

The Wire

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Needed but unwanted

On the night of 28 October 2007, four Haitian migrant workers were attacked in Ranchadero, a community in the north-west region of the Dominican Republic. Their attackers used machetes, seriously injuring the four men, and damaged or destroyed homes and personal belongings.

“[there is a] profound and entrenched problem of racism and discrimination against... Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian descent”

Findings of a joint visit to the Dominican Republic by the UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism and the UN Independent Expert on minority issues, October 2007.

Racism and discrimination permeate virtually every aspect of life for Haitian migrants in the Dominican Republic. While violent attacks are relatively rare, they face a constant battle to have their rights respected in a country where their labour is welcomed but their presence is not.

For nearly a century, Haitians have crossed the border into the Dominican Republic hoping to find a better life for themselves and their families. Most were brought to work in the country's sugar cane plantations and settled in rural communities known as bateyes.

Since the mid-1980s, the importance of sugar cane as a source of foreign income has decreased. However, Haitian migrants continue to come to work in the Dominican Republic and increasingly are working in other industries.

It is estimated that each year 30,000 migrants arrive in the Dominican Republic from Haiti and a similar number are expelled. Nearly half a million Haitians and people of Haitian descent who were born in the Dominican Republic are thought to be living in the country.

The authorities in charge of issuing birth certificates continue to discriminate against Dominicans born to Haitian parents. The 2004 Migration Law redefined the category of “persons in transit” to include migrant workers. As a result, the authorities routinely deny Dominican nationality to the children of Haitian migrant workers and even to the children of people born in the country but of Haitian ancestry.

Birth certificates not only prove Dominican nationality, they are also an essential document for accessing a whole range of services. Children without birth certificates are denied a series of rights and as adults they are prevented from entering into formal contracts or finding a job in the formal sector. They have no choice but to join the thousands of other Dominicans of Haitian descent who are effectively disenfranchised and condemned to a life of poverty.

For more information, see *Dominican Republic: Haitian migrants denied their rights* (AMR 27/003/2007).

[Picture caption: A Haitian migrant worker living in a *batey* in Los Llanos region, Dominican Republic, June 2006 © Amnesty International]

Habeas corpus denied

In the absence of proper judicial scrutiny of the USA's "war on terror" detentions, detainees have suffered a range of abuses - enforced disappearance, secret detention, arbitrary detention, unlawful transfer, torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.

Amnesty International is concerned that current review procedures violate detainees' right to habeas corpus, the mechanism under which they can exercise their right to challenge the lawfulness of their detention in an independent and impartial court and to seek a remedy for government illegality.

Majid Khan has been held in US custody for more than four and a half years, most of that time entirely incommunicado. He was seized from his brother's house in Karachi, Pakistan, on 5 March 2003. For the next three and a half years, he was kept in secret custody at unknown locations. His family did not know if he was alive or dead. He reappeared in September 2006, when US President George W. Bush announced that Majid Khan and 13 other men were being transferred from the custody of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to military detention in Guantánamo in order to be brought to trial.

But by November 2007, Majid Khan still had not been charged or tried, nor had he been given access to a court to challenge the lawfulness of his detention, his right under international law. Instead, in April 2007 his case was heard by a Combatant Status Review Tribunal (CSRT). These tribunals consist of panels of three military officers who can use any information – including classified information that the legally unrepresented detainee cannot see and information coerced under torture – in deciding whether the detainee is "properly held" as an "enemy combatant". This status, as used by the USA, is not recognized in international law.

The CSRTs are an integral part of a detention regime designed to minimize, evade and delay judicial scrutiny of executive actions. Majid Khan's tribunal was conducted in camera (behind closed doors) because, according to the government, he is in possession of classified information – including details of the CIA's detention and interrogation programme. Majid Khan has alleged that he was tortured while held in CIA custody but this was censored from his tribunal transcript.

Majid Khan was granted access to a lawyer in October 2007, four and a half years after he was taken into custody. The CSRT decision confirming his "enemy combatant" status will be subject to judicial review. Nearly six years after detentions began in Guantánamo, neither Majid Khan nor any of the more than 300 detainees still held there had received even this narrow review.

Amnesty International rejects the US government's claim that this review is an "adequate substitute" for habeas corpus. Under the Military Commissions Act of 2006, the US courts cannot hear habeas corpus petitions from foreign nationals held as "enemy combatants". The US Supreme Court is now considering whether this habeas corpus-stripping is unlawful.

In a companion report to the brief it has filed in the Supreme Court, Amnesty International concludes that the issues raised in the case go beyond crucial questions of the rights of the Guantánamo detainees through to the very concepts of accountable government and the rule of law. See *USA: No substitute for habeas corpus: six years without judicial review in Guantánamo* (AMR 51/163/2007).

[Picture caption: Manaal, the daughter of Majid Khan, outside the Supreme Court in Pakistan. Her father has been held in US custody for nearly five years without being able to challenge the lawfulness of his detention. © Private]

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Education system still failing Romani children in Slovakia

Almost 80 per cent of the total European Roma population of about 10 million live in European Union member states and aspiring member states. Roma are one of the largest and fastest growing ethnic minority groups in Europe. The pervasive discrimination they experience perpetuates both their economic status, the worst in the region, and their social marginalization.

Romani children in Slovakia continue to face serious barriers to education, especially at the primary level, despite European Union requirements that member states improve access to primary education for all.

A widespread practice of segregating Roma and non-Roma pupils at primary level condemns many Roma children to an inadequate education in “Roma-only” schools. These schools often suffer from overcrowding and lack of resources and the provision of teaching materials in Roma is almost non-existent.

Additionally, “special schools” provide distinct curriculums adapted to suit children with a variety of different needs ranging from communication problems to those with mental or physical impairments. Because Romani children usually do not speak Slovak and have not attended pre-school education, they face a disadvantage when being assessed for their abilities and may be wrongly assigned to special schools and classes. Once a child has been put into special school, there is rarely a route back to mainstream education.

Discrimination, poverty and the denial of linguistic and cultural rights fuel the continued segregation of children in education. The setting of many Romani communities outside towns and villages creates further obstacles to accessing schools. In these communities Romani children lack affordable transport, as well as basic amenities such as running water, central heating and electric lighting — all of which impair their ability to attend school.

One Romani parent explained to visiting Amnesty International delegates: “We live badly. There is a lack of everything... I would like [the children] to do homework... but it is impossible to do anything without light.”

Almost 90,000 Roma were recorded in the 2001 census in Slovakia, from a population of over 5.3 million. However, the actual Roma population in Slovakia has been estimated at between 480,000 and 520,000. Although they have been officially recognized as a national minority since April 1991, the economic situation for many Roma continues to worsen because of the discrimination they experience.

According to a 2006 report by the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, only 3 per cent of Romani children in Slovakia reached secondary school, and only 8 per cent enrolled in secondary technical school. This extraordinarily low figure has raised the concern of international human rights bodies.

Slovakia has adopted some measures to improve Romani children’s access to education including preparatory classes in primary schools for children from “disadvantaged” backgrounds, and teaching assistants to help children with language or social difficulties. However, funding is completely discretionary and not widely taken up by municipal authorities.

No monitoring of the implementation of these measures by the central government is currently in place.

Amnesty International is initiating a major campaign to improve access to education free from discrimination for Romani children in Slovakia, with a full-length report and a launch in Bratislava, Slovakia and Brussels, Belgium.

Amnesty International is calling upon the government of Slovakia to commit to tackling segregation and ensure Romani children are free from discrimination. It also calls on the European Union and other donors to support the government of Slovakia in addressing systematic violations of the right to education of Romani children by providing financial and technical assistance.

For more information, see Amnesty International's report: *Still separate, still unequal: Violations of the right to education of Romani children in Slovakia* (EUR 72/001/2007).

ACTION NOW

Please call on the government of Slovakia to make an unequivocal commitment to take all necessary measures to eradicate segregated education for Roma. This commitment should be the guiding principle in all education policies on Romani people.

Send appeals to:

Dušan Čaplovič

Deputy Prime Minister for Human Rights and Minorities

Sekcia ľudských práv a menšín

Úrad vlády Slovenskej republiky

Nám. slobody 1

813 70 Bratislava

Slovakia

Fax: +421 2 52 491 647

Email: urad@vlada.gov.sk

Salutation: Dear Deputy Prime Minister

[Picture caption: Romani children waiting for the bus at the settlement of Letanovce, Slovakia. The school is 2km away and many parents cannot afford the fare. © Amnesty International]

Training event addresses Roma discrimination in schools

Amnesty International has recently begun working with grass roots organizations and local professionals in Slovenia to address widespread discrimination against Romani children in school.

During October 2007, Amnesty International hosted a training event for teachers and other professionals working directly with the Roma in the region.

The event, organized in co-operation with the Institute of Slovenia for Schools, took place in Otocec, Novo Mesto, and was repeated in Krško. It focused on good working practices within the classroom and encouraging co-operation between Roma communities and different state institutions such as social services and the police.

The training included creative workshops on human rights and was attended by teachers as well as Romani parents and children. A round table event with the Ministry of Education dealt specifically with access to education for Roma pupils and related issues such as integration.

The training follows on from conclusions and recommendations in the Amnesty International report published in November 2006: *False starts: The exclusion of Romani children from primary education in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Slovenia* (EUR 05/003/2006).

See also the Amnesty International fact sheets: *Bosnia and Herzegovina: Roma and the right to education* (EUR 63/014/2006), *Croatia: Roma and the right to education* (EUR 64/001/2006), *Slovenia: Roma and the right to education* (EUR 68/002/2006).

Former ‘comfort women’ seek European Union help to secure apology from Japan

As part of its campaigns on Stop Violence Against Women and Justice for Survivors of Japan’s Sexual Slavery System (comfort women), Amnesty International organized a speakers' tour last month with three former comfort women. The Hague, Brussels, Berlin and London played host to the event between 1 and 14 November 2007.

The women, Gil Won Ok, 79, from Korea, Ellen van der Ploeg, 84, from the Netherlands and Menen Castillo, 78, from the Philippines, met Members of the European Parliament, and parliamentarians in the Dutch, British and German parliament. The meeting, and lobbying by AI Netherlands, led to a successful Unanimous Motion in the Dutch parliament, asking Japan to address the comfort women issue immediately.

On 6 November, the three women gave powerful testimonies at a hearing in the European Parliament to a packed room including Members of the European Parliament, staff, journalists and TV crew. In telling of the repeated rape, torture and beatings inflicted on them by Japanese soldiers before and during the Second World War, their stories were a testament to their suffering and illustrated the plight of all women who suffer sexual violence in conflict situations.

[Picture caption: *From left to right: Menen Castillo, Gil Won Ok and Ellen van der Ploeg*]

Individual action, mutual rights

A man sent to a “re-education through labour” camp for his religious beliefs. A woman fighting for justice after she was raped for supporting the political opposition. A human rights defender taken away by the security forces and not seen since.

Rights are not just concepts or laws — they affect people’s lives. Whether the person is at risk of human rights abuses or a survivor, a relative demanding justice or an activist speaking out for the rights of others, we are affected individually and collectively by the rights we fight for and the rights we exercise.

People are the reason Amnesty International campaigns

On Human Rights Day, 10 December, each year, thousands of Amnesty International activists act to stop specific human rights violations and to help other people. They flood government offices with demands for justice and send messages of support to remind people that they are not alone in their fight for justice.

Activists from over 30 Amnesty International sections have pledged to act for individuals this Human Rights Day. Will you? Three of the individuals’ cases are featured in this month's

Worldwide Appeals. You can contribute to our global goal of over 150,000 actions by sending your demands directly to the authorities.

For more information and more actions see <http://web.amnesty.org/appeals/current>

Update

Gospel singer granted asylum in Denmark

Helen Berhane, a gospel singer from Eritrea, has been granted asylum in Denmark. She had been imprisoned for two and a half years and repeatedly tortured in order to get her to recant her faith. She refused to do so.

She was arrested in May 2004 after recording a cassette of gospel music. She was detained incommunicado without charge or trial for two and a half years in Mai Serwa army camp near Asmara, the capital of Eritrea.

She spent most of her time in detention locked inside a metal shipping container which was used as a prison cell. She was repeatedly tortured by being placed face down with her arms and legs tied behind her back, known as the “helicopter” position, and beaten.

In October 2006 she was admitted to hospital in Asmara. She now uses a wheelchair because of injuries to her feet and legs caused by the repeated beatings.

After a high-profile international campaign by Amnesty International and other NGOs she was released in December 2006. She fled to Khartoum, the capital of Sudan, but feared for her safety there too.

Helen Berhane’s daughter Eva, who joined her in Khartoum, accompanied her to Copenhagen, Denmark, where they were greeted by campaigners and supporters on their arrival on 19 October 2007. She is undergoing medical treatment there for the injuries caused by her torture.

Helen Berhane is a member of the Rema Church, which has been subjected to sustained persecution for the past four years. She was among an estimated 2,000 members of banned evangelical churches in Eritrea arrested in recent years. Although freedom of religion is guaranteed in the Eritrean Constitution, members of around 35 minority Christian evangelical churches face persecution.

[Picture caption: Helen Berhane © Private]

Still no justice for murdered environmentalists

One year after the killing in Honduras of environmental activists Heraldo Zúñiga and Roger Iván Cartagena, no one has yet been brought to justice.

The two men, members of the Environmentalist Movement of Olancho (Movimiento Ambientalista de Olancho, MAO), were shot execution-style on 22 December 2006 in Guarizama, Olancho department, reportedly by members of the national police. They had been threatened and intimidated before their deaths, but no effective protection was reportedly provided to guarantee their safety. Four police officers were accused of the killings and have been held in preventive detention since February pending trial.

Following the killings the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ordered the Honduran Government to urgently implement precautionary measures on behalf of members of MAO. Information indicates that the authorities have not fully complied with this and provided MAO with only limited and sporadic protection and which is now reported to have ceased altogether. There are concerns about the impartiality and effectiveness of the protection as it is provided by the same police force reportedly responsible for the killings.

Please write, expressing concern at lack of progress in the investigation into the killings of Heraldo Zúñiga and Roger Iván Cartagena and urging that members of MAO receive adequate protection.

Write to: Attorney General Sr. Leonidas Rosa Bautista
Fiscal General de la República
Lomas del Guijarro, Avenida República Dominicana
Edificio Lomas Plaza II
Tegucigalpa
Honduras
Fax: +504 221 5667 (say “tono de fax por favor”)
Salutation: Estimado Sr. Fiscal General / Dear Attorney General
Language: Spanish, English or your own language

[Picture caption: David Zúñiga, father of Heraldo Zúñiga]

World wide appeals

Russian Federation

Where is Artur Akhmatkhanov?

“Even today I think, maybe today, maybe tomorrow they will give my son back to me... Every night he appears in my sleep and I cry all the time... That is not a life any more. For me everything came to a halt. I just walk over the earth.”

Bilat Akhmatkhanova, Artur Akhmatkhanov's mother.

On 2 April 2003 Artur Akhmatkhanov, a student and human rights defender, was arrested in Grozny, Chechnya, apparently by masked members of the Russian federal forces. They covered his head and forced him into an armoured personnel carrier. He has not been seen since. He had been married for just one month.

At the time of his disappearance Artur Akhmatkhanov was a volunteer at the Russian-Chechen Friendship Society, a human rights organization.

In a letter to local Chechen authorities in March 2004, a military commander denied any involvement by the Russian military in Artur Akhmatkhanov's disappearance. An official investigation into his disappearance, which was launched on 4 April 2003, was suspended.

The Russian non-governmental organization Memorial has estimated that between 3,000 and 5,000 men, women and children have been forcibly disappeared or abducted in Chechnya since 1999.

Artur Akhmatkhanov's mother, Bilat Akhmatkhanova, continues to search for her son in mass graves, places of detention and other places where she fears he may be held. She has not given up hope that her son is still alive.

- Please write, calling on the Russian authorities to: ensure that Artur Akhmatkhanov's disappearance is fully investigated; make public the official list of all missing people in Chechnya; ensure full and impartial investigations into the mass graves in Chechnya; and provide protection from intimidation for witnesses and relatives.

Send appeals to:

Vladimir Putin

President of the Russian Federation

103132 g. Moscow

4 Staraya Ploshchad (or Old Square)

Russian Federation

Or you can send an email via this website:

www.kremlin.ru/eng/articles/send_letter_Eng1a.shtml

Salutation: Dear President Putin

[Picture caption: Artur Akhmatkhanov © Private]

Democratic Republic of the Congo Student raped in police custody

Coquette Nsinga, a 25-year-old student and member of the Movement for the Liberation of the Congo, was arrested in October 2006 and held in incommunicado detention, beaten and raped.

On 31 October, the day after the second round of the presidential elections, she was lured, along with her mother, Anne-Marie Lisasi, Chantal Wantami and a fourth woman, to a restaurant in the centre of Kinshasa to collect allowances for their work as election monitors.

When they arrived at the restaurant the four women were arrested by police officers from the Special Services and Intelligence unit and driven to the headquarters at Kin-Mazière police station. They were beaten by police officers, who also took Coquette Nsinga's money, party membership card, mobile phone and jewellery and interrogated her about her political activities. The fourth woman was later released.

After being held in incommunicado detention, without being formally charged, for three weeks, Coquette Nsinga was taken to another room and raped by five police officers. Since the rape she has suffered from pains in her stomach and back but has been offered no medical treatment.

After seven months in detention she was transferred to Kinshasa central prison and brought before a military tribunal. She was charged with "inciting soldiers to commit acts of indiscipline", a charge which carries a sentence of between five and 20 years' imprisonment. The trial is ongoing.

STOP PRESS! Coquette Nsinga, Anne-Marie Lisasi and Chantal Wantami were released on 22 November 2007 just as the Wire went to press.

- Please write, calling for a thorough and independent investigation into the rape of Coquette Nsinga and for those responsible to be brought to justice.

Send appeals to:

Président Joseph Kabila

Présidence de la République

Kinshasa Gombe

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Email: pr@presidentrdc.cd or pp@presidentrdc.cd
Salutation: Dear President

China

Falun Gong practitioner detained without trial

Bu Dongwei, a Falun Gong practitioner, is serving two and a half years of “Re-education Through Labour” (RTL) for exercising his right of freedom of religion. He is being held at the Tuanhe facility in Beijing where he does packaging work.

Bu Dongwei was arrested in May 2006 by seven police officers. His family did not know what had happened to him until three months after his arrest. He was assigned to RTL for “resisting the implementation of national laws” and “disturbing public order” on the basis of a verbal confession and 80 copies of Falun Gong literature that the police say they found in his home. He has not been brought before a court, and the authorities claim that he decided not to appeal against his imprisonment.

In August 2000 Bu Dongwei was assigned to 10 months’ RTL for his religious beliefs. He said he was beaten, deprived of sleep and made to sit in a small chair all day to force him to renounce his beliefs.

Tens of thousands of Falun Gong practitioners have been arbitrarily detained in China since 1999 when the organization was banned. Alleged organizers or leaders have been sentenced to prison terms and others have been held in psychiatric hospitals.

RTL is a system of administrative detention imposed by the police without charge, trial or judicial review and in violation of international fair trial standards. Recent efforts to abolish the system appear to have stalled within China’s legislature. Beijing city authorities have extended the use of RTL as a pretext to “clean up” the city in the run-up to the 2008 Summer Olympics.

- Please write, calling for the immediate and unconditional release of Bu Dongwei as a prisoner of conscience. Pending his release, urge the authorities to allow regular visits by his family, access to a lawyer and medical treatment. Ask for a guarantee that he is not subjected to torture or other ill-treatment during his detention. Please also call for the abolition of the RTL system.

Send appeals to: Wen Jiabao Guojia Zongli, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of China, The State Council General Office, 2 Fuyoujie, Xichengqu, Beijingshi 100017, People's Republic of China

Fax: +86 10 6596 1109 (c/o Minister of Foreign Affairs)

Email: gazette@mail.gov.cn

Salutation: Your Excellency

[Picture caption: Bu Dongwei ©Private]

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Freed Ethiopian journalist donates prize to Amnesty International

A former prisoner of conscience has thanked Amnesty International for helping secure her release from jail by donating a journalism award to the organization.

Serkalem Fasil was freed from an Addis Ababa jail in April 2007, following extensive campaigning by Amnesty International and other human rights NGOs. Her ordeal was recognized this week when she was honoured with a Courage in Journalism Award from the International Women's Media Foundation.

She has given the prize money to Amnesty International and the Committee to Protect Journalists, which also campaigned for her release.

“Human rights was once demonized as alien and subversive in the West... as it is today in nations with dictatorial regimes like that of Ethiopia,” said Serkalem Fasil, who attacked the notion that human rights organizations are “western institutions... muddling through non-western societies”.

She described her donation as “A rejection of the manipulation of our national, religious and cultural differences against international human rights organizations. It is also an affirmation of the importance of the work that human rights organizations are doing... I have no doubt about the importance of Amnesty International in this story.”

Serkalem Fasil was seized by police in November 2005 for her role as co-publisher of *Asqual*, *Menilik* and *Satenaw* newspapers. Amnesty International believes she was detained solely for exercising her right to freedom of expression.

She faced a possible death penalty on account of her journalism. She was finally acquitted of charges of outrage against the Constitution, impairing the defensive power of the state and “attempted genocide”. She was pregnant at the time of her arrest and gave birth to a baby son in the police hospital, where medical care was grossly deficient.

[Picture caption: Serkalem Fasil, baby son Nafkot and journalist husband Eskinder Nega (also detained) hold a copy of their newspaper *Menelik*, which was shut down when they were arrested. © Private]

Safe schools — 16 Days of activism against gender based violence

Schools are places for children to learn and grow. But many girls all over the world go to school fearing for their safety, dreading humiliating and violent treatment, simply hoping to get through another day. The result is that countless girls are kept out of school, drop out of school or do not participate fully in school. Their human rights — rights to freedom from violence and to education — are violated.

Safe schools for girls, Amnesty International's project to address violence against schoolgirls as part of the Stop Violence against Women campaign, is gaining momentum. A short but intense burst of activity will take place during the 16 Days of activism against gender-based violence (25 November to 10 December). Amnesty International activists will aim to raise awareness about violence against girls in and around school and to highlight how this impacts on girls, their education and their future. They will campaign for full implementation of Six steps to stop violence against schoolgirls:

- Step 1: Prohibit all forms of violence against girls
- Step 2: Plan for safe schools
- Step 3: Respond to incidents of violence against girls
- Step 4: Provide support services for girls who have suffered violence
- Step 5: Remove barriers to girls' access to school
- Step 6: Protect girls from abuse

This introductory phase paves the way for further campaigning due to begin after the launch of a global report in March 2008. Planned activities include:

- informing school principals and teachers about Amnesty International's Stop Violence against Women campaign and its Safe schools for girls project
- calling for schools to declare themselves a violence-free zone for girls
- encouraging schools to hold events such as art exhibitions, photo competitions and plays that address the issue of violence against girls in schools.

[Picture caption: Safe Schools poster © Amnesty International]

Tough arms controls called for at the UN

The majority of the world's governments confirmed in October that they want an Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). At the UN General Assembly in New York, delegates submitted written proposals calling for respect for international human rights and humanitarian law in conventional arms transfers.

The Control Arms campaign applauded an unprecedented show of support for a tough ATT — especially by African states. Amnesty International, the International Action Network on Small Arms and Oxfam International, which form the campaign, intensively lobbied delegates. Their members held over one hundred "people's consultation" events around the world to convince governments to support an effective ATT.

At the UN headquarters three survivors of armed gun violence told UN diplomats their stories at an event organized by Control Arms. Vavine Gabi witnessed the fatal shooting eight years ago of her mother in Papua New Guinea (PNG), and is a member of the PNG Coalition to Stop Gun Violence.

The next stage in the development of an ATT will be the work of a group of government experts (GGE) from 28 countries, including the world's biggest arms exporters and many of the countries affected by irresponsible arms flows. In February 2008 the GGE will begin shaping government submissions into the first blueprint of a future ATT and will present their report at the UN General Assembly's First Committee in October 2008.

[Picture caption: Vavine Gabi outside the UN headquarters, New York, USA © Control Arms/Sol Aramendi]

UN General Assembly adopts resolution to halt executions worldwide

A UN resolution calling for a moratorium on executions was adopted by the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly 62nd session on 15 November. The Resolution A/C.3/62/L.29 was adopted by a vote of 99 countries in favour and 52 against, with 33 abstentions. The General Assembly, sitting in plenary, is expected to endorse the resolution in December.

The adoption of this resolution is an important milestone towards worldwide abolition of the death penalty.

Ten countries from across the world —Albania, Angola, Brazil, Croatia, Gabon, Mexico, New Zealand, the Philippines, Portugal (for the European Union) and Timor Leste — co-authored the resolution.

The resolution calls upon all states that still maintain the death penalty “to establish a moratorium on executions with a view to abolishing the death penalty”. It urges these states “to respect international standards that provide safeguards guaranteeing the protection of the rights of those facing the death penalty” and “progressively restrict the use of the death penalty and reduce the number of offences for which it may be imposed”. The UN Secretary-General will report to the General Assembly in 2008 on how the resolution is being implemented.

For more information, see <http://web.amnesty.org/pages/deathpenalty-index-eng/>