WIRE
TOGETHER AGAINST INJUSTICE

THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE DISAPPEARED

Rio Olympics
Beyond the violence of Brazil's favelas

Hazardous roads
Nepali migrants risk it all for a better life

Refugees welcome
Our survey of global attitudes to refugees
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In a landmark decision, the UN Human Rights Committee ruled that Ireland’s restrictive abortion law violated the rights of a woman who was carrying a foetus with a fatal condition. Under Irish law, women in this condition are forced to carry a doomed pregnancy to term – or travel abroad to get a termination.

Through My Body My Rights, Amnesty has campaigned alongside local activists against Ireland’s near-total ban on abortion. More than 275,000 people signed our She is #notacrimal petition. More than 2.5 million activists worldwide have taken action for My Body My Rights, Amnesty’s global campaign for sexual and reproductive rights.

http://bit.ly/1UpIp1A

Angola’s Supreme Court freed human rights defender José Marcos Mavungo on 20 May 2016. A prisoner of conscience, José had been arrested on 14 March 2015 for his part in organizing a peaceful demonstration, and was later charged with “rebellion”. A big thank you to the Amnesty activists around the world who wrote to Angola’s authorities, demanding his release.

http://bit.ly/1Z1ZnTq

\[1\] LOOK BEYOND BORDERS

Amnesty launched a video experiment breaking down barriers between recently arrived refugees and Europeans on 25 May. The video, Look Beyond Borders, is based on a theory that four minutes of uninterrupted eye contact increases intimacy. Amnesty International Poland and Polish ad agency DDB&Tribal applied the theory to the refugee crisis, sitting refugees from Syria and Somalia opposite people from Belgium, Italy, Germany, Poland and the UK. The results were overwhelmingly positive.


\[2\] SHE IS NOT A CRIMINAL

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\[3\] YECENIA FINALLY FREE

After four harrowing years in a Mexican jail, Yecenia Armenta is finally free. In 2012, police beat, near-asphyxiated and raped her during 15 hours of torture until she “confessed” to involvement in the murder of her husband. Hundreds of thousands of Amnesty supporters wrote letters as part of our Stop Torture and Write for Rights campaign, demanding her release. She was freed on 7 June.

“Thank you and keep fighting for the rights of others,” she said. “Justice is sometimes slow, but it arrives.”

http://bit.ly/1Ufs1RI

\[4\] JUSTICE FOR JOSÉ

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http://bit.ly/1Ufs1RI

http://bit.ly/1Z1ZnTq
**CHAD’S HISSÈNE HABRÉ CONVICTED**

In a landmark ruling for international justice, former Chadian president Hissène Habré was convicted on 30 May of crimes against humanity, war crimes and torture committed in Chad between 1982 and 1990. Among other evidence, the prosecution relied on Amnesty reports dating from the 1980s as well as the expert testimony of a former Amnesty staff member. Habré was sentenced to life. His conviction is a victory for the tens of thousands of victims who have been demanding justice for decades. [http://bit.ly/1TXi4rA](http://bit.ly/1TXi4rA)

**JOURNALIST FREED IN AZERBAIJAN**

Award-winning journalist Khadija Ismayilova was released on 25 May. The Supreme Court replaced her seven-and-a-half-year prison sentence with a suspended three-year sentence following an appeal. Khadija was arrested in December 2014 and convicted on trumped-up charges. Before her arrest, she had been investigating and reporting on corruption at the highest levels in Azerbaijan’s government, including family members of the president. Amnesty is calling for her sentence to be quashed. [http://bit.ly/1VjQk1k](http://bit.ly/1VjQk1k)

**WE SAVED ALIREZA**

Iranian teenager Alireza Tajiki was saved from the gallows thanks to a global outcry condemning his imminent execution. He was scheduled to hang on 15 May 2016, but with Amnesty staff lobbying hard and activists tweeting the authorities to #SaveAlireza, the execution was called off. Alireza is not safe yet – we are now calling on Iran to quash his death sentence. [http://bit.ly/1XN3nca](http://bit.ly/1XN3nca)

**EL SALVADOR FREES MARIA TERESA**

Maria Teresa Rivera was freed on 20 May 2016. The 33-year-old had been sentenced to 40 years in prison in 2011 after she suffered a miscarriage. Suspected of having had an abortion—which is banned in El Salvador—she was denounced to the police by hospital staff.

She served four years of her sentence, but was freed after a judge said that there was no evidence to support the charges against her. However, that same day, the Attorney General’s Office said it would appeal against the decision. Thousands of Amnesty activists around the world have written letters on her behalf, urging El Salvador to stop criminalizing abortion. [http://bit.ly/1PjXuld](http://bit.ly/1PjXuld)

“I am very grateful to every man and woman who has been following my case with that lighted candle, and who hoped that I would be free.”

Maria Teresa Rivera

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FIFA, FOOTBALL AND FORCED LABOUR IN QATAR

Researcher Mustafa Qadri on how Amnesty has pressured FIFA, football’s world governing body, to take action for migrant workers in Qatar.

The last time I met representatives from FIFA, I was on the sidelines of a football pitch on the outskirts of Doha, the capital of Qatar. I told them about our latest research, which highlighted the appalling treatment of migrant workers building a prestigious stadium for the 2022 World Cup.

DIRTY AND DANGEROUS

I had personally interviewed over 600 migrant workers and documented over 5,000 cases in Qatar – and I was shocked by what I saw. Many were literally starving because they’d not been paid for months. Or living in dirty, cramped and dangerous camps and facing threats just for complaining about their conditions.

FIFA President Gianni Infantino had just been elected, and in the few minutes I had, I urged him to act quickly. Men and women were suffering hugely because of Qatar’s exploitative labour laws. A few minutes later, Infantino told the world that FIFA would establish an independent monitoring body to oversee conditions for migrant workers.

GLOBAL SUPPORTERS

It was an encouraging first step, and I was struck by the power of Amnesty. They listen to us because we’ve worked on labour rights for many years. Our work is based on what exploited workers tell us. And we are a global movement with followers across the world, just like football.

There’s still a long way to go. But with your help, we will make sure FIFA does all it can to stop migrant workers being exploited in Qatar.

READ MORE ON PAGE 14

Sign the petition http://bit.ly/1V8MEhH

DISAPPEARANCES IN NUMBERS

30K+ People are still missing in Sri Lanka

10K+ Tens of thousands have disappeared in Syria since 2011

27K+ People have disappeared in Mexico

8K+ People whose fate remains unknown in Bosnia and Herzegovina

52 States have ratified the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance

BEHIND THE SCENES

© Getty Images/iStock

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WHERE THERE IS HOPE

What do you do when your loved ones are taken from you? Snatched by the very forces that many of us rely on for our security – the police, our own governments – they disappear from our lives, possibly never to be seen again.

What can you do in circumstances like these? And what if you’re the one who is taken?

Confronted by the seemingly insurmountable, you may give in to a private despair. But when the anger and grief extinguish themselves, as inevitably they will, what takes seed is hope. Hope that one day you will see your loved ones again. Hope that one day you may be free again.

It is hope that fills the pages of our latest issue. From the Brazilian youths who are finding a route out of violence through boxing, to the Nepali migrants who risk so much for a better and safer life, hope compels them forward.

And there is reason to hope. As our latest survey on people’s attitudes to refugees has shown, 80% worldwide say they would welcome refugees – despite the rhetoric of their government leaders.

As activists, hope is one of our greatest weapons: because of it people are freed; because of it, repressive laws are dropped.

How? Because where there is hope, there is purpose. And where hope and purpose are contagious, there is solidarity, action and, ultimately, triumph.

Shiromi Pinto
@blimundaseyes

THE WIRE TEAM

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The violence is palpable when you enter the favelas of Rio de Janeiro’s Maré neighbourhood. Armed teenagers greet you with confrontational stares, and crack and cocaine dealers drink beer while selling their merchandise. Yet violence is not the whole story of this neighbourhood.

A hairdressing salon, steakhouse, and a school are packed together, mere metres from the drug dealers in Maré. This diverse area, with a long history of community organizing – a result of poor public services – comprises over 140,000 people crammed into just 10km². They share their neighbourhood with groups of drug traffickers and so-called “militias”: criminal gangs mainly made up of former or off-duty police.

The neighbourhood’s narrow alleys may feel a world away from the glamour and glory of the nearby Olympic stadium, but Brazil’s hosting of world sporting events continues to have profound effects on the population here. During the 2014 World Cup, the army took over policing duties in Maré and stayed for over a year. Residents reported numerous abuses by the military during that period, including beatings and shootings. As the 2016 Olympic Games approach, the police are carrying out operations here several times a week, and violence is common.
CAN VIOLENCE BE KNOCKED OUT AT RIO 2016?
The tourists and athletes who come to Rio for the Olympics are unlikely to see these favelas, not least because the authorities have built a wall to hide them from view from the motorway that runs beside it. Yet inside the favelas, some people are working to ensure that the Olympic legacy is not only that of violence, but of sporting opportunity for the most vulnerable.

FROM THE FAVELA TO THE OLYMPICS
At the heart of these favelas, in the community of Nova Holanda, is the headquarters of Fight for Peace, an organization created in the year 2000 by Luke Dowdney, a British boxer. He wanted to use boxing to change the lives of young people affected by violence. Alongside their work in the ring, the youngsters take part in classes about sexuality, leadership and vocational workshops. They can also practise judo, capoeira and taekwondo, among other martial arts. One notable former student is Roberto Custodio, who is likely to compete in the Olympics as part of the Brazilian team this summer.

“Roberto started here in 2000 and now he’s in the Brazil squad. He’s won several international competitions. He’s our big hope and a great role model for our youngsters. His family still lives in Maré and when he can, he comes along and coaches the students and gives them classes. He’s an inspiration for all our young people,” says Lola Werneck, Fight for Peace’s Youth Leadership Co-ordinator.

Werneck has been working here for three and a half years, and so knows the area well. “There are times when
everything’s quiet, but then suddenly a police operation or a confrontation between gangs changes everything and you don’t know what might happen. That creates a feeling of constant insecurity, though with time it begins to seem normal. You build up a kind of resistance. You can’t think about violence all the time, so a few minutes after you hear gunfire, you go out into the street, you go back to work or back to school. That’s the survival mechanism the people have developed.”

**TAKING COVER**

Someone who knows all about survival is 27-year-old Alan, who first came to Fight for Peace as a student 10 years ago and now teaches at the school. Two of his cousins were killed by the police. They were involved in drug trafficking, but he wanted a different life. Today, he is a boxing coach.

“Here, it’s common for young people to be stopped by the police, sometimes several times a day. They treat you as if you’re a criminal when you’ve done nothing wrong. They might push you or search you. If you are in a car or on a motorbike, they might stop you and arrest you. It’s also normal to see gunfire between police officers and drug traffickers on a daily basis. You are in the street and you hear a shot fired. All you think about at that moment is taking cover. That’s what you have to do. You learn to do it when you are a child.”

Police homicides in Rio have risen constantly in recent years, with 307 killed in 2015. Most of these killings have not been investigated, despite evidence that many of them appear to have been extrajudicial executions. Overwhelmingly, the victims are young black men who live in the favelas.

**THE LEGACY OF RIO 2016**

There is a great deal that the authorities and organizers of Rio 2016 can, and must, do to prevent human rights violations from being committed during policing operations. The law enforcement authorities must adopt an approach to policing based on caution and consultation, rather than continuing with their “shoot first, ask later” strategy. Likewise, the organizers must use their influence with the authorities to prevent human rights violations taking place in the name of the games. Otherwise the legacy of the Olympics will not just be sporting endeavour, but young lives ended and families torn apart.

The use of boxing as a route out of violence may seem contradictory, but Fight for Peace have shown that it is an effective way of attracting young people and giving structure to their lives that they otherwise would not have had. “Boxing has its own values. You work a lot on discipline, concentration and respect for your opponent. Young people come to us wanting to learn to defend themselves in the street, but it’s about channelling that aggression, and little by little, things take a different direction,” concludes Werneck.

**WHAT CAN I DO?**

Take action to end police violence in Rio: http://bit.ly/1Pkb3ko
An amazing 80% of people worldwide would welcome refugees with open arms – leaving their governments badly out of touch with reality.

When Amnesty asked more than 27,000 people across 27 countries if they would welcome refugees, the response was incredible: 4 in 5 people replied with a resounding “yes, we will”!

All over the world, people are watching in horror as the global refugee crisis goes from bad to worse. Our survey shows that while many governments still claim they simply can’t find room for refugees, their citizens feel the opposite way.

The UK and Australian governments are probably more out of touch than any other leaders globally: an astonishing 87% of British people and 85% of Australians are ready to invite refugees into their countries, communities – even their own homes.
MOST WELCOMING: CHINA, GERMANY AND THE UK

We created a ranking based on our survey results, called the Refugees Welcome Index. China comes out on top, with almost half of those we spoke to saying they would accept refugees in their own home. Russia, Indonesia and Thailand – which thousands tried to reach by boat after fleeing Myanmar last year – came bottom of the list.

People in Germany and the UK are also taking the refugee crisis particularly personally, ranking second and third as the most welcoming.

Almost a third of people in the UK – 29% – are willing to open up their own homes to refugees. Another 47% would let refugees live in their neighbourhoods.

An incredible 96% of Germans, whose nation made room for 1 million people in the last year, are still open to the idea of hosting more. In Jordan, a small country already hosting over 600,000 refugees from Syria, 94% feel the same way.

GOVERNMENTS SHOULD HELP MUCH MORE

Almost 3 in 4 people worldwide – 73% – agree that people should be able to take refuge in other countries to escape war and persecution. This feeling is particularly strong in Spain (78%), Germany (69%) and Greece (64%).

Across the globe, 2 in 3 people, or 66%, say their governments should do more to help refugees. They include countries that have already welcomed huge numbers: 84% feel this way in Jordan, 76% in Germany and 74% in Greece. In Kenya, which hosts nearly 600,000 refugees – including 413,000 people from Somalia – 65% agree.

Others are waiting impatiently for their country to start pulling their weight: 86% of those we spoke to in China, for example, 85% in Nigeria, and 82% in Spain.

MAKE YOUR POLITICIANS LISTEN

Our survey results are overwhelmingly positive – but most governments still just aren’t listening.

Only nine of the 27 countries covered by our survey have committed to taking in any of Syria’s 4.8 million refugees. But they have only agreed to share fewer than 174,000 people between them.

Another four countries in our survey – Turkey, Jordan, Greece and Germany – are hosting millions, with very little help from other countries. Because most governments still pretend that protecting refugees is somebody else’s problem.

Their attitude is badly out of touch with the inspiring “can do” attitude among their citizens.

Our survey shows that politicians have run out of excuses not to do their fair share: Instead of chasing headlines with anti-refugee rhetoric, they should be making brave decisions.

They can start by agreeing to share responsibility for those refugees who need help most.

Amnesty is pushing for more than 1 million refugees to be resettled by the end of 2017. It’s not going to be simple, or easy, but as our survey shows, thousands of people stand ready to roll up their sleeves and pitch in to welcome refugees.

TAKE ACTION:
CHINA’S CRACKDOWN ON HUMAN RIGHTS LAWYERS

A timeline of detention and arrests over the last year.

It’s been one year since China began its assault on human rights lawyers and activists across the country on 9 July 2015. In all, 248* lawyers and activists were questioned by police, detained or charged. We lay out the key milestones as they unfolded, from the height of the crackdown, to reactions from the international community, to the subsequent release of some of those affected.

9 JUL 2015
Prominent human rights lawyer Wang Yu goes missing in the early hours after sending panicked phone messages to friends. The messages state that her internet and electricity have been cut off, and that people are trying to break into her home. Her husband Bao Longjun and their 16-year-old son, Bao Zhuoxuan, are also missing. Wang Yu works at Beijing Fengrui, a law firm that handles many sensitive human rights-related cases.

A group of more than 100 lawyers and activists sign a joint statement condemning her disappearance.

11 JUL 2015
Well known Guangzhou-based lawyer Sui Muqing is held at an undisclosed location on suspicion of “inciting subversion of state power”, a serious criminal offence that carries a potential 15-year jail term.

12 JUL 2015
Chinese authorities notify Wang Yu’s lawyers that she is being held at an unknown location on charges relating to state security.

10 JUL 2015
Public security officers across the country detain and question lawyers and activists, including 11 employees of Beijing Fengrui.

The People’s Daily, the official newspaper of the Chinese Communist Party, describes the crackdown as an operation to destroy a “major criminal gang”.

The People’s Daily
The UN Committee against Torture voices concern over China’s crackdown on human rights lawyers and activists, saying it is “unprecedented”.

Rights activists Wang Fang and Yin Xu’an are arrested on suspicion of “picking quarrels and provoking trouble”, a catch-all charge often used to silence critics, after they posted online photos of themselves wearing T-shirts with activist Wu Gan’s image to protest his detention.

Bao Zhuoxuan, the teenage son of Wang Yu, attempts to flee China to study abroad, but is taken away by officers in uniform in the border town of Mongla, Myanmar, along with Xing Qingxian and Tang Zhishun, two activists accompanying him.

A total of 13 lawyers and activists, including some previously detained, are formally arrested on state security charges.

Prominent lawyer Sui Muqing is released, the first lawyer among those targeted to be granted bail.

Activists Xing Qingxian and Tang Zhishun are arrested for helping Wang Yu’s son Bao Zhuoxuan “illegally cross national borders”. They could face seven years in jail for the offence.

A total of 18 human rights lawyers and activists remain detained and under arrest.

UN Human Rights chief Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein says he has raised concerns with China on the “worrying pattern” of arrests and intimidation of lawyers and critics in the country.

Paralegal Gao Yue and lawyer Li Shuyun are released on bail.

12 countries release a joint statement at the UN Human Rights Council expressing concern over the deteriorating human rights situation in China as a result of the ongoing crackdown. They highlight that many individuals affected have been denied access to lawyers or visits by family members.

A total of 18 human rights lawyers and activists remain detained and under arrest.

READ MORE: http://bit.ly/2951fe1

*All figures are correct to the best of Amnesty International’s knowledge, however as verification is difficult, not all information may be up to date.
Illustrations © Badiucao
PHOTO STORY: MIGRANT WORKERS

JOURNEY TO THE UNKNOWN
Across Nepal, people are leaving their towns and villages in search of work in Gulf countries such as Qatar. It’s a journey of hope and expectation, but they face exploitation and abuse at every step.

Potential migrant workers at a visa office in Kathmandu, Nepal.
Workers queue at the Foreign Employment Promotion Board, Kathmandu. To find work, workers often have to pay high fees to unscrupulous recruitment agents. Many take out expensive loans and end up in debt, which makes life even harder when they get to their destination.

“The fee has eaten up all of my money. I work here six days a week, it is difficult work. My wish is to send back money for my family, but after paying my loan there is little left.”

Sunil Pardeshi, Nepali migrant worker in Qatar
“The work is hard, our camp is filthy and small and I haven’t received any pay yet.”

Kamal, 19, Nepali migrant worker in Qatar

Departures, Kathmandu airport.
According to the Nepali Times, 1,500 Nepalese workers fly out to the Gulf States and Malaysia every day from Kathmandu Airport. Many, such as those Amnesty spoke to in Qatar, experience abuse including living in cramped and unsafe accommodation.

Processing visas in Kathmandu. The most popular destinations for migrant workers are Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Malaysia. According to a foreign employment officer this office verifies 500-1,000 visas for Qatar every day.
Looking in at a queue of labourers departing for the Gulf, Kathmandu airport. Potential migrant workers are often given false promises by recruiters about salaries and working conditions. They might also have to sign agreements written in English, which they don’t understand.

Waving goodbye, Kathmandu airport. Most migrant workers are seeking a better life for their families. But debts and delayed salaries make it hard to send enough money home. One worker we spoke to, Prem, wasn’t paid for three months and his family was unable to pay their rent: “My family is now homeless and two of my younger children have been taken out of school. I cannot sleep at night. This is a torture for me.”

“No one mentioned anything about the country – how hot it is, what work I would do, or if I needed some training to do my job.”

Rajiv, Nepali migrant worker in Qatar
Preparing for take off. When they land, migrant workers in Qatar might have their passports confiscated by employers. What’s more, if they want to leave Qatar they have to get an “exit permit” approved by their company. Employers often ignore these requests.

TAKE ACTION
Tell FIFA, football’s governing body, to protect migrant workers building facilities for the 2022 World Cup in Qatar: http://bit.ly/1V8MEhH

Photos by Anna Tervahartiaia
Around the world, people are grabbed from the streets or their homes by government forces and not seen or heard from again for days, months – sometimes forever.

The authorities deny it, or refuse to say where they are. The legal term for it is “enforced disappearance”, and it is a crime under international law.

Those who are taken are frequently tortured and in constant fear of being killed. They know their families have no idea where they are and that chances are no one is coming to help. Even if they are eventually released, the physical and psychological scars stay with them.

30 August is the International Day of the Disappeared – a day of remembrance and action.

In 2010, the International Disappearances Convention was introduced. The Day of the Disappeared followed swiftly afterward in 2011, providing a focal point for families and activists searching for the missing.

The following pages offer just a glimpse of the courage shown by survivors and families of the disappeared – in never giving up on their quest for justice.
With some 27,000 people still missing in Mexico, Josefina Salomón takes us back to the students of Ayotzinapa – a case that typifies Mexico’s disappearances crisis.

26 September 2016 will mark two years since the disappearance of 43 students from the Ayotzinapa school in Mexico’s southern state of Guerrero.

Just under a year ago, I visited that rural college tucked away in this mountainous region. I remember walking through the school complex, finding 43 orange chairs perfectly aligned in a shabby open-air basketball court. A picture sat on each chair, decorated with letters, flowers and gifts. They told a tragic story.

“Not everyone can go through what we have gone through,” Mario, a first year student at Ayotzinapa, told me.

That fateful day in September, his fellow students had been trying to commandeer buses in nearby Iguala to travel to a protest in Mexico City when they were arrested by police and never seen again. Three of the students are known to have been killed. The rest remain missing.

Among them are Saúl Bruno García and Leonel Castro Abarca, Mario’s former highschool friends. They had convinced Mario to join the school – which he did, two months after they disappeared.

“When I learned that Saúl and Leonel were missing, I could not believe it. Just a day earlier I was exchanging messages with them. My mother was scared after what happened but I told her, ‘If you don’t take a chance, you don’t win,’ so I came here,” Mario said.

For young men like Mario, born to rural families with very few economic resources, a school like Ayotzinapa provides not only education but three meals a day and a place to sleep.
A FACTORY FOR TROUBLE
The school is part of an ambitious educational project set up in the 1920s, arising from the Mexican Revolution, which sought to provide specialized education to young men from marginalized rural backgrounds. The idea was to combine academic subjects with practical knowledge on how to care for the land, and encourage social activism.

But since then, successive conservative Mexican governments saw these schools as factories for trouble and relentlessly targeted them. Budgets have been slashed and Ayotzinapa's buildings are now overcrowded and crumbling.

Local campaigners say the disappearance of the 43 students has been a cruel attempt to stop their vocal activism, to send a message that there’s no room for them in today's Mexico.

“We never received a lot of support from the government but now we receive even less. It is as if we are a rock in the government’s shoe. All I want is to be a teacher, to teach and to help my family,” said Mario.

ENERGIZED AND DETERMINED
However, instead of deterring the students, the problems seem to energize them. The Ayotzinapa disappearances struck a chord in Mexico like no other human rights tragedy in recent years. Perhaps people’s anger is a reaction to the government’s shambolic response and the lack of effective investigation; both heavily criticized by international organizations like Amnesty and experts appointed by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. Mexico’s current leaders are so eager to sweep this crime under the carpet they have even prevented this body of experts from continuing with their investigation.

Whatever it is, people are determined to find out the truth of what happened.

“The worst is seeing the parents when they visit,” said Mario. “We see them sitting in the chairs their children used to use. I see them talking to the pictures, telling them that they will never stop looking for them. It was not the first time the government attacked us but it was the hardest one. But we will not stop until we find the 43, until the government tells us where they are.”

READ MORE:
http://bit.ly/1XYrGW8
When my son Takudzwa barged into my bedroom in the early hours of the morning to announce that there were visitors at the gate I was irritated. On the first day of my vacation I was hoping to sleep in and was certainly not interested in entertaining visitors at that time of the day.

Having failed to wake me, Takudzwa left, but in no time he was back blurting, “Mama, the visitors at the gate are police officers.”

I got up, reached for my old and much-loved baby blue silk dressing gown, and walked towards the kitchen, my son in tow. Barefoot and wearing a stocking on my head to maintain my weave hairstyle, I was still tying the belt of the dressing gown when I found myself confronted by six grim-faced men and one woman. They were charging towards me like a pride of lions that had spotted its prey.

The dark, heavily-built man who seemed to be in charge of the team barked at me, “Are you Jestina Mukoko?” His voice reverberated in the small hall leading to my kitchen. Almost losing my step, I confirmed that I was. To my surprise, as soon as I did so, two men firmly grabbed my hands as though they had found a treasure they had spent a long time searching for.
**BUNDLED INTO A CAR**

I was force-marched out of the house towards the gate, where a silver grey unmarked Mazda Familia was parked.

The passenger door was quickly opened and in a flash they bundled me into the car, where I found myself perched between two men. “Put your head down,” commanded the man who appeared to be leading the team.

The man to my right indicated that I should put my head on his lap. I tried to protest at having my head on the lap of an unknown man and as I obeyed, reluctantly, I noticed a rifle on the floor of the vehicle. This was clearly no ordinary arrest.

The journey was the worst I had ever endured. Driving at top speed with strangers who could do anything to me was unsettling enough, never mind the rifle on the floor. Indecently dressed as I was, still in my night clothes, I feared being raped.

So many thoughts flooded my mind as the vehicle raced towards its destination. What had I done to deserve this and what would they do to me?

**TERRIFYING JOURNEY**

I had heard of people disappearing, never to be seen again and had seen images of people who had been brutally tortured.

The man on whose lap my head rested covered the top of my head and eyes with something woollen.

When the vehicle stopped I was confused because of the loud music from the radio. There was even louder music outside the car. I was led into a tiny room and rudely instructed to sit down.

I was so afraid that I was unable to sit properly. I was shaking like a reed and having difficulty breathing. Would this nightmare ever end?

The man walked out of the room, the door was locked and, officially, I was in detention. But where?

_In December 2008, Jestina Mukoko was abducted and held in a secret location, where state agents psychologically and physically tortured her. For three weeks, her whereabouts were unknown. Later she appeared in court where she was charged with planning to overthrow the government, and jailed. Amnesty declared her a prisoner of conscience and campaigned for her release. Three months later she was freed on bail. The charges against her were eventually dropped. This is an edited extract from her memoir The Abduction and Trial of Jestina Mukoka (KMM Review Publishing, 2016)._

**HE WILL BE HOME SOON**

“Hands up,” nudged Kugan dislodging my death grip of the chair’s edge
My hands sought refuge in my lap, interlocked I will not, I will not I will not, I will NOT!

Teacher said “all those whose fathers are dead raise their hands”
Sleekly sheathed in plastic peacock blue school bags bulging books, crayons, feltpens beckoned ownership

Father’s towel still hangs on the rail, dust laden
His mug and plate atop the shelf, untouched
Why, only the other day I glimpsed him on TV
He will be home soon

Malathi de Alwis in Amnesty’s Silenced Shadows, an anthology of poetry on disappearances in Sri Lanka.

**TAKE ACTION:**

Take action for the world’s disappeared – browse our latest actions at https://www.amnesty.org/
International attention may have moved on, but the crisis in Burundi continues. In April 2015, President Pierre Nkurunziza announced he would run for a third term in office. This sparked large-scale protests across the country, which were violently repressed by security forces (pictured). Several months later, bodies were being found on the streets of the capital on an almost daily basis. Now the crackdown has become less visible, but the climate of fear remains. By May 2016, some 262,000 people had fled the country. It’s not hard to see why.

345 PEOPLE TORTURED
345 cases of torture were reported in the first four months of 2016, according to the UN. Amnesty had already pointed out a rise in the use of torture against political opponents in 2015 in the report Burundi: Just Tell Me What to Confess to.

474 PEOPLE KILLED
Over 474 people were killed in the first year of the crisis, including 130 in December 2015 alone. Among them were 29 children and 77 police officers.

36+ PEOPLE MISSING
At least 36 people have disappeared, including activist Marie Claudette Kwizera. She was taken by unidentified men in a vehicle suspected of belonging to the intelligence services in December 2015, and has not been seen since.

4,951+ ARRESTS
At least 4,951 people were arrested during the political crisis as of March 2016. 452 were arrested without any evidence in November 2015 alone.

TARGETED KILLINGS
At least nine officers of the Burundian Army targeted and killed since April 2015. The son of prominent human rights activist, Pierre Claver Mbonimpa, was killed after being arrested by the police. His son-in-law was shot dead outside his house.

Several political leaders from the opposition and the ruling party have been killed, including Zedi Feruzi, President of the opposition party – Union for Peace and Democracy-Zigamibanga.
Former prisoner of conscience Filep Karma tells us why he won’t stop fighting for freedom of expression in Indonesia.

Why did you become an activist?
When Papuans demand independence it’s because many of them know that the 1969 referendum for independence was unfair. During that time Papuan people were intimidated by the Indonesian military forces. People were killed or they disappeared. Papuans lived in terror and didn’t have the courage to speak out. I could not accept this.

Why do you embrace non-violence?
When I was a civil servant in the 1990s I was invited to study for a year in the Philippines. I learned about Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King – how you could struggle against injustice using peaceful methods. I decided that Papuans, too, should speak up for their rights peacefully.

Tell us about the first time you were imprisoned.
When [former President] Suharto resigned in May 1998, I thought this was the moment to start a peaceful Papuan independence campaign. I organized a gathering in Biak city and I led the raising of the Papuan Morning Star Flag [a symbol of Papuan independence, banned in Indonesia]. For this I was convicted of “treason” and sentenced to six and a half years in prison.

What dangers have you faced as an activist?
While in detention, I received death threats. I was sent a dog’s head. In the package there was a letter saying: “I know your family, I know your activities; I know everything, so stay out of it!”

You were jailed again in 2004. How did you feel when you were finally freed?
On 18 November 2015, a prison official informed me that I would be released in the next hour. I initially refused. I said: “You are very cruel. Why do you want to kick me out today? At least I should be given a period of adaptation before being released”. The next day they released me. I was in shock.

What did Amnesty’s support mean to you?
While I was in prison, I received lots of letters from many countries in the world. I give huge thanks to friends from Amnesty International who campaigned for me. Those letters had an enormous impact on me. I think they gave me spirit, reassurance, hope and satisfaction. They made me feel like I wasn’t alone.

READ MORE:
This year Amnesty’s prestigious awards ceremony touched down in Senegal to honour four outstanding individuals and groups for their passion for justice.
World-renowned musician Angélique Kidjo and three inspirational African youth activist movements were declared joint winners of Amnesty’s Ambassador of Conscience Award 2016.

“I have always tried to use my singing and spoken voice to fight injustice and inequality,” said Angélique Kidjo. In a 40-year-career spawning 12 albums, she has been a prominent campaigner for freedom of expression and for the education of girls in Africa, as well as against female genital mutilation.

Joining her were Burkina Faso’s Le Balai Citoyen (“The Citizen’s Broom”), a political grassroots movement committed to peaceful protest, and Y’en a marre (“Fed Up”), a group of Senegalese rappers and journalists who aim to encourage young people to register to vote.

LUCHA (Lutte pour le Changement, or “fight for change”), a community-based youth movement from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, were the fourth to share the award this year. “This prestigious award... is a great encouragement to keep up our non-violent fight for social justice and democracy in our country,” said LUCHA’s Juvin Kombi.

The Ambassador of Conscience Award praises people who have used their talents to inspire others to fight for human rights. It also aims to create debate, encourage public action and raise awareness of human rights issues. The event is produced by Art for Amnesty.

‘HE WHO IS NOT COURAGEOUS ENOUGH TO TAKE RISKS WILL ACCOMPLISH NOTHING IN LIFE.’

Muhammad Ali (1942–2016)