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Amnesty International  
International Secretariat  
1 Easton Street  
London WC1X 8DJ  
United Kingdom

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FACTS AND FIGURES ABOUT AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL AND ITS  
WORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

THE BEGINNING

- Amnesty International was launched in 1961 by British lawyer Peter Benenson.
- His newspaper appeal, "The Forgotten Prisoners", was published worldwide on 28 May 1961 and brought in more than 1,000 offers of support for the idea of an international campaign to protect human rights.
- Within 12 months the new organization had sent delegations to four countries to make representations on behalf of prisoners, and had taken up 210 cases. Amnesty International members had organized national bodies in seven countries. The first year's expenditure was £6,040.
- The principles of strict impartiality and independence were established. The emphasis was on the international protection of human rights: Amnesty International members were to act on cases worldwide and not become involved in cases in their own countries.

TODAY

- Amnesty International has more than 1,000,000 members, subscribers and regular donors in over 170 countries and territories and over 4,300 Amnesty International volunteer groups .
- There are nationally organized sections in 55 countries, 35 of them in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East and Central Europe.
- The organization's nerve centre is the International Secretariat in London, with over 320 paid staff and 90 volunteers from more than 50 countries. The Secretary General is Pierre Sané.
- Amnesty International is 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.

## HELPING THE VICTIMS

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

- free all prisoners of conscience. These are people detained anywhere for their beliefs or because of their ethnic origin, sex, colour or language -- who have not used or advocated violence;
- ensure fair and prompt trials for political prisoners;
- abolish the death penalty, torture and other cruel inhuman or degrading treatment of prisoners;
- end extrajudicial executions and "disappearances".
  - oppose abuses by opposition groups including hostage taking, torture and deliberate and arbitrary killings .

Amnesty International members around the world work on behalf of victims of human rights violations threatened with imprisonment, unfair trials, torture or execution. This year's activities are an indication of the level of work done every year.

## ACTIONS FROM JANUARY TO MAY 1995.

Amnesty International takes **long-term action** on all the concerns reflected in its mandate, including prisoners of conscience. By the end of May 1995 3,909 Amnesty International volunteer groups were working on behalf of 4,726 named individuals and 2,111 unnamed individuals from 94 countries worldwide.

Rapid action for prisoners and others who are in immediate danger, e.g. they are facing torture or execution, is mobilized by the **Urgent Action** network of around 80,000 volunteers in some 87 countries. They are organized through electronic mail, fax, courier, express and airmail to send fast appeals on behalf of those at risk.

In the first five months of 1995 184 new actions on 61 countries were issued to the Urgent Action network. Further action was requested on 135 actions during that period, making a total of 319 times that the network was activated. Each Urgent Action or a follow-up can generate hundreds of appeals to the authorities within days of being issued and several thousand within a few weeks.

The new actions covered a variety of concerns : prisoners whom it was feared might be tortured; those at risk of, or who had been the victim of, extrajudicial execution or "disappearance"; prisoners sentenced to death; and people who had been harassed or had received death threats from agents of the state or armed opposition groups. Actions included many other concerns, for example: arbitrary arrest, prolonged incommunicado detention, detention without charge or trial, death in custody and risk of refoulement. (Note these concerns are not mutually exclusive, more than one concern may feature on any action.)

The Amnesty International **network of health professionals** numbered between 9,000 and 10,000 members in 1995, organized in medical groups and networks in some 30 sections. The network appealed in several cases,

including 11 medical actions issued on behalf of prisoners in need of medical attention; in cases of torture and suspicious death in detention; where there is evidence to suggest spurious medical certification following a death in custody; or following examination after torture has been alleged. In addition, during this period there were six Amnesty International research missions in which a medical doctor was part of the delegation.

-- There were 2,396 groups working in **Regional Action Networks (RANs)**. RAN members concentrate their work on any one of five regions of the world to assist people subjected to any of the human rights abuses that Amnesty International opposes in almost all of the world's countries. In the year up to the end of May 1995 there were 208 **RAN** actions issued.

-- Amnesty International issued 59 **major documents** on human rights violations on 31 countries in the year up to the end of May 1995.

The reports covered a range of human rights violations, such as the lack of respect for human rights that lies at the heart of the humanitarian disaster in Sudan; forgotten victims of human rights violations in Syria; arms transfers to the perpetrators of Rwanda's genocide; violations against women in Afghanistan, the Turkish government's refusal to confront its appalling human rights record, torture and deaths in custody in Jammu and Kashmir, juveniles in Pakistan who have been sentenced to death, police ill-treatment of foreigners in Germany, and the official secrecy that hides continuing repression in Iran.

-- From January 1995 to the end of May 1995 the organization had sent 46 **delegations** to 35 countries. Delegates discussed Amnesty International's concerns with government authorities, observed political trials and carried out on-the-spot investigations into human rights abuses. The countries visited included: Algeria, Brazil, Cambodia, Chile, Croatia, Denmark, Egypt, Ethiopia, France, Germany, Guatemala, Guinea, Haiti, Indonesia, Israel/Occupied Territories and areas under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian Authority, Jordan, Kenya, North Korea, Russia, South Africa, Rwanda and Burundi, Sri Lanka, Thailand, USA and Yemen.

## **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 **1995 annual *Amnesty International Report***, which detailed abuses during 1994, is indicative of the kinds and levels of abuses against people every year. According to that report:

### **PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE**

- Prisoners of conscience or possible prisoners of conscience were held in some 78 countries.

### **DETENTION WITHOUT CHARGE OR TRIAL**

- Tens of thousands of political detainees were held without charge or trial in some 70 countries.

### **UNFAIR TRIAL**

- Thousands of political prisoners were imprisoned after trials that did not meet international standards for fairness in 33 countries in 1994.

## **TORTURE OR ILL-TREATMENT**

- Detainees were tortured or ill-treated in prisons, police stations or secret detention centres in at least 120 countries, with the known number of such victims estimated at around 3,000.
- At least 1,000 people died as a result of torture, in custody, or inhuman prison conditions in some 34 countries.

## **EXTRAJUDICIAL EXECUTIONS**

- Government agents carried out extrajudicial executions or possible extrajudicial executions in 54 countries, killing suspected government opponents, members of targeted ethnic or minority groups or people living in opposition strongholds.

## **"DISAPPEARANCES"**

- In 1994, close to 1,000 people were known to have "disappeared" at the hands of government agents in some 29 countries, some of whom were believed to have been extrajudicially executed.
- In 22 countries, people who had "disappeared" in previous years remained unaccounted for.

## **DEATH PENALTY**

- Some 2,500 people were known to have been executed by hanging, firing squad, lethal injection or other means in 33 countries in 1994.
- Prisoners in some 57 countries remained on death row awaiting execution by the state.
- In 1994, four countries abolished the death penalty entirely completely, or restricted the use of the penalty.

## **HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES BY ARMED OPPOSITION GROUPS**

- In 36 countries, armed opposition groups committed human rights abuses, such as torture, hostage taking, and deliberate and arbitrary killings.

## **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.

- Over 1,000 domestic and regional organizations are working to protect basic human rights;
- An increasing body of international human rights agreements hold governments accountable for their actions;
- 129 governments are now party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and 131 governments are party to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR). These covenants require countries ratifying them to recognize or protect a wide range of human rights;
- 80 states are now party to the Optional Protocol to the (first) International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The Protocol establishes procedures allowing both individuals and states to present complaints of human rights violations;
- 26 states are now party to the second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights aimed at the abolition of the death penalty;
- 86 governments are now party to the United Nations Convention against Torture.

## **THE MONEY**

Amnesty International's funding reflects the movement's independence and its reliance on broad public support. No money is sought or received from governments. The hundreds of thousands of donations that sustain the organization's work come from the pockets of its members and the public.

The international budget for 1995 is approximately GBP16,330,000. This does not include funds needed to maintain the operations of the national bodies in individual countries or the costs of the thousands of letters and telegrams sent every month by individual members around the world.

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 administration of the movement's international publishing, campaigning and development activities.

The international nerve centre for this unique operation, the International Secretariat, runs on just under GBP 150 a minute. Some of the costs:

- launching a life-saving appeal on behalf of a prisoner threatened with torture or death: up to £50 in faxes and E-mail alone;
- running the research, missions and information systems that are involved in generating new actions on behalf of prisoners (average cost): approximately GBP 5,000 per Action File
- sending a delegation to meet government officials and conduct on the spot fact-finding (average cost): GBP 3,100.

