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**Amnesty International's campaign to mark the
50th anniversary of the
Universal Declaration of Human Rights**

The Declaration

On 10 December 1948 the United Nations, in response to the atrocities of the Second World War, wrote and proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Member States pledged “*to achieve... the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms.*”

Fifty years on, the world has moved closer to obtaining many of those rights and millions of people are active in the broad human rights movement. Nevertheless, disregard and contempt for human rights continue to result in barbarous acts which offend the conscience of mankind. Half the world's countries jail people because of their beliefs, race, ethnic origin, sex or religion, and a third of the world's governments torture their prisoners. On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the United Nations' adoption of the Declaration, Amnesty International proposes not only to commemorate and celebrate the occasion but also to provide a focus for the world's commitment to the principles it promised to uphold.

Amnesty International works to promote human rights and protect the individuals who fight for those rights. To further our efforts, on 10 December 1997, one year before the Declaration's 50th anniversary, Amnesty International will launch its campaign on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Amnesty International's campaign

*Amnesty International will invite people around the world to make a personal pledge to the principles contained in the Declaration.

*It will call upon the world's governments to adhere to their duty to “*cause the Declaration to be disseminated, displayed, read and expounded principally in schools and other educational institutions...*” and will undertake its own massive education drive about the Declaration and the rights and freedoms contained within it.

*It will work on behalf of human rights defenders who have been the target of human rights violations because of their efforts to defend the rights contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

What the campaign will achieve

*A stronger and more dynamic human rights movement with a strategy for the growth of activism into the 21st century.

*Better awareness of the relevance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Concert in South Africa

Almost 50 years ago, South Africa was one of only eight UN members — including the then Czechoslovakia and the former Soviet Union — to abstain in the vote on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Ten years ago in South Africa, President Nelson Mandela was in

prison, *apartheid* was law, and the country was an international pariah scorned for its atrocious human rights record.

Now South Africa has become a beacon of hope, not only on the continent of Africa, but throughout the world. Because of this, Amnesty International plans to stage a pop concert in Johannesburg in 1998 and to broadcast it internationally, targeting the world's youth, drawing attention to the human rights defenders featured in the organization's campaign and presenting Amnesty International's *Get Up, Sign Up!* challenge to the world.

Get Up, Sign Up!

President Mandela has agreed that around 10 December 1997, one year before the Declaration's 50th anniversary, he will sign his name to a text which personally commits him to doing all he can to ensure that the principles in the Declaration are upheld. He will call upon the rest of the world to follow his example.

Amnesty International will take this initiative to the world. The commitment to the Declaration, and the challenge for others to sign will be contained in specially prepared books which will tour the world in 1998. Amnesty International members in over a hundred countries will take the initiative to everyone in their country — political leaders, business leaders, celebrities and ordinary members of the public. Each person who signs will be given a copy of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, asked to take active steps on at least one of its articles and given instructions as to how they can help the human rights defenders featured in the campaign. The books will move from country to country, city to city, town to town and village to village. Each time a book arrives it will provide an opportunity for high profile events.

Get Up, Sign Up! will also feature as a website, where visitors will be able to sign up and download copies of the Declaration, as well as personalized letters which they can send to their own governments and to governments identified as violators of the Declaration.

Amnesty International invites everyone committed to the principles contained in the Declaration to join this campaign and to work together to ensure that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is universally recognized and implemented.