

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

REVIEW 2002

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AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

A message from the Secretary General

Right now war is raging in Iraq. Hundreds of Iraqi civilians have been killed by bombs and bullets, and many more are at serious risk from the collapse of supplies of food and clean water. For decades Amnesty International documented the horrendous violations of human rights of the Iraqi people by its government. In the months leading up to this crisis, Amnesty International members lobbied relentlessly to draw attention to the severe human rights and humanitarian consequences of possible conflict on the Iraqi people. With the outbreak of conflict we called on the USA, the United Kingdom and their allies as well as on the Iraqi government to respect international humanitarian law standards and to protect civilians. And in the aftermath of the conflict, we call for the protection of the human rights of the Iraqi people to be made central to the reconstruction of Iraq.

While Iraq grabbed the news headlines in recent months, away from international attention war and violence continued to destroy thousands of lives and livelihoods in other parts of the world. Government forces and armed groups acted with impunity to abuse human rights, to kill, torture, abduct and rape. In some countries, the so-called “war against terrorism” was used as a licence to suppress political dissent and restrict the rights of minorities, refugees and asylum-seekers. In others, draconian measures were introduced to roll back human rights in the name of “counter-terrorism” and greater security.

The drive for security, far from making the world a safer place, made it more dangerous by curtailing human rights and undermining the rule of international law, by shielding governments from scrutiny, by deepening divisions among people of different faiths and racial origin, and by diverting attention from festering conflicts and other real threats that affect the lives of millions of people, such as small arms proliferation, extreme poverty, HIV/AIDs and other killer diseases, and violence against women and children.

Achieving real change in people’s lives is the measure of our success. During the past year, together with our partners in the human rights movement, we confronted major challenges and found some success. We mobilized our members to campaign against escalating crises in Colombia, Israel and the Occupied Territories, Côte d’Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Nepal, among other situations. We also launched a year-long campaign on human rights in the Russian Federation, highlighting the situation of women, children and minorities as well as the long-running conflict in Chechnya. We spoke out strongly against detention of prisoners in Guantánamo Bay by the USA in clear defiance of international humanitarian law, and against racial profiling, detention of immigrants and efforts to under-mine the International Criminal Court. We kept the spotlight on Afghanistan through the critical post-conflict phase, and opened a field office in Kabul to work with local non-

governmental organizations on reform of the criminal justice system and on the rights of women.

We carried on our work against the death penalty, on the rights of refugees and on military, security and police transfers around the world. We broke new ground in research and action on economic and social rights. And we saw some important fruits of our labour. The establishment of the International Criminal Court was a major step forward in the fight against impunity. The struggle for the eradication of torture also gained strength with the adoption of a new agreement for international inspection of places of detention.

For human rights activists, the time ahead is likely to be tough in the midst of global insecurity and economic uncertainty. But a dangerous world, far from diminishing the value of human rights, has actually heightened the need to respect them. History has consistently shown that insecurity and violence are best tackled by effective and accountable governments which uphold, not undermine human rights. That is true now more than ever. Human rights are not a luxury for good times, they must be respected at all times.

Irene Khan

Secretary General

April 2003

[pic cap:] Irene Khan listens to the experiences of women sitting in the ruins of their home on the edge of Jenin Refugee Camp, in the Occupied Territories. © Mahfouz Abu Turk/AI

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Amnesty International in 2002

Crisis Alert and Crisis Response

Amnesty International mobilized members and resources in response to the deteriorating human rights situations in Colombia and Israel and the Occupied Territories and the serious human rights and humanitarian concerns raised by the threat of war in Iraq.

Colombia

The conflict in Colombia – which has gained little international attention – worsened in February, when peace talks between the government and the main armed opposition group, the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia, Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, broke down.

Since 1985 over 60,000 people have been killed, 80 per cent of them civilians, and hundreds of thousands more have been displaced, tortured, kidnapped or “disappeared”. All the parties to the conflict must accept responsibility for perpetuating the cycle of violence and abuses.

In 2002 Amnesty International used every possible opportunity to challenge the government of President Álvaro Uribe on its failure to protect human rights. Six delegations travelled to the country and reports were produced on the situation in the

contested area of San Vicente del Caguán, on human rights and US military aid to Colombia, and on the impact of President Uribe's security policies.

Amnesty International sections made a concerted effort to raise media interest in order to break down the wall of silence on the human rights situation in Colombia and put a human face on the crisis.

Israel, the Occupied Territories and the Palestinian Authority

The human rights crisis in Israel and the Occupied Territories was among the issues most discussed – and least acted upon – by the international community. Violence spiralled and killings doubled in 2002. Some 1,000 Palestinians were killed by the Israeli army and more than 265 Israeli civilians were killed by Palestinian armed groups. The Israeli army shot at and shelled densely populated Palestinian areas and Palestinian armed groups carried out suicide bombings and shooting attacks against Israeli civilians.

Curfews, prolonged movement restrictions and the destruction of thousands of Palestinians homes and vast areas of agricultural land by the Israeli army resulted in a sharp increase in poverty in the Occupied Territories, with more than half of the Palestinian population living below the poverty line and malnutrition and other health problems spreading.

Throughout 2002 Amnesty International sent numerous delegations to Israel and the Occupied Territories, including forensic, military and international human rights law experts. Amnesty International delegates often had to work in difficult circumstances to uncover and tell the world what was happening and to send an unambiguous message to all parties to the conflict – that nothing can ever justify targeting civilians. The organization repeatedly and publicly condemned the unlawful killings, the wanton destruction of civilian property, the deliberate obstruction of humanitarian aid, the killing of medical aid workers and the deliberate targeting of civilians by Palestinian armed groups.

[pic cap]

A man points to the rubble of a destroyed building, beneath which a member of his family is buried, Jenin refugee camp, the Occupied Territories, April 2002. © AI

[box]

“Mr Baryalai has asked me to convey his heartfelt gratitude and immense appreciation to all those colleagues at Amnesty International and its members worldwide who worked so hard to secure his legal rights and ensure humane treatment for him while in US custody in various places of detention inside Afghanistan. He wishes to congratulate you all and wants you to know he owes his freedom to you!”

[pic cap]

A boy standing by a police barricade in San Vicente del Caguán, Colombia.

© AP/Scott Dalton

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Afghanistan: Amnesty International on the ground

As international attention turned towards Iraq in 2002, it began to fade away from Afghanistan – the site of the first US-led military intervention in the “war against terrorism”.

Amnesty International believes that human rights guarantees must be at the centre of the rehabilitation and reconstruction process in Afghanistan.

In June Amnesty International established a year-long field presence in Kabul, aiming to engage with the government and with local and international organizations based in Afghanistan; to research key areas of the criminal justice system; and to draw up recommendations for the Transitional Administration, donor governments and the UN.

The presence includes a field research coordinator and rotating specialist researchers. To date, work has been completed on policing, including police training, facilities, and practices, and prisons – investigating conditions and facilities and interviewing prisoners, some of whom have suffered extreme abuse. Further research on justice and gender issues is scheduled for 2003.

Amnesty International’s team in Afghanistan has received excellent cooperation and support from national and local government officials. It has kept human rights on the agenda and raised issues that others may have preferred kept quiet.

By giving input about human rights while institutions are being reconstructed, Amnesty International is doing what it can to push for a positive outcome to the transitional process.

[pic cap]

Detainees attend a literacy class in a prison in Mazar-e-Sharif, Afghanistan, November 2002. © AI/Anou Borrey

Pressure mounts on Iraq

The threat of US-led military action against Iraq grew during 2002. Concern about the lives, safety and security of the Iraqi people was glaringly absent from the many debates on the pros and cons of war.

Amnesty International, which has for decades documented and vigorously campaigned against widespread human rights violations in Iraq, stepped up its efforts to ensure that governments considered not only the security and political consequences of their action, but also the inevitable human rights and humanitarian consequences of war.

Amnesty International members around the globe petitioned their governments and members of the UN Security Council to ensure the protection of the rights of Iraqi people. They spelled out the likely human rights and humanitarian toll of a war on Iraq – civilians killed by bombing or internal fighting; massive outflow of refugees; needless deaths of children, the elderly and other vulnerable groups from hunger and disease following a decade of UN-imposed sanctions.

[pic cap]

An Amnesty International vigil for the people of Iraq.

© AI/Marie-Anne Ventoura

Conflict and impunity in Africa

Conflict, insecurity and violence – fuelled by struggles for control of natural resources – claimed millions of victims in Africa in 2002.

Hundreds of unarmed civilians were killed by government forces in reprisal for the activities of armed political groups in Burundi.

In September an armed opposition took control of more than half of Côte d'Ivoire. Hundreds of thousands of people living in the combat zones were forced to flee and hundreds of civilians were killed by government troops and opposition fighters.

As many as three million people are estimated to have died in the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the last six years, while many in power have amassed huge personal wealth.

Amnesty International continued to bring to the world's attention the human rights abuses in these and many other African countries. The organization exposed the links between human rights violations and corruption, the arms trade, and the trade in natural resources such as diamonds which fuels the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Members and activists campaigned to raise worldwide awareness of who is responsible for perpetuating this conflict, in spite of the cost in human lives.

Throughout the year Amnesty International gave assistance and support to human rights defenders across Africa, many of whom risk persecution for their work.

[pic box]

“Thanks to the support of Amnesty International members, I never felt alone.”

Alpha Condé, prisoner of conscience, Guinea

© Private

[pic cap]

An Amnesty International action postcard showing illicit miners sifting for diamonds in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the victims of shootings by diamond company guards. © AI

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Human rights defenders

Human right defenders are essential to the preservation of the human rights of ordinary people. They speak out while others are silenced and act on behalf of those who have no power to act for themselves. In doing so they often put their own lives and liberty on the line.

In 2002 Amnesty International continued to work to ensure the safety of human rights defenders at risk, in extreme cases offering direct protection such as assistance with emergency evacuation, medical treatment for those who have been victims of torture or injury or contributing to legal defence costs.

The work covered all regions of the world, but the majority of the reports we received of killings of human rights defenders occurred in the Americas. A dedicated team at

Amnesty International's International Secretariat in London is striving to address this appalling situation.

In September, Amnesty International delegates accompanied threatened human rights defenders in the state of Espírito Santo in Brazil to ensure that they were able to request federal intervention to tackle impunity and mass killings committed by a paramilitary group with close links to state officials.

Amnesty International's campaigning helped bring about the appointment of an attorney to investigate attacks against defenders in Guatemala, and as a result of several years of lobbying a Special Unit for Defenders was set up within the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, and carried out a visit to Guatemala.

As a result of Amnesty International's work on human rights defenders in Mexico, the government established protection for some human rights defenders at risk and the human rights ombudsman's office for Mexico City district launched a campaign to promote the value of work carried out by human rights defenders.

[pic box]

"I could always feel that you were concerned about us. Throughout your work you have reflected the reality of what was happening to the pro-democracy activists."

Prisoner of conscience Riad al-Turk, a lawyer and leading opposition activist, on his release from 'Adra Prison in Syria following a personal presidential amnesty on 16 November 2002.

© Private

Russia: 'Justice for everybody'

In October Amnesty International launched a year-long major worldwide campaign on human rights in the Russian Federation.

The campaign aimed to bringing to the world's attention the widespread violations of people's rights by those very officials responsible for protecting them. Torture and ill-treatment by police and other law enforcement officers are widespread in the Russian Federation. Tens of thousands of children are detained for months, even years, in filthy, overcrowded and frequently inhuman conditions. Racist violence against ethnic and religious minorities and foreigners is not properly investigated and goes unpunished. At least 14,000 women die from domestic violence every year, yet the authorities do little to stop it.

Against the background of the 11 September attacks in the USA, and the hostage-taking by Chechen rebels in a Moscow theatre, the appalling record of abuse in Chechnya – extrajudicial killings, "disappearances", torture, including rape, and looting by the Russian army, and serious abuses by Chechen rebels – was ignored by Western governments as the Russian authorities justified their actions as part of the "war against terrorism". Amnesty International lobbied the international community to press the Russian authorities to grant unrestricted access to Chechnya for independent journalists and human rights monitors.

As the part of the campaign, Amnesty International members appealed on behalf of environmentalist and journalist Grigory Pasko (pictured left), arrested in 1997 for

passing allegedly sensitive information to Japanese media. On 23 July 2003, he was set free on parole. His release was a victory for the millions of people who campaigned tirelessly on his behalf.

[pic cap]

Grigory Pasko in Amnesty International's Russia Resource Centre in Moscow, after his release. © AI

[pic cap]

A guard opening the door to a cell for young women at a pre-trial detention centre in Moscow, which was visited by an Amnesty International delegation prior to the launch of the campaign on the Russian Federation. © AI

Death Penalty

2002 saw the establishment of the World Coalition against the Death Penalty. AI, a founder member, is joining with other national and international abolitionist organizations as well as bar associations, trade unions, and regional authorities to coordinate their drive towards the universal abolition of capital punishment.

Amnesty International has campaigned against the death penalty throughout its 40 years. Staff and volunteers are organized in a network across sections working against the death penalty. Last year they took part in actions on countries such as Bangladesh, Egypt, Guatemala, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan and the USA. By the end of 2002, more than 100 countries were abolitionist in law or practice. However, this vital work must continue. At least 1,526 people were executed in 31 countries in 2002, and at least 3,248 were sentenced to death.

[pic cap]

People watching a public hanging of men in Tehran, Iran, September 2002. © AP

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[pic box]

“Thanks to your work my son Nikolay is alive. Your work is without price. You helped save his life and gave him hope.”

On 14 February 2002 Nikolay Ganiyev's death sentence was commuted in Uzbekistan. © Private

Establishment of the International Criminal Court

“Our journey is part of a wider quest in search of a peaceful and just world, in which all human beings live in freedom and harmony.”

Kofi Annan, UN Secretary-General, on the fourth anniversary of the adoption of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

Work is under way to set up the International Criminal Court, which will be a fundamental part of a new system of international justice to bring an end to impunity for the worst crimes known to humanity – genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

Amnesty International's members were instrumental in ensuring that the Rome Statute was ratified by 60 countries – the number necessary for the establishment of the Court. This important milestone was reached in July, years earlier than expected, illustrating the will of the international community to address impunity for these crimes which perpetuate cycles of abuse and conflict throughout the world.

However, during 2002 the USA intensified its opposition to the Court and launched a worldwide campaign seeking to weaken it, including initiatives to ensure immunity for US nationals from prosecution by the Court. Much work will need to be done to protect the Court from these and future attacks so that it can function as an effective instrument of international justice. Amnesty International is committed to working for universal ratification of the Rome Statute.

[pic cap]

The special ceremony for the depositing of the 60th ratification of the Rome Statute.

© Coalition for the International Criminal Court

Military, Security and Police

Millions of people face death or injury in violent conflicts fuelled by the international trade in arms. Equipment used to kill and torture is traded to known human rights abusers.

Throughout the year Amnesty International called on governments, particularly the most powerful Group of Eight, to introduce stringent controls using human rights and humanitarian law criteria for arms exports and arms brokering; to prevent the trade of security equipment used for torture; and to base military and police training on respect for human rights.

Amnesty International's survey of police practices in countries of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) was widely distributed in the region and training, lobbying and outreach activities were organized, particularly by Amnesty International groups in southern Africa. Authorities in at least three countries have since begun amending their laws.

An Amnesty International report examined the failure of US government institutions to promote and protect human rights when providing military and police training to people from over 150 countries. In September Amnesty International's section in the USA secured a legal requirement that the US Secretary of State report annually to Congress "any involvement of a foreign military or defense ministry civilian" trained by the USA "in a violation of international recognized human rights", and defeated government efforts to remove human rights conditionality from US foreign assistance programs.

[pic cap]

A poster produced for the action on the SADC to be used in police stations.

© AI

Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

In the globalized world of 2002, where there was vast wealth and opportunities for some, and destitution and despair for many, Amnesty International broke new ground to work not only on legal justice but also on social justice.

Amnesty International's strategy on economic, social and cultural rights focuses on marginalized people, such as the extremely poor. Medical care, clean water and adequate food are often beyond their reach. They may be barred from access to schools and jobs. Many are forcibly displaced from their land. Police often refuse to enter their communities to defend women from violence, to combat racist attacks, or to protect the poor from crime. Yet the rights to adequate health care, food, education and freedom from discrimination are all laid out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Amnesty International aims to draw attention to the obligations of governments, and others, to protect and fulfil these rights.

Amnesty International is seeking to strengthen its expertise and build bridges with groups already fighting for these rights. A good start was made in 2002 with a number of pilot projects on issues such as discrimination against the mentally disabled in Bulgaria, the right to work of Palestinians in the Occupied Territories, discrimination in economic and social rights suffered by Bosnian refugees and displaced persons and the right to health of HIV/AIDS victims in southern and east Africa.

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Who We Are...

Amnesty International is the largest human rights organization in the world. It forms a global community of human rights defenders with more than 1.5 million members, supporters and subscribers in over 150 countries and territories. Members are encouraged to take part in the organization's democratic and decision-making processes.

What we do

We research and publicize human rights abuses. We promote understanding and awareness of human rights issues. We lobby governments and intergovernmental organizations to adopt constitutions, conventions and other measures to guarantee the rights contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We campaign for change, including the release of individual prisoners and detainees, and reforms in laws, practices and institutions.

Our campaigning activities include letter-writing, Urgent Actions and staging high-profile events and international media work. We also provide relief to prisoners of conscience and victims of torture, protect human rights defenders under threat and work on behalf of refugees.

Vision

Amnesty International's vision is of a world in which every person enjoys the human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other human rights standards.

Mission

Amnesty International'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.

[pic cap]

Delegates at Amnesty International's first Middle East and North Africa Regional Youth Forum, in Bouznika, Morocco, September 2002. © AI

2002 IN BRIEF

We cannot reflect in a few words the enormous amount of work undertaken by Amnesty International or the incredible variety of initiatives taken in Amnesty International's name at local, national and regional levels. An overview is given here, but more information is available in the Amnesty International Report 2002, and from Amnesty International sections and our websites (www.amnesty.org).

Visits

During 2002, Amnesty International delegates visited more than 76 countries and territories to conduct research, to meet victims of human rights violations, to observe trials, to contact local human rights activists, and to meet government officials.

Campaigning actions

Throughout 2002 Amnesty International's sections and structures worked together on human rights problems in all world regions. A variety of campaigning techniques were used, including direct lobbying, media publicity, education and training, public demonstrations, letter-writing and e-campaigning.

Issues worked on during 2002 included:

- * Africa and the G8 Summit of the world's richest nations
- * Torture and impunity in Turkey
- * Freedom of expression and the administration of justice in Iran
- * Police reform and human rights in the Southern Africa Development Community
- * The consistent failure of Guatemalan governments to address the legacy of mass human rights violations during the country's civil conflict

Long-term actions

Thousands of Amnesty International groups in local communities, schools and colleges work for months or even years in support of particular victims of human rights abuses, including prisoners of conscience. Groups put pressure directly on the authorities; take action to raise awareness of Amnesty International's concerns; and work with others in their communities and internationally. They often maintain direct contact with individual victims and their families to offer their support. Over 130 new actions of this type were taken up during 2002.

Urgent Actions

If urgent action is needed on behalf of people in imminent danger of serious human rights violations, volunteers around the world are alerted, and they send thousands of letters, faxes and e-mails within days.

During 2002, Amnesty International initiated 468 such appeals on 83 countries and territories. They called for action on behalf of people who were at risk of or had suffered human rights violations including torture, "disappearances", the death

penalty, death in custody, or forcible return to countries where they would be in danger of human rights violations. There were 346 updates to previous Urgent Action appeals, 130 of which recorded positive developments in the case.

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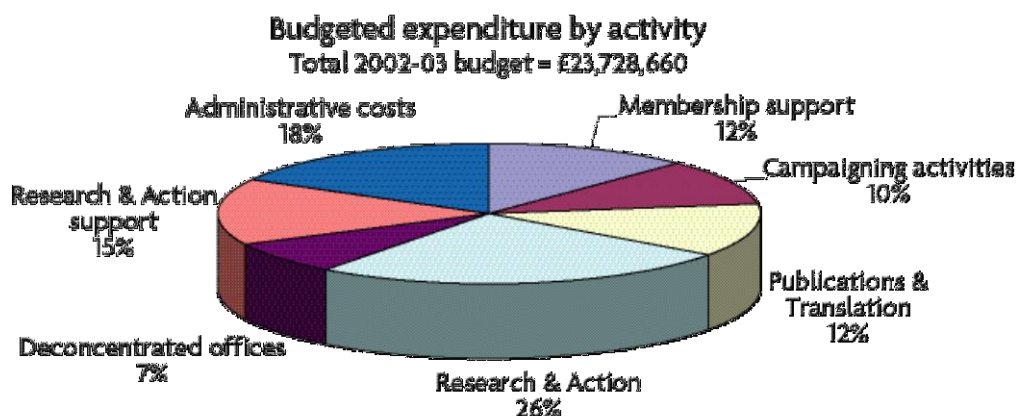
Amnesty International 2002-2003 budgeted expenditure

Amnesty International's national sections and local volunteer groups are primarily responsible for funding the work of the movement. We do not accept money from governments for our work investigating and campaigning against human rights violations – the donations that fund this work come from the organization's many individual supporters around the world.

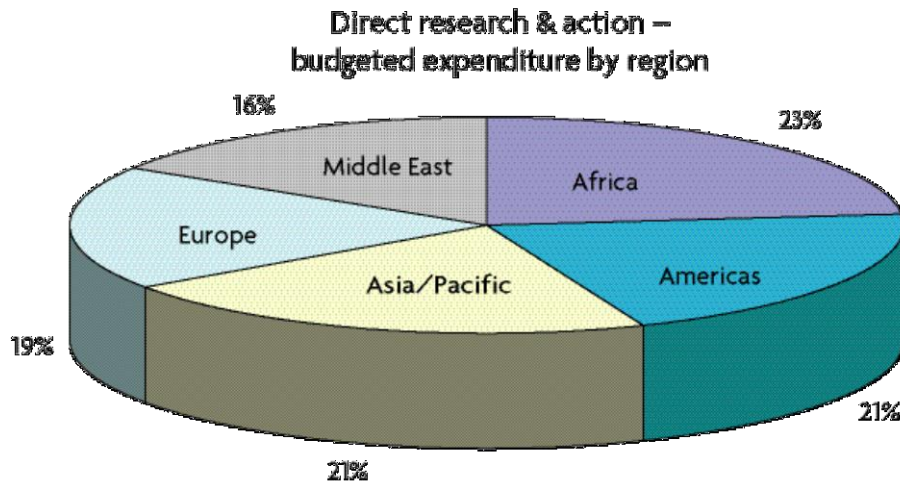
The international budget adopted by the International Council for the financial year April 2002 – March 2003 was £23,728,660. This sum represents approximately one quarter of the estimated income likely to be raised by the movement's national sections to finance their campaigning and other activities.

The International Secretariat of Amnesty International is also dependent on the generous support of various trusts, foundations and charitable givers. In particular, the International Secretariat would like to thank the institutions that supported it during 2002, including the Community Fund UK, the Ford Foundation, the Oak Foundation, the Dutch ZipCode Lottery (through the Dutch World Wide Fund), and the NRK (Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation) Telethon Fund. With their support, the International Secretariat has been able to carry out much needed projects to promote and protect human rights across more than 35 countries around the world.

The 2002/2003 international budget for operating expenses, as agreed by Amnesty International's governing body, the International Executive Committee, was spent as follows:



Research and action work are two of the key functions of the International Secretariat. This budget was spent as follows:



These figures combine the budgeted expenses of Amnesty International Charity Ltd, a registered charity under the UK Charity Act, number 294230, and Amnesty International Ltd, a registered limited company under the UK Companies Act, number 1606776. Copies of the most recent audited accounts may be obtained by writing to:

The Company Secretary, Amnesty International, International Secretariat, Peter Benenson House, 1 Easton Street, London WC1X 0DW, United Kingdom

WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT

Amnesty International's unique strength is in its supporters: we have 1.5 million and every one is vital in the struggle for human rights.

There are many ways you can support Amnesty International; you don't need to spend a lot of time or money to really make a difference to people's lives.

Become a volunteer

Volunteers are vital to Amnesty International, and form a significant part of our workforce. If you have a few days a week, or a few months in which you would like to use your skills and experience to help us work for human rights, please contact the Amnesty International section in your country or the International Secretariat, Peter Benenson House, 1 Easton Street, London WC1X 0DW, United Kingdom, for more information.

Join Amnesty International

As an individual member or part of a local group, you'll join a worldwide movement of people who are united by a desire to protect and promote human rights. You will be able to take part in a range of activities that really make a difference to the victims of

human rights violations. Our members are important to our decision-making structures so you'll have a say in the way we work too. To join the Amnesty International section in your country, please see the address below, or go to www.amnesty.org for more details or to join online.

Become a donor

Amnesty International is almost entirely dependent on the donations and subscription fees of its members and supporters around the world. We do not accept money from governments for our work campaigning against human rights violations, so every donation – no matter how small – is vital to our work. You can make a donation online at www.amnesty.org, just click on the “Give Now” button. If you would prefer to make your donation by cheque to the Amnesty International section in your own country, please see below for contact details.

Take Action

You can support Amnesty International simply by writing a letter to a prisoner of conscience or a government, sending a postcard, signing an online petition or attending an organized demonstration. For more information on how you can take action to support us, please see www.amnesty.org or contact the Amnesty International section in your country.

Get in touch

[box for local address]

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