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Facts and Figures: The work of Amnesty International

This facts and figures document gives an overview of the work of Amnesty International and the work carried out by the organization in 2000.

1) Amnesty International Today

28 May 2001 was the 40th anniversary of Amnesty International's foundation. Launched in 1961 by British lawyer Peter Benenson, Amnesty International has today more than 1,000,000 members, subscribers and regular donors in more than 140 countries and territories. The organization's nerve centre is the International Secretariat in London, with more than 320 member of staff and over 100 volunteers from more than 50 countries around the world.

The movement consists of more than 7,500 local, youth & student, and professional Amnesty International groups registered at the International Secretariat plus several thousand other youth & student groups, specialist groups, networks and coordinators in nearly 100 countries and territories throughout the world. There are nationally organized sections in 56 countries, and pre-section coordinating structures in an other 23 countries and territories worldwide.

Amnesty International is a democratic movement self-governed by a nine-member International Executive Committee (IEC). It comprises eight volunteer members, elected every two years by an International Council

comprising representatives of the worldwide movement, and an elected member of the International Secretariat.

2) Helping the victims

Amnesty International has a precise mandate, detailed in an international statute. The main focus of its campaigning is to:

- C free all prisoners of conscience. These are people detained anywhere for their beliefs or because of their ethnic origin, sex, colour, language, national or social origin, economic status, birth or other status -- who have not used or advocated violence;
- C ensure fair and prompt trials for political prisoners;
- C abolish the death penalty, torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment of prisoners;
- C end extrajudicial executions and "disappearances".

Amnesty International also opposes abuses by opposition groups, including hostage taking, torture and killings of prisoners and other deliberate and arbitrary killings; assists asylum-seekers who are at risk of being returned to a country where they will be at risk of violations of basic and fundamental human rights; cooperates with other non-governmental organisation (NGO), with the United Nations (UN) and with regional intergovernmental organisations; ensures control of international military, security and police relations; organises human rights education and awareness raising programs.

3) How Amnesty International holds states and others accountable for their conduct?

Campaigning for Human Rights

During 2000, Amnesty International delegates visited more than 70 countries and territories to meet victims of human rights violations, observe trials, and

interview local human rights activists and officials. The facts are gathered in order to generate action. Amnesty International members, supporters and staff around the world mobilize public pressure on governments and others with influence to stop human rights abuses. Activities range from public demonstration to letter-writing, from human rights education to fundraising concerts, from approaches to local authorities to lobbying intergovernmental organisations, from targeted appeals on behalf of a single individual to global campaigns on specific country or issue.

Worldwide campaigns

Each year, Amnesty International members from around the world join forces to campaign for the better part of a year on human rights issues in one country or on a particular human rights issue. These major campaigns involve reporting on major human rights issues, lobbying governments and ambassadors globally for change, publicizing human rights abuses, and working closely with local human rights activists and other community organizations to achieve change.

Highlights 2000:

“Take a step to stamp out torture”

On 18 October 2000, the global Campaign Against Torture was launched with a rolling program of media events across the five regions of the world from Tokyo to Nairobi, Beirut, London/Paris and Buenos Aires. The website www.stoptorture.org was set up to give visitors and subscribers the opportunity to take immediate action on urgent cases at risk of torture. Also, for the first time Amnesty International offered notices of urgent cases sent to subscribers' mobile telephones using “SMS” text messages .

Saudi Arabia

Human rights are no longer a taboo subject in Saudi Arabia since the launch, in March 2000, of Amnesty International's first-ever campaign against human rights violations in the country and since the unprecedented announcement made by the Saudi government of its belief in the universality and indivisibility of human rights within days from the launch. The authorities also gave undertakings to introduce new legislation with more human rights guarantees

and acceded the UN Women's Convention. An important breakthrough with this campaign was to end the silence of the international community about grave human rights violations in Saudi Arabia.

4) Working for individuals

Amnesty International members work for individuals or groups of people suffering the range of human rights violations in the organization's mandate. During 2000 Amnesty International's local groups worked on behalf of more than 3,685 named individuals, including prisoners of conscience and victims of other human rights violations, whose cases had been assigned to them as long-term **Action Files**, or as medium-term actions through a **Regional Action Network (RAN)**.

During the year, more than 2,732 groups worked on around 1,000 Action Files -- of which 108 had been launched during the year -- on behalf of victims of human rights violations in more than 100 countries and territories, while 230 group assignments on the detention of prisoners of conscience and possible prisoners of conscience were closed. There were also 23 RANs involving around 1,800 groups taking part in 208 actions covering human rights abuses in every country of the world.

Rapid Action

Rapid action for prisoners and others who are in immediate danger of serious human rights violations is mobilized by the **Urgent Action (UA) network** made up of more than 80,000 volunteers in some 85 countries. Each case can generate between 3 and 5,000 appeals.

In 2000, more than 481 new actions were issued to the UA network on behalf of people in 85 countries and territories who were either at risk or had been victims of torture or ill-treatment, "disappearances", political killings and death threats, judicial executions, unfair trials, deaths in custody or *refoulement* (forcible return) of asylum-seekers. There were also 347 updates on urgent actions already issued, 171 of which asked for further appeals to be sent.

Amnesty International Specialist Networks

Besides the Urgent Action (UA) network and the Regional Action Network (RAN), Amnesty International has developed international networks which work in specialized areas. They are the Legal Network, the Military Security and Police (MSP) Network, the Company Approaches Network, the Children Network, the Youth/Student Network, the Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Network, the Death Penalty Network, the Medical Network, the Trade Union Networks, the Refugee Network and the Human Rights Education Network.

Highlights 2000:

The **Medical Network** continued to act in cases of prisoners suffering ill-health because of torture, poor prison conditions and lack of medical care. The network has doctors, nurses, psychologists and other health professionals in more than 30 countries around the world and campaigned on some 50 medical actions. They also acted on behalf of many doctors and other health workers whose rights were abused. For more information, visit:

<http://www.web.amnesty.org/rmp/hponline.nsf>

The **Legal Network** continued its work as one of more than 1,000 non-governmental organisation members of the Coalition for an International Criminal Court, campaigning for states to sign and ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and enact effective implementing legislation. The ICC will be established after 60 states have ratified the Rome Statute. At the end of 2000, there were 27 ratifications and 139 signatures.

The **Children Network** continued to call on governments to fulfil their obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child and to lobby on the Optional Protocol to the UN Children's Convention on the involvement of children in armed conflict, which the UN General Assembly adopted on 25 May 2000.

In Spring 2000, a hugely successful speaking tour of the US and Western European countries by Zimbabwean gay and lesbian rights activists -- sponsored by several Amnesty International sections and their **Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Networks** -- took place. This signalled a major

breakthrough in terms of raising public awareness on LGBT rights and building links by Amnesty International's activists with LGBT rights communities. In July 2000, Amnesty International took part in World Pride in Rome, highlighting to the media and to the public, discrimination against the gay community as a human rights issue.

5) Exposing the violations

Amnesty International confronts governments with its findings by issuing detailed reports and by publicizing its concerns in leaflets, posters, advertisements, newsletters and on the Internet. The address for the English language Amnesty International website is www.amnesty.org. It contains more than 10,000 files and receives over 6 million hits a month. It holds most AI reports since 1996 and all the latest news releases detailing Amnesty International's concerns about human rights stories around the world. Additionally there is information on the latest campaigns and appeals for action to help protect human rights (www.stoptorture.org); contact details for Amnesty International's offices around the world, and links to hundreds of website with human rights theme. There are also Amnesty International sites in French (www.efai.org), Spanish (www.edai.org) and Arabic (www.amnesty-arabic.org).

Some 2,971 documents were published by Amnesty International in 2000. The major publications were the *Amnesty International Report 2000*, and two major reports for the Campaign Against Torture: *Take a Step to Stamp Out Torture and Hidden Scandal*, *Secret Shame: Torture and Ill-Treatment of Children*.

6) Human rights developments and treaties worldwide

Today an ever-growing human rights constituency is gathering the facts on abuses by governments, taking action to stop them and strengthening the forces necessary to prevent future violations.

· 147 states are now party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and 145 are party to the International Covenant on

Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). These covenants require countries ratifying them to recognize or protect a wide range of human rights;

- *98 states are now party to the first Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The Protocol establishes procedures allowing both individuals and states to present complaints of human rights violations;*

- *45 states are now party to the 2nd Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights aiming at the abolition of the death penalty;*

- *123 states are now party to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; however, only 43 of them have made a declaration under art. 22 recognising the competence of the Committee against Torture, the treaty monitoring body established under this Convention, to consider individual complaints on violations of the Convention;*

- *137 states are party to the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and 136 to the Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees;*

- *167 states are party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and 19 to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;*

- *191 states are party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and 3 to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict;*

- *157 states are party to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, although only 33 of them have made a declaration under art. 14 recognising the competence of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), the treaty monitoring body established under this Convention, to receive and consider communications from individuals or groups of individuals claiming to be victims of violations of the rights specified in the Convention;*

- 139 states had signed the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and 27 of them have ratified it.

7) The continuing challenge

Every year Amnesty International produces a global report which details human rights violations against men, women and children in all regions of the world. The Annual Report for 2001, which detailed abuses during 2000, is indicative of the kinds and levels of abuses against people every year.

EXTRAJUDICIAL EXECUTIONS

- Confirmed or possible extrajudicial executions were carried out in 61 countries in 2000.

“DISAPPEARANCES”

- People “disappeared” or remained “disappeared” from previous years in 30 countries.

TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

- People were reportedly tortured or ill-treated by security forces, police or other state authorities in 125 countries.

PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE

- Confirmed or possible prisoners of conscience were held in 63 countries.

DETENTION WITHOUT CHARGE OR TRIAL

- People were arbitrarily arrested and detained, or in detention without charge or trial in 72 countries.

DEATH PENALTY

· During 2000, at least 1,457 prisoners were executed in 28 countries and 3,058 people were sentenced to death in 65 countries. These figures include only cases known to Amnesty International; the true figures are certainly higher.

HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES BY ARMED OPPOSITION GROUPS

· Armed opposition groups committed serious human rights abuses, such as deliberate and arbitrary killings of civilians, torture and hostage-taking in 42 countries.

8) The Money

Amnesty International's funding reflects the movement's independence and its reliance on broad public support. No funds are sought or accepted from governments for Amnesty International's work investigating and campaigning against human rights violations. The hundreds of thousands of donations that sustain this work come from the pockets of its members and the public and organisations such as trusts, foundations and companies.

The international budget is spent on professional research by Amnesty International staff into human rights violations worldwide, on delegations that observe trials and make representations to governments, and on the movement's international public information, campaigning and development activities. During the financial year 1 April 2000 to 31 March 2001 the international budget adopted by Amnesty International was £19,510,000 (including contingency) spent in the following areas:

| | | |
|------------------------------|--------------|-----|
| Membership Support | 2,486,700.00 | 13% |
| Campaigning Activities | 1,811,200.00 | 10% |
| Publications and Translation | 2,487,200.00 | 13% |
| Research and Action | 5,065,100.00 | 26% |
| Deconcentrated Offices | 1,246,300.00 | 7% |
| Research and Action Support | 2,615,900.00 | 14% |

Administrative Costs

3,247,200.00

17%

In addition, relief payments to victims of human rights violations and their families totalled £125,000 during the same period.