although this may sound dangerous, it was actually safe as Nairobi traffic is almost at a constant standstill in downtown due to so many new cars being added to the roads every month. We thought we would be ignored, but to our surprise the drivers were all winding down their windows and reaching out of their cars to take the flyers.”

CRACKDOWN ON MIGRANT WORKERS IN SOUTH KOREA

MANY MIGRANT WORKERS IN SOUTH KOREA FACE DISCRIMINATION, EXPLOITATION AND APPALLING WORKING CONDITIONS. IN NOVEMBER 2008, AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL'S EAST ASIA RESEARCHER VISITED SOUTH KOREA AND INTERVIEWED MIGRANT WORKERS FROM ACROSS THE COUNTRY.



© Private



There are almost 700,000 migrant workers in South Korea. Most are recruited to work in manufacturing, agriculture and fisheries. About a third of these are irregular, which means they do not have official permission to work in the country.

South Korea was one of the first Asian countries to legally recognize the rights of migrant workers. However, both regular and irregular migrant workers continue to face discrimination. The workers, from China, Viet Nam, Bangladesh and other countries in the region, are forced to work long hours, many without overtime pay. They operate heavy machinery or work with dangerous chemicals with little or no training and no protective equipment. When workplace accidents happen, many migrant workers fail to receive adequate medical treatment and compensation. Several of the workers interviewed suffered serious industrial accidents, including broken bones, loss of limbs and third degree burns.

Women are particularly vulnerable to exploitation and many are sexually

Chinese-Korean women at a shelter in Seoul, South Korea, November 2008.

harassed by Korean managers and male migrant workers. Their vulnerability is heightened by the fact that they often find themselves the only female worker in a factory.

Accommodation for migrant workers is very basic, ranging from dormitory-style housing to converted shipping containers with outside toilets and cooking facilities. Women share living space with male workers – one woman interviewee had no choice but to share the same bedroom.

Employers must sign release papers before migrant workers can change jobs, making them very vulnerable to exploitation. If they are unable to find new employment within two months of leaving a job, they are deported. When employers refuse to release migrant workers, some find conditions so unbearable that they have no choice but to leave anyway, and become irregular workers.

RAIDED AND DEPORTED

In September 2008, the government announced its intention to deport half of the country's estimated 220,000 irregular migrant workers by 2012. On 12 November, immigration officials and police officers raided factories in Maseok, Gyeonggi province, north of Seoul, and arrested 110 irregular migrant workers.

During the raid, one Filipina migrant was denied permission to go to the toilet and had to urinate in public. A Bangladeshi migrant broke his leg when he tried to escape – he was handcuffed and made to wait five hours before being taken to hospital. "I cried out in pain and told them my legs hurt so much," he said. I couldn't walk and had to be carried by five immigration officers to an awaiting van. They mocked me and told me to stop crying and exaggerating."

At least four other migrant workers had to be hospitalized with serious injuries, as they attempted to escape arrest. As the crackdown continues, the number of reported cases of ill-treatment of migrant workers during these operations rises.

Several detained migrant workers were deported without any attempt by the South Korean authorities to help them recover their unpaid wages. The Ministry of Justice stated that the November crackdown "was necessary to take strong steps against the disorderly conduct by 'illegal' migrants" who are turning places like Maseok into "slums" and "a hotbed of crime".

TRADE UNION TARGETED

Migrant workers' right to freely form and join trade unions is also being challenged. The authorities have targeted senior officials of the Migrants' Trade Union (MTU) who were arrested and deported in November and December 2007 and May 2008. The

Ministry of Labour has also denied MTU's legal union status on the basis that irregular migrant workers do not have the same legally protected rights, including the right to freedom of association, guaranteed to other workers under South Korean law.

In times of financial downturn, cost-cutting plans include having migrants incur the costs of accommodation and food. There are also concerns that incidents of xenophobia are on the rise. As the South Korean government continues the crackdown, fears grow that migrant workers will become further marginalized. **W**

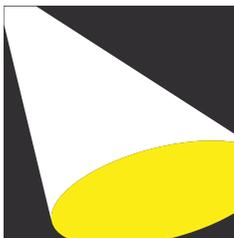
For updates and actions on migrant workers in South Korea, go to www.amnesty.org/en/region/south-korea

REMEMBER MIGRANT WORKERS ON 1 MAY!

International Workers' Day, on 1 May, celebrates decades of progress in securing and protecting the rights of workers around the world. But not all workers are safe from exploitation. Migrant workers, especially irregular migrants, are at particular risk of exploitation by employers, traffickers and smugglers.

Many migrants move for a combination of reasons: better access to economic opportunities, adequate food, or to ensure security for themselves and their families. Those who do find work in other countries often live in poor conditions under threat of unlawful arrest and detention. They are often unable or unwilling to assert their labour or other human rights. Some have their wages withheld; others have their documents confiscated as a way of controlling their movements. Some are deceived, threatened or forced into debt bondage.

To read more about the rights of migrant workers, go to www.amnesty.org/en/wire/migrants-rights



DYING FOR SPEAKING OUT

RUSSIA IS NOT SAFE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS AND JOURNALISTS. THE KILLINGS OF HUMAN RIGHTS LAWYER STANISLAV MARKELOV AND JOURNALIST ANASTASIA BABUROVA ARE FURTHER PROOF OF HOW DANGEROUS IT IS TO SPEAK OUT AGAINST HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN RUSSIA. THE PERSECUTION MUST STOP AND IMPUNITY MUST END.

“I am tired. I am tired of coming across names of people I know listed as crime victims in the media. This is not about work but about survival... We need protection from Nazi groups. We need protection from corrupted authorities and from the law enforcement bodies which very often simply serve them. And we understand very clearly that no one but ourselves will ever give us the protection we need.”

With these words, Stanislav Markelov, one of Russia's leading human rights lawyers, addressed the audience at a public meeting in Moscow in November 2008. The meeting was held in support of Mikhail Beketov, editor-in-chief of the newspaper *Khimkinskaya Pravda*, which published critical articles alleging corruption by local authorities. Mikhail Beketov had been subjected to intimidation and violence, and was attacked in November 2008 by unidentified assailants. He was severely beaten and nearly died of his injuries. Less than three months later, Stanislav Markelov was killed.

Stanislav Markelov was the founder and director of the Rule of Law Institute, an organization that aimed to unite lawyers, legal advisers, journalists and human rights activists protecting human rights in Russia. Specializing in cases that seemed hopeless at the beginning, Stanislav Markelov worked with Anna Politkovskaya, a journalist

and human rights defender who exposed human rights violations committed during the armed conflict in Chechnya, among other issues. Anna Politkovskaya was assassinated in Moscow on 7 October 2006. The trial of the men accused of involvement in her murder finally began in 2008. On 19 February they were acquitted by jury and released in the court room. The case was sent back to the Investigative Committee at the Prosecutor General's Office the next day.

It was Anna Politkovskaya who asked Stanislav Markelov to represent the family of Zelimkhan Murdalov, a young Chechen man who in 2001 was subjected to enforced disappearance and torture by Sergei Lapin, a Russian law enforcement official. That year, Anna Politkovskaya began to chronicle Zelimkhan Murdalov's family's search for justice in the paper *Novaya Gazeta*. She reportedly received threats from Sergei Lapin.

It took Stanislav Markelov four years to bring Sergei Lapin to justice. During these years, Stanislav Markelov often travelled to Chechnya. The first Russian lawyer to work in Chechnya after the armed conflict, he insisted that the case should be heard in Chechnya, not in another Russian region or at the European Court of Human Rights. He was determined to show that the laws of the Russian Federation also apply to the Chechen



Vigil for murdered lawyer Stanislav Markelov and journalist Anastasia Baburova outside the Russian Embassy in Norway, January 2009.

Republic and its population. In 2005, Sergei Lapin was sentenced to 11 years in prison. Stanislav Markelov also represented other Chechens, including Makhmadsalor Masaev, a man who was reportedly abducted and detained at a secret detention facility in Tsenterei, the native village of Chechen President Ramzan Kadyrov.

SHOT DEAD IN THE STREET

Despite the world's attention following the death of Anna Politkovskaya, the killings continued. Aged 34, Stanislav Markelov was shot dead on the street in

Moscow on 19 January 2009. Anastasia Baburova, a journalist who was with him at the time, tried to stop the gunman. She was fatally wounded and died in hospital later that day. Before her death, 25-year-old Anastasia Baburova was reporting on radical right-wing youth movements and neo-Nazi groups. She was the fourth *Novaya Gazeta* journalist to have been killed since 2000. [W](#)

ACT NOW

Please sign and send the attached postcard to Russian President Dmitry Medvedev. Urge him to publicly condemn the murders, to ensure that the perpetrators are brought to justice and to secure the protection of human rights defenders in Russia.

World Press Freedom Day is on 3 May 2009. Read more on www.amnesty.org/en/wire/press-freedom

POLITICAL PARTIES
AND INDEPENDENT MEDIA

3 **DEAL WITH PAST HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS**
AND COMBAT IMPUNITY

4 **END PARTISAN POLICING**
AND HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS
BY THE SECURITY FORCES

5 **ENSURE THAT ZIMBABWEAN PEOPLE**
HAVE ACCESS TO ADEQUATE FOOD,
HOUSING, ESSENTIAL HEALTH CARE,
SAFE DRINKING WATER, SANITATION
AND EDUCATION

LEARN MORE ABOUT AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL'S CAMPAIGN TO MAKE HUMAN RIGHTS A TOP PRIORITY
FOR THE NEW ZIMBABWEAN GOVERNMENT ON WWW.AMNESTY.ORG/EN/REGION/ZIMBABWE





DON'T HOLD HOSPITALS HOSTAGE

WORLD HEALTH DAY 2009

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



© AP/PA Photo/Ashraf Amra

A Palestinian man inspects the damage caused to the al-Quds hospital in Gaza City by an Israeli attack, January 2009.

ZIMBABWE'S GOVERNMENT!
SHOW YOUR COMMITMENT TO PROTECTING
AND RESPECTING HUMAN RIGHTS!

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



IN THE FIRST 100 DAYS OF THE NEW ADMINISTRATION:

1 RELEASE ALL PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE

AND ENSURE PROMPT AND FAIR TRIALS

FOR POLITICAL DETAINEES

2 IMPROVE

THE OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

FOR NGOS AND HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS,

POLITICAL PARTIES

ABUKAR ALBADRI

Q WHAT SPARKED YOUR INTEREST IN HUMAN RIGHTS?

A As a young boy during the civil war in Somalia in 1991 I saw people being killed because of their clan and children my age, about 10 or 12, killed because of their ethnicity. Most of my life I have seen people in Somalia caught up between the blazing guns of militias and insurgents controlled by warlords. So I decided to become a witness – a journalist who is documenting the abuses, the events and the victims, witnessing how perpetrators become heroes and how violations of human rights become the only route to political power.

Q WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE MAIN CHALLENGES IN THE STRUGGLE AGAINST HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SOMALIA?

A People who misunderstand human rights. Somali fighters, regardless of their affiliation, view human rights defenders as enemies. Some even believe that they will go to paradise for killing a human rights defender. Somali civilians, who live in a reality of constant human rights abuse, have little understanding of what their rights are and have little trust in human rights defenders. We need more public understanding of what human rights mean and people need to be more aware of their rights.

Q WHAT IMPACT DOES YOUR WORK HAVE ON YOUR LIFE?

A As a journalist defending human rights I am constantly under threat. I'm suspected of being a spy, especially since I freelance for western media. I've received death threats. Someone once called me and said "Abukar, we've decided to take your life. You have three hours to let your family know and say your goodbyes". My colleague, Said Tahlil Ahmed, director of Horn Afrik Radio in Mogadishu who was famous for his analyses of the political conflict in Somalia, was assassinated in Mogadishu in February 2009.

In Mogadishu, I've covered street battles, assassinations and public executions. I've had guns held to my head. I've been summoned to news conferences in the presidential palace only to be detained by corrupt officials who demanded a bribe. After a particularly dangerous incident in 2007, from which I very narrowly escaped, I grew suspicious. I started viewing every passer-by as a potential assassin and finally went into hiding. I used to think that with commitment, dedication and a strong heart, I could survive. Now I'm not so sure. This job can be rewarding, but sometimes it feels like a curse.

Q WHAT KEEPS YOU MOTIVATED WHEN TIMES ARE HARD?

A I feel that I work for the people, for those who are abused and are underprivileged. I believe my work might help to change Somalia's violent culture and I hope that one day it will help bring accountability for war crimes in Somalia.

Q DO YOU HAVE A MESSAGE FOR OUR READERS?

A When people are abused they feel hopeless and helpless. They need our support, our love and our acceptance. Our actions can save lives. When we defend one another, our own lives have value. When we support those who need our support, we change something in the world.

Q WHAT IS THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT LESSON THAT YOUR WORK HAS TAUGHT YOU?

A That in communities, everywhere in the world, there are victims and there are perpetrators. And then there are the human rights defenders. I learned that I wanted to be this third person, the human rights defender, and dedicate my life to documenting abuses of human rights.



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**I DECIDED TO BECOME A WITNESS –
A JOURNALIST WHO IS DOCUMENTING THE
ABUSES, THE EVENTS AND THE VICTIMS**

ABUKAR ALBADRI is a Somali photojournalist and human rights activist. His images appear in several Amnesty international publications. To read more about the killing of SAID TAHLIL AHMED and about journalists in Somalia, go to page 20.

ANYONE CAN BE AN ACTIVIST

WHAT IS IT LIKE TO ACT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS? WE ASKED AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL ACTIVISTS TO SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCES AND TELL WIRE ABOUT THE ACTIONS WHICH THEY HAVE TAKEN PART IN. WHY NOT SEND US YOURS?

Amnesty International activists in Mongolia told WIRE how they promoted the Control Arms campaign. In October 2008, they built a tank out of balloons and took it onto the streets of the capital, Ulaanbaatar. Many Mongolians have hardly seen a tank before, and the activists wanted to raise awareness

'So what is the best thing about being an activist? Being one in a mass of people who believe that we have not only the right, but the responsibility to transform the world into the place we want it to be – a better and safer world, where every single life weighs the same. And of course, to try to make it reality!'

Miriam Schillerova, Amnesty International Slovakia



© Amnesty International

'One thing led to another and here I am – one of these human rights activists. Years of unforgettable adventures, countless activities followed. I met a man who had been imprisoned and was awaiting execution for more than 15 years while being innocent.'

Michelle Proyer, Amnesty International Austria

about the damage caused by weapons and firearms and the huge numbers of civilians who are killed and injured every year. They succeeded. The balloon tank attracted plenty of interest from bystanders and from the media.

In Nepal, Amnesty International members educate and inform others,

including more than 3,000 local police officials, about human rights. Members also trained youth activists on practical ways to campaign for human rights. The participants collected signatures for the release of prisoners of conscience in China, distributed leaflets on women's rights in Dhulikhel, Nepal, and took part in a demonstration against impunity in Banepa.

In Italy, members of Amnesty International invited other human rights activists to join the 100 days campaign and call for the closure of Guantánamo. On 17 January, 254 activists in orange boiler suits marched silently towards the US embassy in Rome. The

demonstration was a great success and even got the support of the mayor, Gianni Alemanno. 

Do you want to share your activism experiences with others? Do you need advice or have any questions about effective activism? Email us on online.communities@amnesty.org

These links can help you keep in touch with other International Members around the world:

African Online Community
<http://facebook.dj/amnestyaooc/>
Comunidad Online Latinoamericana
<http://facebook.dj/amnistiacoala/>
Bangla Online Community
<http://groups.to/aiboc>
Amnesty Online Twitter Feed (English):
<http://twitter.com/AmnestyOnline>
AmnistiaOnline Twitter Feed (español):
<http://twitter.com/AmnistiaOnline>



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Above: Beijing Olympics campaign, Innsbruck, Austria, June 2008.

Left: "Balloon tank" used in Control Arms action, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, October 2008.

A young child with a large belly and a sad expression stands next to a yellow bucket. The child is shirtless and wearing colorful shorts. The background is a muddy, outdoor setting with a tree trunk and some debris.

CHILDHOOD DENIED

THE LIVES OF MILLIONS OF COLOMBIA'S CHILDREN CONTINUE TO BE DESTROYED BY CONFLICT. THEY ARE VICTIMS OF FORCED DISPLACEMENT AND LAND MINES, SOMETIMES IN THEIR OWN SCHOOLS. THEY ARE TORTURED, KILLED AND RECRUITED AS CHILD SOLDIERS. THEY HAVE BEEN SUBJECTED TO THE WORST HORRORS OF CONFLICT BY ALL THE WARRING PARTIES. THEY MUST BE PROTECTED.

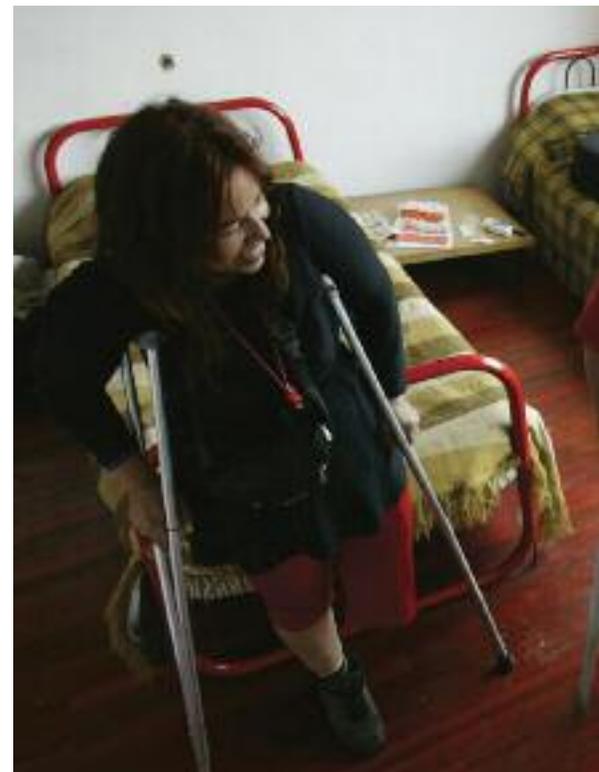
COLOMBIA

WIRE [APRIL/MAY 09]

15



© Amnesty International



Fourteen-year-old Rubén Darío Avendaño Mora and his brother Luis Guillermo Robayo Mora, aged 25, were killed in April 2007. The brothers, from Agua Blanca in the municipality of Sácama, Casanare Department, were on their way to buy livestock and had quite a large amount of money on them. The Colombian army claimed the brothers were guerrillas who were killed by army troops as they were about to receive an extortion payment. Both had apparently been tortured. Rubén Darío had burns on his fingers and deep cuts across his throat. Luis Guillermo had acid burns on his abdomen.

For more than 40 years, Colombia has been in the grips of an internal armed conflict which has pitted the security forces and paramilitaries against guerrilla groups. The abuses that epitomize the conflict – such as enforced disappearances, torture, abductions and killings – have been inflicted on children as well as adults.

Children injured or killed in the armed conflict are often bystanders, caught in the wrong place at the wrong time, but others are deliberately targeted to terrorize communities or in reprisal killings. Many are killed or tortured simply because they live in an “enemy zone” and are therefore held to be sympathetic to the other side. Some, mainly girls, are singled out for sexual abuse.

Sixteen-year-old Ingrid Yahaira Sinisterra was abducted and killed by paramilitaries on 24 August 2007, in Buenaventura, Valle del Cauca Department. When her family went to see the paramilitaries to ask for her body, they were told that she had been killed as a warning to others not to have relationships with guerrillas. The family recovered her mutilated body from the sea the next day and buried

Page 15: A child from an Embera Indigenous community, Chocó Department, 2007. The Embera, like many other Indigenous communities throughout Colombia, have been threatened and attacked by all the warring parties.

Above: Children in a camp for displaced people, Campo Dos, between Cúcuta and Tibú, Norte de Santander, 2007. When the children were asked what toys they had, they proudly produced the chickens recently received as part of a local scheme to help displaced families to earn income.

her. Ingrid Yahaira Sinisterra’s story is not an isolated case. Paramilitary groups have abducted and raped girls in various parts of Colombia and forced them to work as prostitutes. Soldiers and members of the guerrilla have also been implicated in cases of violence against women and girls.

CHILD SOLDIERS

There are estimated to be between 8,000 and 13,000 child soldiers in Colombia. Both guerrilla and paramilitary groups continue to recruit children as combatants – some as young as seven.

While some child soldiers are driven by poverty or discrimination, others are abducted or forced to join through intimidation. Two boys aged 12 and 14 were killed, reportedly by the guerrilla group Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), in the municipality of La Hormiga, Putumayo Department, in January 2008, apparently in reprisal for their refusal to join up. Their families’ homes were then burned down.

THE CONFLICT IN COLOMBIA

There is little agreement on the underlying causes of the long-running conflict in Colombia. However, the fighting has provided a useful cover for those seeking to expand and protect economic interests. The main protagonists in the conflict are:

THE ARMED FORCES

For over 40 years there have been numerous and persistent reports documenting the direct responsibility of the security forces in grave human rights violations. Those abuses continue today. Of particular concern in recent years has been the apparent increase in extrajudicial executions of civilians committed directly by the security forces.

PARAMILITARY GROUPS

Paramilitaries have their origin in legally constituted civilian “self-defence” groups. These were originally created by the Colombian army to act as auxiliaries during counter-insurgency operations. Despite government claims that all paramilitaries demobilized in a government-sponsored programme that began in 2003, such groups continue to operate, often in collusion with or with the consent of the security forces, and continue to commit human rights violations.

GUERRILLA GROUPS

The first of the guerrilla groups emerged in the 1950s. Over the decades, the guerrillas have created extensive strongholds, principally in rural areas, but have been driven back in recent years. Guerrilla groups, notably the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the smaller National Liberation Army (ELN) are responsible for repeated human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law.



© AP/PA Photo/William Fernandez Martinez



© Amnesty International

While the security forces do not officially recruit children as combatants, they do use children as informers and there are also reports of soldiers soliciting information from children in schools, enticing them with sweets and money or threatening them.

DISPLACED CHILDREN

Possibly more than 50 per cent of Colombia's 3-4 million displaced people are under 18. While on the move, and once they have settled elsewhere, displaced people encounter barriers preventing them from accessing goods and services.

Something as routine as going to school can be dangerous. Some schoolyards, as well as local water sources and rural access roads are strewn with land mines and unexploded ordnance (UXOs). Colombia reportedly has the highest number of land mine victims in the world. Guerrilla groups – mainly the FARC and to a lesser extent the ELN – continue to use anti-personnel mines. Children playing or working in fields, unaware of the hazards posed by land mines, are at particular risk.

Help and support for land mine victims is often inadequate. María (not her real name), now 19, lives in Florencia, Caquetá Department, and has a young son. She walks with difficulty, using a stick. Years after she was injured, she is still waiting to get a prosthetic limb that will allow her to walk more easily. Her description of how she was injured reflects the stories of many land mine victims.

"I stayed with my mother when my parents split up. I was nine and I always took food to her [in the field]. One day, I saw something and trod

Above left: Three people who lost limbs in land mine explosions receive help and support at a home run by the church in Bogotá, April 2006.

Above: San Francisco neighbourhood of Buenaventura, Valle del Cauca Department, October 2006. All parties to the conflict are active in the area and levels of conflict-related violence are high.

on a mine [...] The explosion left me maimed, I lost my leg from the knee down. We didn't report it because we were afraid of being branded guerrilla supporters and of reprisals. We went to a health centre, I got gangrene. It did me a lot of harm. We went to see the doctor and we told him it was a snake bite [...] I just have this stick because I can't afford a prosthetic limb."

WHAT IS AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CALLING FOR?

Amnesty International continues to call on guerrilla groups to make a public commitment not to recruit anyone under the age of 18 and immediately release all child soldiers. Guerrilla groups, as well as the security forces, should also not use inherently indiscriminate weapons, such as land mines, and ensure that necessary precautions are taken in planning and carrying out attacks to protect civilians and civilian objects, such as schools.

Amnesty International is calling on the Colombian authorities to honour their obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and ensure that all Colombia's children are able to enjoy all their human rights, including their rights to life and to freedom from torture or other ill-treatment. **W**

ACT NOW

Please call on President Uribe to ensure that the security forces stop dragging children into the conflict, either through "civic-military" operations, such as "soldiers for a day", or by using children as informants, all of which could place children at risk of attack by guerrilla groups.

Please write to:

President, Señor Presidente Álvaro Uribe Vélez
 Presidente de la República, Palacio de Nariño,
 Carrera 8 No. 7-26, Bogotá, Colombia
 Fax: +57 1 337 5890

Salutation: Dear President Uribe/Excmo. Sr. Presidente Uribe

Please call on the Attorney General to ensure that his Office carries out exhaustive and impartial investigations into cases of forced recruitment of children by both guerrilla and paramilitary groups, and into other types of human rights abuses against children, as well as into human rights violations committed against children by the security forces, and that those responsible are brought to justice.

Please write to:

Attorney General, Dr. Mario Germán Iguarán Arana
 Fiscal General de la Nación, Fiscalía General de la Nación
 Diagonal 22B (Av. Luis Carlos Galán No. 52-01) Bloque C,
 Piso 4, Bogotá, Colombia
 Fax: +57 1 570 2000 (a message in Spanish will ask you to enter extension 2017)

Salutation: Dear Mr Iguarán/ Estimado Sr. Fiscal

To read more on the conflict in Colombia, go to

www.amnesty.org/en/region/colombia.

To read more about children caught in conflicts in

different parts of the world, go to

www.amnesty.org/en/wire/children-conflict



BELARUS: DEATH BEHIND DOORS

Belarus is the only country in Europe and in the former Soviet Union that still executes people. Four executions are known to have taken place there in 2008. There are no official statistics available, but Amnesty International estimates that as many as 400 people may have been executed since Belarus gained its independence in 1991.

Neither prisoners nor their families are told the execution date in advance and prisoners must live with the fear that every time their cell door opens they may be taken for execution. “All death row prisoners hate doors. As long as the doors are closed, they are alive. Death always comes from behind doors”, says Oleg Alkaev, former director of the Minsk prison where executions were carried out. Prisoners are told they will be executed only moments before the sentence is carried out, with a shot to the back of the head. The body is not handed over to the family, who are often informed only after the event, and the place of burial is kept secret causing further distress to relatives.

In Belarus, the use of the death penalty is compounded by a flawed criminal justice system. There is credible evidence that torture and other ill-treatment are used to extract “confessions”; condemned prisoners are not able to appeal; and the inherently cruel, inhuman and degrading nature of the death penalty is exacerbated for death row prisoners and their relatives by the secrecy surrounding the procedure.

Amnesty International is working with other human rights groups in Belarus to encourage public debate on the death penalty. [W](#)

ACT NOW

Please sign and send the attached postcard, which asks the President and parliament of Belarus to immediately declare a moratorium on death sentences and executions as a first step towards full abolition of the death penalty, and for the sentences of all prisoners currently on death row to be commuted and replaced with terms of imprisonment.

A cell for condemned prisoners, Minsk, Belarus, 2003.



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POLICE ABUSES IN FRANCE: TIME FOR TRUTH

Several police officers are suspected of being responsible for the death of Abdelhakim Ajimi, who died during his arrest in Grasse, France, on 9 May 2008. At the beginning of March, no charges had been brought against the officers, and they remained on active duty in Grasse while the investigation continues.

Racist abuse, excessive use of force during arrest, beatings, and unlawful killings – these are the allegations of human rights violations committed by French police officers. The courts often dismiss complaints without investigation or fail to investigate these abuses effectively. Sometimes these investigations are conducted by officers from the same police force as those suspected of the crime. Victims who try to complain often face charges of insulting or assaulting a police officer. As Boubaker Ajimi, Abdelhakim Ajimi’s father, said: “[It is] much better to be a police officer than just a citizen. They’ve got themselves covered.”

When the internal police investigation body looks into a complaint, it is not seen as independent and impartial by the victims, and the results of investigations are not publicized. The independent police complaints commission lacks the powers to enforce its recommendations. As a result, victims of human rights

violations by law enforcement officials are too often left without justice.

These abuses do not just happen in France: unlawful killings, torture and other ill-treatment by law enforcement officials is a serious problem across Europe. The victims are often migrants, asylum-seekers, other foreign nationals or ethnic minorities.

Amnesty International is campaigning to end police impunity in France and across Europe. It is time to demand equal treatment in France for both victim and police officer, in line with the requirements of international law. [W](#)

ACT NOW

Call on the French authorities to ensure that the new Defender of Rights is independent of the police, prosecutor, and judiciary. This new body should have the power to receive complaints directly from the victim; to investigate independently all allegations of human rights violations; and to make binding recommendations.

Please write to:

Minister of Justice
Ministère de la Justice
13 Place Vendôme
75042 Paris CEDEX 01
France

Top: Abdelhakim Ajimi sitting outside a cafe. He died in Grasse on 9 May 2008 after being restrained by police officers.



Kurdish men read newspapers to find out the latest news in the build-up to the second Gulf war. Erbil, Kurdistan, February 2003.

THE STATE OF RIGHTS IN KURDISTAN

ARBITRARY DETENTION, ATTACKS ON PRESS FREEDOM AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN. THESE ARE SOME OF THE ISSUES THAT STAND IN THE WAY OF PROGRESS ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE KURDISTAN REGION OF IRAQ.

For the last nine years, Walid Yunis has been held in detention without charge or trial in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. A member of the Turkman minority, he was arrested in the street in the northern province of Erbil by men in plain clothes believed to be members of the Asayish, the Kurdish security police, in February 2000. The authorities have given no reason for his arrest and for nearly three years his whereabouts in detention were unknown. He remains detained without charge or trial at the Asayish headquarters in Erbil.

In 2008 the Kurdish authorities released hundreds of long-term detainees and only a handful of political prisoners are said to remain in detention. Prior to this, the Asayish had arbitrarily detained thousands of people in the Kurdistan Region. The vast majority of those detained were members of local Islamist organiza-

tions, including armed groups, and legal political parties. Many stayed in detention for years, without charge or trial and had no access to legal counsel.

Some, like Walid Yunis, were subjected to torture and other ill-treatment during detention. Amnesty International received reports of electric shocks, beatings with a cable or a metal or wooden baton, beatings on the soles of the feet (*falaqa*), suspension by the wrists or ankles, and sleep deprivation. In some cases, the families of the detainees were unaware of their whereabouts and were unable to obtain information about them or even receive confirmation of their detention for weeks or even months.

INDEPENDENT MEDIA UNDER THREAT

Encompassing Iraq's three northern provinces of Erbil, Sulaimaniya and Dohuk, the Kurdistan Region has been

fully and effectively administered by the two leading Kurdish parties, the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), since 1991. After a long period of in-fighting, the region has seen an increase in stability in recent years. Following the overthrow of head of state Saddam Hussein in 2003, the two parties joined forces for the general elections in December 2005. The Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), a unified government for the Kurdistan Region, was formed in May 2006.

The vast majority of media in the Kurdistan Region is funded by the KRG. The various political parties operate their own television stations and publish their own newspapers. As a rule, they all avoid criticizing the KRG and its main political parties or questioning the work of the Asayish.

The newly emerging independent press in the region, namely newspapers

such as *Hawlati* and *Awene*, has been more inclined to criticize KRG policies and condemn human rights violations committed by the Asayish. The papers have also investigated allegations of corruption, nepotism and lack of transparency in government. In some cases, the Asayish responded by arresting, beating and harassing journalists.

In September 2008, the KRG passed a new media law that abandons the use of imprisonment of journalists. Despite this positive development, journalists are still being targeted by the authorities, including the judicial system. On 24 November 2008, Adil Hussain, a medical doctor, was jailed for six months and fined by a court in Erbil for writing an article on sex and homosexuality in the newspaper *Hawlati*, which was deemed "immoral". The case against him was initiated by both the Public Prosecutor in Erbil and the Medical Syndicate. He was released on 7 December 2008 following international pressure.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Despite some progress in monitoring and preventing violence against women, violent incidents against women, including murder, continue to be widespread in the region and many perpetrators of violent crimes against women are never brought to justice. In some cases, the authorities apparently failed to act when alerted of violent threats.

When Begeerd Hussein Muhammad, a 27-year-old journalist, received threats from her estranged husband, she reported them to the police and sought protection from the Police Directorate of Follow-up Violence against Women. The police failed to ensure that effective protection measures were taken. She was stabbed to death in her home on 18 April 2008. As of early 2009, her husband is still at large despite being the prime suspect. **W**

Amnesty International's report on human rights violations in the Kurdistan region of Iraq is out in April. To read more, go to <http://www.amnesty.org/en/region/iraq>.

DID YOU KNOW?

JOURNALISTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO DO THEIR WORK FREELY AND SAFELY, BUT ALL OVER THE WORLD, THEY CONTINUE TO BE KILLED, INJURED OR IMPRISONED.



IN SOMALIA

Somalia is one of the most dangerous places in the world for journalists. Since the beginning of the year, three Somali journalists have been attacked in Somalia, two of them fatally. Said Tahlil Ahmed, director of the independent radio station HornAfrik, was gunned down in Mogadishu's market on 4 February, is the 11th journalist to have been killed in the country since the beginning of 2007, when Somalia entered a new and more violent phase

Said Tahlil Ahmed, Director of HornAfrik Radio, who was shot dead in February 2009.

of conflict. All parties to the conflict have been responsible for intimidation and threats against journalists. Foreign journalists, at risk of kidnappings, rarely venture into Somalia. Somali journalists therefore play a crucial role in bearing witness to the routine attacks and violence against civilians and in reporting to the world.

IN CUBA

Freedom of expression in Cuba is severely limited. The authorities control all media outlets and private ownership of press, radio, television and other means of communication is prohibited by law.

Independent journalists and political dissidents face harassment and intimidation through short-term detention and monitoring by security officers. In some cases they are held for months without charge and sometimes without trial, often on vague charges.

In order to work, journalists must join the official Cuban Journalist Association and commit to exercising freedom of the press "in keeping with the objectives of socialist society".

Access to the internet is also severely limited outside government offices and educational institutions. Users can face prison sentences for carrying out "counter-revolutionary" activities on the internet.

Cuba has recently signed certain human rights treaties such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. However, the government rejected all recommendations made by participating member states at the UN Universal Periodic Review in February 2009, which related to the lifting of restrictions on freedom of expression and releasing of prisoners of conscience.

Please call on the Cuban authorities to end the harassment and imprisonment of independent journalists and to reform laws and practice relating to freedom of expression.

Please write to:

Sr. Raúl Castro Ruz, Presidente

La Habana, Cuba

Fax: +53 7 8333 085

Email: cuba@un.int

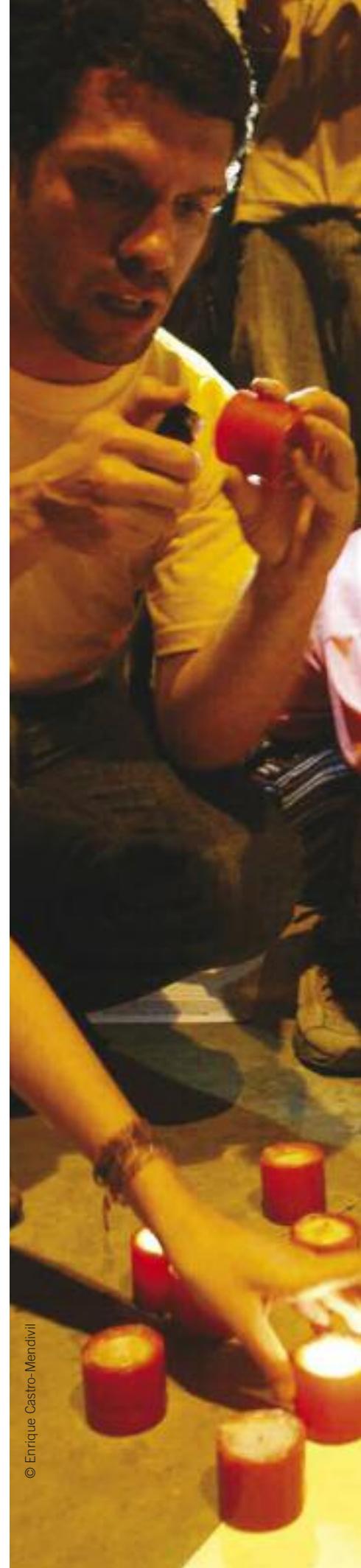
To find out more, go to

www.amnesty.org/en/wire/cuba-press

Many of the journalists killed appear to have been deliberately targeted. Yet no one has been held accountable, fuelling the possibility of further killings. With no Somali institutions able or willing to protect journalists, the international community should urgently condemn the killings, press for investigations, and protect freedom of expression in Somalia.

To find out more, go to

www.amnesty.org/en/wire/somalia-journalists



© Enrique Castro-Mendivil



Amnesty International Peru light candles for a Gaza Action outside the Israeli Embassy in Lima, January 2009.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL is a global movement of 2.2 million people in more than 150 countries and territories who campaign on human rights.

Our vision is for every person to enjoy all the rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights standards.

WHETHER IN A HIGH-PROFILE CONFLICT OR A FORGOTTEN CORNER OF THE GLOBE, **AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL** CAMPAIGNS FOR JUSTICE AND FREEDOM FOR ALL AND SEEKS TO GALVANIZE PUBLIC SUPPORT TO BUILD A BETTER WORLD

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Activists around the world have shown that it is possible to resist the dangerous forces that are undermining human rights. Be part of this movement. Combat those who peddle fear and hate.

- Join Amnesty International and become part of a worldwide movement campaigning for an end to human rights violations. Help us make a difference.

Together we can make our voices heard.

I am interested in receiving further information on becoming a member of Amnesty International

NAME

ADDRESS

COUNTRY

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www.amnesty.org

Please return this form to the Amnesty International office in your country.

For a full list of the offices worldwide please go to www.amnesty.org/en/worldwide-sites

If there is no office in your country, you can become an International Member and join our International Members' online community.

To do this, please visit: www.amnesty.org/en/join where you will be able to access joining information and sign up online in Arabic, English, French and Spanish.

Or alternatively write to:
Online Communities Team, Amnesty International,
International Secretariat, Peter Benenson House, 1 Easton Street,
London WC1X 0DW, United Kingdom

To be an International Member you need to agree to an International Members Code of Conduct. The Code is available in Arabic, English, French and Spanish at: www.amnesty.org/en/code-of-conduct



**‘WHEN WE DEFEND
ONE ANOTHER,
OUR OWN LIVES
HAVE VALUE.’**

Abukar Albadri

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