

October–December 2015

WIRE

TOGETHER AGAINST INJUSTICE

UNBREAKABLE SPIRIT

Free Albert Woodfox

Surviving 40 years alone
in a US prison cell

Finding Rania

How a mother and six
children vanished in Syria

Write for Rights

Join thousands worldwide
using words to change lives

AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL



WIRE

is Amnesty's global magazine, published four times a year to inform, empower and inspire people worldwide to take injustice personally.

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Cover image: Albert Woodfox has spent over 40 years in solitary confinement in the USA. He is one of 12 people and communities featured in Amnesty's global Write for Rights campaign in December 2015.

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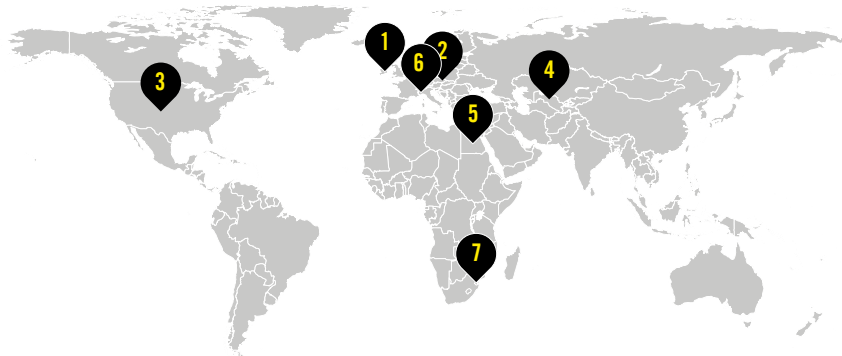
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AMNESTY AROUND THE WORLD



4 HAPPY BIRTHDAY MUHAMMAD!

One of the world's longest-held journalists, Muhammad Behzhanov, turned 61 in Uzbekistan on 1 October. Muhammad has been tortured for his work and has spent the last 16 years in jail. Over 140,000 people have so far signed our appeal urging the President to release him.



© Private

1 SHE IS #NOTACRIMINAL

Amnesty activists from around the world gathered in front of government buildings in Dublin to condemn Ireland's oppressive abortion law in August. They carried 80 suitcases (see below) – equal to the number of women who travel from Ireland every week for an abortion abroad. In September, thousands more marched for choice.

Join the more than 130,000 people who have already signed our petition demanding a change to Ireland's abortion law: <http://bit.ly/MBMRIreland>



© Maxwell's Dublin

2 SUPPORTING ROMANI CHILDREN



© Amnesty International

More than 38,000 people in 94 countries – including these activists in Prague – have urged the Czech Prime Minister to end the discrimination against Romani children in schools. They are being bullied just for being different, kept apart from other children and even placed in schools for pupils with learning disabilities. So far, the Czech government has not done enough to stop this discrimination – we'll use your voices to push for change.

3 LOVE WINS IN THE USA

The US Supreme Court delivered a historic ruling on 26 June, affirming same-sex couples' legal right to marry. Until then, a man wanting to marry a man, or a woman wishing to marry a woman, was at the mercy of the law in his or her own state.

"This is a joyous day for everyone who believes in human rights and equality for all," said Steven W. Hawkins from Amnesty International USA. Read more about this important breakthrough:

<http://bit.ly/LoveWinsUS>



© Justin Sullivan/Getty Images

5 EGYPT PARDONS JOURNALISTS

Just weeks after a court sentenced them to another three years in prison, Al Jazeera journalists Mohamed Fahmy and Baher Mohamed (pictured below) were released on 23 September under a presidential pardon. Over 1 million people took action for journalists jailed just for doing their jobs. “Thank you to all the supporters,” Mohamed tweeted on his release, while Baher wrote: “Finally I’m a free man.”



“No one leaves home unless home is the mouth of a shark.”

Warsan Shire, author

8 ways world leaders can help refugees:
<http://bit.ly/8RefugeeSolutions>

DID YOU KNOW?

700M+

women alive today were married as children

7 THOUSANDS OF LETTERS

“I felt like I was dreaming,” Fikile Makhubu said about the moment the state finally admitted it shouldn’t have arrested her husband Bheki. A magazine editor and prisoner of conscience, Bheki was released in Swaziland on 30 June. He was imprisoned a year earlier alongside human rights lawyer Thulani Maseko. They had published an article raising concerns about Swaziland’s justice



system. Thousands of Amnesty supporters wrote letters of solidarity to the men and their families. Read Fikile’s moving story: <http://bit.ly/BhekiMakhubu>

6 WE WELCOME REFUGEES

Children should not have to die for politicians to face the fact that refugees have a right to be protected. This was Amnesty’s message to world leaders after the tragic photograph of three-year-old Syrian refugee Alan Kurdi, who drowned on a Turkish beach on his way to Greece, made international headlines. More than 280,000 people signed our petition urging EU leaders to give people fleeing bombs and persecution safe routes to sanctuary.

In September, up to 6,000 people created a massive human chain around Italy’s Dolomite mountains to say #RefugeesWelcome. Watch the video:

<http://bit.ly/WelomeChain>



SYRIA'S REFUGEE CRISIS IN NUMBERS

130,408

resettlement places offered globally
by 7 October 2015 (Source: UNHCR).

0

resettlement places offered by Gulf
countries, Russia, Japan, Singapore,
South Korea.

400,000

especially vulnerable refugees who need
resettlement abroad.

1.9M+

refugees from Syria now living in Turkey.

US\$0.45

daily amount many refugees in Lebanon
have to spend on food.



BEHIND THE SCENES

WE ARE ALL AYOTZINAPA

How can 43 young men just disappear into thin air?
Josefina Solomón from Amnesty's Mexico office
on a movement of thousands now demanding answers.

The young man reads out the names,
one by one, defiantly holding back
the tears.

José Angel Navarrete González,
Marciel Pablo Baranda, Daniel Gerardo
Cantu Morales... he doesn't stop until
he has named each one of the 43
students who disappeared in the town
of Iguala after being arrested on 26
September 2014.

They were heading from Ayotzinapa,
a rural teacher training college in
Guerrero state, to commemorate a
student massacre in Mexico City. But
they never made it.

"We want them back alive!" shouts
Melitón Ortega after each name, with a
picture of his nephew Mauricio around
his neck. He and tens of thousands of
others are braving the relentless rain,
marching through Mexico City's wide
streets to its main Zócalo square.

"Mexico is crying," a woman tells
me, rain pouring down her thin plastic

coat. Under a sea of umbrellas, they
listen attentively to the students' parents'
desperate pleas for justice.

The government has tried to convince
the world that local police handed over
the young men to local gangsters, who
killed them, burned their bodies, packed
their remains in large bags and threw
them into the river.

But a group of independent
experts recently refuted this theory
as scientifically impossible. All across
Mexico, people are tired of excuses, and
the Ayotzinapa case refuses to go away.

"You are not alone," the crowd in
the square shouts. Together, we are all
Ayotzinapa.

@josefinasolomon

Read more on pages 24-25.

DIARY DATES AND ANNIVERSARIES

10
NOVEMBER

Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other environmental activists executed, Nigeria, 1995

13
NOVEMBER

Aung San Suu Kyi released from house arrest, Myanmar, 2010

25
NOVEMBER

International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

1
DECEMBER

World AIDS Day

2
DECEMBER

International Day for the Abolition of Slavery

2
DECEMBER

Bhopal disaster kills up to 10,000 people in three days, India, 1984

3
DECEMBER

International Day for People with Disabilities

4
DECEMBER

Amnesty's global Write for Rights letter-writing campaign starts

10
DECEMBER

Human Rights Day

16
DECEMBER

South African Day of Reconciliation

18
DECEMBER

International Migrants Day

20
DECEMBER

International Human Solidarity Day

EDITORIAL

THE POWER OF YOUR WORDS

This December, millions of Amnesty supporters worldwide will write letters, emails, petitions, postcards and much more to defend human rights.

We'll be taking part in Write for Rights, our global letter-writing marathon, which I'm lucky enough to manage. I'm always inspired and humbled by how many people are passionate about changing the lives of others who they've never met.

Together, we want to free Albert Woodfox, who has spent more than 40 years in solitary confinement in the USA (see page 16). We want to find Rania Alabbasi, a Syrian dentist who disappeared with her six children after being seized by security officers (page 6). And we want the charges dropped against Zunar, a Malaysian cartoonist who spoke out against the jailing of an opposition leader (page 27).

These people – and the many others featured in this year's campaign – are a constant reminder of the huge threat to human rights and free speech right now across the world. Governments are afraid of people power and are cracking down on dissent.

And that's why we need events like Write for Rights more than ever. We need to stand with people who are risking everything to speak out.

Our words are powerful. We need to use that power to push for change, now.

May Carolan, Campaign Manager

www.amnesty.org/writeforrights

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FOCUS: DISAPPEARANCES IN SYRIA

MY SISTER RANIA — MISSING IN SYRIA

On a cold spring morning Rania Alabbasi walked down the stairs of her apartment building in Damascus, Syria, carrying her baby daughter Layan. Her five other children followed behind. The family got into a car and were driven away. And that was the last anyone heard of them.

As we demand that Rania and her family are found and released, her sister Naila tells their story.

DISAPPEARED WITHOUT A TRACE

I first realized that something was wrong when I couldn't get hold of Rania. I had been calling my sister's house phone and mobile for several days with no answer.

I later discovered that a group of armed men from Military Intelligence had come to my sister's house on 9 March and arrested her husband, Abdulrahman, without giving any reason.

They returned the following day and this time looted the house, taking family jewellery, mobile phones and the children's tablet computers as well as confiscating the family's passports and documents.

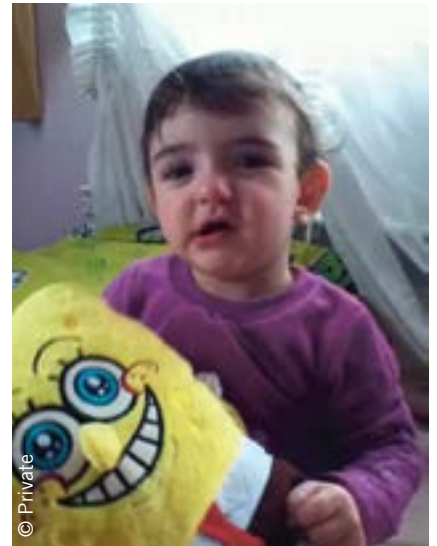
Then, they arrested Rania and her six children, and on their way out, took all the building's CCTV cameras, so there would be no evidence. »



Damascus, the Syrian capital, where Rania and her family were abducted by state security forces two years ago.







SHE THOUGHT SHE WOULD BE SAFE

When the conflict began in 2011, Rania refused to leave. The rest of our family was working in Saudi Arabia and we told her to join us, but she told me: “Society needs me, and I want to raise my children in Syria; they will complete their studies here.”

It never occurred to Rania that she could be detained: the family did not go to demonstrations or participate in political activities.

My clever, caring older sister; Rania was an example to me. A successful dentist, she was kind and popular with her neighbours and patients, many of whom she used to treat for free when they couldn't afford care. She helped raise me, and always encouraged me in my studies. Now, the same thoughts keep me awake at night: is she okay – or not?



BETWEEN HOPE AND FEAR

In two and a half years I heard nothing, only some unofficial information that Rania was seen in security force detention around Damascus. But no official information, nothing I can trust. I suffer from anxiety and cannot sleep at night – I keep wondering: Are her children hungry – or not? Are they calm or they are screaming and crying? Are they alive? Or – are they dead?

My mother, who helped to raise the children – at once their grandmother and ‘mother’ – cries all night long.

Those six children have done nothing wrong. They should be in school. Rania and her husband adored them: shy and bookish 16-year-old Dima; energetic and bold 15-year-old Entisar; kind and studious 13-year-old Najah; 10-year-old Alaa; eight-year-old Ahmad; and four-year-old baby Layan.

Their parents made sure they were well-educated; they were taught English, as well as other languages, and like any other children they enjoyed reading, playing on the computer, singing and acting, drawing, visiting parks.

There was no reason for their lives to be destroyed. ☐

DISAPPEARANCES IN SYRIA

When did disappearances start in Syria?

So-called enforced disappearances (see page 23) have a long history in Syria and have been a major feature during the al-Assad family’s rule. But the number of people who’ve been taken since the beginning of the crisis in 2011 has risen sharply.

How many people has this affected?

Thousands of civilians have been killed in the custody of Syrian security forces, and tens of thousands have disappeared since 2011.

How are people treated in detention?

Large numbers of people are held in very small, filthy spaces. There is not enough food or water – one detainee told us that others in his cell were so desperate for water that they drank from the toilet. Torture is rife.

TAKE ACTION

Tell the Syrian authorities to release Rania Alabbasi and her six children, or to give her a fair trial: www.amnesty.org/writeforrights



Rania’s children from top left to right: Dima, Entisar, Najah, Alaa, Ahmad and Layan. Rania pictured below. None have been seen since security officers escorted them out of their house in March 2013.



Tens of thousands of people have vanished at the hands of the Syrian authorities and been held in terrible conditions since the country’s conflict began in 2011.





**WRITE
FOR
RIGHTS**

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CAMPAIGN: WRITE FOR RIGHTS

WRITE A LETTER, CHANGE A LIFE

Across the world, people's freedom is under threat. Activists are locked up just for expressing their opinions. Protesters are tortured and wrongfully imprisoned. And young girls are forced to get married.

During Write for Rights 2015, your words can push decision-makers to take action. With your help, torturers will be brought to justice. Prisoners of conscience will be released. And more people will be free to live their lives.

HOW IT WORKS



Activists in more than 200 countries and territories...



...take part in all kinds of events, in cafés, schools, community centres and more...



...where supporters write millions of letters, emails, tweets and petitions...



...for people who've been tortured, forced to marry, locked up for speaking out...



...and put pressure on governments, leaders and decision-makers...



...as well as showing love and support for the people and their families...



...and help make change happen – releasing activists, convicting torturers and changing abusive laws.



TAKE ACTION

1. Read more about the people we're fighting for:

www.amnesty.org/writeforrights

2. Contact the Amnesty team in your country at: www.amnesty.org/countries

3. Tweet your support to [@AmnestyOnline](https://twitter.com/AmnestyOnline) using the hashtag [#W4R](https://twitter.com/hashtag/W4R)

HOW OUR WORDS HAVE CHANGED LIVES



PARDONED IN NIGERIA

After pressure from Amnesty supporters, Moses Akatugba was given a full pardon in 2015. He had been wrongfully sentenced to death for a crime committed when he was 16.

"While before I felt all hope had gone, the story changed when Amnesty came in. The messages I received overwhelmed me. I regained hope."



FREEDOM IN BELARUS

Political prisoner Ales Bialiatski received 40,000 letters in his Belarus cell, including many sent as part of Write for Rights. He was released in 2014 after almost three years in jail.

"The huge quantity of letters gave me a powerful sense of optimism. When I received them I was very, very happy."



RELEASED IN TUNISIA

Blogger Jabeur Mejri was pardoned in 2014, after being jailed for seven-and-a-half years for Facebook posts deemed "insulting to Islam". Thousands wrote letters demanding his release as part of Write for Rights.

"Amnesty's support had a great impact. Things got better when there was more attention on my case."





CAMPAIGN: WRITE FOR RIGHTS

MARRIED OFF AGED 11

More than half of all girls are forced to get married much too young in Burkina Faso, West Africa.

Burkina Faso's recent coup seized international headlines, but the country's scandal of forced marriage continues to go largely unnoticed.

At 13, Maria (not her real name) was forced to marry a 70-year-old man who already had five wives. When she resisted, her father told her: "If you don't go to join your husband, I will kill you."

Maria walked nearly 170km over three days to a shelter for young girls. But her escape prompted tensions between communities in her village, and ultimately she returned to her family to keep the peace.

When her father beat her and made her go back to her "husband's" house, she took refuge at the nearest police

station. After the police threatened to press charges against her father, he finally agreed not to force Maria or any other girls in the family to marry. Maria now lives with her family and hopes to go to school one day.

Across Burkina Faso, thousands of girls like Maria are being forced into early marriage, some as young as 11. And like her, some girls are doing all they can to escape to refuges like the one shown in these photographs. There they learn new skills to prepare them for a new life outside the shelter.

(Out of respect for the wishes of the girls featured here, these photographs do not reveal their identities.)



Because no one can force you to love someone: some girls flee hundreds of kilometres on foot to a shelter to escape forced marriage.



Sewing new futures. Knitting, sewing, cooking and farming are some of the activities taught here. Girls stay for as long as they need to until they have the skills to make a living outside.



Hidden refuge – a shelter for survivors of forced marriage in Kaya city, northeast Burkina Faso. With 52% of all girls married before age 18, Burkina Faso has the seventh highest rate of child marriage in the world.



A chance to go back to school: revising for her French course. For most girls, early marriage means losing out on their education.





Drying moringa leaves, a herb used in cooking



Making pastry like these French “galettes” is one of the many skills taught at the shelter. Once married, many girls are expected to cook, clean, fetch water and work in the fields, dawn to dusk.





A gateway to a new life – an entrance to a shelter. Forced and early marriages are banned by Burkina Faso's Constitution and by international law. Still, the authorities keep turning a blind eye.



A place to rest. Forced to marry, girls are expected to have as many children as their husbands want, regardless of the threat that early pregnancy poses to their health and life.

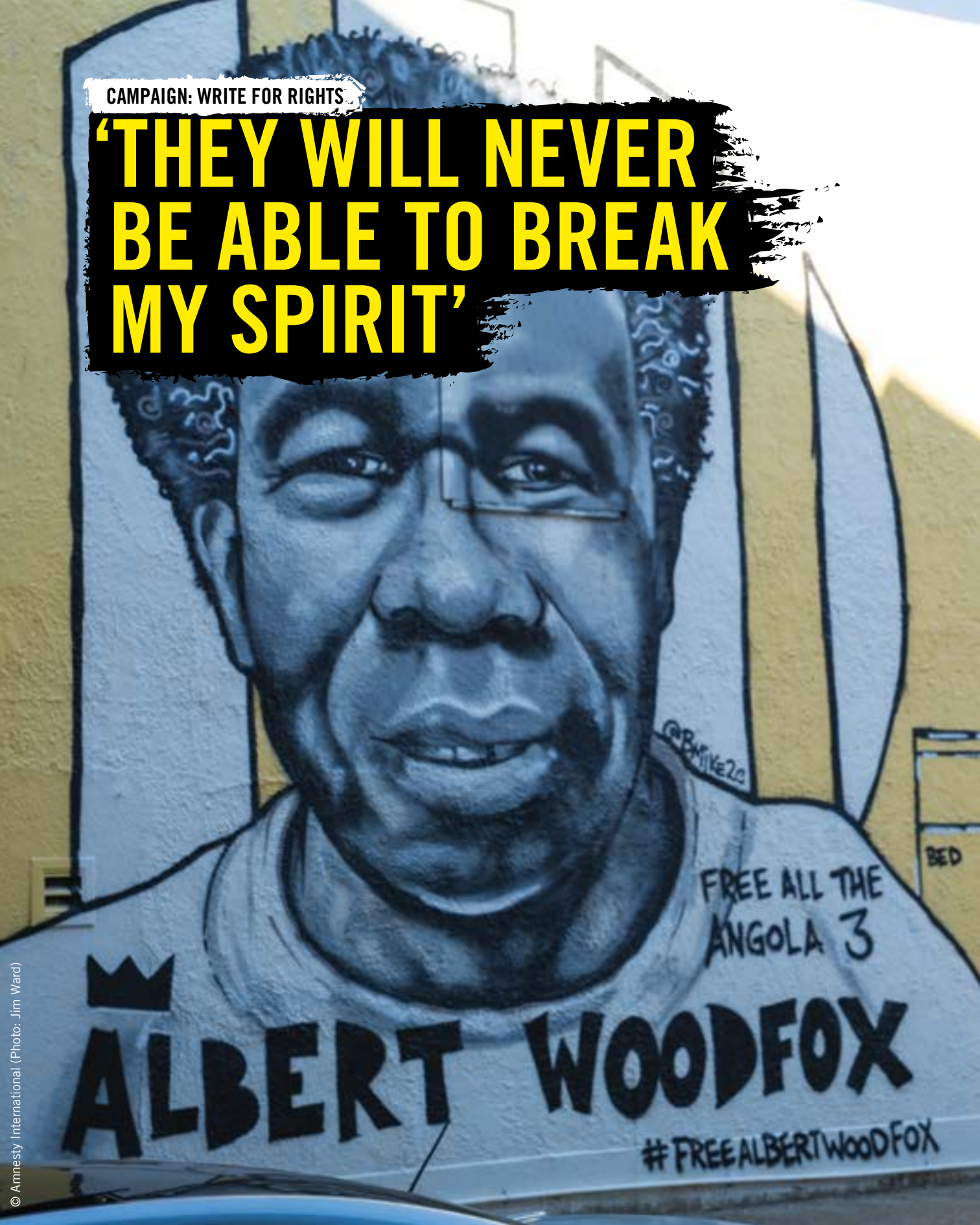
All images by Sophie Garcia
© Amnesty International

TAKE ACTION

Tell Burkina Faso's authorities to protect girls and young women from forced marriages:
www.amnesty.org/writeforrights

CAMPAIGN: WRITE FOR RIGHTS

**'THEY WILL NEVER
BE ABLE TO BREAK
MY SPIRIT'**



43 YEARS OF INJUSTICE

ALBERT WOODFOX HAS SPENT MORE THAN HALF HIS LIFE TRAPPED IN A 6'x9' CELL FOR 23 HOURS A DAY, FIGHTING TO PROVE HIS INNOCENCE. IT'S TIME FOR HIM TO WALK FREE

TOILET

How has Albert Woodfox survived more than 40 years in solitary confinement? The answer lies in a dramatic story of political courage and friendship, faced with a bitter campaign of vengeance. As global pressure to free Albert intensifies, we talk to his most vocal supporter and former fellow inmate – Robert King.

By Kristin Hulaas Sunde, Wire editor

"Angola was considered the bloodiest prison in America. There was slave-like labour – people worked 17 hours a day for two and a half cents an hour. There was a lot of raping going on – the prison guards sold the younger inmates [into sexual slavery]." >>



Mural created by Amnesty USA on Claiborne Avenue in New Orleans.



The only existing photo of the Angola Three together: Herman Wallace (left), Robert King (centre) and Albert Woodfox, Angola prison, Louisiana, 2001.

Robert Hillary King is describing Louisiana State Penitentiary, a massive former slave plantation known as Angola in the southern US state, where he spent 29 years alone in a cell.

Today, Robert is an energetic 72-year-old, dapper in a blue silk shirt, preparing to give a lecture about the US justice system at the University of Dundee, Scotland. Around his neck hangs a gold medallion from the West African country of Benin, decorated with three figurines. They might symbolize the Angola Three, of which Robert is one member.

He and two other young black men, Albert Woodfox and Herman Wallace, become known under this name after they rebelled against the prison's vicious, racist regime in the early 1970s, and ended up spending a record total of over 100 years in solitary confinement.



Albert's most vocal supporter, Robert King, on a visit to Dundee, UK, 15 September 2015.



A prison museum photograph shows mainly black prisoners working the land at Louisiana State Penitentiary, under the watchful eye of white guards. The prison – also known as Angola – is a former slave plantation.





*Family, friends and activists march to demand Albert Woodfox's freedom and in memory of Herman Wallace, who died just days after being released from prison, October 2013.
© Angola3*



Angola is the largest maximum security prison in the USA, with close to 5,000 inmates and covering 18,000 acres – more than the island of Manhattan.

SURVIVING SOLITARY

"I do not have the words to convey the years of mental, emotional and physical torture I have endured," Albert Woodfox has said.

Solitary confinement means being completely alone for around 23 hours a day, locked in a room no bigger than a parking space. "The lack of social interaction is incredibly damaging," explains Amnesty's USA campaigner, Tessa Murphy, who has worked on the Angola Three case since 2006. "You experience things like insomnia, hallucinations, intrusive thoughts and severe paranoia. Suicide rates are disproportionately higher for people held in isolation. After just a few weeks your eyes can't adjust to anything far away."

Despite the UN calling it a form of torture, solitary – or Closed Cell Restriction (CCR) in Louisiana prison jargon – is still used widely in the USA.

Robert, convicted of a robbery he has always denied, thinks a newfound political consciousness gave the three men the mental strength to survive the cruelty and degradation.

"When they sent me to solitary, I had come to see America as one big prison. I saw myself as being plucked from minimum custody in society to maximum security in prison. I think Herman and Albert felt the same way, that no matter where you are, you still have to struggle. It was a system that needed to be fought."

"Being politicized gave me buoyancy, a sense of purpose and the courage of my convictions. I was in prison, but prison wasn't in me." >>

AUDACIOUS PRISON POLITICS

The three men were all born into deep poverty in the 1940s racially segregated American south. Robert describes regular, blanket round-ups of local black men by the New Orleans police, and being sent to prison for crimes pinned on him by “witnesses” who had been bribed, threatened or beaten. “I had begun to think that the system was rotten,” he says.

The radical black rights movement, the Black Panther Party (BPP), became a lightning rod for their frustrations: “Albert became a full-fledged BPP member when he escaped from prison and went to New York,” says Robert. “It was the first time he had seen black men standing tall, being proud of who they were.”

Herman and Albert, sent to Angola for armed robbery, started holding political education classes in the prison kitchen or yard, advocating for prisoners’ rights to better conditions and an end to the rape culture. “Bringing the BPP ideology into prison was a pretty audacious thing to do,” says Robert.

“It was incredibly threatening for the prison authorities,” Tessa adds. “The men were very effective activists and became easy targets.”

A CAMPAIGN OF VENGEANCE

Soon after, in 1972, Albert and Herman were convicted of murdering a prison guard, Brent Miller. They have always maintained their innocence, a claim supported even by the victim’s widow, Teenie. Albert believes their conviction was a reaction to their politics.

There was no physical evidence linking them to the crime, and their conviction relied mainly on the dubious testimony of another prisoner, who received a pardon in return. Nevertheless, he and Herman would spend the next four decades alone in their cells.

When Robert was sent to Angola, he was placed in solitary next to Albert: “We began to speak out – trying to implement changes by engaging in hunger strikes, and being very, very disruptive. Only a squeaky wheel gets the grease.”

Although the legal process was so flawed that Albert’s convictions were overturned three times, his freedom has been blocked at every turn by the Louisiana authorities.

Robert was released in 2001 and has campaigned relentlessly for his friends’ freedom ever since. Finally, after 41 years in solitary, Herman was released in October 2013. Tragically, he died of cancer just days later.



© Amnesty International (Photo: Jim Ward)

In June 2015, a judge ordered Albert's immediate release, only for his cell door to be immediately slammed shut when the authorities appealed the decision. Louisiana's Attorney General, James "Buddy" Caldwell, is now only person standing in the way of Albert's freedom, having waged a personal campaign of vengeance against him.

"Buddy Caldwell wishes that Albert will do what Herman did," says Robert: "Go away and die."



© Amnesty International



Albert Woodfox's brothers Hayward, Michael and Donald Mable with Robert King (third from the left) outside St. Francisville courthouse, Louisiana, USA, September 2015.



Prison museum photograph of a cell block in Louisiana State Penitentiary.

UNBROKEN SPIRIT

But Albert and his supporters refuse to be silenced. This December, through Amnesty's global Write for Rights letter-writing campaign, thousands worldwide will call for his freedom.

"Albert is elated that he is getting this support," says Robert. "It means the authorities know that Albert and his supporters aren't going away. They have tried to quell and quash this, and every time they try, it just gets bigger.

"And I am sure he feels that this goes beyond him. Because what about the thousands who are also in solitary? The focus is much broader. We're just the tip of the iceberg."

Now aged 68 and in poor health, Albert is still in isolation, but no longer in Angola. He can receive visits for two hours a week and make phone calls. Robert speaks to him regularly, and will visit him again once he returns to the US: "We talk about the case. That's the focus, to see Albert released. He feels hopeful.

"I think he will be able to cope outside prison," Robert adds. "Lots of people want to give him the opportunity to travel. And if he just wants to lay back and relax, he can come to my place. He is welcome in a lot of places.

"Albert says: 'they will never be able to break my spirit'. Even though his body is broken now to some degree, he still has that spirit. What more can they do to him now? He's been locked up for nearly 50 years. I felt the same way – what else can they do to me, except send me off the planet?" □

TAKE ACTION

Urge Louisiana's Attorney General to release Albert Woodfox immediately: www.amnesty.org/writeforrights

U.S. PRISONS HOLD...

more than

 **2.2M**


people

around

 **1/4**

of the world's prisoners

up to

 **80,000**

in some sort of solitary confinement



LOCKED UP FOR PROTESTING

This photo shows student leader Phyoe Phyoe Aung attending a court hearing in Myanmar, May 2015. She was arrested after organizing a largely peaceful protest during which police attacked students with batons. She and many others now face long jail terms. And across the country, the authorities continue to harass young people in what appears to be a systematic clampdown on the student movement.

Call on the government to release Phyoe Phyoe Aung and everyone else jailed just for protesting peacefully:

www.amnesty.org/writeforrights



A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO HUMAN RIGHTS JARGON

Some troublesome human rights terms and phrases explained.



Crimes against humanity

When certain acts – including murder, torture and slavery – form part of a widespread attack on a civilian population by a state or organization. Unlike war crimes, they can take place at times of peace as well as during conflict. The Rwandan genocide of 1994 is one example of a crime against humanity.



Enforced disappearance

This is when a person is arrested, detained or abducted by the state, or by people acting with its support. Those responsible deny that the person is being held, or hide their fate or whereabouts. The victim is then said to have “been disappeared”.



Immunity (from prosecution)

Immunity allows an accused person to avoid prosecution for a crime because of their job or office. Amnesty is opposed to immunity. For example, we have called for the rejection of immunity in the Central African Republic so that people who committed crimes during conflict there are brought to justice.



Sexual and reproductive rights

These rights involve being able to make your own decisions about your body. You should also be able to:

- get accurate information about sex and reproduction
- access sexual and reproductive health services including contraception
- choose if, when and who to marry
- decide if you want to have children and how many.

You should be able to do this without being forced, and without being threatened with violence.



War crimes

These are serious crimes committed during armed conflicts, which could include murdering prisoners of war, killing hostages, torture and destroying towns and villages. A recent example is in the Ukraine, where there is overwhelming evidence of ongoing war crimes, including torture and summary killings of prisoners.

FIND OUT MORE

<http://bit.ly/HRJargon1>

INSIGHT: DISAPPEARANCES IN MEXICO

WHERE ARE THE 43?

*'We don't have any guns! Don't shoot!
Help him, help him please!'*

These desperate words are shouted out, again and again by frightened young voices in shaky mobile phone footage taken on 26 September 2014.

The voices belonged to student teachers from Ayotzinapa, a rural teaching college in central Mexico. That night, a hundred of them were attacked, six people were killed, and 43 young men disappeared.

More than a year later, their relatives – some of whom are pictured here – still don't know why their sons, brothers, husbands were snatched from them, how they might have died, or if they are alive. They don't even have a body to bury or grave to mourn by.

All they have is the knowledge that their boys' 43 faces have changed Mexico. Today, it is almost impossible to walk around any city or town without seeing a reference to their story.

The Ayotzinapa tragedy has revealed a country riddled with violence and horror, where nearly 30,000 men, women and children have disappeared or gone missing in just the last few years.

And it opened up a Pandora's box of crime, negligence and political cover-ups that could run up to the highest levels of Mexico's government.

Across the country and worldwide, the pressure is building on President Enrique Peña Nieto to answer one simple question – where are the 43?

Read more on page 4, and find out what "being disappeared" means on page 23.

All images © Scott Brennan



Carmen Cruz and her children are looking for their son and brother, Jorge Aníbal Cruz Mendoza. "My son is a quiet, intelligent young man who loves rodeo and horses. Wherever he is, I hope he feels proud that I will keep on searching until I find him."



Bernardo Campos Santos is looking for his son José Ángel Campos Cantor. "My son went to school to support his wife and two daughters. Wherever he is, I pray that he isn't suffering."



Elucadio Ortega Carlos is looking for his son Mauricio Ortega Valerio. "We're inviting people to join us to put more pressure on the Mexican government, because it lies a lot."



Nica Nora García is looking for her son Saúl Bruno García. "My son is a farmer like the rest of us and he wants to be a professional, a teacher. It hurts me to think about him – I cry all day and all night. I want the government to give them back to us now."





María de los Ángeles Molina is looking for her son, Marco Antonio González Molina. "First he wanted to work as a doctor for people on a low income. Then he decided to be a teacher."



Brigida Olivares is looking for her grandson, Antonio Santana Maestro. "We want to hug them, for them to be happy back here with us."



Margarito Guerrero is looking for his son Jhosivani Guerrero de la Cruz. "My son has always been very sporty – he likes playing football, basketball, dancing."



Estanislao Mendoza and Margarita Zacarias are looking for their son Miguel Ángel. "My son worked as a hairdresser," says Estanislao. "He has a girlfriend – I think they are still together. We haven't heard from him at all since 26 September [2014]. He is still alive in our hearts."



Joacina Oliveria Parral Rosa is looking for her sons Jorge Luis González Parral and Dorian González Parral. "This is Jorge Luis aged 20," she says. "Dorian is 19. Where are they? My sons weren't delinquents – they wanted to study."



Maria de Jesus Tlatempa and Cornelio Bartolo Victoriano in their maize field near the town of Tixtla, Guerrero state, Mexico, July 2015. "The government has done nothing to help us. But if it had been their son, they would have searched the heavens, the sea and earth."

60-SECOND INTERVIEW

BEATEN FOR BEING IN LOVE



Costas and his partner.

Costas and his boyfriend were badly beaten up in a homophobic and racist attack in Athens, Greece. Costas tells us their story, and how we can help make sure this never happens again.

What happened to you and your partner?

We were sitting on a bench in a square after going shopping in late August 2014. It was really hot, with a nice breeze. It was just us, a corner shop that was slowly closing, and a group of young men on the other side of the square.

We sat there talking and laughing, when two of the men approached us from behind on a motorbike and threw a bucket of dirty water over us. I was paralyzed, and sat back trying to calm down. Big mistake. One by one, they ran towards us and started punching and kicking us. There were 12 or 15 of them, all wearing black shirts. Too many. They kept hitting us.

Why did they target you?

I think they could tell that we are a couple, and because of my partner's skin colour. Last thing I saw was him being thrown on the pavement, and them kicking him. I realized my head and upper body were inside an overturned rubbish bin. Then they threw me on the ground, and broke my leg in three places. The police arrived but the officer wouldn't come near me, as if I was contagious.

How has the attack affected you?

It was a tragedy. It took me months to recover. I had to have surgery. It severely affected my job, my mental health. Whenever I see any kind of violence, everything comes back to me, all the horror and fear. And no one has been punished for this.

Do you feel safe now?

No – this keeps happening, to us and to people we know. There is no recognition, rights or proper protection for LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex) people in Greece. It is as if we don't exist.

TAKE ACTION

Tell the Greek government (@govgr) to end hate crimes: Tweet a photo of yourself kissing your partner or holding a friend's hand in public, with the hashtag #W4R

THE POWER OF THE PEN

“As the regime sharpens its iron fist, my pen gets sharper!”

These are the words of Malaysian political cartoonist Zunar. He is facing a long jail sentence for speaking out when an opposition leader was jailed. He created this illustration to inspire Amnesty supporters campaigning for him during this year's Write for Rights.

“The pen is a powerful tool,” he tells us. “It can bring people together, and symbolizes power, direction and a clear target.”

Zunar is well known for his satirical attacks on government corruption and electoral fraud. But he's now being charged under a draconian, outdated law dredged up from 1948 as the government seeks to lock up its critics.

“What the government did has one objective: to silence me and stop me from doing cartoons,” he says. “It's intimidation and harassment. I say: I won't stop.”



TAKE ACTION

Call on Malaysia's government to drop all charges against Zunar:
www.amnesty.org/writeforrights



NEWS & VIEWS

Get involved with Amnesty, share news about human rights where you live, and send your questions, feedback and ideas about this magazine to **thewire@amnesty.org**

DO OUR FREE HUMAN RIGHTS COURSE

Take part in Amnesty's first massive open online course (MOOC), run in partnership with edX, a global leader in online education founded by Harvard University and MIT.

Our brand new, free three-week course on freedom of expression will

run in English from 17 November to 8 December 2015.

Providing a high quality, cutting-edge learning experience, it aims to empower people worldwide with the skills and knowledge to defend human rights and ultimately, change the world.

Register here:

<http://bit.ly/FreedomMOOC>

"They are simply looking for a better life. We are all citizens of the world. Don't let fear get so much power."

Comment by Pretty Fly in a discussion about refugees on www.facebook.com/AmnestyGlobal

USE YOUR CLICK POWER FOR A BETTER WORLD

Alt Click is a new Amnesty project aiming to get a new, tech-savvy generation of human rights activists involved in monitoring and documenting human rights abuses.

In the first pilot, we plan to invite lots of people to help us analyze satellite images of things like refugee movements in war zones, or illegal house demolitions. Next, we will focus in on data challenges like verifying video footage.

Find out more and get involved: <http://bit.ly/AltClick>

? TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

You'll find the answers inside the magazine.

1. How many years has 68-year-old Albert Woodfox spent alone in a cell?
2. How much (USD) do many Syrian refugees in Lebanon now have to spend daily on food?
3. Can a crime against humanity be committed in times of war?
4. Which single country holds one quarter of the world's prisoners?
5. How old is Rania Alabbasi's youngest child, who was abducted in Syria over two years ago, now?

See answers on bottom right. >>





HAPPY 25TH ANNIVERSARY AMNESTY ALGERIA

Twenty-five years since it was set up, Amnesty in Algeria now boasts activists and supporters from almost all the country's *wilayas* (departments). More than 80% are young people, reflecting the country's young population. They are passionate about issues such as stopping violence against women and freedom of expression – a vital issue in a country where securing permission to protest in public can be very difficult. With six full-time staff and 10 volunteers, spreading the human rights message across Africa's biggest country is Amnesty Algeria's biggest challenge. Happy anniversary, and keep up the good work!



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3 KILLER FACTS



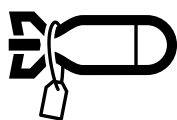
**US\$1,711
TRILLION**

Total global military expenditure in 2014 – a 50% increase from 2001.



508,000

People killed every year by armed violence globally.



31%

Percentage of global arms exported by the USA.

“You cannot lecture about peace while being the world’s largest manufacturers of arms.”



© UN Photo/Mark Garten



Amnesty UK ran a spoof advert, poster campaign and staged stunts around London's 2015 arms fair – watch the video at:

www.tortureonyourdoorstep.co.uk

Answers:

1. Over 40 years (see p. 17)
2. Around US\$0.50 (p. 4)
3. Yes (p. 23)
4. The USA (p. 21)
5. Four (see p. 9)

Amnesty's Secretary General, Salil Shetty, makes a speech to the world's leaders at the United Nations, 25 September 2015.

Watch it here: <http://bit.ly/GlobalGoalsSpeech> #GlobalGoals

**‘I SHALL CONTINUE
MY STRUGGLE
AS LONG AS MY
HEART BEATS.’**

*Samar Badawi, wife of Waleed Abu al-Khair,
a human rights lawyer jailed in Saudi Arabia
#W4R*